

**FACTORS INFLUENCING A DECLINE OF LEARNERS ENROLMENT IN  
COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS: A CASE OF DRIEKOP CIRCUIT IN LIMPOPO  
PROVINCE**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that *an investigation into the factors influencing a decline of learners enrolment in commercial subjects*: a case of Driekop circuit in Limpopo is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE (Mr T.A MATHIBA)

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DATE

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late mother, Mamakgotla Bertha Mathiba. I don't know where I would be if it wasn't for your infinite love, unwavering support and immense prayers, may your soul continue to rest in peace

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the valuable contribution from the following people:

- Firstly, I would love to thank God for giving me the strength and courage to continue and complete this work during the most difficult time of my life just after I have lost my mother
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- My family in its entirety, my sister Maseroka Mathiba as well as my two aunts Manhloa and Tselane Mathiba, your support means a lot.
- To my Daughter Pono Mathiba for giving meaning to my life and therefore inspiring me to do more
- Lastly, but with gratitude; I thank all the participants of the sampled schools, who shared their ideas, knowledge and expertise and therefore made this research project a success.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study reports on factors influencing a decline of learner's enrolment in commercial subjects: a case of Driekop circuit in Limpopo province. The study followed a qualitative research methodology underpinned by a case study design. The uncertainty reduction theory by Berger and Calabre (1983) guided the study. The aim of the study was to investigate the factors influencing learner enrolment in commercial subjects in Driekop Circuit and the sample of participants was comprised of eight teachers and twenty learners from four secondary schools. Data were collected through interviews and document analysis.

The finding of the study revealed a number of factors influencing learners enrolment in commercial subjects which includes; i). learners' ability in the subject, ii) peer pressure, iii) the influence of teachers and school managers, and iv) learners' misconceptions about commercial subjects. The study makes a number of recommendations: Firstly, learners should be advised, guided and supported in their decision making. Secondly, aptitude and interest tests should be taken, and thirdly appropriate interventions from professionals should be sought by schools.

### **Keywords:**

*Secondary school, Learner's enrolment, Driekop circuit, Commercial subjects*

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION**

I am a commercial teacher at a school in the Driekop Circuit, Tubatse Municipality in the Greater Sekhukhune District. The chosen topic forms part of my interest, and my involvement in the Department of Basic Education gave me access to information and a deeper understanding of the issues involved. I have noted a decline of learners' enrolment in commercial subjects. The inclusion of commercial subjects in a curriculum allows learners to deal with real-life issues relevant in the South African context. The curriculum that comprises the subjects deals with three areas, namely Business Subjects, Economics, and Accounting (Department of Education, 2014). The subjects provide the framework for exploring theoretical and practical components of the business environment and the economy as a whole.

This makes it important to have many learners enrolling and emerging in the commercial stream. The growth of any human being's social, economic, political, geographical, scientific and technological skills is centered on quality education (Maliki, Ngban & Ibu, 2009). The statement was made back in 2009 and remains as strong and relevant today as it was then amid many socio-economic ills like unemployment, crime and poverty. Worryingly, though, recent statistics published by the Department of Education shows a decline in the number of learners' enrolment in commercial subjects in high schools (Department of Education, 2018). Surviving the contemporary economic predicaments, learners need to be well prepared and educated about business, finances and economy. Thus, commercial subjects remain critical for the country's development and more learners have to take up commercial stream, and ultimately emerge, because there is no social, political, or economic problem soluble without adequate education (Lyman, Strachan & Lazaridou, 2012).

Many subjects on factors influencing enrolment of learners conducted were mostly in the sciences stream, particularly in mathematics and physical sciences. Their findings presented different results, including socio-cultural and psychological factors, which were perceived to be barricades (Van der Walt, 2008; Sinyosi, 2015). However, literature studied fall short of research that explores the commercial stream. As a result, the purpose of this study was to explore factors influencing a decline in the enrolment of commercial subjects in Driekop Circuit.

## **1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The enrolment in the commercial stream has been on a downward trajectory recently. I have observed a consistent decline in the enrolment of commercial subjects like business subjects, economics and accounting over the past three years in the final Grade 12 examination results. Although this is a national trend, such declines are beyond the tipping point in poorer districts like the Greater Sekhukhune (Department of Education, 2018).

In this area of study, numerous intrusion tactics to advance the state of affairs have been employed but with little development as the decline kept continued every year, and some school principals began to remove the stream altogether. The let down by the strategies engaged to arise with expressive development is evocative of more pragmatic debriefing to form any underlying difficulties and forces to the challenge.

## **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTION**

### **Aim**

This study aims to investigate the factors influencing learner enrolment in commercial subjects in Driekop Circuit.

### **Objectives**

The objective of the study is:

To explore the factors that affect learners' enrolment in commercial subjects.

To investigate the factors influencing enrolment of learners to the commercial stream

## **1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study has adopted a qualitative approach as it offers the opportunity to interact with the participants while capturing and interpreting their experiences in their own words. Also, this approach allows for the terrain of experiences and feelings of participants to be realised.

The qualitative approach is relevant to this study because of its appropriateness in social research, which can be done in the subjects' natural setting (Creswell, 2011). Qualitative research is a type of primary research in which the researcher collects first-hand information obtained directly from participants (Cohen, 2013). The model uses an inductive form of rational rather than a logical one; therefore, emerging notions, insights and empathy form patterns in the data (Creswell, 2011). In this study, data was collected from learners and teachers of the targeted schools rather than information from books.

### **1.4.1 Research Design**

Research design is a plan outlining how the researcher will explore the project. It summarises how the study will progress and hopefully plan out. This includes information such as the period, the subjects involved and the conditions under which the data will be collected and collated. The purpose of using a research plan is to map out a path to find evidence to answer the research question. The objective is to ensure that the results are valid and reliable (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

### **1.4.2 Sampling**

Sampling is the act of choosing a smaller group from a bigger group with the understanding of representing the whole group sufficiently through the actions employed over the smaller group (Preissle, 2010). According to Rosnow (2014), sampling refers to selecting a subdivision from the whole population.

The study has sampled four (4) schools with twenty (20) learners; four (4) from each of the four (4) sampled secondary schools in Driekop Circuit. Also, two (2) commercial teachers from each of the schools formed part of the sample. Purposive sampling was used in this research to select the schools. The schools were purposefully selected because they were accessible to me. I have opted for a purposive sampling method because it is appropriate for the setting and context of the study. After all, only learners in Grade 9 were chosen to get a true reflection of the decline in enrolment.

#### **1.4.3 Data collection**

Data were collected through document analysis and interviews with participants. I have used a field recorder to document the interviews. An advantage of using interviews is the use of open-ended questions for in-depth answers (Creswell, 2013). Participants were free to give answers without any fear because they were interviewed anonymously.

#### **1.4.4 Data analysis**

##### **Qualitative data analysis**

I have followed Creswell's (2013) model of data analysis because of its precise scholarly mode of quantifying evidence in academic research. All data collected was transcribed, sorted, typed and saved as a document on a computer. Once this had been done, an analysis of the findings took place, in which common trends and patterns were identified and interpreted to develop themes.

#### **1.4.5 Quality criteria**

##### **Credibility**

Credibility is the aspect which requires the researcher to visibly connect the study's outcomes with reality to validate the truth of the research findings (Creswell, 2013).

The following techniques were applied:

**a. Triangulation**

The study employed multiple methods of data collection to establish credibility and to attain a broad understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

**b. Member checking**

I have shared the interpretations and conclusion with the participants to try and elucidate their intentions, precise accuracies and allow them to add any supplementary information.

**c. Transferability**

I have provided a detailed account of my experiences during data collection, including the location of interviews, the socio-cultural aspects, and the context of the sample to provide a complete understanding of the research setting. This will make provision for other scholars and readers to make autonomous transferability judgment.

**Conformability**

I have ensured that the findings of this study are shaped by the participants more than me, using the following techniques:

**a. Audit trail**

A detailed process of data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the data was provided. I have recorded the topics that are unique and interesting into themes and explain what the themes mean.

**b. Reflexibility**

I have reflected on my background and position to determine if they may influence the research process. A reflective journal was kept to reflect on what was happening in the research process, considering the researcher's values and interest.

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

One of the objectives of introducing commercial subjects in the South African curriculum was to use education for self-reliance among learners, particularly after completion of their subjects in matric. This objective remains an ambition as fewer learners enrol for this stream and, therefore, there are not enough learners attaining business skills as expected to enable them to create opportunities for themselves in various commercial activities (Taylor, 2008).

It is expected that findings from this study will inform the stakeholders in education, especially principals, policy makers and planners about how big a challenge this is in order to take necessary measures of improving learners' enrolment in commercial subjects in secondary school. Furthermore, the research findings will contribute to the existing literature on learners' enrolment in commercial subjects. Also, the study will serve as a base for further subjects on commercial subjects.

## **1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics are naturally allied with principles and morality and deals with matters of what is right or wrong (Babbie, 2007). It is, therefore, essential that all aspects of a research project be critically subjected to a search for any violation of ethical principles. Full attention was given to this issue in this research. The proposal to undertake the research went through the university of Limpopo ethics committee before the research can be conducted (refer to Appendix B).

### **Participants consent**

The Limpopo Department of Education was approached for permission to conduct the research at their schools (see Appendix F). Learners and teachers selected at the schools for interviews were approached only once the permission has been granted by the schools' authorities. Participation in this study was voluntary and consent forms were signed and sought from the participants

### **Informed consent**

In this study, participants were provided with detailed information about their role in the research study, inclusive of the purpose of this study, the procedures that were to be followed to conduct this study, the data collection instruments, and how the results were used, so that they could make an informed decision whether they want to participate in the study or not. The participants completed and signed the informed consent forms upon agreement to participate in the study.

### **Principle of beneficence**

Participants were protected from harm and discomfort by the researcher not asking them questions which can invade their dignity. They were monitored for any sign of distress. Also, the participants were informed that they have the right to ask questions and raise complaints (Brink et al 2012).

### **The principle of justice / Fairness**

The participants have a right to fair selection and treatment (Brink, 2012). The respondents were selected due to the reasons directly related to the study such as gender, age and the area, not because they can be easily manipulated or they are known.

### **Confidentiality**

Affirmation for anonymity and confidentiality of information produced were given to participants. The confidentiality and protection of participants' identities were ensured strictly observing all protocols embodied in the research ethics of University of Limpopo.

### **Anonymity**

All the participants' names were anonymised to preserve their identity and their wellbeing was also not compromised. In this study, i did not use the participants' names in the collection of data. Instead, pseudonyms were employed.

## **Respect for persons**

Participants were informed that participation is strictly voluntary and that they may, at any time, withdraw from participation without any consequence. They were also informed that their information may not be passed on to other people. Participants were also informed that they can refuse to disclose information they are not comfortable with and that their choice will be respected without any prejudice.

### **1.7 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This study focused on the Sekhukhune District in Limpopo province and the learners and teachers in those schools. Concentration is on the sampled schools. Therefore, the data can only be used to make recommendations and conclusions about the schools in the Sekhukhune District and not generally about other areas of the country.

### **1.8 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

#### **1.8.1 Further Education and Training (FET)**

Within this research, the emphasis is on the Further Education and Training (FET) phase which incorporates grades ten to twelve where there is a NCS (National Curriculum Statement) for each subject. This NCS defines the broader LOs (Learning Outcomes) for the subject, and each of these is divided into a number of ASs (Assessment Standards) which provide the various skills, knowledge, attitudes and values which the learner needs to acquire in order to achieve the said outcomes. On achieving this for a total of seven subjects, the learner can attain the NSC (National Senior Certificate) which is the exit-level qualification for the FET (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the FET refers to the grade 9 learners who are expected to make subject choices in grade 10.

#### **1.8.2 Subject choice**

Subject Choice is defined as the act of selecting a subject (Akerman, 2014). In this study the term subject choice indicates the choices of commercial subjects which grade 9 learners make when transiting to the FET phase.

### **1.8.3 Driekop circuit**

Driekop circuit is a department of education office in Sekhukhune district under Limpopo province in South Africa; it is among the chain management of schools in the country and governs schools in Driekop circuit which is responsible for.

### **1.8.4 Commercial subjects**

According to Russell (2009) commercial subjects are known in OBE as Economic and Management Sciences (EMS). At the GET and lower levels, learners study EMS to get a commercial grounding, but at FET level they may do any combination of Accounting, Business Subjects and Economics as part of their subjects choice.

## **1.9 ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

The research report is structured in the following way:

### **Chapter 1: background and motivation**

The first chapter offers a comprehensive background as well as the summary of the study which includes the motivation to the research, research aims and objectives.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review**

The second chapter explores some of the literature that other researchers who have studied comparable topics found and reported in their work. It covers the literature on the factors that influence learner subjects' choice in an effort to understand the factors that influence the low enrolment of learners in commercial subjects.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

Chapter three deals with the adopted methodology to gather information used in this study. The processes followed during data collection and data analysis is well documented in this chapter.

#### **Chapter 4: Data presentation and analysis**

The fourth Chapter presents the collected data as well as the results found from the interviews and document analysis. An analysis is also concluded and unfilled in this chapter. Furthermore, the results are also interpreted in this section as they come up. The findings are then combined to give a robust conclusion as to what influences the leaners low enrolment in commercial subjects.

#### **Chapter 5: recommendations and conclusion**

The last chapter presents the critical discussion of the findings of the research so as to make tactical recommendations and conclusions based on the responses. The suggestion on what could be done to improve leaners enrolment in commercial subjects is then forwarded in conclusion.

### **1.10 SUMMARY**

This chapter has provided the background to the study as well as the general introduction to the study. In the next chapter, the study provides a literature review on factors influencing leaners choices of subjects at school.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section presents the wide-ranging literature on factors that influence learners' enrolment in commercial subjects, which were significantly considerable. This chapter outlines the following aspects: (a) Influence by teachers and school managers, (b) Parental influence, (c) The effect of social class and gender, (d) Career requirements, (e) Learners' perception about the subjects, and (f) Beliefs about subject choice. It starts by giving a background to the commercial subjects and also explores some strategies to overcome the challenge of poor enrolment.

## **2.1 COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS**

It was recorded that in India, commercial subjects began with the establishment of a commercial school in Madras by the Trustees of Pachaiyappa's Charities. A school of commerce was established in Calcutta in 1895 by the government of India. Commerce classes started in presidency college, Calcutta in 1903 and 1912 commercial institutions came into existence in Bombay and Delhi providing for skill formation in typewriting, short-hand and business methods. According to Gordon and Howell (2015) business education is largely a product of the twentieth century. South Africa embarked on radical transformation of education and training between 1989 and 1994 with the inclusion of commercial subjects in their curriculum. The commercial stream includes the following subjects in South Africa:

### **Economics**

Economics can be defined as the study of how individuals, businesses, government and other organisations within our society choose to use scarce resources to satisfy their numerous needs and wants in a manner that is efficient and equitable (CAPS, 2011). According to Obemeata (1980) the importance of economics in any nation is clear as the subject enables both leaders and citizens to understand basic economics concepts, principles as well as to understand, appreciate and seek to improve the economic situation for their own social good. To him the principal objective for teaching economics entails providing economic understanding necessary for responsible citizenship. Furthermore, Obemeata (1991) stated that the position of economics particularly in

secondary curriculum has been strengthened because it has been accepted and also has civil values because of some topics such as the element and determinants of national income, the structure and activities of labour unions, the working and influence of financial institution.

Adu (2002) emphasised that the study of economics serves a useful purpose in modern life. The subject provides facts and shows what may be expected to be the outcome of certain lines of conduct, helps to decide which of several alternatives to choose from. To Obemeata (1991) economics has some intrinsic value that makes it appealing as a school subject for instance, there is a great logic in it and it also connects learners to the essentials of everyday life. Hermanowicz et al (1985) also mentioned that economic education prepares learners as future global citizens to make effective decisions. For example, the study of economics helps individuals in understanding human behavior and cultivating analytical and argumentative skills that are crucial for winning a job.

Friedman (1966) argued that the ultimate goal of economics is to develop theories that yield meaningful and valid predictions about phenomena not yet observed. He emphasised that economics as a body of tentatively accepted generalisation about phenomena that can be used to predict the consequences in changes of circumstances.

### **Business Subjects**

Business education as stated by Dunhill and Hodkinson (2012), Whitehead and Dyer (2010) has held insubstantial place in the English secondary school and has attracted little-status areas of the curriculum, a situation exacerbated by the gendered nature of business education. However, from the end of the 1970s business and enterprise education began to be both transformed and to make major in-roads within the secondary school curriculum. The introduction of the technical and vocational education initiative (TVET) in 1983 was a particularly significant event in the growth of business enterprise. A curriculum framework that emphasised certain progressive features such as enabling students to “learn how to learn”. Business subjects deals with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are critical for informed, productive, ethical and responsible participation in the formal and informal economic sectors (CAPS, 2014)

Added that the development of these business rules will put learners in a position where they are able to effectively apply knowledge and skills in order to analyse and deal with different business environments namely, macro environment, micro environment and market environment to initiate and carry out business ventures and successfully carry out business operations.

All the commercial subjects are important to the economy because of their private and social benefits. Their significance cannot be exaggerated particularly in our globalized economy. Commercial subjects prepare learners to survive the dynamics of free trade of goods and services in a state of globalization. In order to meet the objectives of commercial bias subjects there should be teachers who would make sure that the ball is rolling in the right direction of success.

## **2.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNER'S ENROLMENT IN COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS**

The modern world as a result of industrialisation and the advancement in technology have led to us having a range of careers that necessitate diverse prior knowledge at high school level like the sciences, commerce and the general stream; these demands for learners to make a decision about which subjects would best suits their needs.

### **2.2.1. Influence by teachers and school managers**

According to Costantino (2012), teachers remain a dominant element towards learning in the classroom and play the mediator role in the verdicts which learners and guardians make. In support of the perspective, teachers play an important role in subject choice learners make. Colley (2013), states that learning is a state of becoming, this means learners necessitate the contribution from teachers to learn; hence, the relationship with and perceptions of the teacher are vital. Teachers become accustomed to their pedagogy to the habitus of their learners. Learners' habitus is cognisant through occupational ideas that similarly impact teachers' discourse. Considering these factors, it becomes clear that the effect teachers have on learners is significant, either positively or negatively (Frykholm & Nitzler, 2014).

### **2.2.2. Teacher's views**

Contreras (2011) suggested that “if a teacher expects that a student doesn't need help or will do well, the student is likely to do well; if a teacher expects a student to fail, they will probably fail” (58). This indicates that if a teacher has faith in a learner ability to succeed in particular subject then the learner is likely to succeed, and if the teacher does not believe in the learner then the learner will not do well and could possibly not even continue with that particular subject. This ideal on learner subject choice is an outcome of communications and relationships that the teacher has with their learners. Koomen, (2011), have noted that many researchers have portrayed the importance of the relationship between the teacher and the learner. Ladd, Birch and Buhs (1999) further established that the quality of the relationship between teachers and learners have a significant impact on the overall activity of the learners which then have an impact on their learning and henceforth influences their subject choices.

Harvey (2013) affirms the significance of positive relationships between teachers and learners as having an impact on the learners confidence when it comes to learning. Moreover, he further argues that teacher's familiarity of different learners play an important role in refining the learner's motivation. Teachers' views could be problematic as they influence learner's behaviour or beliefs about a specific subject which then directs them towards other subjects

According to Davies, Adnett and Turnbull (2013), principals might also believe that they could distinguish certain subjects that are predominantly suitable for the type of learners who attend their school. The English system, probably, also makes it easier to differentiate between a learner and teacher influence (Davies & Adnetta, 2013). Most learners in England continue to study from the age of 16 – 19 (which is similar to our FET phase, Grades 10 – 12) and continue to do so at the same school which they have attended in the preceding years.

### **2.2.3. Parental influence**

Parents can be very influential in their children's subject choice. However, research into independent schools and their career choice procedures has led to the finding that parents should not force their children to do subjects which they consider important or better than others (Gatlin, 2012). The best choice will always be the subjects with which the child feels they can cope with and those that interest them the most (Maskew, 2012). Throughout the entire universe, there is a rising acknowledgement of the prominence of engaging guardians, relatives and societies in rising the educational ambitions and achievements of young people (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2008). The findings of this research fully support this statement.

Berger (2012) looks at the importance of the relationship between parents and schools. The author proposes that teachers need to be trained on how to handle this relationship. Therefore, proving the absolute importance of the parent in the learner's schooling. Parents will always remain the primary teachers of their children with an invested interest in their child's subject choice.

The pragmatic indication indicates that guardian's involvement is one of the crucial elements in safeguarding advanced learners' accomplishment and improvement in schools (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2013) supported by Harris & Chrispeels (2014).

#### **2.2.4. The effect of social class and gender**

Davies (2014) attempted to identify the effect of gender and social class on subject enrolment for 14 – 16-year-olds in England. Their study design and methods investigated the circumstance and likelihood of a learner entering for examinations in the following subjects: French, Business Subjects, German, History, Home Economics, and Geography.

The study looked primarily at socioeconomic background and gender as determinants of subject enrolment. Davies concluded that general ability and aptitude have the firmest effect on subject enrolment, followed by socioeconomic background. For most

subjects, learners' job aspirations and how well they get on at school have significant effects on their choice.

### **2.2.5. Gender differences**

Jin, Muriel and Sibieta (2010) posit that subject choice for learners can be influenced by the perceived different gender stereotypes. It has been found that females and male learners could easily have different views on their personal capability and competency to achieve in certain subjects, which could influence their enrolment choices as they would go to those where they believe they would perform well (Nagy , 2006).

Omondi (2013) also presents that learners' gender has been found to have an impact on learners subject choice, and also the values they attach to different types of subjects. Omondi further demonstrated that the gender differences that are observed in universities and colleges are also observable in subjects involving high school learners. Gender, therefore, has an influence on a learners' choice as well as the gender of those who provide them with advice.

### **2.2.6. Career requirements**

Different careers require one to have basic skills and knowledge and this boils down to the subjects they choose at high school in the FET phase.

### **2.2.7. Future Career Requirements**

Research by Erasmus and Breier (2013), showed a shortage of skilled professionals in South Africa. The National Talent Acquisition Leader at Deloitte and Touché , Willem van der Post, in his account states that the South African landscape for training chartered accountants (CAs) is plagued by a significant shortage of suitable, prospective candidates at entry-level, and a training regime that is constantly challenged by the need to stay relevant (2015).

In a media release, CA Training in South Africa, presented by Grey Consulting an accounting, finance and risk recruitment Specialist Company, claimed that part of the

problem of a shortage of suitable candidates is a lack of understanding of financial skills, business acumen and team playing roles (2015). These skills are part of the commerce curriculum offered at FET level.

## **2.3 LEARNERS' PERCEPTION ABOUT THE SUBJECTS**

Learners equate their attainments with that of their peers and develop a certain mentality regarding the outcomes. This leads them to believe that they are good at one subject because they seem to perform relatively better in that subject when compared with others.

### **2.3.1. Passion for the subjects**

Davies (2012) suggests that learners perform better when they choose the subjects they wish to study. This is further corroborated by Marsh (2012) and Eccles and Wigfield (2014) when they state that this apparent position makes them more poised and, henceforth, appreciate the subject more and ultimately nurturing the passion for the subject. Subjects in various states, by Elsworth (2011), Stokking (2013), and Cleaves (2014) among others found the effect of learners' aspirations and interest on subject choice, that when learners are highly enthused to study a subject they become more probable to persist in the face of difficulties. Also, they become more probable to aim for profound rather than superficial learning.

### **2.3.2. Academic ability in the subject**

Learners are more likely to attain high marks when studying subjects more suitable to their competences and when they have faith in their ability to succeed (Trautwein, 2013). Learners' capacity to base their choice of subjects on their relative advantage rest on the appropriateness of the facts they have gathered at the time of making their choices.

### **2.3.3. Perceived personal ability**

Lyons and Quinn (2010) demonstrated that Learners make their subject choices based on their belief on their ability and capability to achieve in those subjects. Moreover, Lyons and Quinn (2010) further indicates learners tend to choose the subjects that are less demanding and in which they believe they can achieve more. According to Stevens, et al. (2007) a learner's perceived personal ability had an influence on their enrolment in a particular subject, as an example if a learner performs well in maths in lower classes then they are likely to choose commercial subject in the following classes in comparison to those who attain a low academic performance in that subject (Tripney et al., 2010).

#### **2.3.4. Peer pressure**

The learners' subject choice can be influenced by the ambitions and expectations of their peers (Davies & Coe, 2012). Friends play a major role in teenagers' lives in high school, making it typical for learners to make similar choices. Also, the peer group's effects on learners' achievement at school have been extensively reported by Hoxby (2014) and Robertson & Symons (2013). Its effect on attainment can have a spillover effect on subject choice.

#### **2.3.5. Self-realization**

Kori, et al. (2015) presents self-realization as one of the factors that influence learners' subject choice. In his study he establishes that despite some researcher's findings about how learners choose easier subjects, there are still those who would opt for subjects that are believed to be difficult so as to prove the point that they are proficient, furthermore he indicates other factors such as role models, school reputation, curriculum as well as future prospects which have been noted to impact on a learner's choice of subjects.

### **2.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING A DECLINE IN LEARNERS ENROLMENT**

The decline of enrolments in some subjects has been a result of certain learner factors such as gender, the intended career after high school as well as factors involving the pupil's teachers.

#### **2.4.1. Teaching and learning environment**

Mabula (2012) has found the school learning environment as one of the factors that influence the decline on learners' enrolment in his study on the Science subjects; the same could be true even on the commercial subjects. The creation of a learning environment is completely the responsibility of a teacher and the school in its entirety. Lyons (2006) also noted that in Tanzania teaching and learning in classrooms influenced the decline in the enrolment of learners in Science subjects.

#### **2.4.2. Teachers' teaching approaches**

Movahedzadeh (2011) found that the way a subject is presented plays a significant role in emerging learners' interest towards that subject. Speering and Rennie (1996) found that usage of different teaching methods have an impact on learning which results in increased enrolments and the lack of application of appropriate techniques will lead to learners being bored and enrolment decreasing, Similarly, Akintade (2012) also notes that teachers' poor adoption of relevant teaching methods influenced the decrease of learners enrolment in geography.

Akerman (2012) has noted that some teaching approaches adopted by teachers are not based on learners' ability level or the specific content to be taught. The adoption of teaching methods has been habitual. Ndalichako and Komba (2014) note that the subject learning experience gained in the previous classes forms the foundation for learners deciding not to take the subject in the next class.

#### **2.4.3. Relevance of a subject and level of difficulty**

According to Ndalichako and Komba (2014) learners weigh and put on some value on subjects believed to be suitable and appropriate to their everyday life. This may include subjects that affords them the necessary skills and knowledge they will need to tackle their daily activities and challenges. Subjects which were perceived to be less relevant to their needs were therefore further observed to be rejected by most learners.

## **2.5 OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF POOR ENROLMENT**

### **2.5.1 Educator's intrinsic motivation**

In order to succeed in dealing with the challenges of poor enrolment in schools (Taylor, 2008) stipulates that teachers must find it in themselves to be responsible for the learning outcome of their learners through improving teaching and learning. They must have intrinsic motivation to expand their content knowledge by studying more on the subject they are offering. Teachers must take it upon themselves to ensure that they remain lifelong learners so as to also increase their creativity (Balls, Eury & King, 2009).

### **2.5.2 Effective training of all stakeholders in the education system**

Taylor (2008) further indicated that preparation and quality training of subject advisors is of great importance, as it would help them advance in assessing teachers' knowledge and their performance. Good and quality performance by teachers helps in attracting many learners to enrol in a particular subject.

Learners' poor enrolment can be combated by improving subject teaching through quality circles, in-service training and peer support groups (Taylor, 2008). The school's management teams should be tasked to organise in-service training for teachers so that they can remain up to date and not lose touch with the latest developments in school curriculum.

### **2.5.3 Developing professionalism in schools**

It is common cause that teachers are a significant and an enabling factor for improving the quality of education. Education is also a labour-intensive profession. Without a sufficient number of high quality, poised and motivated teachers, it will be difficult and close to impossible to attain access to quality education. Therefore, in order to overcome the challenges of poor enrolment in a subject or a stream, it is vital to improve the quality of education through developing the professionalism of principals and teachers (Göttelmann-Duret, 2012).

A Professional person refers to an individual who possesses knowledge of something and has a commitment to a particular set of values, both of which are generally accepted characteristics of professions (Balls, 2015). Professional development also has an impact on academic subjects and how learners learn particular material. It addresses life-long learning, collaboration and personal reflection as characteristics of a profession (Balls et al., 2015:1). Furthermore, developing professionalism also needs transformation of school staff and offering a clear curriculum framework and practical tools (Göttelmann-Duret, 2012).

According to Taylor (2008), teachers should enhance their knowledge through exploration of new methods of teaching and learning and new assessment strategies. Teachers could improve their subject knowledge through adequate training and adapting their teaching to real-life rural situations. Unfortunately, professionalism is hampered by teachers themselves through absenteeism, which influences learners to drop out school. If teachers do not act professionally, learners copy bad values and morals. Attendance of both learners and teachers should be tightened (Rena, 2011).

Furthermore, in order to maintain professionalism in schools, teachers should have well organized lesson plans and they should know how to use resources effectively. In addition, activities such as reviewing learners' work, observing other teachers, cooperative planning of classroom implementation, practice sessions with feedback, and opportunities to give presentations, lead discussions and produce written work are effective ways for teachers to improve their skills (Rena, 2011).

#### **2.5.4 Maintaining discipline**

The challenges of poor enrolment in a school or any stream could be overcome if the principals and teachers in their respective schools and streams were able to maintain discipline and order. Discipline is an important feature in a school. According to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, 8 (1) and (2) (SASA), for a school to be effective, good school discipline is important as learners learn best in an orderly and safe environment. Therefore, to achieve good discipline, a written code of conduct is necessary for schools and their departments because it encourages good behavior.

Good behavior persuades learners to stay in a particular school; therefore enrolment will also gain momentum.

Furthermore, Arong and Ogbadu (2010:196) indicate that in order to overcome the challenges of poor enrolment in schools, it is the responsibility of such schools to instill discipline, and provide guidance and leadership. Regarding the issue of discipline, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) 10 (1) and (2) stipulates that teachers are not allowed to apply corporal punishment. Any educator who applies it commits an offence and can be charged in a court of law and punished. Therefore, the code of conduct stipulates types of sanctions that could be used instead of the application of corporal punishment.

## **2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework guiding this study is the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) by Berger and Calabre (1983). The theory maintains that social life is filled with ambiguities and that the primary goal of communication is to minimize uncertainties. These scholars also assumed that communication was the primary vehicle that could reduce uncertainties in people. With the literature provided, it is clear that learners are uncertain about their subject choices. Therefore, the Department of Education and schools, as well as stakeholders in education like parents, must make information available for learners in choosing which of the streams is appropriate for their children. This will help learners to be certain about their choices and decisions. This could be useful in reducing ambiguities of choice among learners.

### **2.6.1 Uncertainty Reduction Theory**

According to Berger and Calabre (1983), URT maintains that the primary goal of communication is to minimize uncertainties. There are two types of uncertainty reduction, namely, cognitive uncertainty and behavioural uncertainty, and three interactive strategies which people may use to look for useful information about something of their interest - passive, active and interactive. The first encounter between strangers is discussed and divided into various stages: entry stage, personal stage, and

exit stage. These communication behaviours can be used to reflect the way people like and dislike things and each other. According to the theory, most people find uncertainty in interpersonal relationships, unfriendly relations and are driven to decrease it through interpersonal communication.

The theory further says that in the first interactions among people, there are two types of uncertainty - cognitive uncertainty or behavioural uncertainty. Cognitive uncertainty relates to the level of doubt related to cognition, beliefs and attitudes of one another. Uncertainty occurs mostly at the beginning of interactions when people first meet because people are not aware of the beliefs and attitudes of others. Uncertainty can be closely linked with the motivation behind acceptance of norms of other societies in which people tend to accept the way of life, and if in the initial encounters most people choose to ignore such norms because they bring in the risks of increasing behavioural uncertainty and decreasing the probabilities of future communication.

Moreover, Berger and Calabre (1983) highlighted two processes to reduce uncertainty among people, namely proactive uncertainty reduction and retroactive uncertainty reduction. Proactive uncertainty reduction is a strategic communication plan before one can start talking to another person. Retroactive uncertainty reduction is the process that takes place from the time of the initial encounter until the end of that particular interaction.

In terms of this study, the URT is more relevant especially to learners that might not be aware of what commercial subjects are all about and their career path. The information that will be supplied and channelled to the learners will enable them to be clarified on issues relating to subject choice.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides the rationale for the research design and methodology used to investigate the factors influencing the decline of learner's enrolment in commercial subjects. A brief discussion of the data collection tools, population and sample size is presented, followed by the data analysis technique utilised.

### **3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH**

This study explores factors influencing the decline of commercial subjects in Driekop circuit. A qualitative research approach is therefore used, it is considered to be the most appropriate (Creswell, 2012). It offers the opportunity to interact with the participants and also captures and interpret their experiences of the factors influencing a decline of learners' enrolment in commercial subjects in their own words. In addition, this approach allows participants to fully express their feelings.

As pointed out in the previous chapters, the scope of the current study centres around the decline in the enrolment of learners in the commercial stream. Therefore, the approach selected depends on what the research is trying to find out (Silverman, 2011). The adoption of a qualitative research approach in a study can also be underlined by the following reasons: when a study deals with a social phenomenon and this presupposes that the anticipated research would be a social phenomenon. Accordingly, through the qualitative approach, a number of factors influencing the decline of commercial subjects in Driekop circuit have been identified. It allows the examining of an individual's inner impulses that cannot be exposed by other approaches such as the quantitative research approach.

The approach was again selected due to its flexibility in research design and data collection. The research design was continued to be remoulded as the fieldwork continued. I did not approach the study with hypotheses to test or standardized questions to answer.

### **Limitations of Qualitative Approach**

Reliability and validity are a major criticism in qualitative approach (Hughes, 2006). The subjective nature of qualitative data and its origin in single contexts is a serious concern; it becomes hard to apply conservative ideals of reliability and validity. Also contrasting quantitative, qualitative findings becomes difficult to generalise because of its in-depth nature of the study, it covers only a small area that may not be generalised. Moreover, in the present study, I have strived to be neutral, non-judgmental, and report what is found in a balanced way.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design is a plan outlining how the researcher will explore the project. It is a summary of how the study will progress and hopefully plan out. This includes information such as the time period, the subjects involved, and the conditions under which the data will be collected and collated. The purpose of using a research plan is to map out a path to find evidence to answer the research question. The objective is to ensure that the results are valid and reliable (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

Creswell (2012) specifies that research design is “specific procedures involved in the research process: data collection, data analysis, and report writing”. Similarly, research design could be defined as the detailed strategy prepared to deliver answers to the set research questions at the same time as also covering the plans adopted to warrant the reliability of the research (Polit & Beck, 2008). De Vos, et al. (2009) present research design as decisions of the researcher in the process of the study. McMillan (2012) presents the research design as “the plan for carrying out a study”. He further goes to present that research design can be either qualitative, quantitative or through the use of mixed-methods.

McMillan (2012) demonstrates qualitative research as an interpretive research that takes place in the natural setting as a strategy of understanding a particular phenomenon. This method relies on the verbal narratives and sometimes includes documented observations. Similarly Gay et al. (2011) demonstrates qualitative research as the process of data collection, collating, analyzing and interpretation. Fraenkel and

Wallen (2010) indicate that qualitative researchers focus more on the understanding of a particular situation based on the participants' views and description.

As I would be interacting with the teachers and learners on a face to face basis, this research has a qualitative element. It seeks to identify factors influencing the decline of leaners enrolment in commercial subjects. It is accepted that the concepts are generalizations and themes.

### **3.4 SAMPLING**

Sampling refers to the act of extracting or selecting a smaller group from a larger one with the view of representing the larger group adequately through the procedures used for the smaller one (Preissle, 2010). According to Rosnow (2014) a sample is a subset of the population.

Strydom (2011:224) has presented two kinds of sampling, that is the probability and non-probability sampling. These two kinds can also be divided into sub-groups that ensure that a researcher clarifies the process of picking the specific individuals that are participating in their research. The study has adopted the non-probability sampling.

#### **Examples of common non-probability sampling include:**

##### **3.4.1 Convenience Sampling**

Gay et al. (2011) presents convenience sampling as a process of choosing to collect data from the available individuals who are willing to participate during the time when the data is being collected.

##### **3.4.2 Purposive sampling**

MacMillan (2012) note that the researcher makes a selection of individuals based on their apparent knowledge of a specific topic in this sampling method. Gay et al. (2012) asserts that purposive sampling can also be called judgment sampling and its sampling selection procedure depends on the researcher's familiarity with the group. Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) indicate that in this sampling, the researcher chooses the samples based on the knowledge they have about the participants and the aim of the research.

The advantage of purposive sampling is that the researcher is guided by the understanding and knowledge of the participants.

Purposive sampling was used in this research. According to Rubin (2005) this technique is also called judgmental sampling because it is entirely the judgment of the researcher to make sure that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics, representative or typical attributes of the population that serve the purpose of the study best (Grinnell and Unrau, 2008). This kind of sampling ensures that no cases are barred from the sample (Patton, 2002). The study sampled 20 learners and 8 teachers from 4 schools in Driekop circuit.

### **3.5 POPULATION**

Population is defined as the universe of elements from which sample elements are extracted. The population is also the group of elements to which we want to generalize the result of research (Rosnow, 1996). Gay and Airasian, (2000) define population as a group of interest to the researcher, the group to which he or she would like the result of the study to be generalizable.

In this research, the population was the learners and teachers in Driekop circuit as they were found to be the relevant source of valuable information regarding the factors influencing the decrease of learners' enrolment in the commercial subjects. The population from which the sample was selected was understood to have the required information that the researcher could use to benefit the study.

### **3.6 GEOGRAPHICAL SITE**

The schools are located within the eastern area of the Sekhukhune district in Limpopo province of South Africa. The circuit where the schools are located is approximately 70km from Burgersfort town, known for its mining, which is its greatest source of employment for many of the residents whereas the remaining workforce are involved in cattle rearing and the minority in education and civil service, most of the community is dependent on government social grants.

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION**

Different techniques are at a researcher's disposal when collecting data. In this research interviews and document analysis were used.

#### **3.7.1 Interview**

An interview is a two way communication in which the researcher meets participants and asks them questions during the process of data collection (Greef, 2005). Hornby (1989) was also quoted in Rwegelera (2010) defining an interview as a meeting where the researcher asks individuals questions in order to find out their views about a particular matter. Bogdan and Birklen (1992) also defined interview as face-to-face version of the questionnaire. Data was collected through recording all interviews; it was then transcribed and categorized into themes. The responses were recorded on tape and used to make notes on the common trends and beliefs of factors influencing a Decline of Learners Enrolment in Commercial Subjects.

Interviews are the commonly used method of data collection in any qualitative study. This study adopted semi-structured interviews as the main method of data collection and where it was deemed necessary the in depth interviews were also used. Interviews allows the researcher to ask the question, "Why". It is claimed that the interview permits the researcher to explore some topics in depth and discover the reasons and motivations which make the participants act in a certain way, Hence the adoption of interview in this study.

Basis for the selection of interview method in this study was also because of the potential of the method to assist the researcher to gain more in depth information, through searching beyond the prearranged questions. The Semi structured interviews allowed the researcher to freely ask further thorough questions that can explore deeper inner feelings of participants, meaning the researcher does not necessarily have to conform only on to the interview schedule. The researcher therefore used personal interviews in collecting data from 20 leaners (5 from each school) and 8 commercial subjects' teachers (2 from each school).

The participants were made aware of the aim and objectives of the study. Furthermore, the participants were also assured that taking part in this study was voluntary and that they could stop participating at any time. Participants were also reassured that their identities will be protected. This would ensure that the participants freely share their views in the interview without fear of being personally identified.

### **3.7.2 Document analysis**

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) indicate that documents give provision for the researcher to get an internal outlook of an organization. Henning, Van Ransburg and Smith (2004) further define document analysis as a collection of documents and other sources which are relevant and valuable for information. In this study documents that were regarded to be of value to the study were requested from the schools to be examined. The documents utilized by the researcher did not speak for themselves; they were therefore open for interpretation by the researcher.

The documents which were requested by the researcher included the class register, admission register, the summery register as well as the minutes of the meeting to get an insight about the issues related to enrolment.

#### **Class register**

The class register is an official record of the department of education under section 16 (Department of Education, 2010) used to monitor learners attendance by the classroom manager, it is administered daily by the class manager and must reflect the total actual number of learners' attendance, total number of learners' absence and total possible number of learners' attendance.

#### **Admission register**

The admission register is an official record of learners admitted in a school. It is also used to record learners coming from other schools and those leaving to other schools.

## **Summary register**

A summary register is a document used to summarize all the activities in a school from grade 8 to 12, it monitors the movement of learners from those admitted to those who are leaving, unlike the class register that is monitored by the classroom manager, a summary register is monitored by a member of the school management team (SMT) or a capable teacher delegated by the principal.

## **The minutes of the staff meetings**

The staff's meeting minutes are everything that was being said during a sitting by either all the staff at a school or a particular department of the school, it records all the discussions, strategies and resolutions adopted by the people taking part in the meeting.

## **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns or relationships among the categories (McMillian and Schumacher 2014). The analysis is a systematic process of coding, categorizing and interpreting the data with the aim of providing an explanation. Analysing qualitative data (such as the interview) is an eclectic activity. There is no one right way; data can be interpreted in many ways.

According to Mouton (2001), qualitative researchers verbally analyse data which involves examining and organizing notes from interviews, observations and reducing information into smaller segments from which they can see patterns and trends. In this case the researcher reviewed the data after each and every interview to extract important issues that cropped up during the interview. This helped the researcher to make sure that those issues are prioritized.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented a detailed outline of the research design, methods, data collection and analysis techniques used. The research design was intended to study the factors influencing a Decline of Learners Enrolment in Commercial Subjects

## **CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses and analyses the findings of the qualitative data from interviews and document analysis. A recorder was used for recording interviews, and at a later stage, the researcher transcribed data for analysis purposes. The transcribed results are presented and discussed in descriptions, following analysis of quoted comments from participants. Through conducting these interviews, I have gained a level of understanding from the teachers and learners related to beliefs as well as the causes of a decline of enrolment in the commercial stream. Interviews further helped me to gain a clear understanding of what is happening in the study area, I have qualitatively interviewed teachers and learners at the four sampled schools in Driekop circuit as study participants. This chapter also discusses the significant quotes from emerging themes and their sub-themes and further provides analysis from documents.

### **4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS**

The demographic information included in the table below displays information about participants who are all teachers in Driekop circuit. The table displays participants' ethnicity and gender. Demographics are important in this study because it gives a clear understanding of the socio-economic issues that the research is dealing with. Number of years that these teachers spent teaching in this area is also important. Having a lot of years working in Driekop area means these teachers have been exposed to the conducts of learners at their schools. The teacher's experiences in Driekop area are thus very important in this study.

Participant 1 is a teacher who has been teaching in Driekop area for the past 30 years. His presence for a long time has assisted this study in obtaining information from his experience and knowledge since he started teaching in the area. The other seven participants also have more than five years as teachers in Driekop circuit.

These teachers agree that not enough is being done to promote the commercial stream to the learners. One of the teachers suggested that the government should increase its

awareness campaigns beyond just science and technology as they are given more priority and therefore neglecting the commercial stream which is just as important, especially in these failing economy.

Participant 6 said that he had become aware that the government is trying to see to it that almost every learner is doing science and technology. He further attested that he has been seeing the government trying to portray science as the only important stream to follow. Participant 6 further said that there are always a lot of bursaries on science but not enough on commerce from the government.

*(P6): "The way the government advertises, finance and valued science stream programmes, subjects and give more preference to learners that do sciences lead to a decline of commercial subject's enrolment"*

Participant 5 also attested to the fact that learners are often influenced by the media and what the government is encouraging. All the teachers said that they always make sure that they educate learners about different career paths and how they are all important but it's not easy when the government is always pushing the science narrative, it makes it look like other streams are not important.

*(P5): "The government is the most contributing factor, by advertising the most important stream as sciences. The only stream, they talk about is the science stream, they provide bursaries to the science learners first. This lead to learners being reluctant to enroll in commercial subjects"*

Participant 2 said that the social standing of the people is what determines their beliefs. According to him, the deeper into the rural area one goes, one is likely to find people who still lack information about business opportunities. He further said, "Only educated people understand these kinds of opportunities." He explained that since he had started teaching in the Driekop area, everything has always been about the mines and very little about other opportunities.

| <b>Participants</b> | <b>Ethnicity</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Teaching experience</b> |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Participant 1 (P1)  | Black            | Male          | 30 years                   |
| Participant 2 (P2)  | Black            | Male          | 15 years                   |
| Participant 3 (P3)  | Black            | Female        | 12yeras                    |
| Participant 4 (P4)  | Black            | Male          | 5yeras                     |
| Participant 5 (P5)  | Black            | Male          | 5yeras                     |
| Participant 6 (P6)  | Black            | Male          | 7years                     |
| Participant 7 (P7)  | Black            | Female        | 10years                    |
| Participant 8 (P8)  | Black            | Male          | 10yeras                    |

***Table 1 Teachers Qualitative Participants' demographic information***

### 4.3 EMERGING THEMES

- Lack of Promotion and encouragement to study commerce by the stakeholders (government teachers and parents)
- Lack of support for commercial teachers
- Learner perception about the commercial stream

#### Theme 1:

#### 4.3.1 Lack of promotion and encouragement to study commerce by stakeholders (government, teachers and parents)

The impression gained from participants was that stakeholders like the government, teachers and the communities are not doing enough to promote the commercial stream to the learners, especially those in grade 9 who are faced with making the most important decision about their careers which lies on which stream they are going to take. Teachers who participated in this study said that the government should do more in promoting all the streams and career opportunities available to learners, but it seems that the people of Driekop are only focusing on the mines.

#### Involvement of parents in Workshops about career opportunities

Looking at data collected from the field, there is a need for schools to organize workshops for parents to educate them about different career opportunities so that they can be in a better position to help in advising learners. Below are reported dialogue within text boxes and interpretations under every text box.

*(P7): "I do promote commercial subjects to parents but it is not easy due to the information they got from the advertisement on maths, science and technology and they start seeing this stream more the most important than others"*

Parents who receive education on the career opportunities available in the commercial stream will help the children of Driekop to reduce uncertainties about careers in commerce. If parents are educated about these opportunities, they will be able to educate their children about them before they can make that important decision about which streams to take.

The government should also come up with initiatives to also encourage and offer bursaries to commercial students like they do with the science and put them up in the media, learners should be educated about them. This means that lack of information would be eradicated in learner's decision making.

*(P7): "Parents should assure their children that they have confidence in these commercial subjects, so that they can take a step forward to their future lives, being able to run their own businesses using knowledge acquired"*

Participant 7's emphatic statement confirms that the only way to improve the enrolment of learners in the commercial stream is through educating them and their parents about different career opportunities that comes with the stream. There is a need for parents to attend meetings by the schools to educate them about different careers.

*(P6): "Many learners here along with their parents believe that the mines are the only place where people get decent employment to feed themselves and their families"*

The respond from participant 6 just goes to show that People should get the message that it is dangerous to believe that mines are the only place to get employment. People should be informed about the dangers of relying only on mines as the source of employment. Parents must be educated about different job opportunities for them to also be in a position to advice their children at home.

## **Theme 2:**

### **4.3.2 Lack of support for commercial teachers and learners**

One of the key questions the participants were asked was what they think could be the possible hinder or challenges to learners in the commercial stream. They all responded by mentioning support. They said support could either be from the government, school management teams or corporate.

Participants raised their concern over how the commercial stream could do well without adequate support. They maintained that even though they are equipped with skills and

knowledge to teach, it would still be challenging without adequate support from the relevant stakeholders to both them and the learners.

Below are the educator's expressions in relation to support for commercial subjects by the relevant stakeholders.

(P1): *“Support would go a long way in making learning and teaching easier and effective as they would help aid the lesson, making the learners life a bit easier. It's going to be very difficult to increase learner enrolment if the necessary support is not provided”.* P2 shared the same view.

*“The science learners are always provided with the opportunities to go to camps and also provided with opportunities from the mines and also bursaries are given to them and all these are only given to the science learners’, of Couse others learners see this and opt to go where the support is given.”*

*“if you look at most of the career exhibitions hosted, they are always giving priority to mathematics and science learners while often times neglecting the commercial students, even most bursaries are offered to science learners, now where is the support to the commercial learners, how is the enrolment supposed to increase.”*

The impression gained from participants was that stakeholders like the government and the public sector could do more to support the commercial stream like they support the science stream, the teachers stressed that not enough is being done to show confidence in commerce as one of the most important stream during the current state of economic affairs in our country and the world as a whole.

### **Theme 3:**

#### **4.3.3 Learner perception about the commercial stream**

The commercial stream aims to equip learners with value addition skills and business related competence that will enable them to prevail in business, economics and

accounting, but that knowledge becomes redundant if not applied and practiced in real life situations.

The Teachers that were interviewed indicated that the learners had a perception that commerce does not have opportunities that will enable them to get ahead in life, teachers stressed and elucidated that the lack of practical experience which allows learners to put the knowledge and the skills they learned into practice disadvantages them and led them to believe that commerce does not have opportunities, they stressed that it is necessary to not only teach these learners theory but that they must also give the learners practical experience.

Participant 1 felt that to get the learners to change their perception about the commercial stream is if they can make sure that learners fully understand commerce and how it is applicable in the real world and actually get them to do well and get good marks in ems grade 9.

Below are some of the expressions shared by teachers in relation to significant determinant in learner's enrolment in commercial subjects.

*(P1): "The performance and the understanding of economics management sciences in get band in which the three commercial subject are combined will determine the enrolment of learners for stream in grade 10"*

*(P2): "Business subjects as one of the commercial stream is the most international study subject in the world, due to how products are developed. It is important to know your audience and define target groups. Through business subjects, students will be prepared for their future engagement with companies, as they may be running their own companies"*

*some learners take or enroll in commerce because they want to further their careers in "commerce, they also take the stream because they want to establish their own businesses in future and the need to acquire knowledge as to how to go about through studying commercial subjects but Most of them think that commercial subjects are*

*difficult and has lot of work compared to science while they don't even have lot of job opportunities"*

the responds of the participants shows that it is clear that a lot of work still needs to be done to fully educate learners about the commercial stream and its importance in the economy, it is important to also educate them that studying must not only be about finding job opportunities but it must also be about job creation.

### **Description of learner participants**

The study consists of a total of twenty eight participants, eight teachers and twenty learners from the four sampled schools in Driekop circuit, data collected from the eight teachers was analysed and the following is the analysis of the data collected from twenty learners in the four schools sampled, four from each school.

| Code Name            | Grade |
|----------------------|-------|
| Participant 1 (P1)   | 9     |
| Participant 2 (P2)   | 9     |
| Participant 3 (P3)   | 9     |
| Participant 4(P4)    | 9     |
| Participant 5 (P5)   | 9     |
| Participant 6 (P6)   | 9     |
| Participant 7 (P7)   | 9     |
| Participant 8 (P8)   | 9     |
| Participant 9 (P9)   | 9     |
| Participant 10 (P10) | 9     |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Participant 11 (P11) | 9 |
| Participant 12 (P12) | 9 |
| Participant 13 (P13) | 9 |
| Participant 14 (P14) | 9 |
| Participant 15 (P15) | 9 |
| Participant 16 (P16) | 9 |
| Participant 17 (P17) | 9 |
| Participant 18 (P18) | 9 |
| Participant 19 (P19) | 9 |
| Participant 20 (P20) | 9 |

*Table 1 Description of learner Participants*

**4.4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

The findings are presented according to the main themes which are clearly discussed in the analysis stage of the report. The presentations of the themes deduced are highlighted for the purpose of illuminating how the findings are structured in this section. Subsequently at the introduction, each theme will be presented and discussed extensively in relation to the findings. Three themes are discussed:

- Lack of a clear understanding of what commerce is
- External pressure from family and friends as well as teachers
- Academic performance

**4.4.1 Results from the interviews**

**a) Theme 1: Lack of a clear understanding of what commerce is**

Although the understanding of the participants on what the actual meaning of commerce is was diverse, it was commonly misunderstood by most of the learners. When they were asked about what they understand about commercial subjects, this is what was revealed.

(P1): One said: *“What I understand about the commercial subjects is that they teach you about how to run a business*

(P2). *“They teach us about how to run a business and how money works in the bank”*

(P3). *“Change in order to make money profitable”*

These three participants show a very narrow understanding of commercial subjects, looking at it as just a stream that talks about a business entity while there is a lot more about the stream than just a business operation, commercial subjects also includes subjects like economics and accounting which they tend to overlook.

Some of the participants even showed that they are not interested and understood nothing at all, below are their responds.

(P4). *“I really don’t understand anything about commercial subjects”*

(P5). *“I have no interest in commerce and I understand nothing”*

(P6). *“I understand nothing about Commercial”*

It seemed that learners are not interested in commerce and do not understand commercial subjects at all, and even those who do show an interest displayed very little understanding of what commerce is and what it is all about.

## **b) Theme 2: External pressure from family and friends as well as teachers**

The learners were asked who or what is their greatest influence in choosing their subjects, they were also asked who makes their final decisions on which stream to enrol

in, the impression found from the data collected showed that learners were hugely influenced by their parents, sisters and brothers on which subject they should take, some just enrol in subjects simply because their friends are doing them and not because they are any good in them.

It was also found that some of the science teachers tend to lure the smartest learners into the science stream despite them doing well in the economic and management sciences, this practice tend to leave a negative impression on other learners as most of the learners often want to follow learners who are doing well and not look at their own strength and weaknesses.

Below are the responses when learners were asked who influences their subject choice.

(P10): *“my older sister”*

(P12): *“my sister”*

(P13): *“my mother influences my decision”*

(P14): *“for me it is my brother”*

Above is an indication of the influences from the family members when it comes to the selection of which stream learners must enroll in, and most of the advice given to the learners is to enroll in science stream because of the job opportunities in the mines, The sentiments found from the learners are further expressed below.

(P16): *“my brother said mines hire people with math and science  
Jobs”*

(P18): *“my mother said if I want to work in the mines like my father I have to know  
science”*

(P20): *“my mother said commerce does not have enough”*

The data collected shows that learners are influenced by their family and friends to not study commerce and rather enrol for other streams to stand a chance of employment in the mines were it is believed that it's the only sector with lots of money.

Although a lot of learners showed that the influence from their parents is often negative when it comes to commercial subjects, it is important to show that there are those who are positively influenced by their parents who are entrepreneurs to study the commercial stream.

*(P3) "my dad owns his own business and he said I will run it when I am finished school. So I guess I think it will help me to make more money one day."*

*(P4): "I want to own my own business, so I think it will help me. Business Subjects will give me the knowledge I need to make a success of my own business one day."*

Having a role model who is in the business world is one of the most significant factors that would lead to learners choosing the commercial stream, but we don't have enough people in business, instead a lot of people in these communities are people who are in mining, most learners would usually want to also follow the same path as those they see every day.

### **c) Theme 3: academic performance and attitude**

It was found that if a student performs well in a subject, this is strongly affected by his/her aptitude for the particular subject and hence starts reducing the range of subjects to choose from, consequently it was also found that learners might develop a positive self-concept through comparing their achievements with that of their peers, leading to an inference that they are 'good at' one subject because they seem to perform relatively better in that subject when compared with others (Marsh, 2012) notes echoed by (Eccles and Wigfield,2013).

Learners expressed the view in relation to the workload in the commercial stream.

*(P1):"I would not choose commerce as a stream because the subject and teacher are too demanding of me."*

*(P5): "I feel like commerce want you to read too much"*

*(P8)" there are a lot of things to read in commerce and its too much"*

Manski (2014) considered that learners' awareness of this relative advantage will improve as they gain more evidence through formal assessments over time. Learners are more likely to achieve higher grades if they are studying subjects for which their capabilities are more suited and if they believe they are likely to be successful. (Trautwein, 2010).

*(P9):" Im not doing well in EMS"*

*(P10): "I always get bad marks in EMS than in SS"*

*(P11): "EMS is difficult; I don't want to do accounting"*

It is found that learners make their choices based on the amount of work required by the concerned subjects which they are going to do and also the possibilities of getting the distinctions, if they feel that they are not going to pass because the subject is difficult or too demanding then they will opt to do the alternative subjects.

#### **4.5 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

Document analysis was conducted to try and get an internal perspective on the four sampled schools, the following documents were analyzed: class registers, admission register, summary register and the minutes of the staff meetings.

The analysis of the registers is discussed below.

##### **4.5.1 Register No 1 (Class Register)**

Grade 10 class registers were made available to the researcher to analyse, all the sampled school registers were properly marked and indicated that indeed the commercial stream had fewer learners than other streams. Although the entry procedure for class register was followed in all the schools, the researcher found a challenge in

school C where the Grade 10 commercial registers indicated a high number of absenteeism with some of the learners withdrawing in the middle of the year. The withdrawal of learners in the class registers leads to a decline in the enrolment of commercial subjects.

#### **4.5.2 Register 2 (Admission Register)**

It was found that all the schools sampled properly kept their admission registers, however the problem was found in school C and D where it indicated that some learners were withdrawn from the admission register, this was also the case in school A, and a little in school B where it looked like the school were able to keep all its learners until the exit in grade 12. The problem with withdrawal of learners in the admission register by schools heavily affects the enrolment status of all the streams in the school, the commercial stream being no exception in this case.

Moreover, a correlation between admission register and class register was indicated. Seemingly, the withdrawal of learners in the class register consequently affects the admission register in the sense that the same child withdrawn in the class register would also be withdrawn in the admission register.

#### **4.5.3 Summary register (Register 3)**

The document analysis revealed to me that the definite number of attendance in Grade 10 registers from school A, C and D had significantly went down. In the interviews conducted participants exposed that some of the learners have a tendency to move from one stream to the other and at times one school to the other in search of greener pastures, as a result, the withdrawal of learners from one stream to the other also forms part of a decline in enrolment.

In addition, the researcher also found that class registers reflected a high rate of absenteeism. Cree et al. (2012) indicate that a high rate of absenteeism gives rise to poor performance and repetition, which leads to poor enrolment of learners in a particular school, especially in the commercial stream. The analysis of minutes of the staff meeting follows below.

#### **4.5.4 Minutes of the staff meetings**

The researcher was interested in the commercial departmental meetings led by the head of department of commerce, it was found that although the commercial teachers are aware of the enrolment issues of their department, three schools out of the four that were sampled did not have regular departmental meetings which addresses the issues of the department like the decline in enrolment, only school B was found to have been the one holding regular departmental meetings. As presented in the previous chapters, teachers have a role to play in improving the enrolment of learners in their subjects, failure to hold meeting lead to a further decline in enrolment. The researcher further looked at the general staff meetings and found minutes on the infrastructure, nutrition, how to improve teaching and learning properly kept.

An examination of staff meetings was done to gain a deeper understanding and some of the recorded minutes in one school revealed the discussions on how to improve enrolment of learners in the school, something that was not found in the commercial departmental meetings even in one school.

In one of the school' the minutes of the general meeting revealed that due to poor enrolment in their school, their norms and standard budget from the department of education significantly decreased. This goes to show that they are dire consequences from the decrease of enrolment of learners. School D further indicated that they have lost teachers through redeployment because of the decrease of enrolment in the school.

Branson (2012) indicated that enrolment of learners is a determining factor for the allocation of funds in a school. Consequently, low allocation of funds due to poor enrolment, affects the operation of the schools.

#### **4.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES ATTAINMENT: QUALITATIVE DATA**

The qualitative data was collected through conducting semi-structured interviews and data analysis. The research objective to explore the factors that affect learners' enrolment in commercial subjects was addressed through the qualitative process. The qualitative process allowed for a deeper understanding of the research setting from an

interpretative and cultural perspective. It also allowed for major variables to be determined through semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

Although qualitative research is not really designed for hypothesis testing, it assisted the researcher to explore an area that needed a deeper understanding. From the qualitative data analysed, there is an indication that residents of Driekop lack proper education about career opportunities in the commercial subjects. The study participants mentioned that people of Driekop believe that mines are the only place to get good careers.

Most of the teachers believe that there is a need for the schools to educate the people of Driekop about commerce and its job opportunities. The government should start organizing workshops for communities from various villages in Driekop with the aim of educating them about job opportunities and different careers in other fields, if they want to reduce unemployment. Alternatively, the Department of education, media platforms such as flyers, billboards, community radio stations and social media networks can be used to communicate these careers. The Department of education should further use the languages that are spoken in the villages to avoid the problem of a language barrier. People who cannot read should be invited to the workshops that will educate them in their languages.

The researcher qualitatively used interviews and document analysis which allowed for gaining a good level of understanding related to beliefs about the causes of a decline in enrolment in commercial subjects. This helped the researcher to gain a clear understanding about what is happening in the study area. Questions that emanated from the responses of teachers were asked of the learners from these schools to find out more about the perceptions around the issues of decline in commercial subjects enrolment.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a summation of findings, conclusion and recommendations made. The research examined the factors influencing a Decline of Learners Enrolment in Commercial Subjects. The factors that were identified were found in review of literature and primary research conducted by means of interviews and document analysis.

### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

The first Chapter presented the background and motivation of the study, the problem statement, as well as the aims and objectives of the study together with the research questions and research methodology were all covered in chapter one, the chapter was concluded with the proposed plan of the study, which covers five chapters.

Chapter two briefly indicated the establishment of commercial subjects in South Africa. The chapter also discussed the factors influencing a decline in enrolment of learners in commerce and other subjects. In addition, this chapter highlighted the perception on poor enrolment in commercial subjects, overcoming the challenges of poor enrolment as well as the initiatives needed to improve poor enrolment of learners in the commercial stream. The chapter concluded with the conceptual framework for the study, which is the uncertainty reduction theory.

The third chapter discussed the research methodology, which included a qualitative research method. In this chapter, the use of (McMillan & Schumacher,2010) data-collection research phases were described by the researcher, they include the following:

Phase1: Planning for data collection. Trec certificate from the University of Limpopo was granted before data collection, this was to ensure that the required ethical considerations were observed. Ethical issues included permission to conduct a research study, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

Phase 2: Population and sampling. At this stage, it was indicated that the target population was composed of commercial teachers and grade 9 learners. Purposeful sampling was adopted. Eight teachers, two from each of the four schools sampled were requested to participate in the study, furthermore, twenty learners with five learners from each of the four schools made up the rest of the population. Purposeful sampling was adopted because the researcher wanted rich information from participants about factors influencing a decline of enrolment in the commercial stream.

Phase 3: Data collection strategies. Two data collection strategies were used, namely semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

Chapter four: The chapter outlines the data analysis and interpretation. During the interview sessions the participants reflected their views on the decline of learners enrolment in the commercial stream and the data collected was presented and analyzed. The chapter concluded with the analysis and interpretation of documents such as class registers, admission register, summary register and the staff meeting minutes.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

A wide range of factors were found to have an influence on the decrease of learners enrolment in commercial subjects, with the following being at the summit: learners' ability, ii) peer pressure, iii) the influence of teachers and school managers, and iv) learners' misconceptions about commercial subjects.

It is found that learners' ability in the subject is one of the factors which contribute largely to the learners decision making of which subjects they are going to take when transiting to the FET phase the following year. Peer pressure was again one of the factors contributing to the subject choice as learners would just go to other stream besides the commercial stream because of their friends.

The influence of teachers and school managers cannot be overlooked as they have the power over the learners and directly but some indirectly have influenced the learners decision about which subject they ought to take in transit to the FET phase, it is found

that most teachers often encourage learners, especially the bright ones to go and do the sciences instead of the commercial stream. Learners' misconceptions about commercial subjects is also a big factor as some learners would just have their own views and beliefs about commercial subjects and make their decisions in that regard. These findings are supported by those of earlier research projects such as (Davies, 2012).

While Entrepreneurial parents are pushing for the subjects to be taken by their children as they see the value of managing businesses of their own. Where parents are themselves entrepreneurs they will generally support commercial subjects as they perceive they could make a considerable contribution to future careers, but most parents in that area are miners and have a believe that if their learners choose the sciences they will also have a chance in the mining industry as it is believed to be a dominating industry in the area.

If parents are not sufficiently informed on the nature of the subjects, it is likely to have a major impact on the choice of subjects. The role of parental engagement as being a key factor in securing higher student achievements and school improvement is found in several research subjects, those include (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development DEECD 2008) and (Desforges and Abouchaar,2013) while (Harris and Chrispeels, 2014) also support the view.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Suggested strategies of increasing learner enrolments in commerce**

In a study by (Lyons and Quinn,2010) it was indicated that the first point in dealing with the declining quantity of learners in a subject is by designing precise policies as the problem is often both complex and multi-faceted. The decline in the quantity of learners enrolling for a specific subject in schools is the outcome of different factors such as the general society, curriculum, and the context of the school along with other issues in relation to learners themselves. Therefore, it will not be possible to have interventions that targets learners or teachers only. Any strategy that is going to be adopted should include all the stakeholders in commerce covering teachers, researchers and parents.

A study by Lyons and Quinn (2010) indicated that a lot of learners stay away from subjects that they did not enjoy in the lower grades. The South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SASTA) emphasises the need to embolden learners to opt for sciences and science related professions (SASTA, 2007) the same can also be done in the commercial stream, learners need a lot of encouragement if they are to choose a certain subject, it is the responsibility of commercial teachers to ensure that learners are encouraged.

Awareness must be created within the primary schools through entrepreneur Days. These entrepreneur Days, should be a celebration of commercial subjects relevant to the level in which learners are in. This can be an intervention strategy that intends to develop learner's interest in commerce and also content understanding of business and economics as the experiences on this level could have a direct influence on the choices that are made later. Teachers are also encouraged to apply the most effective strategy for increasing learner's enrolment in commercial subjects through providing teaching and learning that is enjoyable and interesting to the learners in the lower grades.

Most of the commercial teachers indicated that learners lacked adequate information on the different careers available to them. The deficiency of knowledge could be counteracted with the establishment of strong associations with corporate, so as to acquaint the learners with information about different commerce-related careers at the appropriate time. Familiarizing learners with information about different careers when they are in matric could be too late as the trends of their careers are set when they choose subjects in grade 10.

Even though the teachers considered themselves to have less impact on learners' choice of science in senior classes than others such as parents and peers, the learners view was totally different as they demonstrated teachers as the main contributors towards the subjects they chose (Lyons & Quinn, 2010). Learners who chose science indicated that they did that based on their teacher's advice. Teachers should therefore be supported in noting the role they play in their student's subject selection whilst also

being supported in looking for strategies to develop the different teacher factors that directly or indirectly impact on learner's choices of science subjects.

In summary, the major recommendations to address the factors influencing a Decline of Learners Enrolment in Commercial Subjects in this research are as follows:

### **Recommendation 1**

Learners should be advised, guided and supported in their decision making.

From the discussion in this study, it is clear that parents play a vital role in their children's lives. The learners however, feel that this is not the case and assume they have the knowledge and expertise to make important decisions at a young age. All schools should insist that parents, teachers and school managers have a role in the completion of the subject selection form for their learners.

### **Recommendation 2**

Appropriate interventions from professionals should be sought by schools.

They should be at least one career day where professional assistance will be available for learners to gain as much information regarding possible career paths in the commercial sector. Career guidance should be an ongoing process and parents as well as teachers need to become more involved in the process and play a participatory role.

### **Recommendation 3**

Aptitude and interest tests

A set of aptitude and interest tests conducted by professionals like psychologists should be administered on all Grade 9 learners prior to their subject choices. The results should be discussed in consultation between parents, teachers and learner to ensure that the best suited subjects are chosen for the individual.

Further research is recommended on the following aspects with the view to understanding the factors that influence Grade 9 learners' subject choices.

- External pressures in decision making.
- Parental involvement in subject choice at Grade 9 level.
- Value of commerce at school level.

### **Impact of decreased number of enrolment in the commercial stream**

Currently there are no direct impacts that have been documented at high school level but then again the major impact can be observed post high schools in higher education like universities, colleges, industries as well as the economy at large. In a study by (Angell, 2004) it was found that there is a great concern found in some countries about the decline of learners' enrolment in sciences or physics as it directly impact the number of learners who could enroll for science related professions in higher institutions of learning. The same is a concern even in the commercial stream in South Africa, we are in a time of economic crises, the crises that needs economic solutions especially from people with commercial backgrounds, the impact goes beyond institutions of higher learning extending to the labor force in commercial sectors.

The Department of Labor (2007) In the United States of America indicated that the rate of careers of employment in science related careers increased by 3.3% per year on average in the year between 2004 and 2008 whereas employment in other non-science related careers on average had an increase of only 3%. Therefore, the low number of learners opting for science impacts on the number of professionals who can occupy the positions becoming available annually in most countries.

### **5.5 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY**

The young age of learner participants made the research challenging. Time constraints of a school day played a negative part in conducting research as teachers were pressured to get through their syllabuses in a time where corona virus forced them to stay at home for almost three months; the pressure of time was just immense. Very little evidence of literature specific to this research project was found. Some of the Literature used was from other streams like the sciences and not limited to the commercial subjects.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

In the light of findings presented above, factors influencing a decline of Learners Enrolment in Commercial Subjects were highlighted. It is therefore apparent that subject choice at such a young and vulnerable age may be damaging to a child's future endeavors. Different stakeholders like teachers, school managers, parents and psychologists need to work collaboratively so that learners could make informed decisions. Further research that investigate the form of collaboration by different stakeholders to support grade 9 learners in choosing subjects need to be conducted.

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## APPENDIX A: CONCERN FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to being interviewed by Adolph Mathiba for his study on factors influencing a decline of learner's enrolment in commercial subjects: a case of Driekop circuit in Limpopo province. I understand that: Participation in this interview is voluntary. That I may refuse to answer any questions I'm not comfortable with. I may withdraw from the study at any time. No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 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:** 16 September 2020

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TREC/179/2020: PG

**PROJECT:**

**Title:** Factors Influencing a Decline of Learners Enrolment in Commercial Subjects: A case of Driekop Circuit in Limpopo Province  
**Researcher:** TA Mathiba  
**Supervisor:** Dr MJ Mamabolo  
**Co-Supervisor/s:** N/A  
**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: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **Structured questions to teachers.**

1. What do you find to be the most significant determinant for learners taking Commercial Subjects in Grade 10?
2. What other contributing factors do you think affects their specific choice of which stream to enroll in?
3. Do you promote Commercial Subjects to the learners in Grade 9?
4. Do you promote Commercial Subjects to their parents?
5. In your humble opinion, what do you find to be a major contributing factor in a decline of commercial subjects enrolment?

## **APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **Semi-Structured questions to learners**

1. Why would you choose Commercial Subjects as a stream?
2. Why would you not choose Commercial Subjects as a stream?
3. What do you understand of the Commercial Subjects?
4. Who or what is your greatest influence in choosing your subjects?
5. Do you think Commercial Subjects would add value to your school career?
  - 5.1 Why?
6. Who makes your final subject choice decision

## **APPENDIX E: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECKLIST**

What factors influence poor enrolment in no-fee schools' foundation phase?

### **1. Does the school have the following registers?**

1.1. Does the school have the following registers?

1.1.1. Class register

1.1.2. Admission register

1.1.3. Summary register

### **2. What support does THE commercial department do to improve enrolment of learners?**

2.1.1. Improving quality of teaching and learning

(Year plan, timetable, assessment plan, lesson plan)

2.1.2. Improving accountability

(Rewards, in-service training and incentives)

## APPENDIX F: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### DEPARTMENT OF **EDUCATION**

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 2/2/2    Enq: Mabogo MG    Tel No: 015 290 9365    E-mail: [MabogoMG@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:MabogoMG@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

**Mathiba TA**  
Pinna Park  
Shingwedzi  
0699

#### **RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **"FACTORS INFLUENCING A DECLINE OF LEARNERS ENROLMENT IN COMMERCIAL STUDIES: A CASE OF DRIEKOP CIRCUIT IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE"**
3. The following conditions should be considered:
  - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
  - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the School concerned.
  - 3.3 The conduct of research should not in anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
  - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.
  - 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MATHIBA TA

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700  
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

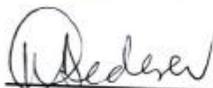
**The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!**

3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



**Mrs Dederen KO**  
**Acting Head of Department**

23/11/2020  
**Date**

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MATHIBA TA

