

Teachers' views on causes of poor performance in Economics among
Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane Circuit, Limpopo Province

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**Teachers’ views on causes of poor performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalanane circuit, Limpopo Province**” is my original research work carried out under the supervision of Dr Linda Thaba-Nkadimene and Ms Sharon Dipolelo Mmakola, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged. This mini-dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Education at the University of Limpopo, South Africa. This study has not been submitted at any other academic institution.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wife, Tebogo Hlatshwayo, and my two daughters, Mandisa Azania and Nonjabulo Nsovo Hlatshwayo whom I dearly love. The support of my wife and daughters, their understanding when I was busy with my studies has been encouraging.

To my late father and mother, Freddy Hlatshwayo and Dina Winstance Maritz, thank you for all. And to my late grandmother, Winnas Ngobeni, thank you for loving and raising me. This work belongs to you.

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ABSTRACT

The blame for the decline in performance of Grade 11 and 12 Economics learners in District has been levelled on poor school resources, poorly trained teachers, and teachers' ability to execute their duties. Other stakeholders blame teachers for the poor performance of learners. Due to that this study was conducted to explore teachers' views on causes of poor performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalanane Circuit, Limpopo Province. Quantitative surveys and qualitative case study were used as research design. Data was collected using survey questionnaires and interviews. The study distributed 80 questionnaires to Economics teachers across Mogalakwena District and 100% response rate was achieved. The researcher also conducted one-to-one interviews among six Economics teachers and 3 Heads of Department (HoDs). Quantitative data was analysed using mathematical and statistical tools and was presented using tables, graphs, and charts. Qualitative data was presented using thematic and narrative analysis. This study identified seven (7) themes, namely, the (1) poor teaching environment and lack of teaching and learning resources; (2) lack of interest and negative attitudes by Economics learners; (3) poor teaching experience and content gap; (4) teachers perceive Economics as a difficult subject; (5) inadequate support from parents, school leadership and department; (6) poor discipline in schools; and (7) increased teenage pregnancy in schools in mining areas. This study recommends in-serve training of Economics teachers; provision of teaching and learning resources to schools; promotion of parents' involvement and participation in their children's learning; provision of support from the Department of Education in addressing school discipline and teenage pregnancy. This study identified the factors that cause poor learners' performance in Economics. However, other aspects that are critical for changing the course of action, as required by the pragmatic paradigm, were not explored because they were not focus areas for this study. I therefore recommend further studies that on teaching and assessment strategies used by Economics teachers. There is a need for further study on strategies used by the Economics teachers; the level of commitment to their work; amount of written work given to Economics learners and the discipline in schools.

KEY WORDS: Economics, teenage pregnancy, poor performance, quality teaching, physical learning environment.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND STUDY BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study sought to answer the primary research question, 'what are teachers' perceptions on poor performance of learners in Economics?' This was done by exploring teachers' and Head of Departments (HoD's) views on learner performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners of three rural schools in the Matlalane circuit in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

Chapter 1 explicates the problem and methodological conceptualisation. To put the problem in perspective, a short summary of literature review and theoretical framework are discussed. Furthermore, the purpose of the study and research questions is presented. I found it necessary to introduce the aspects of research design and methodology that I used in this chapter. I then examined the quality criteria and ethical considerations in this chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

"The importance of economics education goes far beyond the goal of improving an understanding of the basic principles of supply and demand and the workings of the economy. Economics can be taught by generating new knowledge with the help of exposing Learners to real-life learning environments and experiences. Teaching economics in this twenty-first century requires teachers to implement effective technology-integrated teaching and learning, and assessment strategies not only to achieve cross critical outcomes but providing ongoing support to the digital natives" (Van Wyk, 2015).

Van Wyk (2015) puts the importance of the teaching of Economics in perspective. It is an important subject for basic, community and higher education as it exposes general society to basic principles of the world of work, the business world and how the economy works. Therefore, the teaching of Economics cannot be overemphasised. Despite its importance, Economics, and other Commercial subjects such as Accounting and Business Studies are marginalised in schools; and performance in

these same subjects causes schools and circuit offices to recommend for their phasing out.

Learner performance in higher grades (Grades 11 and 12) has been a cause for concern in South African schools (Department of Basic Education, 2015). This 2015 Report further indicates that poor performance is more evident in schools that are in rural areas compared to those in urban areas. In the past, it was only performance in Mathematics and Sciences subjects that was a significant challenge. The same 2015 Report established a new trend in the most challenging subjects, adding Economics to those already with a history of significant challenges with regards under-performing learners. Limpopo Department of Education (2014) shows that this challenge is not only common in the Matlalane circuit, but it exists in other circuits in the province as well.

Different stakeholders have attributed poor performance in Mathematics, Science and Economics in Limpopo Province to different factors such as lack of resources, indiscipline among learners and the low socio-economic status of parents (Rammala, 2009). In support, Ogonnaya, Mji, and Mohapi (2016) established causes of poor learners' performance as poor "teacher knowledge, poor students' mathematics background, lack of teaching and learning resources, lack of parental involvement in students' learning, students' negative attitude towards mathematics, indiscipline among students, frequent changes of the curriculum, high student-teacher ratio and language barrier." Furthermore, Mji and Makgatho (2006: 253) found a poor range of teaching strategies, lack of "content knowledge, motivation, laboratory use, and non-completion of the syllabus," poor parent involvement and the language of teaching and learning as factors that cause poor performance of learners. In another study conducted by Mouton, Louw, and Strydom (2013: 31), the researchers identified the causes of poor learners' outcome in South African schooling system as "poorly performing teachers, poor work ethics, lack of community and parental support, poor control by education authorities, poor support for teachers and very low levels of accountability."

There is a dearth of literature on the poor performance in Economics and this paucity has driven stakeholders to call for the removal of these subjects from the curriculum

options. Sekwena (2014) focuses on “the methods teachers use to teach basic Economics concepts in high school” namely, economic choices, economic concepts and economic goals. Wentland (2004:641) also identified the same three curriculum topics in Economics. The focus of this study is on examining teachers’ experiences of poor performance in the teaching of Economics. Studies conducted in Mathematics and Sciences to establish the causes of poor learners’ performance have striven to clarify the challenges but there is a dearth of literature on Economics and commercial subjects in general.

It is this gap that the proposed study seeks to fill. Some teachers have little experience of what is going on in schools and have suggested what might be the cause of poor performance. This is unfair because teachers whose lived experiences with the learners could offer more informed classroom-based insights regarding the poor performance in Economics in schools.

The voice of teachers provides first-hand information on what transpires in classrooms, given their classroom experiences and the fact that they work with learners in their struggles to understand the specific constructs that pose significant challenges (Limpopo Department of Education, 2018). The engagement with Economics teachers offers an understanding of what the cause of a high failure rate in Economics could be and helps in addressing the challenges of poor performance in Economics. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify and assess what Economics teachers’ observations and remarks clarify about poor performance in the subject.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The performance of Grade 11 and 12 learners in Economics has been on the decline with speculation and criticism from different stakeholders linking the cause to factors such as poor resources and poorly trained teachers (Legotlo, Maaga & Sebege, 2002). Several stakeholders question the teachers’ ability to execute their duties, while others blame teachers for the poor performance of learners (Rammala, 2009). Surprisingly, most of the critics have never been in a classroom environment (Limpopo Department of Education, 2018). This prompted my present study into the perceptions of

Economics teachers on poor performance in the subject. Given that teachers are exposed to classroom dynamics, their perceptions should be sources of insight into the specific constructs that present challenges to the Grade 11 and 12 learners.

Many strategies aimed at improving the academic performance of learners have been designed, developed, and implemented. The results are, however, not proportional to the strategies that have been designed and implemented. According to Cobb-Clark (2013), many strategies aimed at improving the performance have in fact disadvantaged several learners and impeded their performance. The strategies designed and implemented without empirical research on the cause of poor performance were without context and ultimately irrelevant. Teachers attend workshops to improve the academic performance of schools but secondary schools such as Moyaneng, Mphokeng and Kubushe in Matlalanane circuit in Limpopo still underperform (Limpopo Department of Education, 2018). It is difficult for most of the learners to achieve satisfactory results and this study strives to establish the source of the specific challenges by investigating teachers' views on causes of poor performance in Economics.

Shah, Khan, and Khan (2013) show that investing in the development of education material resources of an institution could improve performance. There is, however, no guarantee because some learners cannot afford some of these resources because of financial constraints which ultimately affects their performance. Without these materials, successful learning is compromised. Inadequate materials contribute to poor academic performance. This study focuses mainly on the views of teachers on poor performance in Economics. Other writers (Gardiner, 2008; UNICEF, 2000) have contributed to the debates on what might cause poor performance in schools, but these have not focussed on the perceptions of teachers on learner performance in Economics. This necessitates an empirical study on the views of teachers regarding poor performance in Economics in Matlalanane Circuit in Limpopo Province.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 The aim of the study

The aim of the study was to identify and explore teachers' perceptions of learner performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners of three rural schools in Matlalane circuit in Limpopo Province.

1.4.2 Research objectives

The study designed objectives crafted to:

- Identify teacher's perceptions on poor learner performance in Economics
- Assess the possible factors that contribute to the poor learner performance in Grade 11 and 12 Economics in the selected schools
- Establish the trend of learner performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane circuit in Limpopo province

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1.5.1 The main research questions

- What are teachers' views of poor learner performance in Economics?

1.5.2 The sub-research questions are:

- What are the possible factors that contribute to the poor learner performance in Grade 11 and 12 Economics in the selected schools?
- What trends emerge on learner performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane circuit in Limpopo province?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of the study contribute to knowledge and act as evidence for scholars and stakeholders interested in learners' performance in Economics in rural South African

schools. The data generated from the study could also be used to inform future implementation of education policies aimed at addressing the poor performance of learners in Economics, especially in rural areas and other marginalised contexts and spaces. The findings and recommendations of the study are useful to the Department of Education as well as other stakeholders running campaigns on the state of education in rural schools of Limpopo Province. The findings of the study identify the causes of poor Grade 11 and 12 performances in Economics in the whole circuit/district.

1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study only involved teachers, and Heads of Departments (HoD's). Furthermore, the study was only focusing on teachers' views on the performance of learners in Economics. Even so, the problem of poor academic performance in South Africa is experienced by many provinces, but the current study only focused in Limpopo and the Matlalanane Circuit in particular.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was affected by financial problems as the researcher did not have sponsors. The researcher however, asked for assistance on voluntary basis in terms of collecting data. The participants were not fully accessible due to time restrictions. As much as the participants were willing to take part in the study, there were minor aspect of distrust by some participants towards the researcher. Some participants primarily perceived the study not to be a pure academic undertaking but a work-related commotion. The time for carrying out the study was limited as the researcher is involved in other professional and personal commitments. The closure of schools due to Covid-19 presented a challenge. To overcome this, the researcher maximized on any available time for the research project.

1.9 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

The research project is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

This chapter covers the introduction, background, importance of the study as well as the definition of concepts and research methodology.

Chapter 2: A literature review

This chapter focuses on reviewing the literature of the studies conducted which addresses the factors that are responsible for the poor learner performance in schools. Sources used include books, journals, and newspaper articles.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the methods used to generate the data for this study, including the population and sampling design.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents the data collected.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter focuses on the interpretation of the findings and terminates by offering some recommendations and conclusion to the study.

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This initial chapter of the study was focused on introducing the research problem, specifically the poor performance in Economics as a curriculum specification in Limpopo Province. The chapter discussed the background and motivation, problem statement, aims and objectives, research questions, significance of the study and structuration of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review provides an overview of existing studies on a particular topic. Literature from various related studies undertaken by different researchers is reviewed to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem at hand, the research approaches utilised, and the results established to provide guidance and direction to the current study. As a result, only studies related to the specific problem in this study are considered.

2.2 STATUS OF BASIC EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING OF ECONOMICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In this section, literature was reviewed to address the teachers' views on causes of poor performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane Circuit, Limpopo Province. In this case, Economics is a social science subject specified in the CAPS concerned with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. It studies how individuals, businesses, governments, and nations make choices on allocating resources to satisfy their wants and needs, trying to determine how these groups should organize and coordinate efforts to achieve maximum output (Beattie, 2020). Similarly, Beattie (2020) explains Economics as a science that concerns itself with economies; that is, it studies how societies produce goods and services and how they consume them. Economics has influenced world of finance at many important junctions throughout history and is a vital part of our everyday lives. Consequently, the teaching and learning of Economics apparently prepares both the Learners and their teachers for the actual economic facets of real life. It is therefore a practical orientation to the economies of scale and the global trade patterns.

2.2.1 Quality learning environment, teaching of Economics and the question of high scholastic achievement

Learning occurs anywhere, but the positive learning outcomes which result in the positive performance of learners happen in quality learning environments, with both learners and teachers engaged in the strategic application of dynamic strategies that shape the current subject-specific challenges. Despite interventions by international and national role-players, many people across the country, particularly rural regions, experience extreme poverty (Cohen, 2009). This high incidence of poverty is perceived as a contributing to the poor performance of learners as they struggle to cope with both hunger and subject-concept mastery.

Physical learning environments range from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air learning places. The quality of school facilities has a direct effect on learning, even though it remains difficult to measure such an effect. Some authors argue that “extant empirical evidence is inconclusive as to whether the condition of the school environment is related to higher student achievement after taking into account student’s background” (Fuller, 2000). It must be stated at the onset that Limpopo is largely a rural province, and the levels of poverty are often dire.

2.2.2 Poor learners in poor schools: Increased social grants and government spending

In South Africa, almost a quarter of the population live below the breadline with learners affected the most as their struggling parents fail to meet their basic needs. Statistics South Africa (2017) reports that more than 25, 2% of the South African population is living in extreme poverty. In this 2017 report, it is further revealed that:

“The latest Poverty Trends in South Africa” report shows that, despite the general decline in poverty between 2006 and 2011, poverty levels in South Africa rose in 2015. More than half of South Africans were poor in 2015, with the poverty headcount increasing to 55, 5% from a series low of 53, 2% in 2011. The figures are calculated using the upper-bound poverty line (UBPL) of R992 per person

per month (pppm) in 2015 prices. This translates into over 30, 4 million South Africans living in poverty in 2015’.

This is evident when one considers that close to half of government expenditure is allocated to social grants and that expenditure related to social wages has more than doubled over the past decade (Statistics South Africa, 2013a:22; Statistics South Africa, 2013b:8). This means that “the proportion of the budget spent on social services has increased drastically between 1994/95 and 2014/15” (Moloi, 2015:2). The government’s effort to reduce poverty does not reach all deserving individuals, learners included. The poverty level of most households has a direct impact on the academic performance of learners. This is seen when learners fail to purchase relevant education materials and sometimes miss school due to factors that require financial capacity. This results in most of the learners performing poorly in different subjects, and Economics in particular.

2.2.3 Link between poverty and academic achievement

As much as the government strives to address poverty through the provision of social grants, it makes manifest yet other social challenges which are high birth rate and teenage pregnancy that immediately compel Learners to seek money amid the increasing level of unemployment in South Africa. While short-term assistance aims to provide immediate poverty relief (Department of Social Development, 2013), many of the Learners are constrained academically. Most of the victims of teenage pregnancy are schoolgirls who usually cannot cope with pregnancy, raising their own children and attending school at the same time. This negatively affects their academic performance, with subjects like Economics becoming intractable. Within the framework of the theory of structural poverty, this means that employment opportunities or the lack thereof, are associated with and fundamentally exert a direct impact on sustainable poverty reduction. According to the National Development Agency (2014), there is a clear link between current poverty levels and unemployment. This becomes more evident when one considers that more people who are not poor are permanently employed compared to persons living in poverty. It is estimated that, on an international level, 197 million people in the world are unemployed (International Labour Organization, 2013). In South Africa, during the second quarter of 2014, many

people lost their jobs (Statistics South Africa, 2014). This phenomenon is even more dramatic in Limpopo Province which has very low employment opportunities. Relative to teenage pregnancy, the province has some of the highest rates nationally.

2.2.4 Basic Education Learners are demotivated by high unemployment levels

There is a disturbingly high unemployment rate among the country's youths. South Africa is one of the countries with the highest youth unemployment rates in the world, affecting approximately fifty per cent of South African youths (World Economic Forum, 2014). These statistics are the reason why learners lose focus on their studies because most of the unemployed are their parents who should be providing for them but find it hard due to overwhelming poverty. Some of the learners try to help their parents by doing part-time jobs during the period which they should be studying. This culminates in poor academic performance as learners fail to devote essential time to their academic work. This study acknowledges the existing relationship between poverty, unemployment, and social injustice (Statistics South Africa, 2013a).

2.2.5 Prevalence of public schools' under-resourcing: Poor facilities in schools and lack of teaching and learning resources

2.2.5.1. Basic Resources in Schools

The study conducted by Miske and Dowd (1998), shows that quality of school buildings may be related to other school quality issues, such as the presence of adequate instructional materials and textbooks, working conditions for Learners and teachers, and the ability of teachers to undertake certain instructional approaches. According to United Children's Funds (UNICEF) such factors as on-site availability of laboratories and clean water supply, classroom maintenance, space and furniture availability all have an impact on the critical learning factor of time on task (UNICEF, 2000). When pupils must leave school and walk significant distances for clean drinking water, for example, they may not always return to class. Moreover, when schools do not have adequate infrastructure, parents may be reluctant to allow children, especially girls, to attend if they are located too far away from children's homes. In general, parents often

consider the location and condition of learning environments when assessing school quality and this can influence school participation.

According to Shah, Khan, and Khan (2013), quality of education and research assume that the existence of adequate physical infrastructure is a need in schools. It also assumes that infrastructure must be well managed and maintained in the best way possible in an institution. However, this must not only be done in the interest, or rather, for the convenience of managers, but for quality education. The quality of infrastructure of the internal and external environment is closely related to the quality of education. Shah et al., (2013) further elaborate that investments in the development of the physical facilities of the institution contribute to improving quality education. Basic facilities like school buildings, electricity, laboratories drinking water are necessities for quality education. Without these facilities, education is compromised. Inadequate facilities are challenges that contribute to the poor performance in Economics.

2.2.5.2. Challenges Experienced by Under-Resourced Schools

According to Gardiner (2008), villages and rural communities are difficult to access. The physical conditions in schools are inadequate, and learner performance in comparison to schools elsewhere is weak. According to the National Education Infrastructure Management System: National Assessment Report, published by the Department of Education in 2007, many rural schools still lack basic services. All this makes the conditions for providing quality education for children in rural areas difficult. Gardiner (2008) asserts that most of these schools underperform because of poor facilities.

It is also difficult to manage a class of more than 50 learners at a time. Most Teachers in rural schools spend most of their time trying to ensure discipline in classrooms with many learners, rather than teaching; a practice and undertaking which compromises the teaching and learning time. Learners cannot complete their school work such as assignments, projects and presentations as they do not have adequate materials and resources. Poor performance in Economics can therefore be linked to poor resources in schools, especially when comparing schools in urban areas and those in rural areas.

2.2.5.3. Measures to address the challenges of poor facilities in schools

According to UNICEF (2000), learning can occur anywhere, but positive learning outcomes generally sought by educational systems happen in quality learning environments. Teacher recruitment, development and deployment improvements in teacher recruitment are critical facets that could enhance quality teaching and learning. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) manages the recruitment of Learners intending to enter teaching, and provides in-service training to already-serving teachers, whereas the Department High Education Training (DHET) manages the provision of teacher education. Gardiner (2008) argues that to address these shortages, the Fundza Lushaka bursary scheme was introduced in 2005.

These bursaries specifically target Learners intending to become language, mathematics, and science teachers, as well as those who intend to teach Economics. Additional bursary opportunities are provided through provinces so that there is a palpable increase in the numbers pursuing an education career. The Education Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) has become a platform for training teachers. More than 65 per cent of FundzaLushaka graduates are teaching in schools that serve poor communities (Gardiner, 2008). Another measure introduced by the Department was a new development in 2011, which was an initiative to provide learner workbooks to children in the poorest quintiles. In a context where only 45 per cent of children in South African schools have sole use of a textbook, cheaply-produced, yet attractive workbooks can play a supplementary role in boosting literacy and numeracy practices in schools (Gardiner, 2008). Such efforts could lead to improved performance in Economics as well as other subjects.

2.2.5.4. Effects of poor school facilities on the teaching and learning of Economics

Physical learning environments in which formal learning occurs range from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air places. The quality of school facilities seems to have a direct effect on learning; an effect that is hard to measure (Fuller, cited in UNICEF, 2000). Some authors argue that “extant empirical evidence is

inconclusive as to whether the condition of school buildings is related to higher student achievement after taking into account student's background" (Fuller, 2000). A study in India, however, that sampled 59 schools, found that, of these, only 49 had buildings, 25 had toilets, 20 had electricity, 10 had school libraries and four had a television (Carron &Chau,2000). In this case, the quality of the learning environment was strongly correlated with pupils' achievement in Hindi and mathematics (Carron &Chau, 2000). In Latin America, a study that included 50,000 Learners in Grade three and four found that children whose schools lacked classroom materials and had an inadequate library were significantly more likely to show lower test scores and higher grade repetition than those whose schools were well equipped (Wasiams, cited in UNICEF, 2000). Other studies carried out in Botswana, Nigeria and Papua New Guinea concur with these latter findings (Pennycuick, 1993, 2000).

2.2.6 The failing standards of basic education in South Africa

According to Modisaotsile (2012), in South Africa, many signs show that there is a crisis in education. With high enrolment rates each year, and increasingly poor Grade 12 output, more effort needs to be focused on the quality of education. Quantity should, however, also be considered when most of those learners who pass matric do not meet the minimum requirements for university entrance. Also, of the number of learners enrolled in Grade 1, only half make it to Grade 12. It has been established that several factors hinder learners from receiving a good standard of education. These include parents' lack of participation in their children's education and the weak functioning of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) (Modisaotsile, 2012).

According to Modisaotsile (2012), SGBs were formed in all South African public schools to oversee the administration of the schools, but they are often sidelined due to the lack of formal education and training of members, especially in the area of finance and general administration of the school. Good leadership in schools is also needed to ensure that teachers attend to their classes diligently and learners take their education seriously. The government needs to ensure that teachers are trained accordingly, and schools have adequate basic resources.

2.2.6.1. How to involve parents in their children's education

Modisaotsile (2012) asserts that there are many good reasons why parents should be involved in their children's education. One of the reasons is the ratio of teacher to learner in public and rural schools. One classroom teacher and 25 to 35 young minds to educate can be a difficult task to accomplish. The ratio of learners to teachers is high, and although it is difficult to acknowledge, some learners simply fall through the cracks in the system. Parents are the safety net for their children, yet too many of them fail to realise this important fact. The greatest 'resource' any classroom teacher can utilise is the parents. Cameron (2009) asks an important question "What can parents do to help their children develop in conjunction with the efforts of the formal education system?" The one simple thing that parents can do to assist in the formal education of their child is to take an interest in all aspects of their child's school activities: academic projects, extra-curricular activities, and relationships. This means helping them with their homework and knowing what they are doing in class. It means getting them involved in school sports teams, music, drama, clubs, and so on. Finally, it means knowing who their child interacts with, how he or she interacts with others, and whether they need parental direction.

According to Lingwal, (2010), parents have a fundamental responsibility to ensure that their children are at school and their homework is done. Unfortunately, many parents have not attended school themselves, and so do not know how to read, write, and count properly. Nevertheless, the more parents participate in the schooling of their children, sustainably, at every level, in advocacy, decision-making and oversight roles, as fund-raisers and boosters, as volunteers and para-professionals, and as home teachers, the better for learner achievement. Some parents work long hours, and when they get home, they are often too tired or unmotivated to ensure that their children's homework is done properly. Other parents do the homework for their children, which does not help them or show them how it must be done, so the child does not learn how to find the right answers.

A study conducted by Feinstein and Symons (2015) found that a very high parental interest in a learner's education is associated with improved examination results. Children whose parents show little or no interest are low achievers. Parents who are

well informed on policies and resource allocation in the education sector, and involved in decision-making regarding their children, can exert considerable influence and contribute solutions to the challenges in the education system. Involved communities can articulate local school needs, hold officials accountable and mobilise local resources to fill gaps when government response is not adequate (Feinstein and Symons, 2015). All communities should value education for their children. Families either have the power to take command and work towards the well-being of their children or remain powerless and therefore leave their children worse off. Education as a public good, therefore, must not only be valued by the community but must be advanced and protected to ensure a better future for all. As mentioned, this is the responsibility of all community role players and stakeholders, as well as educational institutions themselves.

2.2.6.2. The responsibility of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs)

According to Patel, Myeza, Ndwandwe, Kriel and Jeenah (2011) in the past, school governance in South Africa was characterised by a top-down approach. Teachers, learners, parents, and communities were excluded from making important decisions about schools and education. Principals and inspectors were the main decision-makers for schools. It can be argued that the transformation and reform of the education landscape in South Africa have influenced all parties involved, including the SGBs. The SGB is the 'government' of the school, established in terms of the South African Schools Act (Act no 84 of 1996). Patel, et al. (2011) states that the SBG is mandated to set policies and rules that govern the school, and to monitor the implementation of the rules. The SGB gets its mandate from the different members (learners, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff) of the school community.

An SGB must ensure that the school is governed in the best interests of all the stakeholders. All SGB members must put the best interests of the school before any personal interests. However, SGBs do face challenges. They continue to be under-representative in terms of race and gender, and so fail those SGB members who are not literate. One of the key challenges is that many SGB members lack the necessary financial knowledge and skills and are placed under tremendous pressure because they are unable to develop practical solutions to practical problems (Patel, et al. 2011).

The illiteracy of some SGB members contributes more for the poor governance of schools which later result in chaos. Poor school governance usually translates into poor school management and eventually poor academic performance. Economics as a subject is not immune to any of the above-mentioned factors that may lead to poor performance.

2.2.6.3. The role of teachers

According to Arends (2011), almost 20 per cent of teachers are absent on Mondays and Fridays. Absentee rates increase to one-third at month-end. Teachers in black schools teach an average of 3,5 hours a day, compared with about 6,5 hours a day in formerly white schools. This amounts to a difference of three years' schooling in total. 'We have not had a teacher development system, empowering teachers to use their techniques,' says (Mathew, 2015) of the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD), pointing to the closure in the mid-1990s of the country's teaching colleges. That move followed a government decision that university training could provide a better standard of teacher training than the colleges (Arends, 2011).

But universities have proved under-prepared to produce teachers in sufficient numbers. Another cause of the decline in school work has been identified as teenage pregnancy: 'The disturbance of schooling that may accompany "adolescent pregnancy" is seen as problematic both internationally and in South Africa, as it may limit the young mother's future career prospects, thereby contributing to a lower socioeconomic status for her and her child'(Arends, 2011). Teenage pregnancy can harm young mothers and their children by placing limits on the mother's educational achievement and economic stability and predisposing her to single parenthood and marital failure in the future.

Department of Basic Education, (2011) states that pregnant learners may also have trouble in studying because of pregnancy-related illnesses. Sometimes they find it hard to balance being a mother and a learner, as more time may be spent with the baby than on schoolwork. Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, section 9(3) provides that the state may not unfairly discriminate

directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation, age disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or birth, which includes pregnant learners. Despite the progressive legislation in South Africa allowing young women to return to school post-pregnancy, only around one-third re-enter the schooling system.

2.2.6.4. Government's contribution to failing standards of education

Projections from the 2005 Human Sciences Research Council (HRSC) Study of demand and supply of Teachers in South African public schools, commissioned by the Education Labour Relations Council South Africa (ELRCSA), estimated that between 18 000 and 22 000 teachers leave the teaching profession every year, either voluntarily or forcibly. The assumption is that the 18 000 to 22 000 Teachers who exit the teaching profession need to be replaced by an equal number of teachers. Graeme, (2011) argues that there is an estimated output of 6 000 to 10 000 new teachers graduating annually from higher education institutions, some of whom might not enter teaching or who might go abroad to teach, as a result of low salaries and poor working conditions in South Africa. Considering this, the government needs to respond to the problems raised in the report.

The other aspect that the government should look at is the time spent by teachers in classrooms. Graeme, (2011) further emphasises that strike action, sometimes unofficial, consumes as much as 10 days a year (5 per cent of school time) and holding a union meeting during school time is often the norm in township schools. Research has highlighted the significance of problems within the education system itself, including the ongoing changes and amendments to curricula, the unsatisfactory type of teacher training, inadequate support for teachers, teaching time compared to other activities, and unavailability of learning and teaching materials such as textbooks (Graeme, 2011).

2.2.6.5. Parents' educational level

Parent's formal educational level is a factor in academic achievement (Saritas and Akdemir, 2009:3). Parents serve as role models and guide in encouraging their

children to pursue high educational goals and desires. This they achieved by establishing the educational resources on hand in the home and holding attitudes and values towards their children's learning. Educational attainment of parents serves as an indicator of attitudes and values which parents promote to create a home environment affording increased learning desire among children while inculcating that desire for achievement. According to Saritas, et al. (2009:4), student achievement is correlated highly with the educational attainment of parents. Also, Saritas, et al. (2009:5) indicates that learners whose parents have less than high school education have their obtaining lower grades in Economics than those whose parents had higher levels of education. The learners' perception of family support directly affects performance, while the mother's level of education does so indirectly. Rammala (2009:14) supports this assertion and indicates also that those learners whose parents are not adequately literate are disadvantaged because in modern education, parents are expected to assist children with their assignments and projects from the home.

2.2.7 Status of Economics as a Discipline in South African Education

According to the Department of Education (2019), Economics as a discipline and subject in schools has faced a great decline in performance in both rural and urban schools. This has seen many schools in rural areas phasing out the subject from their curriculum offerings. Both teachers and learners exhibit concerns about the standardisation of the Economics question papers citing specifically the level of difficulty. It has come to the knowledge of the department that learners are no longer choosing the subject in Grade 10 because the performance in both Grade 11 and 12 is clearly parlous. The rejection of the subject by learners is however not limited to its level of difficulty but lack of teachers and in some instances for schools with teacher's content gap. Such a scenario breeds fear and obviously stands in the way of learners opting to study this subject (Department of Education, 2019).

It is argued that learners prefer subjects that are a lot easier compared to Economics but such evidence is elusive. There are reports that school principals encourage learners to choose streams that are easier so that final exit examination results are massaged. In turn, such principals avert scrutiny and avoid accountability at the end of the year, although these claims have not yet been proven. The status of Economics

as a subject is compromised. Very few learners are doing the subject in secondary schools compared to other gateway subjects offered. It is the view of the researcher that Economics as a discipline is still held in high regard, calling for this advocacy from both Economics curriculum coordinators, subject advisors and heads of department in the national, provincial, district, circuits and school level.

2.2.8 The value of Economics curriculum

According to Jana (2018), Economics is the study of how societies, governments, businesses, households, and individuals allocate their scarce resources and how they interact with each other in producing and maintaining livelihoods. Economic Review, (2018) further elaborates that Economics is intellectually fascinating and challenging. The discipline of Economics has two important features. First, economists develop conceptual models of behaviour to predict responses to changes in policy and market conditions. Second, they often perform statistical analysis to investigate these changes. Early economists were advisors to the rulers of their time. In the present time, economists are everywhere – from performing advisory functions to policy formulations (Jana, 2018). They also contribute to the development of many other public policies across a wide dimension of subjects including health care, climate change, social welfare, school reforms, labour market dynamics, economic development and efforts to reduce inequality, poverty, unemployment, regional disparity, pollution etc.

Technology, economic institutions, people's preferences, and biology are some of the important determinants of economic outcomes. Economists aspire for a better world where all the people flourish and live with happiness (Jana, 2018). Historically, an economic theory emerged from the political economy. The crisis in the Great Depression in the 1930s triggered a fertile period of scientific ferment and revolution in economic theory. The Keynesian school recommended that the problems of underdevelopment can be solved by the extension of government activities.

According to Jana (2018), many economic theories explain the real world. For example, we may take the theory of general equilibrium which concerns how apparent

economic disorder gives rise to an orderly system and how it is that independently made decisions, all motivated by self-interest, can become coordinated and lead to something which can reasonably be called for. The 2008 global financial crisis led to the emergence of new economic theories like heterodox economics to offer better insights into the real world. Every country has its own historical experiences and economic peculiarities. Economics helps us identify the policy measures for attaining sustainable growth with which countries like China, South Korea and Singapore in Asia and Botswana in Sub-Saharan Africa have made economic progress.

Jana (2018) explains that economic analysis helps us to clarify major sources of growth of low-income countries as capital accumulation, increases in the size and quality of labour force, technological improvement, and management of natural resources. The economic theory and economic tools help us to address many questions like causes of concentration of innovation in Silicon Valley or causes of economic and financial instability or how to value the non-marketed goods like environmental goods or ecosystem services. A study of Economics helps in understanding human behaviour and in cultivating analytical and argumentative skills that are crucial for winning a job in the present-day job market.

With the dramatic transformation of the economy in recent decades, there is a growing demand for trained economists from diverse fields such as government, finance and banking, social sector, management, business, policymaking, and teaching. In the mundane world, we are forced to make economic choices in our daily lives. Economics teaches us how to make choices under scarcity, how the aggregate economy works, how to interact in society, how to interpret events, how to participate in a democracy as a responsible citizen etc. Studying Economics equips individuals to make informed decisions leading to increasing the economic security and well-being of the people and society.

2.2.9 The 21st-century learner and teacher: Globalisation & emergence of online learning and social learning platforms

Boholano (2017) argues that education in the 21st century highlights globalisation and internationalisation. Preservice teachers in the 21st century is technology savvy. To

effectively engage and teach the 21st-century generation students, preservice teachers must help the educational system meet this requirement. Mashitola (2020) adds on that the educational systems must be updated with a prerequisite of ICT resources both hardware and software, and curricula must be designed to promote a collaborative learner-centred environment to which Learners relate and respond. Boholano (2017) study determines the 21st-century skills possessed by pre-service teachers in terms of social networking. Pre-service teachers use computers in very advanced ways, but Teachers must remember that they still need guidance in using technology safely and effectively.

Through social media, the pre-service teachers can use a multitude of applications, including Web 2.0, for their projects. Smart social networking requires critical-thinking skills and the ability to integrate and evaluate real-world scenarios and authentic learning skills for validation.

Liu (2010) mentions that Web 2.0 technologies are emerging every day although there are already more than enough applications for people to use. YouTube, iTunes, Facebook, Myspace, Instagram, blogging, wikis, Tumbler, and twittering are some Web 2.0 social media technologies that emerged in the market. The preservice teachers are using these social media technologies in communication, recreation, and education. These applications were not developed for learning purposes (Liu, 2010). Most people use them for recreational purposes such as “gaming, communication, and shaping online spaces for the expression of personal identity”. 21st-century teaching involves a balance of the objectives of the teacher with the needs and input of the students. The pre-service teachers stress that Facebook users (students) participate widely in the fields that allow them to present themselves to other users.

This study suggests that for teachers to successfully teach and learners learn, there is a necessity to incorporate technology into everyday teaching and learning to augment the process of learning. Teachers need to be guided in using social media in teaching and learning. With all these, there is a need for teachers to embrace the skills of 21st-century teaching and learning which smart social networking is.

2.3 BASIC EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK AND ECONOMICS CURRICULUM POLICY

2.3.1 Inclusive education system policy framework in South Africa

In South Africa, the aim of introducing the White Paper on Inclusive Education was to recognise classroom teachers as the primary resources for an inclusive system (Department of Education, 2006). This is because these teachers are the ones who shape the future of the learners by identifying learners experiencing barriers in learning in schools. Lomofsky and Lazarus (2010) trace the development of policy and legislation since 1994, which marked the introduction of a unitary non-racial system of education and training in South Africa. According to Lomofsky and Lazarus (2010) policy development in this context has been guided by the universal principles of a human rights approach to basic education, equality and the recognition of the democratic rights of parents, teachers and all learners, including those with disabilities. A major paradigm shift in education policy has reflected a move from a dual, special and general education system towards the transformation of general education to recognise and address the diverse learning needs of all learners.

2.3.2 National curriculum initiative: Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS) Framework

There have been several government initiatives aimed at restructuring and strengthening the general curriculum. Similarly, the aim of formulating CAPS document is to develop a high level of knowledge and skills in learners in all fields of studies (Department of Education, 2010). This includes the introduction of a new national curriculum to accommodate a diverse range of system and learner needs. The most recent education policy recommends a shift in thinking about 'special needs and support services' in this country towards a commitment to the development of an inclusive education and training system (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2010). The Department of Basic Education has come up with many curriculum changes since the new democratic dispensation, but implementation has always been a challenge. This might be caused by poor training of teachers and curriculum managers, amongst other challenges.

2.3.3 Teachers' digital learning and integration of ICT in teaching and learning

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has gone through innovations and transformed our society, specifically the way people think, work and live (Grabe, 2007). As part of this, schools and other educational institutions which are supposed to prepare Learners to live in “a knowledge economy and society” need to consider ICT integration in their curriculum (Ghavifekr, Afshari & Salleh, 2012). In conjunction with preparing Learners for the current digital era, teachers are key players in using ICT in their daily classrooms. This is due to the capability of ICT in providing dynamic and proactive teaching-learning environment (Arnseth & Hatlevik, 2012).

ICT Integration in Education Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) has become the most pervasive practice in modern industrial society. Mastering information technology and understanding basic skills and concepts of ICT are now highly regarded by many countries (Daniels, 2002; Rampersad, 2011). ICT has been increasing at an amazing rate in instruction among teachers. The need for the development of ICTs is a global resolution and has been a subject of great significance to all. These technologies have become central to contemporary societies (Association of African Universities, 2000).

The prevalence and rapid development of ICTs have transformed human society from the information technology age to the knowledge age. Kitschner and Davis (2003) identified the following competencies required by lecturers in ICT utilisation in instruction in education. These include competence to make personal use of ICT in instruction, competence to master a range of educational paradigms that make use of ICT in instruction, sufficient competence to make use of ICTs as mind tools, competence to make use of ICT in instruction as a tool for teaching, competence in mastering a range of assessment paradigms which make use of ICT in instruction, competence in understanding the policy dimensions of ICT use in instruction for teaching and learning. The ICTs have the potential not only in ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in these two areas of teaching and learning; but also in management of administrative duties.

2.3.4 Status and operations of public schools during COVID-19 pandemic: Basic Education Policy Directives

Learning became tough during the period of COVID-19. This is due to vast change in learning which resulted due to the pandemic. All citizens had to abide by the COVID-19 health precautionary measures such as social distance and wearing masks, sanitizing always and so forth. This made contact learning impossible. This led to the introduction of virtual learning in some institutions (Ayoob et al. 2020).

Even though this is the case, Mashitola (2020) indicates that even though virtual learning replaced contact learning there are still some impediments in adapting the online learning due to inadequate supply of commerce resources that hinder and make the learning system to be slow.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Kolb's learning styles serve as the theoretical framework for the study. Kolb (2005) views learning as an "integrated process with each stage being mutually supportive of and feeding into the next". In this view, effective learning only occurs when a learner can execute all four stages of the model which are diverging, assimilating, converging, and accommodating. The styles are organized in a cyclic structure that includes the following: diverging (feeling and watching), assimilating (watching and thinking), converging (doing and thinking), accommodating (doing and feeling). Kolb submits that the diverging stage includes people who can look at things from different perspectives. They prefer to watch rather than do, gather information, and use mental processes to solve problems. People perform better when they are given a chance to brainstorm. In the case of learners, they may prefer being given a chance to generate new ideas for them to perform to their level best.

In the context of this study, an educator who prefers one teaching style may disadvantage learners who are more comfortable with brainstorming. Obviously, such a mismatch in strategies and approaches could lead to the overall poor performance of the school. Besides, Kolb indicates that assimilating is important as it follows a concise, logical approach. These Learners require a good and clear explanation rather than practical opportunities. In this instance, learners need a teacher who is articulate

for them to perform to the best of their abilities. It is therefore the responsibility of teachers to ensure that all learners understand the competent explanation of concepts. The researcher submits that learners with an educator capable of explaining concepts articulately tend to perform well academically (Kolb,2005).

On the other hand, Learners with converging learning styles can solve problems and find solutions to practical problems. Learners with a converging learning style prefer technical tasks than those who display interpersonal learning traits. The researcher argues that learners and teachers who have less technological resources may not perform well academically. Kolb suggests that accommodative learning style is hands-on, relying on intuition rather than logic. These Learners are attracted to new challenges and experiences. They rely on other learners and participants for information. In the case of learners, teachers may need to be more informed to deliver relevant and age-appropriate information. An educator who is not informed may disadvantage learners by engaging in this type of learning style and the Learners eventually perform poorly. A learner could perform well when there are resources in place to assist during the learning processes. When both learners and teachers have resources, this facilitates execution of their daily duties without being constrained by unavailable resources. When teachers are well trained, they can deliver and eventually exert a positive impact on the performance of learners.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this section of the study different literature and theories were reviewed to map strategies for assessing the teachers' views on causes of poor performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane Circuit, Limpopo province. In facilitating an informed understanding of the problem of poor learner performance in Economics, studies such as Moloji, (2015), Cohen, (2009) Shah, Khan and Khan (2013) were reviewed. Lastly, the literature shows clearly that attitudes of learners and teachers, a content gap of teachers, poor facilities, parents' educational level and language exert serious impact on the performance of learners. The truth is unless we know the cause of this attitudes of the learners and the teachers towards Economics, we may not get a solution to the poor performance problem. I understand that this

research cannot be the only solution to many challenges facing Economics subject, but it can add to what needs to be done.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the research design and methodological framework of the study. The chapter describes the area of study, paradigm, approaches, designs and processes and techniques used in generating and analysing data for this study. It elaborates the population, sampling and sampling techniques, quality issues and as well as ethical considerations. The research methods employed in this study are aimed at investigating teachers' views on causes of poor performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane Circuit, Limpopo Province.

3.2 STUDY AREA

The study was conducted in Mogalakwena District (Limpopo Province), about 100km northwest of Mokopane Town. The area is largely rural with 95% falling under the jurisdiction of the traditional authorities, with one township of Mokopane which has different zones.

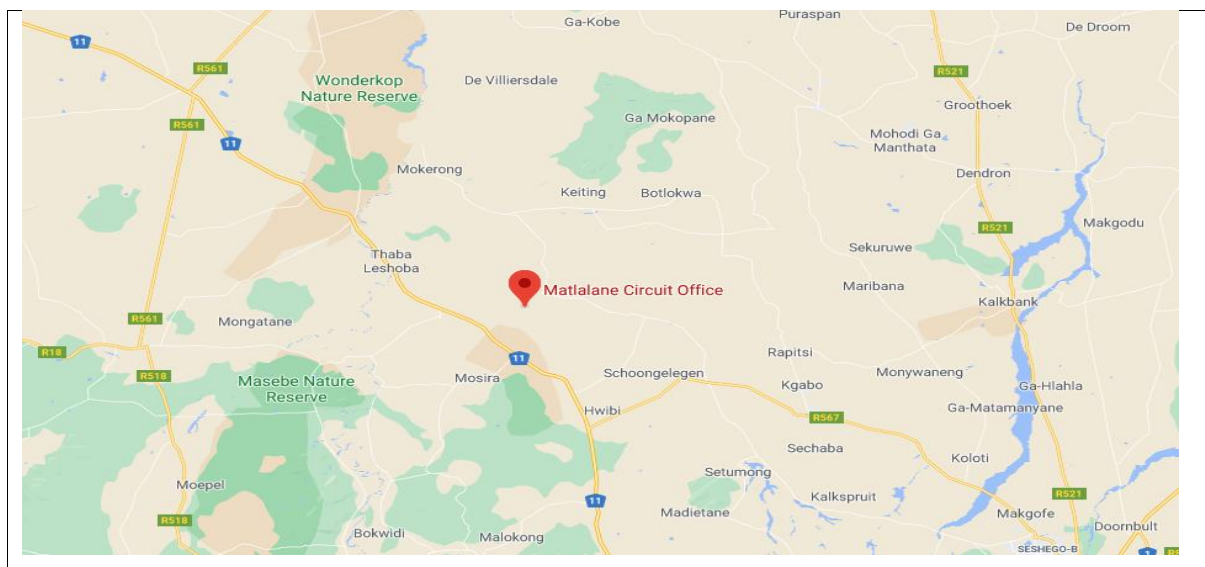


Figure 3. 1 Study areas map: Mogalakwena District and Matlalane Circuit
Source: Internet (Google Map) www.limpopo.gov.za

Figure 3.1 above displays Mogalakwena District and Matlalanane Circuit in Limpopo Province, South Africa, which is the study area. The selection of this area was the result of my interaction with schools, teachers, and learners, as the Commerce curriculum advisor for this District. My study is designed to find solution to the poor teaching of Economics in this specific area that falls directly under my jurisdiction.

3.3 PRAGMATIST RESEARCH PARADIGM

This study was informed by a pragmatic paradigm that facilitated the use of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches in exploring teachers' views on causes of poor performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalanane Circuit, Limpopo Province. Pragmatism addresses how our values, epistemologies and ontologies influence our actions and methodologies (Evans Coon and Ume, 2011: 267-269). Furthermore, pragmatism as a paradigm improves philosophical teaching when used to unveil a teaching philosophy. Pragmatism improves philosophical teaching by making available strategies to understand and evaluate the causes and effects of teaching on Learners and teachers (Sharma, Devi & Kumari, 2018). The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods in exploring teachers' views on poor learners' performance in Economics from its context (Creswell, 2007, Daher, Carré, Jaramillo, Olivares & Tomicic (2017). Furthermore, this study utilised quantitative and in-depth information from the lived experiences of participants (Thahn & Thahn, 2015, Pham, 2018). Pragmatism focuses on objectivity and generation of data; as well as "the importance of studying experience and meaning as part of a larger whole: the participants' life-world" (Daher, Carré, Jaramillo, Olivares & Tomicic, 2017).

3.4. RESEARCH APPROACH

The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative research; and data collection processes ran parallel. This adoption offers the opportunity to interrogate one aspect of the problem in-depth from both perspectives; and establishes trends in poor learners' performance in Economics as understood from teachers' views and experiences (Choy, 2014). A detailed discussion of quantitative and qualitative research approaches follows.

3.4.1 Quantitative research approach

Quantitative research is based on statistical analysis. It has averages, percentages and quotas attached to it (Bernard, 2017). Further, the quantitative approach draws its strength from the fact that it is cost-effective, and highly representative of the entire population. This allows for data to be collected from a large sample within a short space of time (Choy, 2014). Despite its strengths, quantitative approaches are limited by the fact that they are time-consuming, and the researcher generally gets a low response rate.

3.4.2 Qualitative research approach

The nature of this study allows for a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach enables the researcher to get in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of teachers (Thahn and Thahn, 2015) that confirm and interrogate the causes of the high failure rate of learners in Economics in rural schools. Qualitative methods are instrumental in gaining critical insights into participants' perspectives on the unacceptable performance levels in Economics as a school subject under study. It also builds knowledge of the subjective realities faced by participants (Brannen, 2005).

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Two research designs were used, namely surveys and qualitative case study. Visser, Krosnick & Lavrakas, (2000) describe the survey as a specific type of field of study that involves the collection of data from a sample of elements or participants. Empirical data collected from this case study "can use qualitative analysis or quantitative analysis or both" (Ellram, 1995). The qualitative case study methodology was adopted in this study because it provides tools to study complex phenomena within their contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The study adopts the exploratory case study because I investigate teachers' observations on learner performance in Economics. I explore the lived experiences, perceptions of teachers within their teaching and learning contexts (Pham, 2015). The study requires that I deeply immerse myself with the participants by interviewing them, examining their documents, and reporting on the

efficacy of the different strategies they deploy in teaching the subject. An exploratory case study is anticipated to produce credible and acceptable findings from the study.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher used semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaire, and document reviews as the primary method of collecting data. The application and use of the above approaches and tools are discussed below.

3.5.1. Open-ended questionnaires

The open-ended questionnaire offers participants a platform to provide a wide range of answers that often need follow-up (Hyman & Sierra, 2016). Apart from the nature of questions in the questionnaire, the requirement is that they “can be used efficiently with a large number of participants and can yield both quantitative and qualitative data” (Hartson & Pyla, 2012).

Using open-ended questionnaire in a qualitative method allows participants to share their perceptions and experiences (Labuschagne, 2003). The open-ended response permits the researcher to understand the world as seen by the participants because qualitative responses are longer and more detailed (Labuschagne, 2003). The researcher opted to use open-ended questionnaire because it allows an unlimited range of responses and they also demonstrate how the respondent thinks about the question (DeFranzo, 2014). The researcher purposely selected all 80 Economics Teachers in Mogalakwena District to respond to the open-ended questionnaires and submit back to the researcher.

3.5.2. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used. The list of questions guided the order of questioning; the difference occurred when probing questions were asked as a follow-up to questions that were not fully answered. The aim was to get a detailed picture of participants’ perceptions of the causes of poor performance in Economics. Semi-structured interviews were used to get in-depth information about the phenomenon

through “a dialogue between researcher and participant” and it allowed for follow-up questions, probes, and comments (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2018: 1). The stated authors further allude that this method allows for the collection of open-ended data and creates space for the exploration of “respondents’ thoughts, feelings and beliefs about a particular phenomenon.

The processes involved in semi-structured interviews give the researcher and participants’ flexibility and help bridge the relationship gap between the researcher and participants through dialogue. To make the process of data collection convenient, a set of interview questions was developed as data collection instruments. Interviews were conducted during breaks and immediately after school to make sure teachers did not miss classes.

3.6 SAMPLING AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

3.6.1. Sampling

In this study two samples were selected, each for the quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007: 281) highlight that the “researchers are required to decide on the number of participants to select-sample size and how to select these sample members”. Strydom (2010) describes a sample as comprising of the elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. Kember Stringfield and Teddlie (2003: 277) stress that sampling plays a crucial part in “the research process because it determines trustworthiness, internal validity as well as representativeness and external validity of the research findings.”

3.6.1.1. Sampling quantitative data

All Economics teachers in Mogalakwena District, including Matlalanane Circuit formed part of quantitative sample. This sample size was designed to to achieve objectivity, representation and generalisation. Open-ended questionnaires were administered to all 80 Economics teachers in Mogalakwena District. The total number of Economics teachers in Matlalanane circuit are 13. A larger number of teachers were required to qualify for a questionnaire survey design. A need to find a relatively large sample size

influenced the decision of administering questionnaires to all Economics teachers in the Mogalakwena District.

3.6.1.2. Sampling qualitative data

The sample size for semi-structured interviews involved sampling two (2) teachers per three schools offering Commerce in Malalane Circuit, and one HOD from each school, with the total sample of six (6) teachers and three (3) HODs selected from three case schools. The criteria for selection are that teachers should have more than three (3) years teaching experience in Economics; and three (3) years or more (+3) years teaching at the current school where this study was conducted. The sampled HODs were supposed to be responsible for the Department of Commerce with Economics as one of the subject supervised. Another criterion for selection of the HOD is that they needed to have a minimum of three (3) years in this managerial position. Furthermore, the HoD should have been attached to the current school for the past three years. Lastly, the case schools and the participants were selected on the basis that they have been underperforming in Economics for the past three (3) years.

3.6.2. Sampling Techniques

3.6.2.1. Sampling technique for quantitative sample

Questionnaires were randomly administered to the research participants. All the questionnaires were retrieved, giving a 100% response rate because the researcher distributed the questionnaires during Circuit Meetings for Economics teachers. Those who were absent were followed at their respective schools.

3.6.2.2. Sampling technique for qualitative sample

On the other hand, qualitative data was collected using purposive sampling technique. This sampling technique was used to select three high schools within Matlalane as part of semi-structured interviews. Matlalane Circuit is in Mogalakwena District and it is seriously affected by poor learners' performance in Economics.

3.6.2.3. Sampling criterion

Such a selection is guided by the poor schools' performance in the last three years (2017, 2018 and 2019). Furthermore, the size of the school, number of learners and teachers was used as a criterion.

3.7. DATA ANALYSIS

Schwandt (2007) argues that data analysis is as significant as any other aspect of a research study. Regardless of how good the study conducted is, an improper analysis can lead to inappropriate research conclusions.

3.7.1 Analysis of quantitative data

Scientific Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used to analyse descriptive data from questionnaires.

3.7.2 Analysis of qualitative data

For this study, data collected from interviews were transcribed and emerging themes identified for further analysis and discussion. Data is analysed using content and descriptive data analysis.

3.8. QUALITY CRITERIA

Quality of qualitative research is measured by trustworthiness and rigour in the research process. Furthermore, Frambach, van der Vleuten and Durning (2013: 552) highlights that a "good research in education is characterised by evidence that is trustworthy, applicable, consistent and neutral." The researcher has a responsibility to uphold the trustworthiness principle during the research process. Trustworthiness, bias, and triangulation criteria are discussed because of their importance in this study. Apart from trustworthiness and biasness, this study was guided by Shenton (2004) and Korstjensa and Moserb (2018) of four qualitative research criteria as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3.8.1. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is used as an important validation measure in qualitative research. It is the responsibility of every researcher to ensure that “the findings are credible and trustworthy” (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2011). Trustworthiness in research refers to the worthiness of research results. Trustworthiness criteria are pragmatic choices for researchers concerned about the acceptability and usefulness of their research for a variety of stakeholders (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). For the study to be trustworthy and credible; and achieves a high level of rigour, Johnson, and Turner (2003) framework of the research validation process is adopted. This four-phase framework stresses on validation of all research process, namely, (1) alignment of design with methods; (2) alignment of data with data analysis techniques; (3) verification and validation of data and research findings; and (4) writing up for public dissemination. The use of validation framework and various techniques at various stages of the research process ensures the study trustworthiness and credibility which work against biasness.

3.8.2. Credibility

Credibility is important in qualitative research. Credibility is referred to as internal validity in quantitative research and is concerned with the aspect of truth-value (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Credibility in qualitative research “establishes whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants’ original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants’ original views” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018: 121). Several credibility techniques are used in this study, namely, persistent observation, triangulation: member checking and peer debriefing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Furthermore, credibility was established by transcribing the audio-recorded interviews verbatim, as well as the use of reflective and observational notes. The credibility of the data was enhanced by checking the accuracy of the transcripts with each member after the interviews had been transcribed.

3.8.3. Transferability

Transferability refers to the “degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It is also referred to as generalization in qualitative research. In this study, in this study thick description validation techniques were used for verification of transferability. Transferability was verified by using detailed, intense descriptions of the purposive sample.

3.8.4. Confirmability

Confirmability refers to “the degree to which the findings of the research study could be confirmed by other researchers Korstjens & Moser (2018). Frambach, van der Vleuten and Durning, (2013) put in perspective when they define confirmability as “an extent to which the findings are grounded on the setting and study’s participants rather than the researchers’ biases”. Confirmability was obtained through the provision of clear descriptions of the data generation process and the interpretation of the data, as well as a presentation of the findings in a clearer and logical manner.

3.8.5. Dependability

Dependability involves “participants’ evaluation of the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from participants of the study” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018: 121). In this study, dependability was achieved by ensuring that the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical clearance guarantees that the research is conducted in a responsible and ethically accountable way and this eventually guarantees that the research leads to credible results (Henekom, 2018). To make sure that the research process does not deviate from its actual purpose, the researcher applied for the University of Limpopo ethical clearance and adhere to ethical principles of the research with human beings.

A detailed discussion of the processes needed for granting of ethical clearance and ethical principles follows.

3.9.1 Reliability

This quality measure was used for quantitative studies. Reliability is about the stability and consistency of the findings. The study reinforces by highlighting that reliability refers to the confidence in the findings from the usage of a particular tool Mohajan (2017). It concerns the stability of the findings. Reliability is about the consistency of the measuring instrument or the extent to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same circumstances with the same subjects. Lastly, reliability testing is used to ensure that if research is conducted using the same tools used in a study about the same subjects, it was yielding the same findings Yin (2013).

3.9.2 Validity

This measure is very important quality measure of data collected in the quantitative studies. Validity concerns what a research tool measures, and how well it does so (Mohajan, 2017). Yin (2013) attest that it is a test of truthfulness and concerned about how well the data collected covers the actual area of investigation and measures exactly what it meant to measure according to the objectives of the study. Validity and reliability promote transparency in research and reduces researcher biases in qualitative data collection. Goundar (2012) concludes by stating that whatever the researcher concludes based on the findings is correct and is verifiable by him or any others who might be interested in the research.

3.9.3 Ethical clearance from the University of Limpopo

The researcher abided by ethical practices endorsed by the University of Limpopo taking full consideration of the ethical principles. To ensure the quality of the research and whether ethical principles were complied with, the proposal served in the Department, the School, the Faculty, and subsequently, at the UL TREC and the issuing of the ethical clearance. Both the clearance certificate and the approval from

the Mogalakwena District and Matlalanane Circuit Offices of the Limpopo Department of Education served as guidelines when conducting research in schools.

3.9.4 Permission and informed consent

Permission to conduct the study in the field was requested from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Limpopo. Upon receipt of the Ethical Clearance from the University of Limpopo, I then sought permission from the Mogalakwena District and Matlalanane Circuit Office of the Limpopo Department of Education to conduct the study in the secondary schools. I requested permission from participating schools and teachers. The research participants were requested to complete consent forms before the beginning of the research process. The UL informed consent forms was used in the study and provided full information about the study, inter alia, the primary project leader with contact details; the title of the study; that include their voluntary participation was consent to participate in the study; details of UL research office. Participants were requested to complete and sign consent forms and submit them to the researcher before they participated in the study.

3.9.5 Voluntary participation

Participants were informed that their participation was highly valued in the study and voluntarily. Participants voluntarily agreed to participate in a research study in which they had a full understanding of the study before the study begins (Brink, Van der Walt & Van Rensburg, 2011). There was no stipend for their participation and that they had the right to participate up to the extent they wish to participate without any form of penalty or offence. I ensured that participants knew of their voluntary participation, what the research entailed, and their part in the research process. As guided by de Cenival (2008), I highlighted participants' benefits and disadvantages.

3.9.6 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity in this study involved the protection of the research participants' names, in this study letters of the alphabet were used for coding instead of the names of the participants. Coding allowed the researcher to simplify and focus

on specific characteristics of the data (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017: 6). The participation of human beings was treated with great respect, participants' rights and privacy were fully respected in this study.

3.9.7 Prevention of bodily harm

This study is not experimental in nature, for this reason, physical harm was not a concern which nullifies potential risk during the research process. However, the researcher identified possible follow-up questions and responses which could lead participants to think that their lives and employments were at risk, such questions were excluded so that participants felt free to participate.

3.9.8 Respect for dignity and integrity

The researcher strove towards maintaining high standards of respect to human life, rights and information; integrity and dignity when carrying out the research project. I ensured that respect for dignity is addressed by achieving equitable benefits for all participants; and by dealing with problems uncovered during the research process; and by striving towards (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones & Khodyakov, 2015). As part of respect for dignity, I explained to the participants that the information gathered was remain confidential between the researcher and the individuals who form part of the study. As guided by Roberts, Hammond, Warner & Lewis (2005) I ensured that research ethics and integrity practices were respected according to the highest standards of practice, and with the minimal risk of harmful outcomes or consequences.

3.9.9 Communicating research results: Feedback

Feedback was forwarded to teachers of schools that participated in the study in a form of a complete written document. Moreover, the study was made accessible on the University of Limpopo's website and other websites where researchers and stakeholders have access to information regarding perceptions of teachers on learner performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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3.10.7. Respect for dignity and integrity

The researcher strove towards maintaining high standards of respect to human life, rights, and information; integrity and dignity when carrying out the research project.

I ensured that respect for dignity was addressed by achieving equitable benefits for all participants; and by dealing with problems uncovered during the research process; and by striving towards equity (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones & Khodyakov, 2015). As part of respect for dignity, I explained to the participants that the information gathered remained confidential between the researcher and the individuals. As guided by Roberts, Hammond, Warner & Lewis (2005) I ensured that research ethics and integrity practices were respected with the minimal risk of harmful outcomes or consequences.

3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the challenges concerning the sustainability of teachers' views on causes of poor performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane Circuit, Limpopo Province. The chapter described the strategies and options in the research process and how this plan was finally executed. The following chapter presents the findings emerging from the position taken in this study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses and discusses data collected from interviews and questionnaires. Interview data were collected from Economics teachers and Commerce Heads of Department in three high schools located in Matlalanane circuit of Mogalakwena District, whereas survey data was collected from teachers in Mogalakwena District. Firstly, I present school and teachers profiling, followed by qualitative data presentation, and then finally the presentation of data from interviews.

4.2. PROFILING OF CASE SCHOOLS

Profiling in qualitative analysis provides a simple summary of activities, objects, and participants (Rowley, 2020). Profiling gives a multidimensional set of tools for interpreting, monitoring, and evaluating the findings of the research from interviews. Profiling case schools and participants provides in-depth insights of activities in the case of the schools identified in this study (Rowley, 2020) as well as participants' characteristics and their duties. In profiling schools, Teachers and HODs, key methodological concerns relate to: representativeness, sampling and access, the selection of appropriate measures and the interpretation of those measures (Rowley, 2020). The main goal of this qualitative analysis is to provide a summary of both participants and activities.

Table 4. 1: Profiling case schools

School	A	B	C
School Type	Public	Public	Public
School locality	Rural	Rural	Rural
Quintile	2	1	2
Number of Economics learners	64	109	30

Table 4.1 displays the profiling of case schools. The table is a summary of school profiles of the three sampled high schools in the Matlalane Circuit. The observation was based on school type and location.

4.2.1. School type

There were three schools in the sample and all are classified as public schools. Abowitz (2011) defines a public school as one that is funded by tax-payers, overseen by elected officials, operating with open admissions within its district. All sampled schools are fully funded by the government with no exception for learners who pay school fees.

4.2.2. School locality

The location of all the sampled schools is rural. This qualifies all schools to be classified under rural setting which means they are located out of town. The distances of all sampled schools from town is more than seventy (70) kilometres and all located in deep rural areas. Some of the schools are not accessible because of the poor gravel roads.

4.2.3. Quintile

There is some inequality in the quality of education offered between various races and provinces in the country. Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, the government has tried to bridge the gap using quintile categories of public schools and its concomitant funding (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019). The classification is based on the socioeconomic status of the community in which the schools are located. All sampled schools in this study are in quintile one (1). What qualifies them to be classified as quintile one (1) is that the schools are free in so far as payment of fees is concerned. The geographical location of the schools does not allow the schools to charge learners any school fees. As a result, the government provides the norms and standards for those schools (Department of Basic Education, 2020).

4.2.4. Number of Economics learners

The number of learners enrolled for Economics in 2020 in the sampled schools are thirty in school C which is the lowest, followed by sixty-four in school A and the highest number is one hundred and nine in school B. the number of learners per class is very important as it determines the teacher learner ratio. This teacher-learner's ratio helps the teacher to have control of the class since such a teacher must deal with a lot of learners. When classes are overcrowded it becomes difficult for teachers to assist even those learners who are struggling the most since those numbers indicated on schools & C are the allocation per teacher.

4.3. PROFILING ECONOMICS TEACHERS AND THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT (HODs)

The teachers are the focus of the study. Furthermore, teachers play a crucial role in learners' academic performance. This performance depends largely on the effectiveness of teachers. The quality of education that learners receive depends on the quality of teachers, building, equipment, curricula, books, and teaching methods (Thirungevadam, 2013). This study further indicates that teachers are the most vital to the education of learners more than all the factors mentioned above. The table below captures data with reference to teachers' gender, age, grades they are teaching, teaching experience and subject taught.

On the other hand, HODs' profiling was based on the PAM policy as Gazetted on 18th of February 1999. This gazette specifies that secondary school HoDs are advisors to the school principal regarding the division of work among the staff in the department they are serving (Department of Education, 2001). Furthermore, it is the duty of these HoDs to be responsible for the effective functioning of the department. Similarly, Thaba-Nkademene and Mampuru Nkadimene (2020) show that there are some impediments for the HoDs to execute their daily activities effectively. For example, staffing challenges, lack of teaching resources, digital infrastructures, and lack of shared instructional leaderships are coalesce as intractable challenges and impediments.

The above also shows the profiles of HODs, who are the personnel determining the quality delivery of curriculum. HODs also ensure that teachers give learners quality assessments. In any case where an HOD is not qualified or inexperienced, it is very likely that teachers who report to such an HOD may take advantage and not execute their tasks competently, leading to poor performance of learners in the subject.

Profiling of the research participants provides in-depth insights of activities performed in the case schools (Rowley, 2020) as well as the participants' characteristics, qualifications, and duties. In this section of the study, the biographical information tabled was obtained from the interviewees. This included classifications of the participants in terms of their gender, age, designations, and subject specialisation.

4.3.1. Gender of Economics teachers and commerce HoDs from surveys & interviews

This study examined gender as one factor that determines poor performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalanane Circuit, Limpopo Province. Both survey and case study collected data on teachers and HoDs. The table below is a summary of this construct.

Table 4. 2 Gender of Economics teachers who participated in the surveys

Gender					
		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	25	33.8	33.8	33.8
	Female	49	66.2	66.2	100.0
	Total	74	100.0	100.0	

In table 4. 2 above, the outcomes show that 66.2% of the participants were female Teachers . This concludes that only 33.8% are males making female Teachers being the majority in the field of teaching Economics. There are many female teachers in Mogalakwena District teaching Economics; and females are known to be good in caring and nurturing the young one; and Economics learners in this case.

Table 4.3: Summary of profile data from Economics teachers' interviews

	Gender	Age	Grade Teaching	Teaching Experience	Subject Teaching
T1	Female	30	11 & 12	5years	Economics and Business studies
T2	Male	27	11	4years	Economics and Accounting
T3	Female	31	12	4years	Economics, Accounting and Business management
T4	Female	39	11 & 12	8years	Economics and Accounting
T5	Male	52	11	21years	Accounting and Economics
T6	Male	48	11	14years	Economics and Business management

Table 4.3 above displays profiles of sampled Economics teachers. Variables that are included in Table 4.7 above reflects teachers' gender, age, grade teaching, teaching experience and subject teaching. Data reflects equal number of males and female Economics teachers who were interviewed; and 1 male and 2 female HoDs. HoD's data is reflected below.

Table 4.4: Profiling data of Commerce HoDs

	Gender	Age	Experience as a Commerce HoD	Major Subjects
HoD1	Male	50	4years	Geography and Mathematics
HoD2	Female	53	7years	Business studies and Economics

HoD3	Female	45	3.5years	Accounting, and English	Economics
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Table 4.4 above displays gender and other variables of the head of departments (HoDs) who participated in the interviews. Females are in majority despite the view that men subordinates tend to disrespect women in leadership positions and usually defy their orders. In the case of the sampled schools, one HOD is male and two HODs are females Cranford, (2012).

4.3.2. Grade teaching

The focus of the study was on Grade 11 and 12 teachers, and the study was conducted likewise.

Table 4.5: Grade teaching

Economics teachers	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
Grades	11 &12	11	12	11 & 12	11	11

Table 4.5 displays grades taught by the sampled Economics teachers. It was found that three teachers were teaching Grade 12, whereas, five of them teaching Grade 11. Two teachers taught both grades at the time of generating data.

These subjects are not only the subject taught, but the teachers have other 2-4 other subjects, within the Commerce stream, and outside the Commerce stream. The number of subjects which a teacher teaches in a school may culminate in teacher overload. And when teachers are allocated too much workload, in addition to the extra-curricular workload, this may cause them to underperform in teaching some of the allocated subjects and duties. In the study by Duncan (2019: 1) titled “Education staff work activities and excessive workloads: Where now,” the researcher recommended the promotion of work-life balance for all staff across all activities and the institution.

In the case of this study it was not established whether teachers are overloaded because the focus was only in performance in the subject Economics. Looking at the classes for Economics and the number of learners per school, one concludes that classes are not overcrowded. Overcrowding in the case of the sampled schools was not a factor attributed to the poor performance of learners in Economics.

4.3.3. Teachers' experience of teaching Economics

Teaching experience is an important variable for teachers as far as improved teaching practice, classroom management and teachers' promotion are concerned. Teaching experience is important for promotion into head of departments, deputy principal, principal and curriculum advisor. The table below show this construct.

Table 4.6: Teaching experience of Economics teachers

Economics teachers	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
Grades	5	4	4	8	21	14

Table 4.6 displays teaching experience of Economics teachers who participated in this study. Economics teachers all had some varied years' experience ranging from 4-21 years. Those teachers who have taught for three years and below were regarded as novices while those who have taught for four years and above were regarded as experienced teachers. The results of this study showed that the participants have been teaching Economics for some considerable time. Two participants (Teachers) had the lowest teaching experience which amounts to four years. They are followed one respondent who had five years in teaching Economics and the one with five years' experience follows one participant who has eight years teaching experience in Economics. Finally, two respondents had more than fourteen years of experience. One had fourteen and the other one had the highest years of experience which amounts to twenty-one years of teaching Economics.

This indicates that all the teachers of Economics in the selected and participant schools were highly experienced. This is corroborated by the results of this study which identified that most of the teachers have been teaching at least for five years.

4.3.4. Subject specialisation by Economics teachers

Subject specialisation was found to be one variable that influences teachers practice and productivity. The inclusion of this variable was to find out whether Economics teachers did specialise in Economics in their teacher education.

4.3.4.1 The number of Economics teachers against subject-specific qualifications

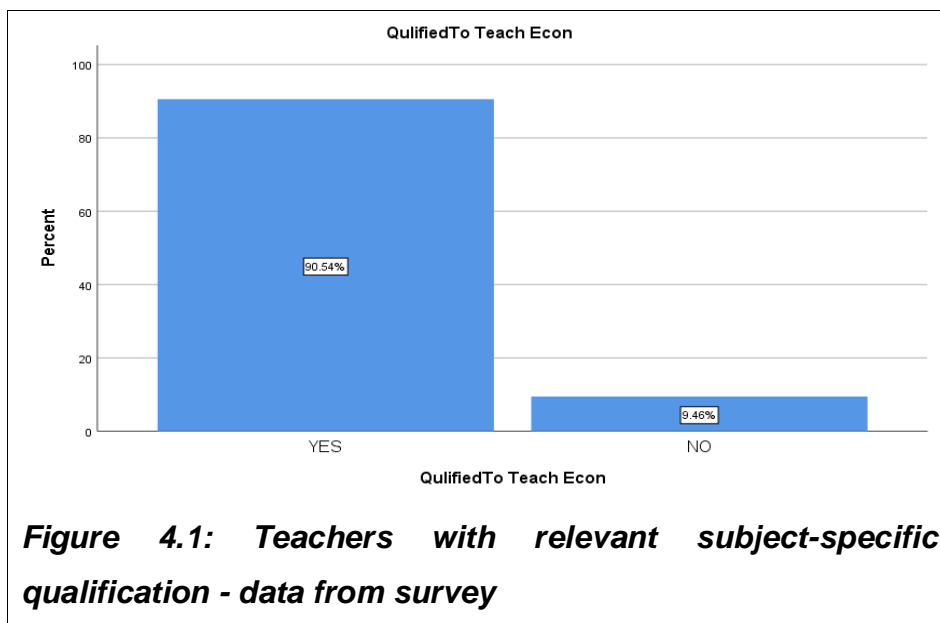


Figure 4.1 exhibits relevance of the subject-specific qualification of Economics teachers in this study. The figure above is derived from data collected from the survey, and it clearly shows that 9.46% of the teachers are not specifically qualified to teach Economics subject. This indicates the practice in schools where any person is allowed free rein to teach Economics and other Commerce subjects. This results in poor command and mastery of the subject; and has negative influence on the ultimate performance of learners.

In contrast to the hard data in the table above, interview data reflects that all teachers have some Economics qualification. This is the result of purposive sampling, where only Economics teachers were selected for participation.

Table 4.6: Subject specialisation: Data derived from interviews

Economics Teachers	Subject of specialisation
T1	Economics and Business Studies
T2	Economics and Accounting
T3	Economics, Accounting and Business Management
T4	Economics and Accounting
T5	Economics and Accounting
T6	Economics and Business Management

Table 4.6 displays subject specialisation of Economics teachers selected to participate in the interviews. Even though participants in all sampled schools seemed to have majored in different subjects, but all of them had majored in Economics in institutions of higher learning. It is expected that at their level as having three years' diploma and degrees, they should possess a particular level of subject content mastery compared to someone who did not major in commercial subjects. The assumption of this study is that teachers who specialised in Economics were very likely to have a greater content mastery than the gaps anticipated in those who did not specialise in Economics. The table below reflects on subject combination by Economics teachers.

4.3.5. Experience of HoDs as instructional leaders of Commerce subjects

The variable of experience of HoDs was raised during interviews, to find out the years they served as instructional leaders of Commerce subjects. In that regard an HOD with the lowest years of experience had three and half years which was followed by an HOD who had 4 years' experience as an HOD for Economics. The highest experienced HOD for Economics had seven years' experience. This number of years of experience is very important because performance of teachers can be linked to the ability of the HOD about giving necessary support to teachers. Essentially, the assumption was that an HOD who does not have experience, struggles with teachers who might have content gaps and still fail to get adequate guidance from the HOD.

Table 4.7: HoDs experience in teaching

	Gender	Experience as Commerce HoDs	Subjects specialization
HoD1	Male	4years	Geography and Mathematics
HoD2	Female	7years	Business Studies and Economics
HoD3	Female	3.5years	Accounting, Economics and English

Table 4.7 exhibits the HoDs years of experience as Commerce instructional leaders. Secondly, this table reflects on HoDs subject specialisation.

Data in Table 4.7 displays that one HoD specialised in Geography and Mathematics. These two subjects are not related to Economics. However, the incumbent acts as the HoD for Commerce subjects. If one did not major in Economics, it becomes difficult to support teachers with content related challenges. The other HODs majored in Economics and this offers assurance that they would support the teaching of Economics and other Commerce subjects when needed.

4.4. ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

4.4.1. Internal consistency of the study

Cronbach alpha is a reliability test used to check internal consistency. The Cronbach alpha analysis was introduced by Lee Joseph Cronbach in 1951 (Shavelson, 2002). Cronbach, the education psychologist, has “made major contributions to psychological testing, including coefficient alpha, generalisability theory, and construct validity theory” (Shavelson, 2002).

The purpose of conducting reliability testing is to ensure that the observed variables measure the true value and whether they are error free or had high error in the questionnaire (Shaw, 2018). Cronbach alpha is used to ensure the internal consistency of items on a scale. Therefore, Cronbach's alpha determines the internal consistency or average correlation of items in a survey instrument to gauge its reliability (Shavelson, 2002).

In analysing Cronbach alpha, Santos (1999), Brown, (2002) and Flanagan, (2007) show that Cronbach alpha ranges from 0-1. This means that 0.00 means no variance is consistent in the test results. Similarly, 1.00 represents all variances are consistent.

Table 4. 8 Case processing summary: Survey

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.710	.626	15

Based on Table 4.8 above, the internal consistency of both the data and questionnaire is significant. That means 71% of the information presented in the questionnaire as well as the findings are consistent and reliable. Similarly, 29% of the information is not reliable when applied to this specific study.

Table 4.9 Item -total statistics in deletion of other variables

Item-Total statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Gender	21.69	14.108	.055	.720
Designation	21.59	12.327	.666	.664
Econ Qualification	21.35	10.889	.613	.648
Knowledge of Economics content	22.30	14.623	-.082	.719
Economics poor Performance	22.23	13.796	.150	.711
Is Economics Difficult	21.41	14.491	-.006	.716
Strategies to Improve	22.22	14.418	-.002	.719
Qualified to Teach Econ Profession/Qualification	22.26	13.728	.329	.699
Age	20.97	9.451	.577	.654
Age	20.95	10.271	.657	.637
Class Environment	22.34	14.336	.207	.709
Period of teaching Economics in G11& and 12	20.80	8.712	.687	.627
Pacesetter	22.32	14.414	.074	.712
Learner Attitude	22.20	14.164	.089	.714
School Environment	22.30	14.102	.221	.706

Table 4.9 verifies the findings in Table 4.3 above. Each variable has its own Cronbach alpha consistency value. This shows how each variable gets affected when some of the variables have been excluded from the model.

4.4.2 Quantitative data analysis results and discussion

This segment of the study provides the thematic presentation of qualitative data. Themes emanated from the research question raised and responses. The following themes are discussed:

- I. Teachers view themselves as having adequate Economics Content Knowledge that is not translated into good performance of learners
- II. Teachers rated themselves as having low Economic content gap
- III. Strategies used by Economics teachers in ensuring curriculum coverage
- IV. Prevalence of non-compliance with pacesetter by Economics teachers
- V. Economics teachers' attitudes towards teaching and learning
- VI. Conducive school environment and good school discipline
- VII. A significant number of Economics teachers have subject-specific qualifications allowing them to teach the subject
- VIII. Availability of textbooks for the learners
- IX. Economics learners receive stationery on time
- X. Total hours of teaching Economics per week

4.4.2.1. Teachers view themselves as having adequate Economics Content Knowledge that is not translated into good performance of learners

In analysing the Economics content knowledge of the interviewees, the results below were obtained.

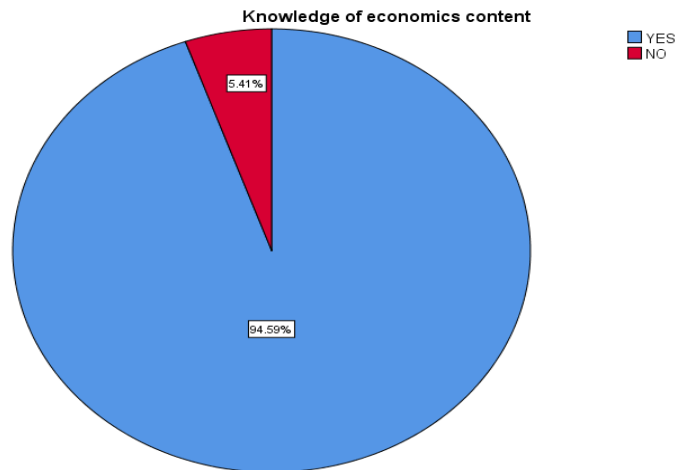


Figure 4.2 Economics content knowledge

Figure 4.2 above shows that 94.59% of the participants indicated that they have a good understanding of the economic content. Only 5.41% of the Teachers submitted that they do not possess adequate Economics Content Knowledge.

The research finding demonstrates that most teachers have adequate Economics content knowledge, even though the learner performance in their schools is poor. According to self-rating, Economics teachers indicate that they possess adequate to high Economics content knowledge; but that content knowledge is not translated into good performance amongst the learners. In trying to get to the bottom of why Economics learners continuously fail, Kruger (2018) conducted a study that examined the Economics content in schools and teacher education Economics curriculum. His findings show that teacher education institutions are aware of demands of teaching Economics and committed to producing knowledgeable teachers; “however, teacher education does not seem to have a clear theoretical framework” (Kruger, 2018: vii) and this affects their Economics content knowledge and their pedagogical content knowledge. This is the reason why qualified teachers of Economics are not successful in the teaching of this specific subject to yield good results for schools and learners.

This finding was derived from teachers’ own perceptions and reflections; and there is always the tendency among people to rate themselves high (Kleinknecht and Schneider, 2013). Again, the high self-rating of teachers (94.59%) is not translated and reflected in the academic performance of learners. This might be the indication

that teachers do not know that is their duty to ensure that high learners' achievement should always be prioritised (Benson-Goldberg, & Erickson,2021).

And if there is 5.41% of teachers who are fair enough to indicate that they do not have adequate Economics content knowledge, it means there is something amiss in their teaching or school. This study did not examine the reason for this cause; it might be that they did not specialise in the subject in their undergraduate or teacher qualification. These factors are sufficient for Economics teachers to develop a negative attitude in teaching the subject successfully.

4.4.2.2 Teachers rated themselves as having low Economic content gap

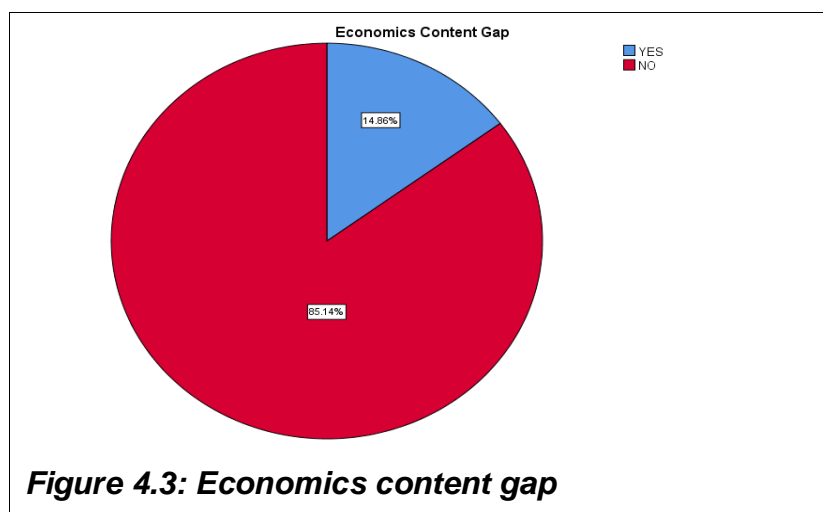


Figure 4.3: Economics content gap

Figure 4.3 displays the teachers' self-rating of their economic content gap. A significant number of the research participants, 85,14% rated themselves as having no Economics content gap. Despite having indicated their high and adequate levels of Economics mastery, many schools in Mogalakwena District experience high failure rate in Economics. The challenge goes back to the efficacy of self-rating and the reality that results do not speak to the high rating shown here.

A total of 14.86% of the participants rated themselves as having low Economics content gap. This group of teachers admitted that they experience some challenges in teaching Economics, particularly Economics graphs, equations, and theories. This

evidence corroborates Spull (2013) who found poor teacher content and lack of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) as factors militating against successful performance of learners in specific subjects. Training can be the best intervention for this group of Teachers to improve the learner's outcomes in the circuit. There is a need for further needs analysis such that the Economics teachers identify the areas in which they require teacher development and training.

4.4.2.3 Strategies used by Economics teachers in ensuring curriculum coverage

The question on what strategies Economics teachers used in ensuring curriculum coverage was included in the survey questionnaire. Data collected is displayed in figure 4.4 below.

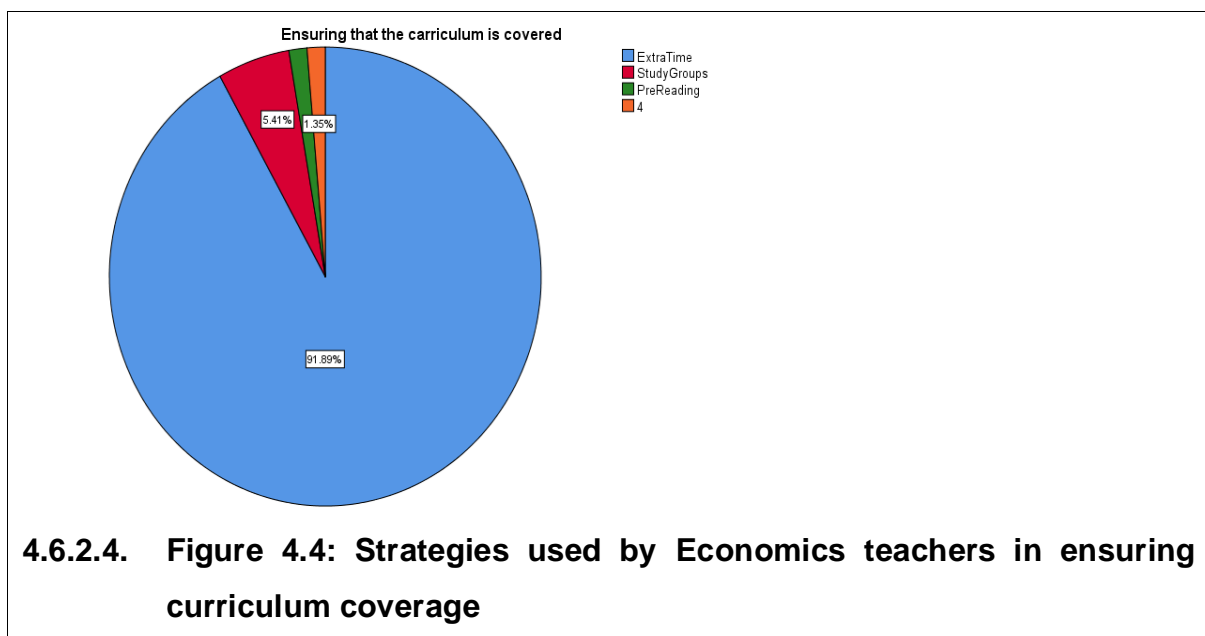


Figure 4. 4 exhibits the strategies used by Economics teachers in ensuring curriculum coverage. The study established that to ensure that Economics curriculum is covered, and the learners have a good understanding of Economics content, 91.89% of teachers opt for extra lessons. The extra lessons are conducted either during the weekend or evening hours. On the other hand, 5.41 % of the teachers conduct group discussions and 1.53 % opt for pre-reading.

The research finding reveals that Economics teachers use four different strategies ensuring that curriculum is covered. Four strategies were found to be common among teachers in Mogalakwena District, namely, extra lessons, weekend and evening lessons, group discussions and pre-reading.

4.4.2.4 Prevalence of the non-compliance with pacesetter by Economics teachers

A pacesetter is important for all subjects in the school. The research question on non-compliance was designed to identify teachers' views on this aspect.

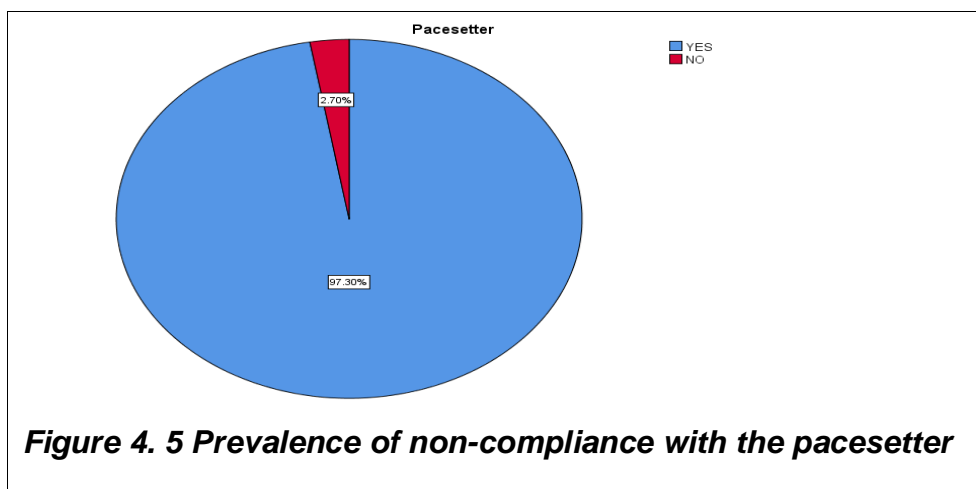


Figure 4. 5 Prevalence of non-compliance with the pacesetter

Figure 4.5 displays prevalence of non-compliance with the pacesetter. Surprisingly, 2,70% of the Teachers indicated that they don't follow pacesetter when teaching Economics. Based on this outcome, it shows that this can be a contributing factors which leads to some of the Teachers not to finish their curriculum on time hence leads to poor performance of the learners.

4.4.2.5. Economics teachers' attitude towards teaching and learning

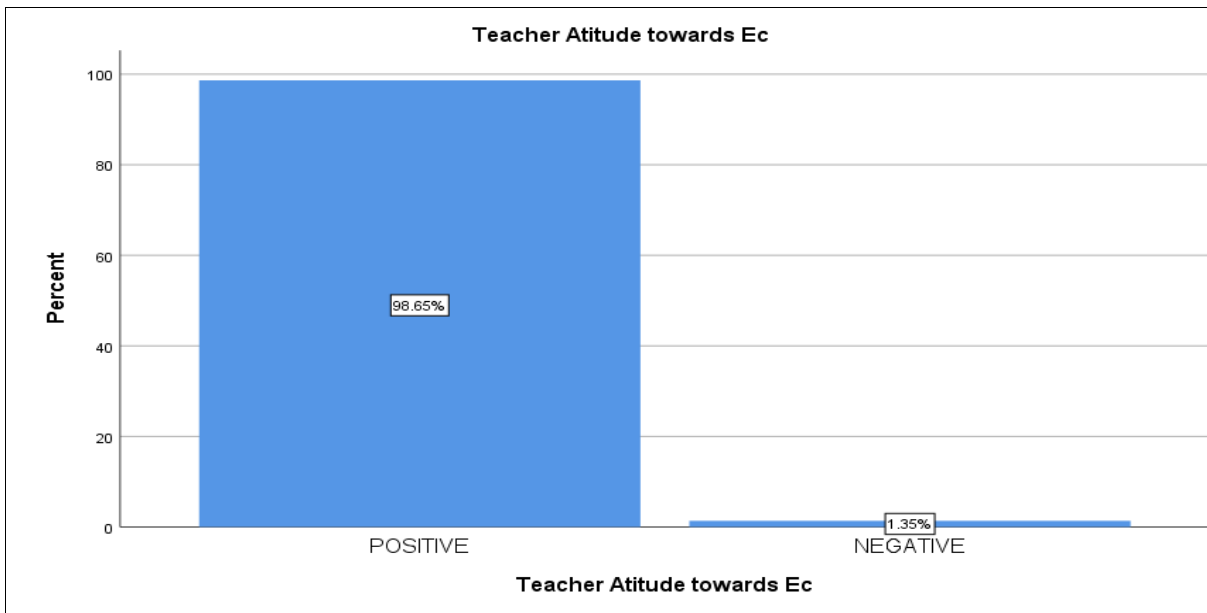


Figure 4. 6 Teachers attitudes toward teaching Economics

Figure 4.6, portrays that 1.35% of the Teachers has a negative attitude towards the Economics as a subject. The same question established that 98.5% do have a positive attitude towards the teaching of Economics. It is worrisome to have subject teachers with a negative attitude to a curriculum specification that they are obliged to teach, because this influences his or her discharge of duties, commitment and learners' attitude towards the subject.

4.4.2.6. Strategies used by Economics teachers to improve learners' performance

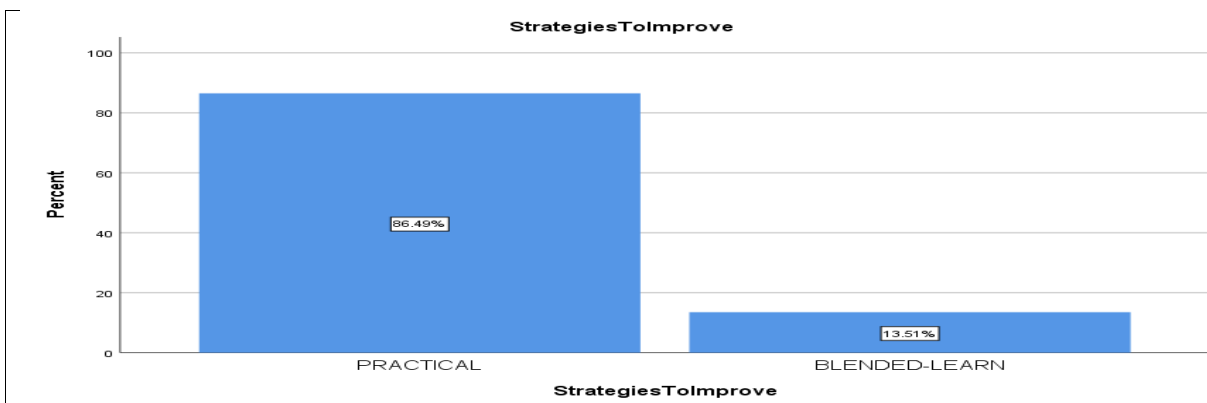


Figure 4. 7 Strategies to improve Economics

Figure 4.7 exhibits strategies used by Economics teachers to improve performance of learners in the subject Economics. Data displayed above shows that 86,49% of the

Teachers suggested daily practice of the subject as a way of mastering it and improving the performance of learners in school. The other 13.51% suggested blended learning as a solution to improve the Economics learners pass rate in schools.

4.4.2.7 School environment and discipline

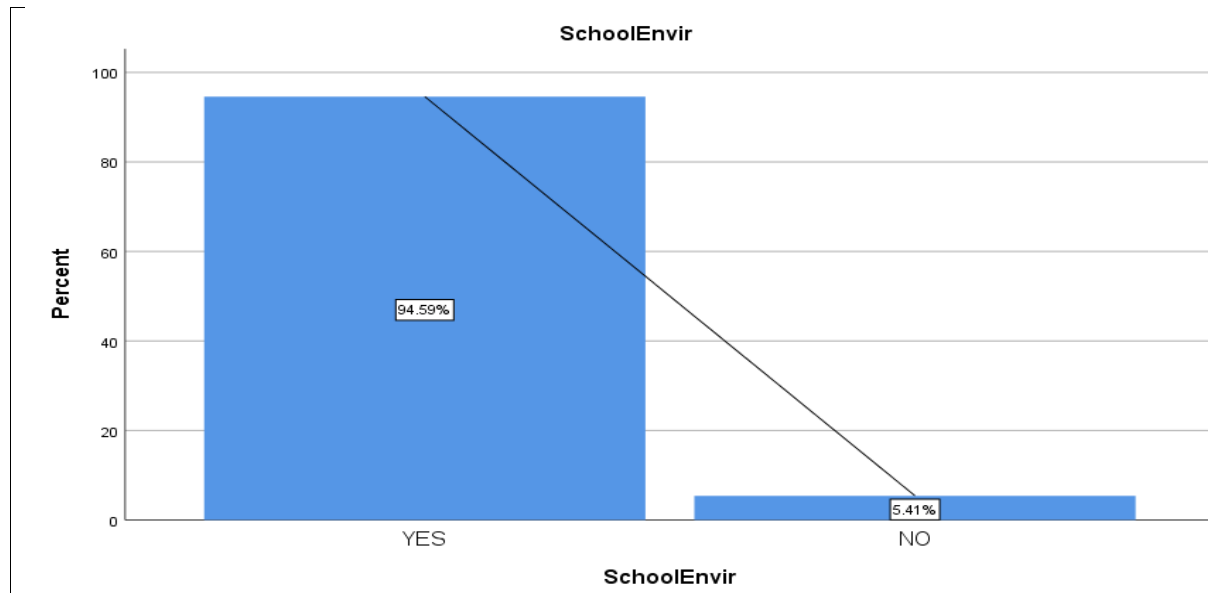


Figure 4. 8: school environment discipline

Figure 4.8 reflects on the school environment and discipline. Most of the schools (94.59%) were found to have inviting school environment and good school discipline both of which are conducive. There was, however, 5.41% of the Teachers who suggested that the school environment was not conducive, contributing to absenteeism of learners. This finding is in line with Ndikumwami, (2013: vi) who identified school environment that is “poor school environment, overcrowded classrooms, student indiscipline, distance from home to school, accommodation, teaching and learning materials, promotion and professional development and lack of teachers’ morale in teaching” as impediments to successful mastery of concepts.

4.4.2.8 Availability of textbooks to learners

Table 4. 10: Availability of textbooks to learners

Textbook					
		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	70	94.6	94.6	94.6

	NO	4	5.4	5.4	100.0
	Total	74	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.10 above, shows that 5.4 % of the teachers indicated that their schools do not have enough textbooks to be used by both learners and the Teachers . This results in poor performance of both Grade 11 and 12 learners. Availability of teaching resources such as textbooks contributes to passing rate of learners in schools. Any school which does not have textbooks and other teaching materials is bound to experience a low pass rate. This finding was also confirmed by Ndikumwami, (2013) whose study concluded that teachers lack of teaching and learning materials and consequently their Learners do not make the good grades.

4.4.2.9. Poor performance of Economics teachers

Factors that were identified as causing poor performance of Economics teachers were learners' absenteeism, learners' negative attitudes towards learning Economics and Economics is perceived by teachers as a difficult subject.

4.4.2.9.1 Learner's absenteeism

Learners' absenteeism was identified as one factor that causes poor performance of Economics in Mogalakwena District.

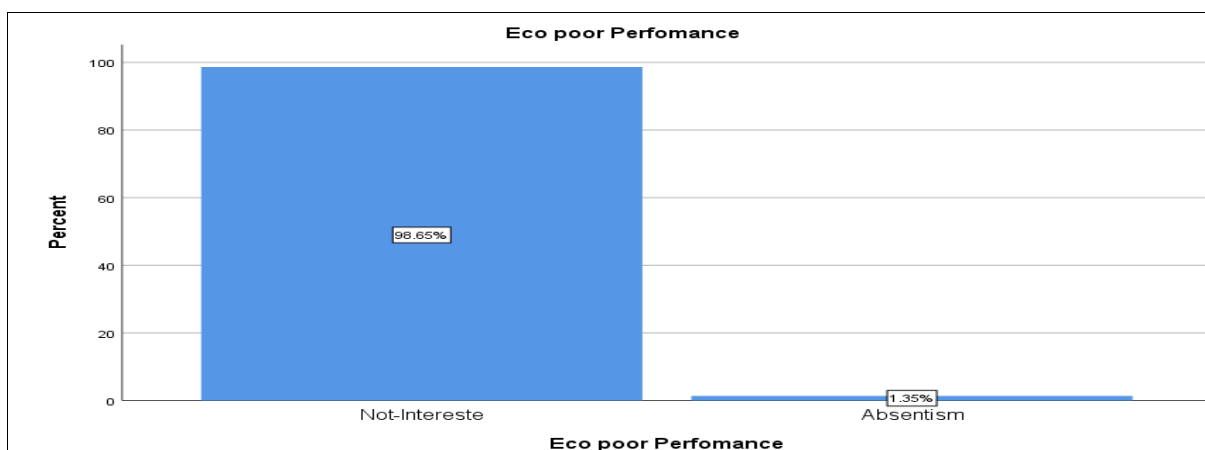


Figure 4. 9 Learners' absenteeism

Figure, 4.9 displays learners' absenteeism as reflected in the data from teachers' questionnaires. It was clearly indicated that learner's absenteeism contributes to the poor performance in Economics subject. It is reflected in Figure 4.6 that 98.65% of the Economics teachers indicated that learners' absenteeism is the cause of poor performance of learners.

4.4.2.9.2 Learners attitudes towards learning Economics

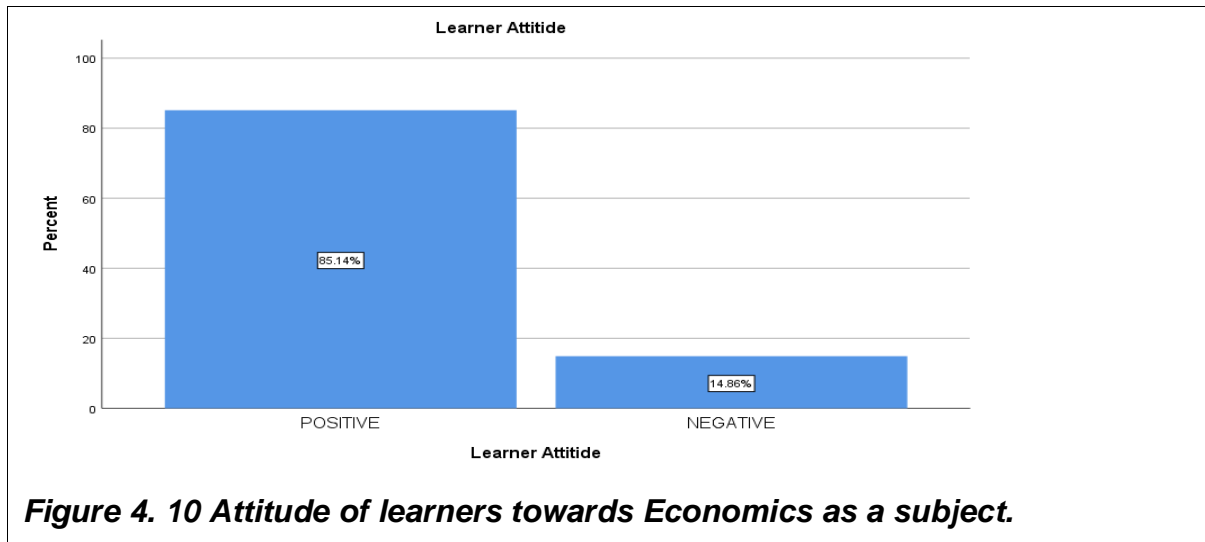


Figure 4. 10 Attitude of learners towards Economics as a subject.

Figure 4.10 indicates learners' attitudes towards learning Economics. Data extracted from Economics teachers' views indicates that 85,14% of the learners have a positive attitude towards Economics subject. According to the same data 14.86 % of the learners have a negative attitude towards the subject. The positive attitude established among the number of learners does not translate into their good performance. This contradiction to teachers' views and realities are evident in the poor results in Grade 11 and 12. If learners have a positive attitude towards learning, then poor performance should be attributed to the external factors, such as lack of commitment by teachers, a lack of parental support, a lack of school resources, and poor school discipline. These factors were not the focus of this study, however, they were suggested as being contributory factors by teachers themselves.

4.4.2.9.3 Economics is perceived by teachers as a difficult subject

The questionnaire included the question on whether Economics is a difficult subject or not. The aim of the question was to find out from teachers their attitude towards this

subject. It was unfortunate to find a few of teachers who regard Economics as a difficult subject whereas they are mandated to teach the same such that learners get to grips with the content.

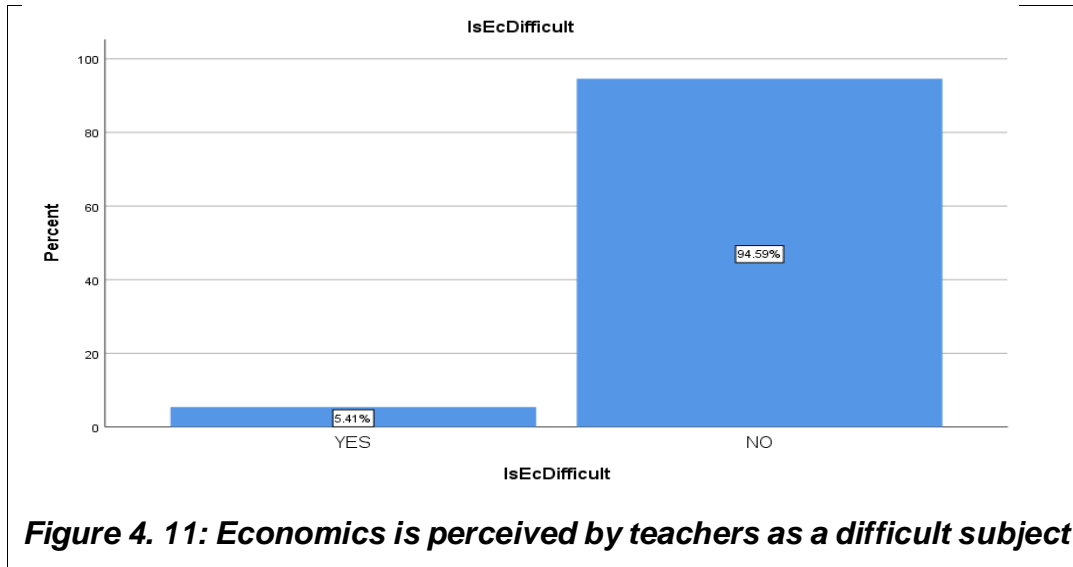


Figure 4.11 displays data from teachers' view that Economics is perceived by teachers as a difficult subject. A small number of teachers, 5.41% perceive Economics as a difficult subject. There is significant number of teachers, 94.59% with a contrary version. This negativity towards the subject gets transferred to learners, hence contributing to poor performance in some schools.

4.4.2.10. Relationship of some variables used in the study

4.4.2.10.1. Economics qualification and gender

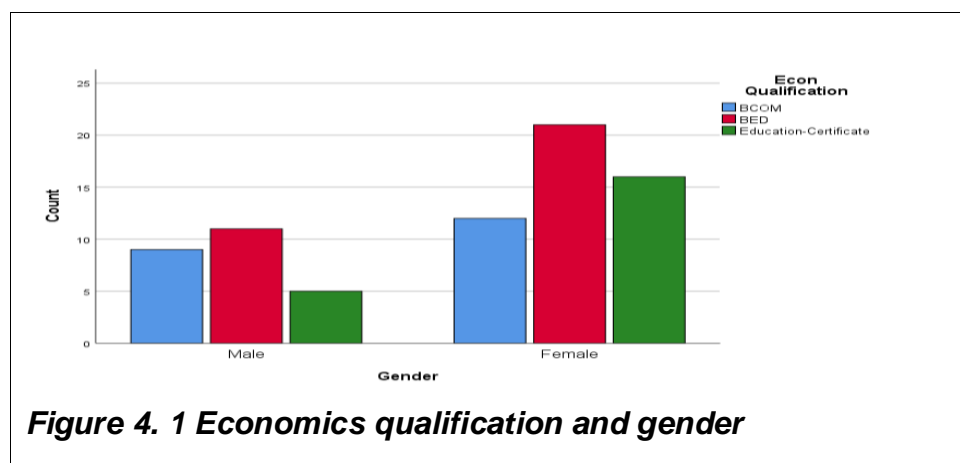


Figure 4.12, indicates that there more females in the circuit who hold Bachelor of Education degree which constitutes 22% of the Teachers . Thus only 11% of the male Teachers hold B.Ed., 9% has B.Com degree and 5% has PGCE. The results also confirmed that 16% female Teachers have education certificate and 12% of female Teachers hold B.Com. degrees.

4.4.2.10.2 Economics content gap and gender

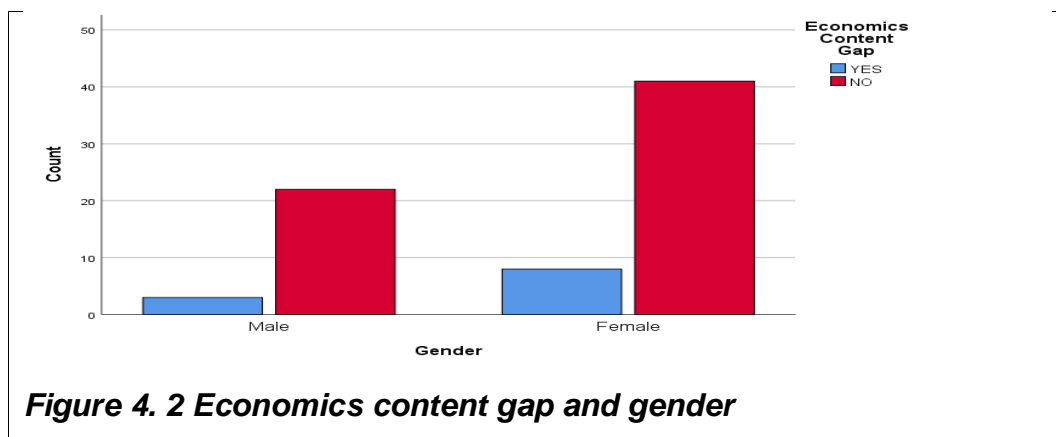


Figure 4.13 exhibits that statistically, in Figure 4.13 above, 42% of female and 22% male Teachers experience challenges in teaching Economics in the circuit.

4.4.2.10.3. Completion of curriculum by gender

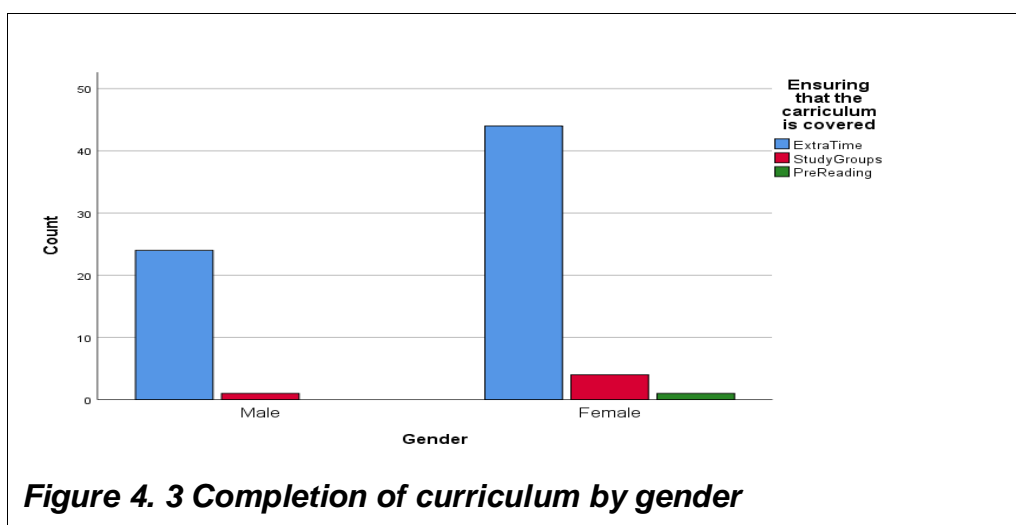


Figure 4.14 reflects that majority of female’s Teachers do not complete their curriculum. This might some reasons or the fact that these people do not get enough support from their subject advisors .

4.4.2.10.4. Strategies to improve Economics by gender

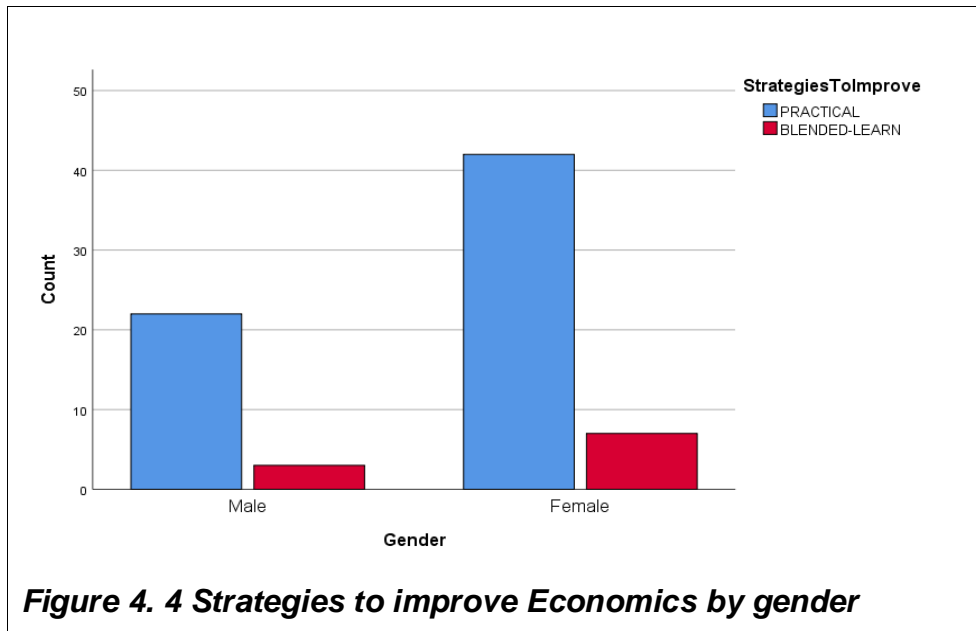


Figure 4.15, indicates that majority of female Teachers suggested practicals as a solution to improve the performance in Economics. Only few male and female Teachers (8% of females and 2 percent of males) suggested blended learning as a way of improving the learner’s performance in schools.

4.4.2.10.5. Economics content gap by profession

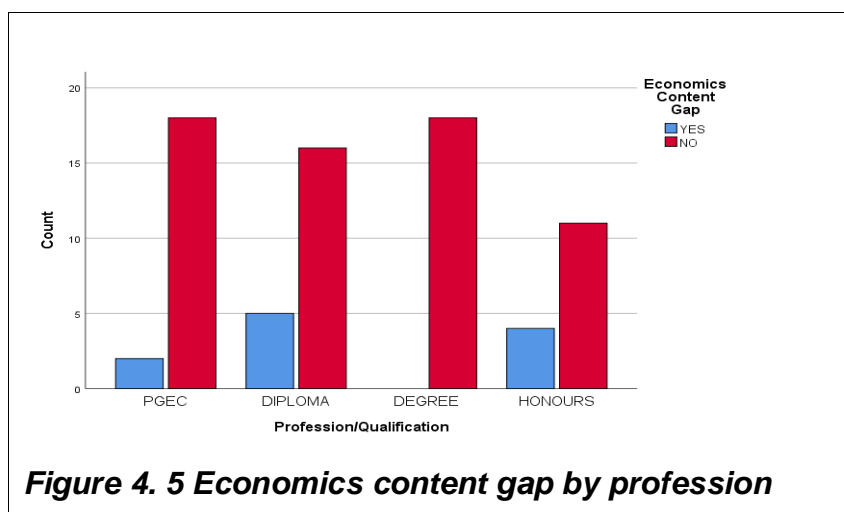


Figure 4.16 reflects on Economics content gap by profession. Most Teachers who hold a teaching diploma have some content gap followed by those with Honours degree. Only a few with PGCE experience the same problem.

4.5. ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA DERIVED FROM SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Qualitative data was collected from six teachers and three HoDs in Matlalane Circuit using semi-structured interviews. Results were analysed using thematic and narrative analysis. The research participants were labelled HoD 1; HoD 2 and HoD3; whereas professional teachers are labelled PL1, PL2, PL3, PL4, PL5 and PL6

The analysis of qualitative data followed step-by-step process of data coding, code classification, code patterning and organising as themes. The discussion of qualitative findings commences with results in thematic presentations wherein themes emanating from teachers' interviews and themes emanating from HoDs interviews are presented.

4.5.1 Results using thematic presentations: Themes and sub-themes emanating from teachers' interviews

Table 4.13: Themes and sub-themes emanating from teachers' interviews

Research question	Theme
1. What is the attitude of learners towards Economics?	*Lack of interest by learners and negative attitudes
2. Does the teaching of Economics receive adequate support from school and department?	*Inadequate support by Commerce HoDs, school leadership and curriculum advisors
3. What is your view on poor performance in Economics?	*Poor discipline in schools *Lack of parental support *Lack of commitment by teachers *Teachers way of teaching is not compatible with Economics learning

	<p>*Teenage pregnancy is a challenge is school near mining areas</p> <p>*Teachers without a required command of Economics content</p>
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Table 4.13 displays themes and sub-themes emanating from teachers' interviews. Thirteen themes emerged as reflected above in Table 4.13. A detailed discussion of each of these themes is presented in the research findings and discussion segment that follows.

4.14 Themes and sub-themes emanating from HoDs' interviews

Research question	Theme
1.What is the attitude of teachers towards the teaching of Economics?	<p>2.1*Increase teachers' support on the identified difficult areas</p> <p>2.2*Provide school-based support</p> <p>2.3*Promote collaborative teacher professional learning among Economics teachers</p>
2.Do you think the teaching of Economics receives adequate support from curriculum advisors?	*Teaching of Economics receives inadequate support from HoDs
3.What are your plans to improve the teaching of Economics in this circuit?	Strategies to improve the teaching of Economics.
4.In your own view, what are causes of poor performance in Economics?	<p>.5.1*Teachers' lack of pedagogical content knowledge</p> <p>5.2*Lack of commitment among teachers</p> <p>5.3*Ill-discipline and lack of interest for learning by learners</p> <p>5.4*School leadership is unsuccessful in maintain school discipline</p> <p>5.5* Lack of school resources to promote the teaching and learning of Economics.</p>

Table 4.14 exhibits themes and sub-themes emanating from HoDs' interviews. Eleven (11) themes emerged from the data. A full discussion of each of the themes is presented under the research findings and discussion.

4.5.2. The research findings and discussion: Data from teachers' interviews

Teachers' data emerged with nine (9) main research findings as reflected in Table 4.13. A detailed discussion of these findings is presented in the following section.

4.5.2.1 Learners' lack of interest and negative attitudes

The research findings indicate a lack of interest by learners and their negative attitudes towards Economics. This finding emanates from the research question, 'what is the attitude of learners towards Economics?' Different teachers emphasised learners' lack of interest and negative attitudes in different ways.

PT1 explains:

"Learners sometimes fail because they don't study, and that they have negative attitude at a certain point. The primary cause of high failure rate is is that they are very lazy, because when we give them informal activities some don't bother to write because they are lazy".

PT4 stresses:

'Learners don't like Economics. Lack of academic English skills can be the contributory factor towards Economics learning.'

PT5 emphasises:

'Laziness of learners and negative attitude towards studying.'

The issue of learners' laziness, lack of commitment to studying, lack of interest in learning Economics and lack of academic English skills were singled out as principal causes of learners lack of interest in Economics and negative attitude.

4.5.2.2 Inadequate support by Commerce HoDs, school leadership and curriculum advisors

It was found that Economics teachers' views, Commerce HoDs and school leadership provide inadequate teaching of Economics. This finding emanates from the research question, 'does the teaching of Economics receive adequate support from school and department?' Majority of the research participants hinted at lack of support by either

the Commerce HoDs and in some cases HoDs, the entire school leadership and curriculum advisors.

PT5 explains:

'The management of schools do not support the teaching of Economics; and that teachers are continuously told of the phasing out of commercial subject by different higher education forums; and this demotivates teachers.'

PT3 stresses:

"Poor performance of learners is mostly caused by lack of support schools management and even official from the department such as curriculum advisors and circuit managers."

From these extracts, it is evident that there is serious challenge unsettling Economics teachers and the entire Commerce teachers, because their field is threatened. There are currently agitated debates for the phasing out at various educational forums and platforms. Apart from this systemic challenge, school leadership and Commerce HoDs are viewed as not doing enough in supporting the teaching of Economics. This is in line with the study by Grabe, (2008) which shows that teachers are supposed to be at the forefront in developing masterly study materials.

4.5.2.3 Poor school discipline

The research findings indicate poor school discipline as the primary challenge to Economics teaching; and it was cited as the cause of poor learners' performance in Economics.

PT2 highlights:

"School leadership and other teachers don't respect school time-table. I experienced change in time-table and extra-lesson schedules without formally informing me as a teacher. Furthermore, continuous announcements that are very perennial disturb my teaching and learning"

PT6 explains :

"It is difficult to maintain classroom discipline in the ill-disciplined schools. I find it difficult to bring learners back from break, and for submission of their written work. The school management is not doing enough to bring back the school in order."

This study supports Asikhia (2010) who indicates that poor performance of learners in schools results in increased dropouts. Similarly, the study showed that improved teaching techniques or strategies and disciplines would basically improve learners pass rate.

4.5.2.4 Lack of parental support

The study found lack of parental support as the cause to poor learners' performance in Economics. This finding is derived from the research question, 'what is your view on poor performance in Economics?' Most research participants indicated lack of parental support as a major challenge in their schools. One participant who has put it in clear terms is PT3 when he explains:

"Poor performance is mostly caused by lack of support from parents, schools management and even official from the department such as circuit managers. And teenage pregnancy is one of the other factors that causes poor performance in girls. Another factor is social related factors."

Lack of parental support was also cited by Munje and Mncube (2018). This study shows that most parents fail to support their children academically due to lack of financial wellbeing.

4.5.2.5 Lack of commitment by demotivated teachers

The research findings indicate lack of commitment by demotivated teachers. This finding is derived from the research question, 'what is your view on poor performance in Economics?' Economics teacher PT5 has put it in perspective when stressing that:

'Poor performance in Economics comes from various factors such as demotivated teachers and learners; and teachers who are not willing to teach learners.'

Not willing to teach and tasking learners with adequate assessment was found to be a challenge. Teachers who defy their job specification, do not execute their duties as prescribed by Crawford (2007). The study shows that inadequate assessments leads to learners failing the subject as the Teachers do not identify who is struggling and which areas need revision.

4.5.2.6 Teachers way of teaching is not compatible with Economics learning

The study found that teachers' way of teaching is not compatible with Economics learning.

'Teachers' way of teaching can also fail learners.'

This is in line with the study by Margolis and McCabe (2003) which shows that teachers only work effectively if they have skills to spot errors among learners who are underperforming. This study is in line with Asikhia (2010) who found that teachers use mixed or blended teaching strategies to improve learners performance in schools.

4.5.2.7 Teenage pregnancy is a challenge is school near mining areas

The study found teenage pregnancy is a challenge is schools located near mining areas. This finding emerged from the research question 'what are the causes of poor performance of Economics by learners?'

PT3 emphasises that:

'And teenage pregnancy is one of the other factors that causes poor performance in girls. Another factor is social related factors.'

Teenage pregnancy was identified as a serious challenge for schools in the mining areas. This is in line with the study by Lall (2007) that highlights that teenage pregnancies lead to high school drop outs and this affects the future of these young mothers.

4.5.2.8 Teachers without a required command of Economics content

The study found that teachers are without a required command of Economics content.

PT4 highlights that:

'Most crucial factor that compromises the teaching of Economics is when the teacher does not understand the topic, and fails to have the required level of subject command.'

PT5 explains that:

'Some of the reasons why learners fail is because there are some topics that are even challenging to teachers and such topics are not fairly taught and learners was always fail.'

This finding is in line with Akinsolu (2010) who shows that teachers without proper qualifications discourage learners from learning. This results into poor pass rate in the schools.

4.5.3 The research findings and discussion: Data from HoDs interviews

4.5.3.1 Some teachers display a negative attitude towards the teaching of Economics

The research finding reveals that most teachers displays a negative attitude towards the teaching of Economics. This research finding emanates from the research question, 'what is the attitude of teachers towards the teaching of Economics?'

HoD 3 explains that:

There are teachers with negative attitude to the teaching of Economics. The primary reason for this attitude is lack of content and pedagogical knowledge of teaching Economics. Therefore, I cannot level a blame for poor learners' performance entirely on learners. It can also be caused by teachers who find it so hard to understand some topics and becomes hard to explain to learners, if teacher has a problem in understanding a particular topic it will not be easy for learners to understand. And economics is just a difficult subject.

The research finding reveals that most teachers display a negative attitude towards the teaching of Economics. This research finding emanates from the research question, 'what is the attitude of teachers towards the teaching of Economics?' Some teacher create negative towards Economic because they don't qualify or does not have necessary qualification to teach Economics as clarified by Asikhia (2010). This has been seen to be caused by poor subject citizenship. Most teachers have poor economics content which makes them to have negative attitude towards economics. Kinsolu (2010) shows that unqualified teachers create negative attitudes towards the subject they ae teaching.

4.5.3.2 Support received in the teaching of Economics is not adequate

The research finding confirmed inadequacies in the support received in the teaching of Economics. This research finding emanates from the research question, 'do you think the teaching of Economics receives adequate support from curriculum advisors?'

HoD2 stresses that:

“The management does not like it, they tried to eliminate it from the school but the outcry of the community rescued the subject.”

HoD3 explains:

“Poor performance in Economics comes from various factors such as demotivated learners, teachers who are unwilling to teach learners, the management of schools do not support the subject, the forums are a very big problem because they are always discouraging commercial subjects, you as a teacher you become demotivated”.

It has been seen that HODs, school leadership and academic advisors do not get the full support from the department hence culminates in poor performance. Schools should have adequate support as well study materials for better performance (Otieno, 2010).

4.5.3.4 HoDs plans to improve the teaching of Economics, improve teaching practice and performance of learners

The research finding shows HoDs' plans to improve the teaching of Economics in both the practice and performance of learners. This research finding emanates from the research question, 'what are your plans to improve the teaching of Economics in this circuit?'

The following vignettes capture the essence of the strategies: HoD1 explains that:

'My plans for the next year are to support teachers with the difficult curricular areas and to offer one-to-one support of individual Economics Teachers. My focus is on teachers who experiences curricular difficulties and schools that performs poorly over the past three years.'

HoD2 highlights:

'My plans for next years was focus on developing teachers' collaboration with the purpose to cross pollinate good practice on the teaching of Economics. Furthermore, I support each teacher on individualised basis.'

HoD3 stresses:

'My plans ...which I already presented at the staff meeting ...are three, namely, increase teachers' support on the identified difficult areas; provision of individualised school-based support; and promotion of collaborative [problem-solving].'

From HoDs narratives, three findings emerged, namely, increase teachers' support on the identified difficult areas; provision of individualized school-based support; and promotion of collaborative teacher professional learning among Economics teachers. Otieno (2010) and Askhia (2010) shows that schools which receive generous support from department and well as have well qualified Teachers produces better outcomes.

4.5.3.5 HoD's views on the causes of poor performance in Economics

The research findings indicate HoDs' views on the causes of poor performance in Economics. This research finding emanates from the research question, namely, 'in your own view, what are causes of poor performance in Economics?'

PT5 explains that:

Poor performance in Economics comes from various factors such as demotivated learners, teachers who are not willing to teach learners, the management of schools do not support the subject, the forums are a very big problem because they are always discouraging commercial subjects, you as a teacher you become demotivated.

Five findings emerged from this research question, namely, (1) inadequate support from HoDs and curricular advisor on the teaching of Economics, (2) teachers' lack of pedagogical content knowledge; (3) lack of commitment among teachers, (4) Ill-discipline and lack of interest for learning by learners, (5) School leadership is unsuccessful in maintain school discipline and lack of school resources to promote the teaching and learning of Economics. According to Asikhia, (2010) any school which experiences the factors as mentioned above is likely to have poor performance in specific subjects such as the one examined in this study.

4.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 4 presented quantitative and qualitative data and the research findings that emerged from data. Firstly, biographic information was presented and discussed. This was followed by the discussion of quantitative results commencing with the internal consistency of the study; and followed by nine (9) research findings. Lastly, the discussion of quantitative results started with presentation of results using thematic presentations; and discussion of eight (8) research findings from data derived from teachers' interviews; and nine (9) research findings from HoDs data derived from interviews.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides conclusions and recommendations on factors that affect learner performance among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Economics. The purpose of the study was to identify and explore the perceptions of teachers on learner performance as researched internationally and within South Africa. The focus was on analysing different factors that teachers perceive as major impediments to learner performance in Economics as a curriculum subject offered under CAPS in South Africa. The key findings were that (1) teachers perceive Economics as a difficult subject; (2) learners' negative attitudes towards Economics subject; (3) poor teaching experience and prevalence of content gap; (4) poor teaching environment and lack of teaching resources; (5) inadequate support from department; (6) lack of parents' involvement and support; (7) poor discipline in schools and parents; (8) increased teenage pregnancy in schools in surrounding mining areas.

5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

5.2.1 Key finding 1: Poor teaching environment and lack of teaching and learning resources

The study identified poor teaching environment and lack of teaching resources as the primary causes of poor performance of learners in Economics as a subject. Effective teaching and learning require conducive school environment. This study is in line with Thaba-Nkadimene (2021) who also identified inadequacies in school provisioning that was found to influence teacher performance and learner outcomes, causing psychological stress and low morale among teachers as a result of poor working conditions. Furthermore, teaching and learning resources were found to be basic to fundamental student learning and student performance.

5.2.2 Key finding 2: Lack of interest and negative attitudes by Economics learners

The HODs and teachers identified learners' lack of interest and negative attitudes towards Economics as a subject to be the cause of poor learners' performance. Most

of the learners do not revise their academic work; and their levels of absenteeism is high. This is due to poor support from parents and as well lack of academic skills which makes them to perceive Economics as a difficult subject(Asikhia, 2010). This study further established that teachers' perceptions that Economics is a difficult subject is one primary cause of teachers' negative attitudes towards the subject, hence this the poor performance to learners in some schools.

5.2.3 Key finding 3: Poor teaching experience and prevalence of content gap

This study identified poor teaching experience among Economics teachers; and the prevalence of content gap among them. The study showed that 5.41% teachers do not have enough Economics content knowledge. Furthermore, it was found that Teachers do not follow pacesetter and have poor teaching approaches when teaching in schools. This makes them not to finish their syllabus on time and culminates in poor performance in those schools.

5.2.4 Key finding 4: Teachers perceive Economics as a difficult subject

This finding is the response to the research question, 'what are teachers' perceptions on poor performance of learners in Economics?' This study found that most Economics teachers perceive Economics as a difficult subject. This is line with the study by Andreopoulos (2009) who found that some participants indicated the subject was difficult.

5.2.5 Key finding 5: Inadequate support from parents, school leadership and department

This study identified inadequate support from parents, school leadership and the Department of Education. The participants reflected that parents offer inadequate support to their children's learning. Similarly, school leadership and the Department of Education in Limpopo were also found not to be giving adequate support to Economics teachers; and supporting the teaching of Economics in schools.

5.2.6 Key finding 6: Poor discipline in schools

It has been noted that poor discipline in schools, poor parents support and poor commitment by teachers results in poor performance in schools. According to Ndamani (2008), schools with poor or no discipline at all are difficult to manage. As a

result, the learners do things as they wish and this disrupts the desirable learning and everyone loses focus. The ultimate results are parlous rates of success in the subject.

5.2.7 Key finding 7: Increased teenage pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy among female learners was identified as a contributing factor to poor performance. According to Panday, et. al, (2009) an increase in teenage pregnancy affects learners psychologically and this often results in these learners dropping out of school.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Recommendation 1: Improved teaching environment and availability teaching resources

This study recommends that the Limpopo Department of Basic Education should ensure that school resources are adequate for teaching and learning to take place. It is the duty of this Department to make sure the schools have enough teaching resources as well good teaching environment. It is also the duty of the community members to look after the school structures instead of vandalising them. Furthermore, school leadership should ensure that that they create a conducive school climate and culture to allow for meaningful learning.

5.3.2 Recommendation 2: Improving learners' motivation and attitude to learning

This study recommends to parents, schools, and the Department of Education to help in improving learners' motivation to learn and create positive attitude towards their learning. Parents should support their children. On the other hand, teachers and school leadership should also promote the value of education through various programmes that promote student learning, motivate them to study harder through sustained engagement. This could improve their attitudes to learning.

5.3.3 Recommendation 3: Provisioning of in-service training for Economics teachers

The teachers perceive Economics as a difficult subject because they do not have enough content in Economics. Furthermore, poor teaching and content gap requires

teachers to participate in all the in-service training. I recommend in-service training for teachers to keep abreast with the dramatic advances in content and pedagogies relevant for teaching of Economics. I further recommend that the Limpopo Department of Education should provide adequate workshops for Economics teachers. Moreover, schools, and unions could hire competent teachers who are subject-specific to curb the problem of lack of content knowledge.

5.3.4 Recommendation 4: Increased parents, school, and departmental support to address school discipline and teenage pregnancy

I recommend that parents, schools, and department should increase their level of support to learners to address the challenges brought along by poor school discipline and teenage pregnancy.

5.4 FURTHER STUDY

This study only focused on the perspective of HODs and Economics teachers at Mogalakwena Educational District in Limpopo Province. I recommend that the same study be conducted in other Limpopo Districts. The study could also be extended to other Commerce subjects beside Economics to address the impediments that cause poor performances in different schools in Limpopo Province. A similar study is needed for subjects that have a trend of poor performance of learners that eventually lead to the entire province underperforming.

5.12. CONCLUSION

In this study different literature and theories were reviewed to identify teachers' views on causes of poor performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane Circuit, Limpopo province. The study was driven by the following research questions:

- What are teachers' views of poor learner performance in Economics?
- What are the possible factors that contribute to the poor learner performance in Grade 11 and 12 Economics in the selected schools?

- How is the trend of learner performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane circuit in Limpopo province?

The (1) poor teaching environment and lack of teaching and learning resources; (2) lack of interest and negative attitudes by Economics learners; (3) poor teaching experience and prevalence of content gap; (4) teachers perceive Economics as a difficult subject; (5) inadequate support from parents, school leadership and department; (6) poor discipline in schools; and (7) increased teenage pregnancy were identified as serious contributory factors to the poor show in Economics in Limpopo province, specifically the schools sampled in this study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: APPLICATION LETTER FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Enq: Hlatshwayo D. S
Cont: 0760146203 /0721482288
Email: delightshaun31@gmail.com

P O Box 617
Acornhoek
1360
16 May 2020

The Office of Research Unit
Director: University of Limpopo
Private Bag X1106
Sovenga
0727

Dear Sir/Madam/Doctor/Professor

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

I write to request ethical clearance in order to conduct my research entitled “**Teachers’ view on causes of poor performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalanane circuit Limpopo province.**” Research data shall be collected from three different schools within Mogalakwena district in Matlalanane circuit. The research participants shall be selected from teachers in the Commercial Subject Group.

Your anticipated assistance is highly appreciated.

Yours truly
Delight Shaun Hlatshwayo

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 21 October 2020

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/297/2020: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Teachers' Views On Causes of Poor Performance in Economics Among Grade 11 And 12 Learners in Matlalane Circuit, Limpopo Province
Researcher: SD Hlatshwayo
Supervisor: Dr KL Thaba-Nkadamene
Co-Supervisor/s: Ms SD Mmakola
School: Education
Degree: Master of Education in Curriculum studies

PROF P MASOKO

CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

Note:

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Finding solutions for Africa

APPENDIX C: LETTER TO MOGALAKWENA DISTRICT

Enq: Hlatshwayo D. S
Cont: 0760146203 /0721482288
Email: delightshaun31@gmail.com

P O Box 617
Acornhoek
1360
16 May 2020

Mogalakwena District Manager
Limpopo Department of Education

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to request permission to conduct a research study in various secondary schools within your circuit. I am currently studying towards a Master's degree in Curriculum Studies with the University of Limpopo. The study title is: **“Teachers’ view on causes of poor performance in Economics among grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane circuit Limpopo province.”** The functioning of the school shall not be interrupted as breaks and after school hours shall be conveniently arranged to assure teacher's programmes are not disrupted.

Upon completion of the study, the results shall be shared with participants.

I anticipate your favourable consideration of this request.

In service, I am
Delight Shaun Hlatshwayo

APPENDIX D: APPROVAL FROM MOGALAKWENA DISTRIC



Ref : S11/2/2
Enq : Dolo S.J
Tel : 015 483 7582
Date : 02 November 2020

To : Hlatshwayo D.S

From : OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR
Mogalakwena District

SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON TEACHERS' VIEW ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN ECONOMICS AMONG GRADE 11 AND 12 LEARNERS IN MATLALANE CIRCUIT.

1. Your letter dated 02 November 2020 refers.
2. It is with great pleasure to inform you that approval to conduct research as per subject above is hereby granted.
3. The research must be conducted in accordance with the Department's policies and conditions such as but not limited to:
 - a. No disruption of Learning and teaching;
 - b. No publishing of research outcomes with privilege information before HOD gives approval.
4. We wish you best of luck with your studies. We believe this will add value to education system in our Province especially in Mogalakwena District.

Kind regards,

District Director

Date

MOGALAKWENA DISTRICT OFFICE
805 Rufus Seakamela Street, Mahwelereng
Tel: 015 483 7500 Fax: 086 425 8313

The heartland of Southern Africa- development is about people

APPENDIX E: LETTER TO MATLALANE CIRCUIT OFFICE

Enq: Hlatshwayo D. S
Cont: 0760146203 /0721482288
Email: delightshaun31@gmail.com

P O Box 617
Acornhoek
1360
16 May 2020

Matlalane Circuit Manager
Limpopo Department of Education

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to request permission to conduct a research study in various secondary schools within your circuit. I am currently studying towards a Master's degree in Curriculum Studies with the University of Limpopo. The study title is "**Teacher's view on causes of poor performance in Economics among grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane circuit Limpopo province.**" The functioning of the school shall not be interrupted as breaks and after school hours shall be conveniently arranged to assure teacher's programmes are not disrupted.

Upon completion of the study, the results shall be shared with participants.

I anticipate your favourable consideration of this request.

In service, I am
Delight Shaun Hlatshwayo

APPENDIX F: APPROVAL FROM MATLALANE CIRCUIT IN MOGALAKWENA DISTRICT



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

MATLALANE CIRCUIT

Enq : MAKHUBELA R. S.S
Tel : 015 571 7915/ 071 674 6817
Date : 09. November. 2020
To : Hlatshwayo D.S
From : OFFICE OF THE CIRCUIT MANAGER

Matlalane Circuit

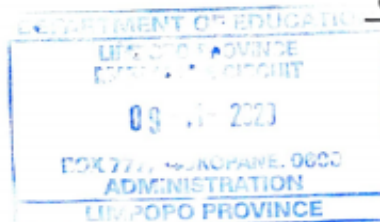
SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON TEACHERS' VIEWS ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN ECONOMICS AMONG GRADE 11 AND 12 LEARNERS IN MATLALANE CIRCUIT.

1. Your letter dated 03 November 2020 refers.
2. It is the pleasure of the Circuit Manager to inform you that approval to conduct research as per your request has been granted.
3. The research must however be conducted in line with the Department of Basic Education policies. Please ensure that among others, there is no disruption of teaching and learning during the research process.
4. We wish you all the best with regard to your research.

Kind regards:



Circuit Manager



09.11.20

Date

APPENDIX G: LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Enq: Hlatshwayo D. S
Cont: 0760146203 /0721482288
Email: delightshaun31@gmail.com

P O Box 617
Acornhoek
1360
16 May 2020

To: The Principal

REQUEST TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

I am currently doing my Master's degree with the School of Education at the University of Limpopo. My research title is **Teachers' views on causes of poor performance in Economics among the Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane circuit in Limpopo Province.**

I am therefore requesting permission to conduct individual interviews with three of your teachers. The purpose of the interviews is to find perspectives on the topic of this research as indicated above.

For further information, please contact me on the details provided.

Yours faithfully
Hlatshwayo DS

APPENDIX H: APPROVAL LETTER FROM MOYANENG SECONDARY SCHOOL



MOYANENG SECONDARY SCHOOL

0109041 MOYANENG
HAM NO 1
REBONE
0617

EMIS: 991101301

Date: 05/11/2020

To: Hlatshwayo DS.

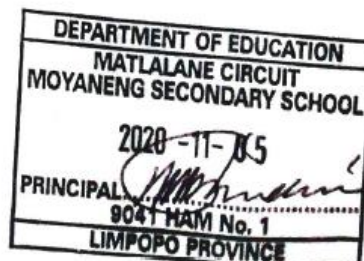
From:

SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON TEACHER'S VIEWS ON LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE OF ECONOMICS AMONG GRADE 11 AND 12 LEARNERS IN MATLALANE CIRCUIT.

1. Your letter dated 03 November 2020 refers
2. It is the pleasure of the Circuit Manager to inform you that approval to conduct research as per your request has been granted
3. The research must however be conducted in line with the Department of Basic Education policies. Please ensure that among others, there is no disruption of teaching and learning during the research process.
4. We wish you all the best with your research

Kind regards

Signature



Date: 05/11/2021

APPENDIX I : APPROVAL LETTER FROM KUBUSHE SECONDARY SCHOOL

ENQ: CHAUKE M.P

CONTACT: 072 240 0792

EMAIL: kubushesec@gmail.com

EMIS NUMBER: 921250300



KUBUSHE SECONDARY SCHOOL

P.O BOX 456

REBONE

0617

Enq: CHAUKE M.P

Tel: 072 240 0792

Date: 05/11/2020

To: Hlatshwayo DS.

From: KUBUSHE

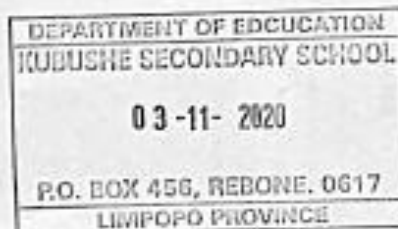
SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON TEACHER'S VIEWS ON LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE I ECONOMICS AMONG GRADE 11 AND 12 LEARNERS IN MATLALANE CIRCUIT.

1. Your letter dated 03 November 2020 refers
2. It is the pleasure of the Circuit Manager to inform you that approval to conduct research as per your request has been granted
3. The research must however be conducted in line with the Department of Basic Education policies. Please ensure that among others, there is no disruption of teaching and learning during the research process.
4. We wish you all the best with your research

Kind regards


Signature

03-11-2020
Date



APPROVAL J: APPROVAL LETTER FROM MPHOKENG SECONDARY SCHOOL

ENQ : Mr. Makgato M.M.

Cell : 0817788203



MPHOKENG SEC. SCHOOL

P. O. BOX 403

TREVES

0618

Email : mphokengsecondary@gmail.com

EMIS NO.: 921250782

05 November 2020

FROM : Mphokeng Secondary School.

: The Principal

TO : Mr. Hlatshwayo D.S.

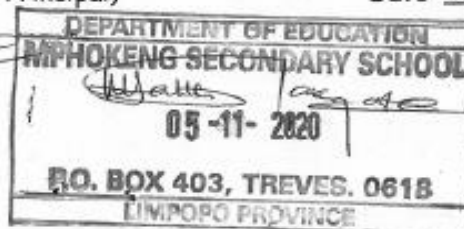
**SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON TEACHER'S VIEWS
ON LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN ECONOMICS AMONG
GRADE 11 AND 12 LEARNERS IN MATLALANE CIRCUIT.**

1. Your letter dated 03 November 2020 refers.
2. It is the pleasure of the Circuit Manager to inform you that approval to conduct research as per your request has been granted.
3. The research must however be conducted in line with the Department of Basic Education policies. Please ensure that among others, there is no disruption of teaching and learning during the research process.
4. We wish you all the best with your research.

Yours faithfully

Mr. Makgato M.M. (School Principal)

Date: 05-11-2020



APPENDIX K: A LETTER FROM EDITOR



Office: 0183892451

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Cell: 0729116600

Date: 25th May, 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

I, Muchativugwa Liberty Hove, confirm and certify that I have read and edited the entire dissertation, Teachers' views on causes of poor performance in Economics among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalele Circuit, Limpopo Province, submitted by D.S Hlatshwayo, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Masters of Education (Curriculum Studies).

D.S. Hlatshwayo was supervised by Dr KL Thaba-Nkadimene and co-supervised by Ma SD Mraikola.

I hold a PhD in English Language and Literature in English and am qualified to edit such a thesis for cohesion and coherence. The views expressed herein, however, remain those of the researchers.

Yours sincerely

Professor M.L. Hove (PhD, MA, PGDE, PGCE, BA Honours – English)



APPENDIX L: CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH PROJECT TITLE: Teacher's view on causes of poor performance in Economics among the Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane circuit in Limpopo Province.

(It is compulsory for the researcher to complete this field before submission to the Ethics Committee)

RESEARCH PROJECT LEADER/SUPERVISOR: MR D.S HLATSHWAYO

(It is compulsory for the researcher to complete this field before submission to the Ethics Committee)

I, **Delight Shaun Hlatshwayo** hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the following project: **Teacher's view on causes of poor performance in Economics among the Grade 11 and 12 learners in Matlalane circuit in Limpopo Province.**

(It is compulsory for the researcher to complete this field before submission to the Ethics Committee)

I realise that:

1. The study deals with people's experiences, perceptions, and experiences.
(e.g. effect of certain medication on the human body)
(It is compulsory for the researcher to complete this field before submission to the Ethics Committee)
2. The procedure or treatment envisaged may hold some risk for me that cannot be foreseen at this stage.
3. The Ethics Committee has approved that individuals may be approached to

participate in the study.

4. The research project, i.e. the extent, aims and methods of the research, has been explained to me.
5. The project sets out the risks that can be reasonably expected as well as possible discomfort for persons participating in the research, an explanation of the anticipated advantages for myself or others that are reasonably expected from the research and alternative procedures that may be to my advantage.
6. I was informed of any new information that may become available during the research that may influence my willingness to continue my participation.
7. Access to the records that pertain to my participation in the study was be restricted to persons directly involved in the research.
8. Any questions that I may have regarding the research, or related matters, was be answered by the researcher/s.
9. If I have any questions about, or problems regarding the study, or experience any undesirable effects, I may contact a member of the research team
10. Participation in this research is voluntary and I can withdraw my participation at any stage.
11. If any medical problem is identified at any stage during the research, or when I am vetted for participation, such condition was discussed with me in confidence by a qualified person and/or I was be referred to my doctor.
12. I indemnify the University of Limpopo and all persons involved with the above project from any liability that may arise from my participation in the above project or that may be related to it, for whatever reasons, including negligence on the part of the mentioned persons.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

THE PARTICIPANT

Signed at _____ on this _____ day of _____ 2020

APPENDIX M: QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the questionnaire by marking with a tick (√) and an answer in the correct place where is required.

A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION			
1	What is your gender?	Male	
		Female	
2	What is your age band?	21-30	
		31-40	
		41-50	
		51-60	
3	What is your designation?	CS1 with less than 5 years' experience	
		CS1 with more than 5 years' experience	
		HOD	
4	What is your highest academic/professional qualification?		
5	What is your Economics qualification?		

B. CONTENT KNOWLEDGE	
6. How long have you been teaching Economics in grade 11 and 12?	
7. Are there topics you find challenging in Economics? If yes, mention them	
8. Is your Economics content knowledge adequate? Motivate	

9. Do you have content gap in Economics? If Yes, motivate and if No, mention the topics you find challenging	
10. How do you make sure that curriculum is always covered at a required time?	
11. Do you follow a pacesetter when teaching?	
C. TEACHING AND LEARNING	
12. How is your attitude towards Economics?	
13. What do you think are the major causes of poor performance in Economics?	
14. How is the attitude of learners towards Economics?	
15. Do you think Economics is a difficult subject?	
16. What are your strategies to improve performance in Economics?	
D. SCHOOL INFORMATION	
17. Is the school environment conducive for teaching and learning? Motivate	
18. Are all Economics teachers in your school qualified to teach Economics from grade 10-12?	
E. RESOURCES INFORMATION	
19. How many hours are Economics periods per week?	

APPENDIX N: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

Data collection from teachers was be guided by the following questions:

1. What is your attitude of learners towards Economics?
2. Do you think the teaching of Economics receives adequate support from curriculum advisors? Motivate.
3. In your own view, what are the causes of poor performance in Economics?

APPENDIX O: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HODs

Data collection from HODs was be guided by the following questions:

1. Gender of the HOD?
2. What were your major subjects at tertiary level?
3. How long have you been an HOD for Economics?
4. What is the attitude of teachers towards the teaching of Economics?
5. Do you think the teaching of Economics receives adequate support from curriculum advisors? Motivate
6. What are your plans to improve the teaching of Economics in this circuit?
7. In your own view, what are causes of poor performance in Economics?