

**EXPLORING FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS THE ENROLMENT  
DECLINE IN COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THABO  
MOFUTSANYANA EDUCATION DISTRICT**

**By**

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to the Almighty God and my late parents, Mathepane Maria Nyenye, Mokete Daniel Nyenye, my late brother Machaelane Joseph Nyenye and my late sister Mabereke Sarah Nyenye.

## DECLARATION

I, **Nyenyé Malefane Steven** hereby declare that ***“Exploring factors contributing towards the enrolment decline in commercial subjects in Secondary Schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District”*** is my own work and that all sources I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledge by means of complete references.

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_ on the 31 day of March 2025.

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I am grateful to my family for their support and prayers.

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## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to explore factors contributing to the decline in enrolment in commercial subjects in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District (TMED). The study's specific goals were to find out what factors are causing fewer students to enrol in commercial subjects, whether a lack of resources could be a factor, and what strategies the school management team (SMT) and teachers can use to get more students to enrol in commercial subjects. The study employed a qualitative research approach. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. A total of 30 participants took part in this study, which included five commercial subjects' teachers and 25 Grade 9 learners from five sampled secondary schools. The study used purposive sampling to obtain all the participants. Qualitative data were analysed and presented in text form, including quotes. The findings indicated that the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects was influenced by learners' perspectives about commercial subjects, lack of guidance, easy subject grouping or combination and influence from peers and parents. The results also showed that learners were not interested in commercial subjects because there were not enough teaching and LTSM and Information Communication Technology (ICT) was not used in the teaching and learning of those subjects. The suggested strategies to increase enrolment of learners in commercial subjects were such as providing guidance to learners, making LTSM available, implementing ICT in teaching and learning of commercial subjects and promoting commercial subjects to parents through various social media platforms. The study recommends that the schools should conduct commercial subjects' debates and competitions that focus on different topics in commercial subjects. Additionally, the schools should organise a career day to provide learners with expert guidance on various careers in the commercial sector.

**Keywords:** Commercial subjects, secondary schools, Thabo Mofutsanyana district, learner's enrolment, teaching and learning support materials.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AS	Assessment Standards
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EMS	Economic and Management Sciences
FET	Further Education and Training
ICT	Information Communication Technology
LoLT	Language of teaching and learning
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
OBE	Outcome Based Education
SMT	School Management Team
SP	Senior Phase
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TMED	Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District
URT	Uncertainty Reduction Theory

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The commercial subjects are included in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase curriculum, and it prepares learners to cope with real-life problems applicable to the South African context. According to the Department of Education (2014), this curriculum includes the subjects that deal with three parts, namely accounting, economics, and business studies. The subjects give background for exploring the business environment and the economy of the country.

It is therefore important that many learners enrol and emerge in the commercial stream. Abulencia (2021) states that the social, economic, and political development of any human being depends on quality education. According to the Department of Education (2018), there is a decrease in the number of learners enrolling for commercial subjects in the FET phase. Students need to educate themselves about a nation's economy in general and prepare for the current economic challenges. Therefore, commercial subjects such as accounting, business studies, and economics continue to be critical for the development of the country, and more learners must enrol in the commercial stream.

Researchers have conducted numerous studies on factors influencing enrollment in the sciences stream, primarily in mathematics. Their findings include sociocultural and psychological factors (Sinyosi, 2015). However, there is limited literature on the commercial stream. As a result, the purpose of this study was to explore factors contributing to the decline in learners' enrollment in commercial subjects.

#### **1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section presents a wide range of literature that focusses on factors that influence learners' enrolment in commercial subjects. Firstly, a literature review on the following commercial subjects is outlined: (a) Accounting, (b) business studies and (c) economics.

The Government of India established the School of Commerce in Calcutta in 1895, followed by commerce classes that started at Presidency College in 1903, and commercial institutions were formed in Bombay and Delhi with the aim of providing basic typewriting skills, shorthand, and business methods. Business education dominated the twentieth century (Gordon & Howell, 2015). Commercial subjects formed part of the South African curriculum during the radical transformation of the education system that took place between 1989 and 1994. Accounting, business studies, and economics comprise the commercial stream in South Africa.

Learners are introduced to accounting as a subject in grade 10, and it focuses mainly on measuring performance, interpreting and communicating financial information of economic sectors. According to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (RSA, 2011), a subject is defined in the National Senior Certificate as definite academic knowledge that includes values and skills. Subject accounting is offered in the FET phase and focuses on financial accounting, managerial accounting and auditing. The curriculum of accounting puts more emphasis on the logical and accurate selection and recording of financial information to assist stakeholders in making reliable financial decisions (Venter, Gordon & Street, 2018).

For grades 10 to 12, the accounting curriculum covers various skills and concepts which prepares learners for different career fields within financial markets. According to RSA (2011), learners are required to meet the demands of the accounting profession and be able to implement the principles of Generally Accepted Accounting Practices. Kenton (2018) states that "Generally Accepted Accounting Practice" is a framework of accounting procedures, principles, and standards that are followed in the private and public sectors and deals with preparing and interpreting financial statements.

The DBE (RSA, 2011) states that the purpose of accounting as a subject is to equip learners with the following skills:

- Record, analyse, and interpret financial information to make informed decisions.
- Present and communicate financial information effectively by using generally accepted accounting practices in conjunction with current legislation.

- Use skills, knowledge, and values in real-life situations to ensure stability between theory and practice.
- Implement principles to solve problems, and
- Deal confidentially with the demands of the accounting profession.

In South Africa business studies curriculum was developed for two main reasons that is (1) to keep up with the demand of 21st century changing industrial revolution and technology, (2) knowledge development (DBE, 2011). Learners in South Africa, especially those in FET phase, will be exposed various knowledge and high-order thinking.

The business studies curriculum in the FET phase is structured in such a way that learners will gain knowledge, necessary skills, and values that are profitable for them to significantly, responsibly, and effectively participate in both formal and informal business activities in South Africa (DBE, 2011). The business studies curriculum is developed to ensure that learners are equipped with knowledge on worldwide business issues and to understand the roles of various stakeholders and different challenges affecting decisions that are made in the business (DBE, 2011). Therefore, the school curriculum should produce skilled learners and entrepreneurs ready to enter the business world.

The curriculum and assessment policy statement ([CAPS], 2011) defined economics as the study of how individuals, government and other organisations in the society opt to utilise scarce resources to satisfy their needs and wants effectively and efficiently. The importance of teaching economics as a subject in South Africa is reflected in the CAPS (2011) when it states that the aim for teaching economics in the FET phase is:

*“to assist learners to acquire an advanced economics vocabulary that will enable them to debate and communicate the essential of the subject and gather, analyse and interpret production, consumption, and exchange information as well as other data in order to solve problem and make reliable decisions”*

This proves that the DBE recognises the importance of introducing learners to basic concepts of economics and to make sense of everyday economic issues that the country is facing (DBE, 2011).

### 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The number of learners opting for the commercial stream in the FET phase has been declining recently. I have witnessed a steady decline in learners enrolling for commercial subjects such as accounting, business studies, and economics over the past five years in the final grade 12 examination results. While this seems to be a national trend, such a decline is becoming worse in the. Thabo Mofutsanyana education district (TMED).

Many intervention techniques have been employed in this area to improve the situation but with little or no progress, as the decline in enrolment of learners kept getting decreasing every year and principals have started to phase out the commercial stream in their schools. Therefore, this poses a great risk to commercial subjects at schools if the enrolment of learners in these subjects does not increase.

### 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the above problem, the researcher developed the following main research question:

*What are the factors contributing towards the enrolment decline in commercial subjects in secondary schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District?*

Emanating from the main research question above, the following sub-research questions arise:

- What are the main causes of decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects?
- Does lack of resources affect the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects?
- What strategies should SMTs and educators implement to ensure increase in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects?

## **1.5 THE MAIN AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **1.5.1 The main aim of Study**

The main aim of the study is to explore factors contributing towards the enrolment decline in commercial subjects in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District.

### **1.5.2 The objectives of the Study**

To accomplish the main aim of this study, the following objectives should be realised:

- To identify contributing factors to the decline of learners' enrolment in commercial subjects.
- To establish whether lack of resources could be a contributing factor to the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects.
- To determine strategies that SMTs and educators can implement to ensure an increase in the enrolment of learners in commercial subjects.

## **1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1.6.1 Research Methodology**

According to Schwaardt (2017), methodology is a way of investigating. It includes an examination of the expectations, ideas, and methods involved in a specific inquiry approach. Researchers Creswell and Tashakkori (2017) state that methodologies explain the type of problems that can be studied, how to set up a problem so that it can be studied using certain steps, and how to select and create effective ways to collect data.

#### **1.6.1.1 *Research approach***

According to Babbie (2016), qualitative research is a social sciences research that gathers and employs non-numerical data that seeks to construe meaning from this data that assist in understanding social life from the study of targeted populations or places.

This study adopted a qualitative approach, as it provides direct interaction with the participants and allows them to interpret their lived experience in their words. This approach also allows the researcher to get an in-depth understanding and explanation of action and events.

The qualitative approach is applicable in this study because of its suitability in social research, and this can be done in the natural setting of the subject (Mohajan, 2018). Creswell (2013) states that qualitative research gives the researcher the opportunity to gather raw information directly from participants. This study collected data from educators and learners in the targeted schools.

#### **1.6.1.2      *Research Design***

A research design is a strategy detailing how the researcher will explore the project. It delineates the methodology for conducting the study. This strategy encompasses details like the time, subject matter, and methods for collecting and organising data. The purpose of deploying a research strategy is to outline a plan for gathering evidence to answer the research questions. The main objective is to ensure that research results are valid and reliable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

#### **1.6.1.3      *Population and Sample Size***

Population is a set of features or facts, whether single or substantive, that is guided by definite standards and to which the outcomes of the study are expected to be generic (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Moreover, Creswell (2013) asserts that the population encompasses all individuals or the phenomenon under investigation, from which the study selects its sample. For this study, the population includes all the grade 9 learners in circuit five of the Thabo Mofutsanyana district who are expected to choose different subjects in the FET phase. Circuit five comprises eight secondary schools, each with a unique grade 9 class structure.

**Table 1.1: Population**

<b>School</b>	<b>Grade 9 class</b>	<b>Number of boys</b>	<b>Number of girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
Aa	9A – 9C	65	61	<b>126</b>
Bb	9A – 9E	107	127	<b>234</b>
Cc	9A	28	12	<b>40</b>
Dd	9A – 9F	128	131	<b>259</b>
Ee	9A	15	15	<b>30</b>
Ff	No grade 9 class	0	0	<b>0</b>
Gg	9A – 9B	28	34	<b>62</b>
Hg	9A	18	15	<b>33</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>389</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>784</b>

The total population for this study is 784.

#### **1.6.1.4 Sample size**

The study did not sample all 784 learners. The researcher selected the sample from 784 grade 9 learners for the purpose of this study. According to Salaria (2012), sampling is the process of selecting a small group from a larger group to accurately and sufficiently represent the characteristics of the population. Sampling refers to choosing a portion from the entire population (Rosnow, 2014).

The sample for this study consists of five (5) secondary schools with twenty-five (25) grade 9 learners; five (5) from each of the sampled secondary schools in circuit five of the TMED. Five (5) commercial subject educators also form part of the sample. To achieve the research objectives, the researcher employed purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, the samples are specifically selected because they are indubitably informed about the phenomenon being investigated. To get a true reflection of the decline in enrolment, only grade 9 learners were chosen.

#### **1.6.1.5 Data Collection**

The study gathered data through document analysis and conducted interviews with participants. The researcher used a voice recorder to record the interviews. According

to Creswell (2013), one of the advantages of using interviews is that it provides the opportunity to ask open-ended questions to get in-depth responses. Participants were interviewed anonymously; this gave them the opportunity to give their responses without any fear.

#### **1.6.1.6 Data Analysis**

The researcher employed the model by Creswell (2013) for qualitative data analysis because of its accuracy in academic research. The researcher recorded, arranged, typed, and saved the collected data in a single document. The researcher immediately analysed the findings, identifying and interpreting trends and patterns to develop themes.

### **1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

The researcher received permission from the Free State Department of Education and the principals of the selected schools to conduct this study. The researcher informed the participants that their participation is voluntary and that their names, responses, and schools will remain anonymous. The Central University of Technology's (FS) FRIC committee scrutinised the proposal before the study commenced.

### **1.8 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of introducing commercial subjects in the South African curriculum was to ensure that education is used as self-support among learners, especially after completing grade 12. This aim remains unfulfilled because the number of learners enrolling in commercial subjects decreases every year. Consequently, not enough learners acquire the business skills needed to create jobs for themselves or seize opportunities in the commercial sector (DBE, 2011).

It is hoped that the study's results will let everyone in the education sector—especially policymakers, principals, and teachers—know about the danger this poses to the commercial stream and to propose strategies to help more students join the commercial stream during the FET phase. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the research findings will contribute to the existing literature on learners' enrolment in

commercial subjects in secondary schools. Furthermore, the study will provide a foundation for further research on commercial subjects.

## **1.9 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted in the TMED in the Free State Province. The study focused on factors contributing to the enrolment decline in commercial subjects. The study is based on grade 9 learners as they will be selecting subjects in grade 10 for the matric year.

### **1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

The following concepts are used throughout the study and are defined to clarify their use in the study.

#### **1.10.1 Commercial subjects**

Commercial subjects are in Outcome Based Education (OBE), such as Economic and Management Sciences (EMS). In the Senior Phase (SP), learners study EMS to gain a foundational understanding of commercial subjects. Once learners get to the FET phase, they may opt for any combination that includes accounting, business studies, and economics (Russell, 2009).

#### **1.10.2 Subject choice**

According to Akerman (2014), subject choice is an act of choosing what subjects to study for matriculation. For this study, commercial subjects refer to the choice of commerce subjects that grade 9 learners are expected to make when promoted to grade 10.

#### **1.10.3 Further Education and Training**

This study focused on the FET phase, which included grades 10 to 12. Each subject in this phase has a National Curriculum Statement (NCS) that outlines what learners should learn. The NCS sets out the main goals for each subject, and these goals are broken down into different Assessment Standards (AS) that cover skills, values, knowledge, and attitudes that learners need to master to meet those goals. By passing all seven subjects, learners can earn a National Senior Certificate (NSC), which is the

exit qualification for FET. For this study, FET refers to the grade 9 learners who anticipate opting for different subjects in grade 10.

#### **1.10.4 Circuit five**

Circuit five is a DBE office in Thabo Mofutsanyana district under the Free State province in South Africa. It is a part of the school management system in the country and oversees schools in circuit five.

### **1.11 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

This study is structured as follows:

#### **Chapter 1: Background and motivation**

The first chapter provides a detailed overview and synopsis of the study, which encompasses the research motivation, aims, and objectives.

#### **Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework**

The second chapter delves into the analysis of literature from various researchers who have examined similar topics and shared their findings. It discusses the literature regarding the factors that impact the decision-making process of learners in the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects.

#### **Chapter 3: Research design and methodology**

Chapter three covers the adopted methodology for data gathering in this study. This chapter thoroughly documented the procedures used for data collection and analysis.

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

Chapter four presents the collected data alongside the results derived from the interviews and document analysis. This chapter also concludes and provides the data analysis. Furthermore, this section reveals the results and provides an explanation. After that, the data are compiled to provide a strong conclusion on the factors influencing the learners' poor enrolment in commercial topics.

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

To draw tactical recommendations and conclusions based on the responses, the final chapter offers a critical examination of the research findings. Finally, the chapter provides recommendations for strategies aimed at increasing learners' enrolment in commercial subjects.

### **1.12 SUMMARY**

The background of the study and a general introduction to the study have been provided in this chapter. The subsequent chapter of the study comprises a literature review of the factors that influence the subject choices of learners in school.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter outlined the background and the research problem of the study. The previous chapter also discussed the significance of this specific research study. Chapter two presents the literature review on factors contributing towards the enrolment decline in commercial subjects in secondary schools globally, in the continent and within South Africa. Secondary school learners' choice of subjects has been a topic for many researchers in the past, and it is evident that there are various factors that influence learners to choose certain subjects. Many researchers have emphasised the fundamental role of subjects such as accounting and economics, which forms part of commercial subjects and indicates the impact the teachers could have on decisions learners make when choosing the subjects. The literature also demonstrates the impact of gender differences, parental involvement, and learners' individual abilities in subjects such as mathematics, accounting, and science.

Numerous studies conducted did not concentrate on commercial subjects in general but focused on subjects in commerce, such as accounting. For the purposes of this study, the researcher focusses on the commercial stream, which includes accounting, business studies, and economics. This is because few studies were conducted on commercial subjects, and therefore the researcher intended to look at commercial subjects as a stream during the literature review. The brief background of commercial subjects in secondary schools is given below, followed by factors impacting learners' enrolment in commercial subjects, and lastly, the strategies on how to overcome the challenges of poor enrolment in commercial subjects are explored.

#### 2.2 BACKGROUND OF COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

After 1994 the new curriculum was introduced in South Africa, and it brought new and various phases that learners in schools will follow from grade R to 12. These phases are foundation, intermediate, senior, and FET. The senior phase consists of grades 7, 8, and 9, where EMS is mandatory as a subject for all learners. When learners are

promoted or progressed to FET phase learners, they are at liberty to opt for commercial subjects such as accounting, business studies and economics or to follow other streams that do not include any commercial subjects.

Table 2.1 below presents evidence that the number of learners enrolling for commercial subjects is declining every year. This decline becomes a concern to the researcher since this trend happens at a time South Africa is faced with the challenge of a declining number of learners pursuing careers in fields such as accountancy and economics. The researcher purposely selected five easily accessible secondary schools to test this claim. The results show that between 2019 and 2023, there was a significant drop in grade 10 students enrolling in commercial subjects at secondary school in the TMED.

**Table 2.1: Decline of learners in commercial subjects from 2019 to 2023**

School	Subject and Grade	Number of learners				
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
School Aa	EMS (Grade 9)	35	47	48	30	44
	Commercial Subjects (Grade 10)	30	28	25	24	36
School Bb	EMS (Grade 9)	101	156	202	165	192
	Commercial Subjects (Grade 10)	0	116	104	85	68
School Cc	EMS (Grade 9)	42	35	40	44	53
	Commercial Subjects (Grade 10)	28	24	19	25	29
School Dd	EMS (Grade 9)	45	42	51	40	52
	Commercial Subjects (Grade 10)	18	22	18	32	19
School Ee	Commercial Subjects	123	145	162	155	180
	(Grade 10)	57	60	55	49	43

Sources: DoE (2022)

The main question that drives this study is: What are the factors contributing to the decline in enrolment in commercial subjects in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district? The researcher launched this study due to the continuous decline of learners in commercial subjects in the FET phase.

### **2.2.1 Accounting**

Accounting, as a school subject, is categorised as a scarce skill and an important subject in the growth of the South African economy that needs to become competitive and sustainable locally and internationally (South African Institute of Chartered Accountants [SAICA], 2020). Lasson, Hopper and Collin (2021) state that, besides its importance to the economy and social growth on the African continent, research on African accounting is not given the attention it deserves. The number of learners who opt for accounting as a subject in the FET phase has been on the decline recently. This happens at a time when Africa as a continent needs to produce graduates with the rare skill such as accounting. As a commercial subject, accounting offers learners various benefits, such as numeracy and critical thinking skills that are needed for strong personal development and career opportunities.

The DBE (2011a) states that accounting offers learners the opportunity to gain presentation skills, communication skills, analytical thinking skills, ethical behaviour, and neatness. According to Hendricks and Dunn (2021) and Modise and Letlhonyo (2020), few learners choose accounting in the FET phase, and their performance is below the average pass rate when compared to other subjects. The South African economy has been crippled by poor accounting practices in both the public and private sectors. Therefore, the economy needs learners equipped with relevant skills to prevent system failures. Moreover, it is critical to ensure that enrolment of learners who opt for commercial subjects such as accounting in the FET phase increases to ensure that more qualified accounting professionals are produced for South Africa and the African continent.

### **2.2.2 Business studies**

Business Studies, formerly known as Business Economics, is included in the secondary school curriculum, and it offers learners an opportunity to experience real-life issues that are current and applicable to the South African context. According to

the CAPS (2011), Business Studies deals with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values critical for informed, productive, ethical, and responsible participation in the formal and informal economic sector. Four main learning outcomes for business studies are the business environment, business ventures, business roles, and business operations.

According to the Business Studies CAPS (2011), the DBE's fundamental aim is to provide learners with knowledge and skills to be active participants in the economy of the country. Ajani (2022) also posits that business studies furnish learners with essential aptitudes to effectively participate within commercial sectors. Business studies is the subject that deals with the organisation, design, coordination, innovation and improvement of products and services by a group of individuals to satisfy the needs and desires of customers. Sarfraz, Khawaja and Ivascu (2022) assert that business studies give learners the ability to grasp the basics of making reliable decisions. According to DBE (2011), business education is part of vocational education because it helps learners acquire, comprehend, and apply the knowledge and attitudes necessary to succeed in the business world.

### **2.2.3 Economics**

Economics is one of the important subjects that forms part of the commercial stream in the FET phase (grades 10–12); it deals with how individuals, businesses, governments, and other organisations within society choose to utilise limited resources to satisfy their numerous needs and wants in a way that is efficient, equitable, and sustainable (DBE, 2011). Throughout the FET phase, learners might choose economics as one of their specialisations. The main aim of the economics curriculum in South African secondary schools is to enhance learners' understanding of economic issues and challenges as well as their ability to implement economic principles and strategies into real-life situations (Van Wyk, 2018). The economics curriculum primarily addresses macroeconomics, microeconomics, economic pursuits, and contemporary economic issues.

In South Africa, economics education has been faced with many challenges, such as a declining number of learners who choose it in the FET phase, a lack of qualified economics teachers, limited resources, and an outdated curriculum that does not

reflect the real economic situation of the country. As a result, the education ministry has put programmes in place to improve economic education across the country; these include hiring more economists and developing relevant and useful economic curricula. For learners to understand how society, businesses, and governments make decisions about the allocation of resources, economics education is important (DBE, 2011). According to Adu and Zondo (2023), economics educators need a profound understanding of topics such as supply and demand, market dynamics, macroeconomics and microeconomics to ensure that correct and reliable knowledge is imparted to learners.

Through economics education, learners can gain knowledge on important economic issues like supply and demand, inflation and economic growth, which will enable them to have better insight into how the economy functions (Joao & Rita, 2016). Students who select economics as a subject can prepare for various careers in business, finance, government, and other sectors. Adu and Zondo (2023) state that economic education is important for both individuals and society, as it offers various skills, such as critical thinking skills.

There are various reasons why learners in secondary schools do not choose subjects in the commercial stream, such as accounting, business studies, or economics (Al-Nimer & Mustafa, 2022). Al-Nimer and Mustafa (2022) further assert that these factors have the same impact across all countries.

## **2.3 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DECLINE IN ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS IN VARIOUS SUBJECTS – AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

### **2.3.1 Learning environment**

According to Balog (2020), the learning environment consists of components that have the potential to impact students learning processes. These components include teaching materials, personnel (teaching and non-teaching), curriculum, learning resources, and physical learning spaces. Teaching materials and learning resources are instructional tools linked to the curriculum, aiding both learners and teachers in the educational process. Curricula are the main fundamentals in the teaching and learning process; they have a huge influence in facilitating the flow of knowledge and skills and ensuring the delivery of teaching content. Personnel directly interact with students,

influencing their development and career paths both directly and indirectly. Physical learning spaces include a positive classroom environment, which encourages a positive teaching and learning process (Balog, 2020). According to Waldman (2016), before students can be successful in their studies, they first need to feel safe, both mentally and physically. To ensure a safe learning environment, it is important that all students feel that they are welcomed, respected, and supported. Students also need a sense of support from all those who are directly or indirectly connected to their learning process, such as teachers, school administrators, and family and community members (Raccoon, 2018).

In the study conducted by Ezike (2018), the classroom environment and students' academic interest were investigated as correlates of achievement in senior secondary chemistry students in selected public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. The results of the study showed substantial connections between academic achievements and classroom environment, although the joint influence of academic interest and classroom environment was similarly substantial. Gilavand (2015) conducted research with the aim of investigating the impact of environmental factors such as schools' space, lighting, and painting in educational institutions, as well as noise, on the learning and academic achievement of elementary students. The results indicate that environmental factors, like suitable colouring, lighting, and the school's space, have a significant influence on the academic achievement and learning process of students in elementary school.

In the study titled "The effect of environmental factors in teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools in Edo State of Nigeria" by Eimuhi and Ogedegbe (2016), the aim of the study was to examine environmental factors to determine the outcome of teaching and learning anytime and everywhere. The study found out that the more conducive the learning environment, the greater the opportunity for better academic performance and overall student results. Likewise, Muddassir and Norsuhaily (2015) conducted a study in Kuala Terengganu City, Malaysia, to examine the influence of the school environment on students' academic performance. The results revealed that students from better-equipped schools, supportive teachers, and favourable school environments perform relatively better than those who come from under-equipped schools and less favourable environments. In Tanzania, Maganga

(2016) indicates that learning environments in schools have a great impact, contributing to a decline in student enrolment in the science stream. This means that a conducive environment is of paramount importance for effective teaching and learning to take place.

### **2.3.2 Incomplete syllabus**

According to Al-Nimer and Mustafa (2023), in New Zealand the content gap in subjects such as accounting has a huge impact on graduates' abilities. This implies that when teachers' fail to cover all the topics, they need to teach learners, there is a possibility that learners will develop a content gap in those subjects. Therefore, school managers and teachers in schools need to ensure that the syllabus is covered in all subjects and in different grades to avoid the possibility of learners having content gaps. When stakeholders, like parents, become aware that a particular school learner's performance is poor, they will not enrol their children in that school. Consequently, a low enrolment of learners negatively impacts the school. Some learners' failure may be caused by an inability to answer the question in the assessment task because they have not been taught the entire syllabus, unlike those who have completed it.

### **2.3.3 Gender disparities**

The study by Cuff (2017) examined students' perception of subject difficulty and subject choices in England. The assumption of difficulty between feminine and masculine subjects influenced students' choice of subject combinations. The finding also revealed that students believed that subjects like mathematics and physics (masculine) are specifically for males, and other combinations, such as arts and humanities, were designed for females (feminine). Vidal (2019) states that there are differences in the attitude of students towards some subject combinations, and this affects the enrolment in other subjects negatively. This is known as one of the factors influencing students' choices in subject combinations.

Palmer (2018) conducted a study in Australia to explore gender and the relative importance of factors students consider when selecting subject combinations. The results found that male students have more interest in chemistry and physics, but most of them opted for physics. On the other hand, female students showed more interest in biology because they like to help people and work in health institutions such as

hospitals. In relation to physics, gender prejudice towards male students was found to be substantial compared to female students because they perceived physics as masculine and challenging to them. This finding suggests that gender is one of the factors that influence students' choice of subjects in secondary schools.

When exploring gender differences in subject choice at higher institutions in Maldives, Shafina (2020) used a mixed-method research approach. The main reason for the study was to explore the causes and patterns of enrolment regarding subject combinations, as well as the factors influencing students' decisions when choosing specific programmes in tertiary institutions. It was revealed that their choices depend on factors such as students' interests, pressure from friends and family, gender disparities, work-related stress, and possible employment opportunities. The outcomes of the study indicate that factors determining male students' choices include interest, while factors determining female students' decisions were mainly based on recommendations and advice from the family. This means that there are gender disparities in the choice of subject combinations among students. Other subject combinations were perceived as only for males, while others were for female students. Such perceptions contribute to the decline in student enrolment in other subjects.

#### **2.3.4 Influence from peers and lack of career guidance**

Kaneez and Medha (2018) discovered that grade 10 learners in Mauritius were largely influenced by their friends and career assumptions when choosing a career. This was because of a lack of career guidance when choosing their subject combinations and careers. This phenomenon was highlighted as a major contributing factor for many learners choosing wrong subjects that might not be relevant to their interests and careers in the future. Therefore, a lack of career guidance in secondary schools leads to learners choosing the wrong subject combinations, which ultimately results in poor career choices.

The study conducted by Wako (2016) assessed the status of guidance and counselling services and challenges in addressing the psychosocial and academic problems in selected secondary schools in Ethiopia. The findings of the study indicate that most students did not have sufficient guidance and counselling to make wise subject choices, and they did not choose subjects that were relevant to their daily academic

lives. The additional absence of policy direction and administrative problems relating to school counsellors also make the situation worse.

### **2.3.5 Teachers influence**

The research finding of the study conducted by Angelista (2018) on the investigation of secondary school teachers in implementing career guidance and its implications on students' future job choices in Tanzania reveals that many teachers do not have insight into other careers or professions; therefore, students did not get proper career guidance from their teachers, especially on professions besides teaching. This resulted in learners opting for unsuitable subjects as their career choices. Students, just like their teachers, said that they were not provided with enough guidance when choosing elective subjects and therefore ended up choosing the wrong subject combinations. Just like parents, teachers and SMT members can also play a pivotal role in the career development of students.

### **2.3.6 Parental or family influence**

Nyambuya and Onyango (2020) conducted a study in Dodoma, Tanzania, and used a mixed-methods approach to look at what factors students in private secondary schools use to choose A-level subject combinations that could lead to different career paths. The study's results showed that parents have a big impact on the subjects their children choose in secondary school, while teachers tell students to choose subjects based on how well they do in them. This shows that parents are very good at controlling their children's choices in secondary school.

Arif, Iqbal and Khalil (2019) conducted a study to assess the factors influencing learners' subject selection at the high school level in Pakistan. The findings reveal that the financial position and the careers of the parents have a huge influence on many students at the high school level when making the choice of subject combination. Likewise, Ukwueze and Obiefuna (2020), in their study relating to the influence of the selected factors on the career choice of secondary school learners in Nigeria, Lagos State, revealed that learners' career choices were predominantly guided by their family's background, social class, and parents' level of education. Meaning, children's choice of subject combination is significantly influenced by their family members because children interact first with people, they are close with, such as parents.

Therefore, it can be said that parental influence plays a significant role in learners choosing subjects, and due to the lack of professionals such as accountants, parents may influence their children to choose other subjects, which can lead to a decline in learners in different subjects.

Furthermore, Javed (2018) explores factors affecting students' subject selection in secondary schools in Pakistan. The study findings indicate that parents' professions, financial status, and students' abilities and performances influenced the choice of subject grouping in secondary schools. The consequence was that socio-economics and individual factors exaggerated students' selection of subject groups; consequently, students who were from low economic backgrounds were unable to select subjects based on their interests; rather, they were pressed to select subject groups that were not in their best interest. Rukewe (2017) in Botswana, Gaborone supported these claims. He looked at what made senior secondary school students in private schools choose their careers. He found that family background, gender differences, personal experience, and possible career opportunities and benefits were the main things that affected students' choice of subject grouping.

### **2.3.7 Effect of Language of teaching and learning (LoLT)**

The language of teaching and learning (LoLT) refers to the medium of instruction that teachers or lecturers use in conducting their lessons. LoLT is not only used to conduct lessons, but it is also used to assess learners or students. In the study conducted in Turkey by Abdulkadir and Coskum (2016), the findings revealed that students' performance is linked directly with the LoLT. Their research results also indicate that where the first additional language was used as a medium of instruction for various races of students in the University of Turkey, it yielded positive academic performance for students where the medium of instruction is their home language. Clearly, conducting teaching and learning in the mother tongue in schools or universities can enhance the performance of learners or students.

South Africa is not immune to the effect of the first additional language, as LoLT, on learners and students' academic performance. Sefotho (2022) endorse this claim in their research, conducted in South Africa's Limpopo Province, in which participants were first-year students. The results show that most first-year students perform poorly

in English-based modules and better in their home language modules. The conclusion can be drawn that if learners' home language can be used in the teaching and learning of commercial subjects in secondary schools, learners' performance can improve, and many learners can subsequently enjoy these subjects. Not teaching and assessing learners in their mother tongues may exacerbate the decline in enrolment in various subjects. The study also revealed that factors relating to culture, such as gender and language, are considered by students in secondary school when deciding on possible career paths. Therefore, students consider various factors essential before choosing their subject combinations.

The above section indicates various studies that were conducted internationally and locally to provide evidence that various factors contribute to the decline in enrolment of learners in various subjects. These factors include gender, family background, individual performances, possible career paths and related benefits, and cultural and socioeconomic issues. These factors can have a positive or negative impact on how learners achieve their career goals.

## **2.4 POSSIBLE FACTORS IMPACTING ON LEARNERS' CHOICE OF COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS**

Because of a rapidly changing world and the evolution of technology and industrialisation, choosing subjects and careers is a huge challenge for learners, educators, and parents. In the past this was not a challenge, as there were limited choices. Today, because of current industrialisation, which focusses mainly on technology, many careers have emerged that require secondary school learners to have background knowledge in subjects such as mathematics, science, and commerce. Secondary school learners are therefore required to make decisions about which subjects will best suit their future career needs.

### **2.4.1 Non-use of information communication technology (ICT) in teaching and learning**

Many countries in the world are embracing the use of artificial intelligence (AI), specifically in institutions of learning. According to Munje and Jita (2020), some teachers, especially in secondary schools, still do not incorporate ICT in their lessons. As a result, learners' ICT skills are not being developed if teachers do not include the

use of ICT in activities such as teaching, learning and assessing. The use of technology advances learners' abilities towards learning; many teachers still do not offer online classes to assist learners even after school hours (Das, 2019). In South Africa, the Eastern Cape Province has the highest number of schools, but few schools have computers when compared to other provinces, such as Free State and Gauteng, which can lead to a decline in the enrolment of learners in commercial subjects, especially in schools that do not have these technologies.

#### **2.4.2 Impact of subject grouping or combination**

The core foundation of an individual's career path is shaped by the choice of subject combination she or he made while in secondary school. Jackson and Wilton (2017) assert that it is vital for learners in secondary schools to select suitable subject combinations, as their choices will ease their path for tertiary education. In other words, learners who choose suitable subject combinations have good professional development that could have a great impact on their future in relation to commitment, desire to work, motivation, and the generation of income. Employees who choose suitable subject combinations early in their schooling are more likely to have job satisfaction, which could lead to a continuous commitment to their organisations (Jackson & Wilton, 2017).

The choice of subject combination in secondary school has led different researchers to investigate the factors that could influence the whole process. The United States of America (USA) allows and supports learners to choose careers based on their capabilities and interests. In the USA, 95% of families support high school learners in choosing their own careers (Yu & Warren, 2018). Families influence many learners in choosing their subject combinations. In Australia, various factors, such as home language, inspiration, and aspiration, influence the choice of subjects among learners (Yu & Warren, 2018).

According to Mudulia (2017), in Singapore, learners are provided with career guidance on how to choose subject combinations based on individual learner potential in their performance in school, starting from early childhood to secondary school. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, subject combination choice depends on age, with the aim of determining the learner's maturity and deciding which subject combination will best

suit them. According to Andres (2018), the choice of a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) stream is based on family, socio-economic status, gender, and type of school, like single-gender, mixed-gender, religious school, or where the school is situated. Andres (2018) asserts that in the United Kingdom, learners choose their subject combinations based on potential future employment, their interests, and the guidance of their parents. It is evident from this research that economics and social history may have an impact on how learners choose subject combinations.

According to Ari, Iqbal and Khalil (2019), learners in Pakistan are free to choose subject combinations based on their interests, prior knowledge, and abilities. Nevertheless, at times their parents force them to choose certain subjects without considering their interest and abilities. As a result of their parents' influence, learners often choose subject combinations they dislike and lack proficiency in. This results in students performing poorly in school and losing interest in their coursework.

The African context is different from other continents. Countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Liberia have made science subjects like mathematics compulsory in secondary school for learners in public schools (Zotorvie, 2016). According to Tsikati (2019), subject combinations in South Africa are structured according to learners' abilities and interests, the location of the school and the nature of specialisation for all the learners.

In 1994, South Africa implemented a new curriculum. This curriculum brought a change in the schooling system, and new and different phases were introduced that learners will have to follow from grade R to grade 12. The schooling system in South Africa is divided into the following phases: foundation phase (grade R–3), intermediate phase (grade 4–6), senior phase (grade 7–9) and Further Education and Training phase (grade 10–12). In the FET Phase, learners can only select subject combinations, which follow a structured format:

**Compulsory subjects:**

- Home language
- First Additional Languages
- Mathematics or Mathematics literacy

- Life Orientation

### **Elective subjects:**

#### **Business, Commerce and Management Sciences:**

- Accounting
- Business Studies
- Economics

#### **Arts and Culture:**

- Dance Studies
- Design
- Dramatic Arts
- Music
- Visual Arts

#### **Engineering and Technology:**

- Civil Technology
- Electrical Technology
- Engineering Graphics and Design
- Mechanical Technology

#### **Services:**

- Consumer Studies
- Hospitality Studies
- Tourism

#### **Agricultural Sciences:**

- Agricultural Sciences
- Agricultural Management and Practices
- Agricultural Technology

Subject combination in secondary school's influences learners' or parents' choice of subjects for their children. In other words, the number of learners enrolled in a particular stream can increase if they are interested in those subjects, whether they are grouped together or not. If the subject combinations are unrelated or irrelevant, learners will perform poorly in those subjects, and that will have a negative impact on their overall performance. Eventually, this will cause fewer learners to enrol in these streams.

### **2.4.3 The effect of teaching integrated curriculum (Economic and Management Science) on commercial subjects**

According to Drake and Reid (2018), there is a call for curriculum reform around the world, which seeks to integrate all related subjects to provide learners with the opportunity to put learning into real-life situations. The aim of CAPS in South Africa is to produce learners who can apply knowledge in real-world contexts by demonstrating that the universe operates as a set of related systems (DBE, 2011). As a result, this aim produced the introduction of an incorporated curriculum to enable learners to combine knowledge on related subjects (Izci, 2017). Nollmeyer, Kelting-Gibson and Graves (2016) assert that the logic of the implementation of curriculum integration is to connect knowledge across subjects to real-life situations. This notion is evident in commercial subjects, where the EMS subject was introduced in the senior phase (grade 7–9) by combining focus, goals, knowledge, theory and practice of accounting, business studies and economics (DBE, 2011).

In South Africa, EMS is a special subject that is offered in the senior phase (Phakathi, 2018). All commercial subjects in FET rely on EMS as a foundation. In secondary schools, the FET phase includes grades 10-12. According to Phakathi (2018), EMS curricula provide learners with elementary skills and knowledge to be able to cope with commercial subjects in the FET phase. EMS consists of three important components: (1) economy, (2) entrepreneur and (3) financial literacy (DBE, 2011). Letshwene and Du Plessis (2021) state that one of the commercial subjects in the FET phase is accounting, which is technical in nature and needs a solid foundation. The financial literacy component of EMS introduces accounting to learners first. Subsequently, the big percentage of the EMS curriculum is devoted to financial literacy with the aim of introducing fundamental concepts of accounting to learners (Arek-Bawa, 2018). The

introduction of these fundamental concepts of accounting in the early grades is important because it provides learners with the necessary skills to analyse, solve, and interpret financial information (Erasmus & Fourie, 2018).

According to Fu and Sibert (2017), the main aim of the EMS curriculum is to equip learners with basic knowledge for all commercial subjects in the FET phase; hence, every EMS teacher is required to implement the integrated approach when teaching this subject. Integrated teaching of EMS furnishes learners with essential knowledge that will assist them with subject choice in the FET phase (Izci, 2017). If EMS is not taught in an integrated way, it will harm the choice of commercial subjects in the FET phase.

#### **2.4.4 The use of traditional methods of teaching in commercial subjects**

According to Hafeez et al. (2020), education is a primary need for humankind and an important instrument for any nation to progress. Tavoosy and Jelveh (2019) state that the main challenge in the teaching and learning process is choosing relevant and productive teaching methods to ensure that teaching is meaningful and learners acquire critical thinking skills. There are two critical elements that need to be considered to develop critical thinking skills in learners, namely (1) methods used by teachers and (2) active participation of learners in the teaching and learning process (Nelson, 2017). According to Molbaek (2018), teachers are required to act as advisors rather than knowledge conveyers in facilitating teaching.

In the study conducted by Farashashi and Tajeddin (2018), there are different methods of teaching, like traditional discussion and project-based methods. The traditional method is characterised by one-way discussions where the teachers provide information to the learners, and there is little to no interaction between the teachers and learners (Almanasef, Almaghaslah, Portlock & Chater, 2020). Gregorius (2017) asserts that the traditional method involves the teacher providing notes and activities at the conclusion of the lesson, without providing a Q&A session for the learners. Dehghanzadeh and Jafaraghaee (2018) pointed out that traditional methods do not equip learners with critical thinking skills and do not stimulate interest in them. The decline in student enrolment in subjects such as accounting and economics could be attributed to traditional teaching methods.

#### **2.4.5 Insufficient learning and teaching support materials (LTSM)**

Teaching and learning support materials include manuals, chalk, textbooks, charts, posters, sanitary facilities, and entertainment resources (Chunk, 2019). The aim of these resources is to ensure an effective and efficient teaching and learning process. According to Frimpong (2017), teachers use these materials to achieve their lesson objectives. When teachers achieve lesson objectives, it means learners can acquire skills and knowledge through learning (Yavuz & Guzel, 2020). Therefore, lack of teaching and learning support materials can compromise the process of teaching and learning. Sufficient teaching and learning materials enable teachers to perform to the best of their ability and to find solutions to any problems or challenges they may encounter (Nawani, 2019).

Mueni and Githinji (2019) state that the use of learning and teaching support material (LTSM) is important because it is a motivation for the teachers to provide stimulus variety and assistance to keep learners' attention during the lesson. They also state that LTSM helps simplify the complexity of the subject. Teaching and learning materials arouse learners' interest and ensure that learners are fully engaged in the classroom during the lesson and outside activities (Mueni & Githinji, 2019). Mashekwa (2019) state that LTSM is a key element of the learning process, and it is difficult to implement without them.

According to Mulkeen (2017), lack of teaching and learning resources in many schools is still a huge obstacle to political, social and economic change in many countries on the African continent. Mulkeen further asserts that 18% of learners in sub-Saharan Africa are retained in their grades due to insufficient teaching and learning support materials in schools.

In the study conducted by Ong'amo, Ondigi and Omariba (2017) on the effect of utilisation of biology teaching and learning resources on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Siaya District, Kenya, it was revealed that insufficient teaching and learning materials caused poor student performance. The researchers also exposed that a lack of relevant textbooks hinders the effective teaching and learning process and, as a result, causes learners to lose interest in the subject. The study by Manjale and Abel (2017) in Tanzania revealed that the use of

teaching and learning materials enhances the conducive learning process because it helps learners gain a better understanding; it also boosts support and improves learners' performance, which in turn improves enrolment in the subject.

The above section focused on possible factors contributing to the decline in learners' enrolment in commercial subjects. As indicated by the literature review, factors such as subject grouping or combination, lack of career guidance and non-use of integration of ICT in commercial subjects and insufficient teaching and learning support materials are among possible factors that contribute to the decline of learners in commercial subjects.

## **2.5 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE LEARNERS' ENROLMENT IN COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS**

### **2.5.1 Integration of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning of commercial subjects**

In the modern world, the word technology is fundamental to various sectors of the economy, including education (Puspitawati, Nurhasanah & Khaerunnisa, 2021). This popularity is because of the widespread use of technology as a means of information transfer in most countries across the globe. According to Rachmawati (2019), in today's world, technology has transformed the way people live, think, and work in societies.

Rachmawati (2019) states that educational institutions have the responsibility to prepare students to live in a well-informed society; therefore, they must ensure that ICT forms part of their curriculum. The daily classroom teaching and learning process must integrate ICT (Abdullah, Toycan & Anwar, 2017). The process of integrating ICT in teaching and learning needs continuous support from all relevant stakeholders in education (Sarker, Wu, Cao, Alam & Li, 2019).

According to Khan (2011) and Kharbach (2023), numerous studies show that using ICT in teaching and learning improves learners' academic performance and helps them to adapt to the digital world we live in. These authors emphasised the importance of ICT in the teaching and learning process, as it helps bridge the learning gaps that exist among learners in the curriculum. Likewise, the study by Malinda (2021) indicates

that using ICT is of utmost importance for every society to develop. In subjects like accounting and economics, the use of ICT has become an essential instrument in transfiguring education and in changing the economy worldwide. The use of ICT in the process of teaching and learning produced positive results, and it raises the standard in the education sector; it also ensures that learners can compete at the global level (Ojo & Adu, 2018).

### **2.5.2 Recruitment of career guidance facilitators or counsellors in schools**

Horatius (2021) conducted the study in Ghana to explore the effectiveness of counselling in students' choice of subjects in relation to their future vocation. The findings of the study show that the implementation of career guidance and counselling assisted the students in getting reliable and relevant information when selecting subjects relative to their future job. This was identified as an active strategy that helped students to select subjects that are relevant to their interests and future career paths. This study recommends that school-based career guidance facilitators be recruited and be furnished with essential resources to enable them to effectively and efficiently carry out their mandate. Moreover, the school counsellors or managers are required to implement alternative strategies to make information available for all different subjects to learners when selecting the subject combinations in the FET phase; this will possibly increase the number of learners enrolling in the commerce stream.

A study by Ndiokubwayo, Ukobizaba, Byusa and Rukundo. (2022) in Rwanda explores issues involved in the choice of subjects at advanced-level secondary schools. The mixed-method approach was used to collect data. The recommendations of the study were that the government should provide training for career guidance facilitators to assist students in selecting their right subjects, and students should be provided the opportunity to choose their favourite subjects rather than choosing subjects based on their performance. The career guidance facilitators will make the students conscious of the consequences of making the wrong subject choice. When students make good subject choices, they will have a positive attitude towards those subjects, and that will improve their performance; therefore, the quality of education in the country will also improve.

### **2.5.3 The use of social media to promote commercial subjects**

Social media refers to technological platforms that enable interaction between users, sharing of content and online communication (Tarigan, Harhap, Sari, Sakinah & Ausat, 2023). These platforms give users the opportunity to share information, create profiles and pages, and distribute pictures and videos and various types of information (Ferine, Ausat, Gadzali & Sari, 2023).

The use of social media has grown significantly recently and has surfaced as a fundamental instrument in people's daily lives (Maitri et al., 2023). The significance of this phenomenon is evident in the educational spectrum, as schools, universities, colleges, parents, and students use social media platforms for communication and interaction (Fauzi, Tuhuteru, & Ausat, 2023). According to Greenhow, Galvin and Staudt (2019), the use of social media in education has huge advantages in the current technological era. The use of social media has the potential to increase access to information, increase knowledge and enable communication between teachers, learners and parents. Different social media platforms serve as instruments to strengthen stakeholders' participation in education (Fauzi et al., 2023).

Numerous studies have also indicated that social media contributes significantly to education. The study conducted by Kisiolek, Karyy and Halkiv (2020), titled comparative analysis of the practice of internet use in the marketing activities of higher institution. The findings revealed that different social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, and YouTube, can be used for various purposes, like (a) disseminating information and communication; (b) marketing and promotional activities for the school; and (c) promoting the brand and culture of the school.

Hafidhah, Arifin and Herli (2020) in their study titled "Analysing the role of social media in supporting the performance and popularity of higher education institutions." The study analysed data gathered through regression analysis on the total number of posts, followers, subscriptions, and viewers across all social media platforms managed by higher education institutions. This was done to evaluate the relationship between institutional performance and reputation in East Java. The findings indicated that the use of platforms like YouTube and Twitter had a huge impact on performance

in higher education, for example, the number of students enrolled in that institution. This study recommends using social media as one of the strategies to improve learners' enrolment in commercial subjects.

#### **2.5.4 Support from teachers and school management team (SMT) members**

Khan (2011) states that teachers, including the school management team (SMT), play an important role in providing career guidance to students. Teachers also have a role to play in helping students to choose subjects that are suitable for their abilities and that will give them the opportunity to have positive career paths (Falaye & Adams, 2008). Teachers are the main suppliers of career guidance; they help students choose subjects and raise their career awareness (Garrahy, 2001).

According to Elizabeth (2012), in secondary schools, teachers are a great influence on students' decisions about which careers to follow by providing guidance and offering information relating to different jobs. Kisilu, Kimani and Kombo (2012) states that teachers assess the students' skills, give them advice relating to the subjects they are studying, and teach them how to choose professions. According to Amoah, Kwofie and Kwofie (2015), teachers are key role players in students' career choices in secondary schools.

Life Orientation, a subject in South African secondary schools, primarily embodies career guidance, with teachers rigorously prepared for this role. According to the Department of Education (CAPS, 2011), life orientation is defined as the study of self in relation to others and to society. This subject addresses skills, knowledge, and values about the self, the environment, responsible citizenship, a healthy and productive life, social engagement, recreation and physical activity, and career choices. According to Prinsloo (2007), this subject provides guidance, equips learners with necessary skills for life's challenges and opportunities, and prepares them to make informed decisions and career choices that will enable them to live a purposeful, successful life.

The Learning Programme Guidelines for Life Orientation from the Department of Education (2008) states that one of the key roles of Life Orientation teachers is to provide careers-related information to learners that includes workplace activities and requirements for admission to tertiary institutions. They are also required to assist

learners in making suitable subjects and university choices. Therefore, it is important for all teachers, including SMT members, to support students when selecting topics in secondary schools to ensure the increase of learners' enrolment in different subjects.

### **2.5.5 Parental and community involvement**

According to Li and Zhang (2023), parental involvement in education serves as a foundation for the holistic development of a learner and wide improvement of social well-being. The importance of this involvement cannot be overemphasised, as it goes beyond the classroom walls and spreads into the entire community (Hamm, Weiner, Corcoran, 2021). Cordova et al. (2024) state that partnerships among stakeholders, such as parents, schools, and communities, do not only improve learners' performance; they also provide learners with skills, knowledge, and values needed for positive contributions in society.

Beard and Thomson (2021) also assert that parental involvement in education has been identified as an important contributor to learners' success in schools and holistic development. Positive parental engagement in their children's education encourages learning, provides guidance, instils discipline, and adds value to education (Hsu & Chen, 2023). Likewise, Kelty and Wakabayashi (2020) state that community involvement in education provides support beyond the family base and inspires educational experiences by providing different views, educational resources, and career opportunities. Working together, different stakeholders such as parents and communities contribute positively to ensuring that learners are prepared for the challenges of the ever-changing world we live in.

According to Alam and Mohanty (2023), the partnership of parents, communities, and schools is critical for improving educational outcomes and developing the social welfare of learners. Therefore, Parental and community involvement can be used to assist learners in making the right career choices, which could also help increase their enrolment in different streams.

The above-mentioned part outlines the results of various studies conducted on strategies to improve learners' enrolment in commercial subjects and other subject combinations. These strategies include integration of ICT in teaching and learning, recruitment of career guidance facilitators, the use of various information resources,

and parental and teachers support. Therefore, the study suggests that the DBE helps students choose their subjects during the FET phase by providing trained career guidance facilitators and career guidance services in schools, along with information about those choices through various media. The literature review recommends the above strategies to all relevant stakeholders to enhance learners' enrolment in commercial subjects.

## **2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The intention of the study is to identify contributing factors to the decline in learners' enrolment in commercial subjects in secondary schools. Therefore, it is important to employ a specific theoretical framework that would pave a foundation for understanding learners' choice regarding commercial subjects. This study employs the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) by Berger and Calabrese (1975) as its guide. The theory emphasises that social life has many uncertainties, and communication's fundamental role is to reduce them. In the provided literature, it is evident that learners are very uncertain about which subject combination to choose from. Hence, the Basic Education Minister, together with schools and all relevant stakeholders in education, such as parents, has a duty to make information accessible to learners to help them select subject combinations that are appropriate for their future careers. Such knowledge will help learners make more confident and easier decisions. This might be beneficial in eliminating uncertainties regarding learners' choice of subjects.

### **2.6.1 Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT)**

The URT suggest that the main aim of communication is to reduce uncertainties (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). There are two categories of uncertainty reduction and they are as follows, cognitive uncertainty and behavioural uncertainty, and three interdependent approaches that people can utilise to get relevant information about anything that they are interested in, namely: passive, active and interactive. The initial interaction between outlanders is deliberated and categorised into different phases: entry phase, personal phase and exit phase. These communication behaviours can determine whether individuals are interested or not interested in something and if they like someone or not. This theory states that most individuals find uncertainty in social

relationships, hostile relations and are eager to reduce it by way of interpersonal communication.

The theory also asserts that the initial encounter among individuals comes with uncertainties, and these are cognitive uncertainty or behavioural uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Cognitive uncertainty associates with the amount of doubt linked with the perception, belief and attitude of another person. Uncertainty arises mainly at the beginning of the encounter, when individuals initially meet since they are not informed about the beliefs and attitudes of others. Behavioural uncertainty is associated with the inspiration behind tolerance of customs of other communities in which individuals normally assent to how things are done, and if in the first encounter people opt to overlook such customs since they present the danger of aggregating behavioural uncertainty and reducing the likelihood of communication in the future.

Furthermore, Berger and Calabrese (1975) underlined two ways of reducing uncertainty between individuals: (a) retroactive uncertainty reduction and (b) proactive uncertainty reduction. Retroactive uncertainty reduction usually happens from the start of the first interaction all the way to the end of that specific encounter. Proactive uncertainty reduction is a critical communication strategy before one can initiate conversation with another individual.

### **2.6.2 Relevance of the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) for the study**

Regarding this study, the relevance of URT weighs more on learners who may not be informed about what a commercial stream entails and their future career requirements. All the information gathered and made available to learners will help them make informed decisions about subject choice challenges.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The intention of this study was to determine factors contributing towards the enrolment decline in commercial subjects in secondary schools in the Free State Province, TMED, especially in circuit five. This chapter, therefore, presents the research design and methodology adopted in this study for the purpose of data collection. This was achieved through a qualitative research approach discussion, and it was used to ensure effective and efficient collection of data needed to answer the research questions. Moreover, this chapter outlines the research methods, sample, and sampling techniques employed in this study.

This chapter's research methodology aimed to address the following research questions:

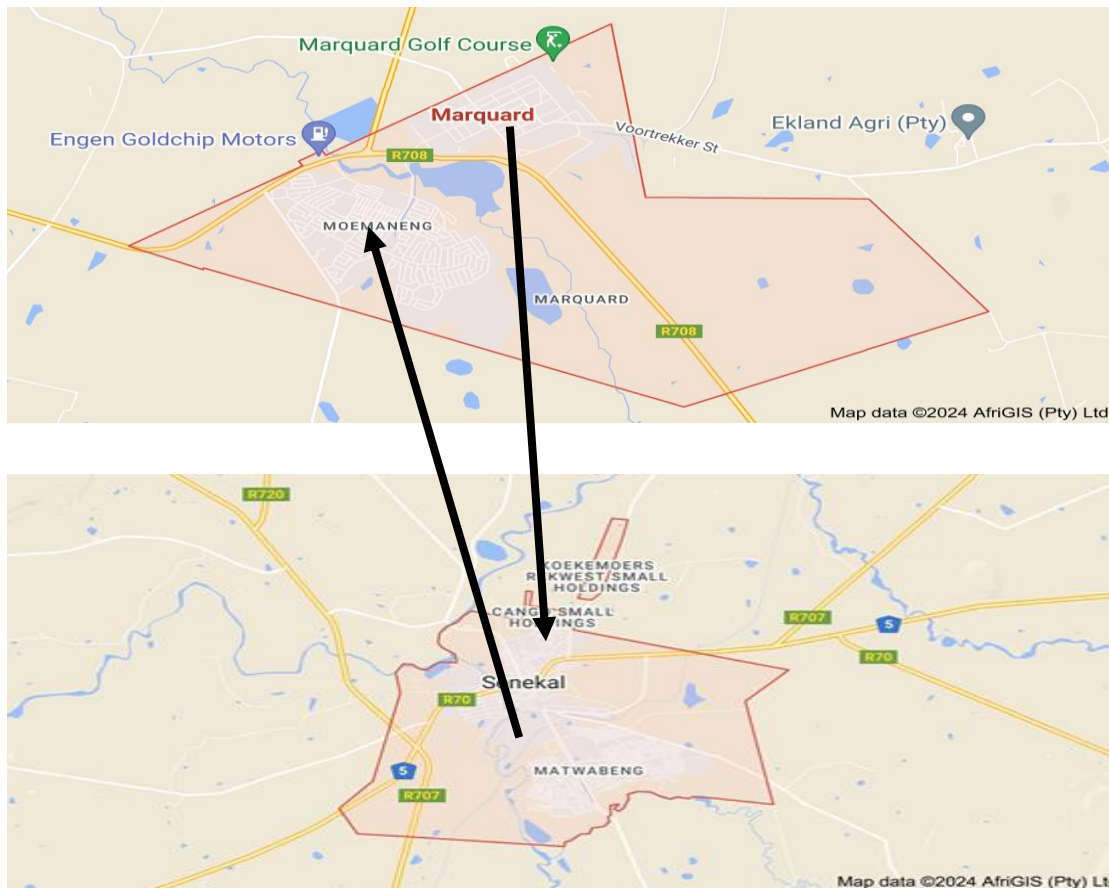
- What are the main causes of the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects?
- Does lack of resources affect the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects?
- What strategies should SMT and educators implement to ensure increase in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects?

Therefore, all the procedures presented in this chapter were determined to enable data collection, analysis, and interpretation to help the researcher provide the answers to the research questions above.

#### 3.2 LOCATION OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted in circuit five of the TMED in the Free State Province of South Africa. Circuit five is made up of two towns, namely, Marquard and Senekal, which are 45km away from each other. Thabo Mofutsanyana District is found in the eastern part of the Free State Province. The researcher chose this district because of its easy accessibility and his current employment as a commercial subject teacher.

Therefore, the researcher has sufficient insight into the challenge of decreasing the number of learners in commercial subjects.



### 3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a strategy detailing how the researcher will explore the project. It delineates the methodology for conducting the study. This strategy encompasses details like the timeline, the subject matter, and the methods for gathering and organising data. The purpose of deploying a research strategy is to outline a plan for gathering evidence to answer the research questions. The main objective is to ensure that research results are valid and reliable (McMillian & Schumacher, 2014). Research design is a research process that includes data collection, analysis, and written reports. Likewise, McMillan and Schumacher (2010:2) defines research design as “the specific plan to execute a research.” He went further to say that a research design can be qualitative or quantitative in nature, or it can use a combination of both, called the mixed method. Pilot and Beck (2008) defined research design as the comprehensive plan to provide answers to research questions and outline strategy to ensure the

reliability of the research. Research design is the decision made by the researcher during the study (Creswell, 2013).

McMillian and Schumacher (2010) define that qualitative research method as explanatory research that happens in the natural setting to comprehend a specific event. Qualitative methods depend on verbal descriptions of participants and occasionally include document analysis. Creswell and Poth (2017) outlined the qualitative research approach as a specific procedure for the collection, organisation, interpretation, and analysis of data. Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) revealed that researchers who use qualitative research methods pay more attention to how participants interpret their life experiences based on specific situations.

McMillian and Schumacher (2014) outlined different types of qualitative research design as follows:

- The study with the intention of examining a particular issue and understanding it is called a phenomenological study.
- The study that comprises the researcher's narration and analysis of a specific issue is known as ethnography.
- The study that aims at a specific environment to institute a theory is called a grounded study.
- The study that involves in-depth investigation of events is called a case study.
- The study that is concerned with inequality or injustice in a particular setting is called a critical study.

In this study, the researcher had direct interaction with learners and teachers, indicating that it was qualitative in nature and fell under a phenomenological study. The study sought to identify factors contributing to the decline in enrolment in commercial subjects. Therefore, it was appropriate to accept the generalisation and thematic nature of the concepts.

### **3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH**

According to Babbie (2016), qualitative research is a social sciences research that gathers and employs non-numerical data that seeks to construct meaning from this

data. This helps us to understand social life from the study of targeted populations or places.

The qualitative approach was adopted in this study, as it provided direct interaction with the participants and allowed them to interpret their lived experience in their words. This approach also allowed the researcher to get an in-depth understanding and explanation of action and events. The qualitative approach was applicable in this study because of its suitability in social research, and the case was done in the natural setting of the subject (Mohaja, 2018). Merriam (2018) stated that qualitative research gives the researcher the opportunity to gather raw information directly from the participants. This study collected data not only from books but also from educators and learners in the targeted schools.

As outlined in the preceding chapters, the focus of this study was the decline in enrolment in commercial subjects. Merriam (2018) stated that the research approach should be opted for depending on what the study was trying to achieve. To choose a qualitative approach, some reasons were given. For example, the qualitative research method helped find many reasons for the drop in commercial subjects in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. It also looked at the feelings of participants in a way that a quantitative method probably would not have. Furthermore, this approach was selected because of its flexibility in data collection and research design. The research design was modified as the fieldwork continued. The researcher did not test the hypothesis in the study and did not ask participants standardised questions.

### **3.4.1 Shortcomings of qualitative research approach**

According to Hughes (2016), reliability and validity of the qualitative research approach were the main criticisms. Qualitative data collection was subjective, and the single setting of origin made it hard to verify the reliability and validity. Moreover, unlike the quantitative approach, the findings of qualitative research were usually difficult to generalise because they were in-depth in nature; it only covers small areas that cannot be generalised. Additionally, in this study, the researcher attempted to be impartial and unprejudiced and reported the finding in a sensible way.

### 3.5 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Population is a group of characteristics or facts, whether they are single or significant, that follow clear rules and for which the study results were expected to be general (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). Moreover, Creswell (2013) asserted that the population encompassed all individuals or the phenomenon under investigation, from which the study selected its sample.

For this study, the population included all the grade 9 learners in circuit five of the Thabo Mofutsanyana district who are expected to choose different subjects in the FET phase. These learners were relevant sources of reliable information in relation to factors contributing towards enrolment decline in commercial subjects, as they are expected to choose different subjects in a FET phase. The researcher believed that the population from which the sample was selected had the necessary information that was useful for achieving the objectives of this study. The table below presents the study population.

School	Grade 9 class	Number of boys	Number of girls	Total
A	9A – 9C	65	61	<b>126</b>
B	9A – 9E	107	127	<b>234</b>
C	9A	28	12	<b>40</b>
D	9A – 9F	128	131	<b>259</b>
E	No grade 9 class	0	0	<b>0</b>
F	9A	15	15	<b>30</b>
G	9A – 9B	28	34	<b>62</b>
H	9A	18	15	<b>33</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>389</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>784</b>

### 3.6 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

#### 3.6.1 Sample size

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) defined a sample as a set of participants selected from the population to act on behalf of the entire population. Wani (2017) asserts that the selected sample aids in data collection, enabling the researcher to draw

conclusions about the population it represents. According to Wani (2017), sample size was the portion of the population used to make population-wide decisions. Shorten and Moorley (2014) states that sampling is the process of selecting a small group from a larger group to accurately and sufficiently represent the features of the population. Sampling refers to choosing a portion from the entire population (Rosnow, 2014). The sample for this study consisted of five (5) secondary schools with twenty-five (25) learners; five (5) from each of the sampled secondary schools in circuit five of the TMED. Two (2) commercial subject educators also formed part of the sample.

### **3.6.2 Sampling procedure**

Creswell (2013) defines sampling as the procedure to select a sample from the whole population. Pajo (2017) asserts that a sampling procedure selects a subgroup of the population, known as a sample.

According to Strydom (2011), there are two types of sampling, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. Researchers can categorise these types of sampling into sub-groups to simplify and easily choose participants for their study. This study used non-probability sampling. The following are examples of non-probability sampling:

#### **3.6.2.1 Convenient sampling**

Convenient sampling is defined as a strategy used to gather data from accessible people who are eager to take part in the study during the process of data collection (Gay et al., 2011).

#### **3.6.2.2 Purposive sampling**

According to McMillian and Schumacher (2012), in purposive sampling, the researcher selected the participants based on their obvious knowledge of the topic. Purposive sampling is also considered judgement sampling, and its selection techniques relied heavily on how best the researcher knew the group (Gay et al., 2012). In purposive sampling, the researcher selected samples depending on the aim of the research and how well they knew their participants (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). The benefit of the purposive sampling is that the researcher is directed by participants' knowledge and understanding.

To achieve the research objectives, the researcher employed purposive sampling. Purposive sampling specifically selected the sample because they possessed indubitable knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation. To get a true reflection of the decline in enrolment, 25 grade 9 learners and 2 commercial subject teachers were chosen for the purpose of this study.

### **3.7 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION AND INSTRUMENT**

Interviews and analysis of documents were used in this study as methods of data collection.

#### **3.7.1 Interviews**

Creswell (2013) presented interviews as an interaction between the researcher and his or her participants, and it was mainly characterised by face-to-face discussion. Interviews provide the researcher with the chance to actively engage in discussions about the problem under investigation. According to McMillian and Schumacher (2010), interviews are methods of data collection by means of oral and prearranged types of questions. They went further to say there are three types of interview questions: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured.

##### **3.7.1.1 *Structured interview***

Structured interviews, also known as standardised interviews, are a method of data collection used in qualitative research with the aim of ensuring that interviews are conducted with the same question and in the same order (Blackman, Funder & David, 2002).

##### **3.7.1.2 *Semi-structure interview***

Semi-structured interviews are mostly used in qualitative research; they are the most common data source in educational research. This method of data collection involved a discussion between the researcher and the participants and is directed by a flexible interview procedure and assisted by follow-up questions and comments. This method gives the researcher the opportunity to gain an understanding of the participants' thoughts, feelings and beliefs about the topic under investigation and allows the researcher to collect data from open-ended questions (Creswell, 2013).

### **3.7.1.3 Unstructured interviews**

Grey (2009) stated that unstructured interviews could take form in non-directive interviews where the aim is to get in-depth information, and it allows the researcher not to follow prearranged questions. Another type of unstructured interview is the focused interview, in which the interviewer is familiar with the interviewee, and when the interviewee deviates from the main issue, the interviewer can redirect the interviewee to the main topic. Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) also presented another form of unstructured interview called an informal or conversational interview; this type of unstructured interview is based on unplanned types of questions that are raised during the interview.

Semi-structured interviews were adopted as the main method of data collection in this study, and where necessary, in-depth interviews were also used. The semi-structured interviews also allowed the researcher to ask more questions freely to get a deeper feeling of the participants; therefore, the researcher was not restricted to interview schedules only. The researcher therefore used individual interviews to collect data from 25 learners (5 from each school) and 2 commercial subject teachers.

### **3.7.2 Documents enquiry**

According to Henning, van Rensburg and Smith (2004), document enquiry is all the documents and sources containing relevant, reliable and valuable information. McMillian and Schumacher (2014) defined document enquiry as documents that give the researcher the provision to have inside information about an institution. In this study, documents that were regarded as valuable to the study were requested from the school for inspection.

The documents that were requested by the researcher included the admission register, class register, summary register and staff meeting minutes to get an overview of enrolment issues in schools.

### **3.7.2.1 Admission register**

An admission register is an official document that is used by the school to record the details of learners arriving at the school including learners who came from other schools and those who were transferred to and from other schools.

### **3.7.2.2 Class registers**

According to the DBE (2010) section (16), an attendance register is regarded as one of the official documents used in schools to record attendance of learners by the class teacher. The class teacher must record learners' attendance every day, and it must include the total number of learners, total number of learners absent, and total number of learners present.

### **3.7.2.3 Summary of register**

A summary of the register is controlled by a member of the SMT or a responsible teacher who is given authority by the principal. It records all the events in the schools, from grade 8 to grade 12. It also tracks the movement of learners from when they first arrive at the school until they leave the school.

### **3.7.2.4 Staff meeting minutes**

The minutes of the staff meetings included all the discussion during a session by all staff members at the school (teaching or non-teaching) or by a certain department at the school. These minutes included deliberations, strategies and tasks, and dates of resolutions made by attendees during those meetings.

## **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Calzon (2021), data analysis is a procedure of presenting collected data and analysing it to get an insight that would help when making decisions. McMillian and Schumacher (2014) stated that data analysis includes an introductory technique whereby data is arranged into categories and classifying patterns or connections among those categories. Analysis is a logical procedure for categorising, coding, and interpreting data with the intention of providing clarification. To analyse qualitative data

like interviews is an extensive activity. There is no single correct method, allowing for multiple interpretations of data.

McMillian and Schumacher (2014) said that researchers in qualitative research analyse data orally. This means that they look over and organise the notes they took during the interviews, interpreting the information, and breaking it down into smaller pieces so that they can see patterns and trends. In this study the researcher revisited the data after every single interview to note vital issues gathered during the interview. The results assisted the researcher in prioritising those issues.

### **3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that four components in qualitative research—credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability—assess trustworthiness. These four components were used as a criterion to guarantee the accuracy of the findings in this study. Below is an explanation of each component.

#### **3.9.1 Credibility**

Credibility is a point where the researcher institutes confidence to guarantee that the research results are correct, reliable and authentic (Forero et al., 2018). In this study, credibility was achieved by scrutinising whether the data collected is the true reflection of the participants by discussion scripts, and they were compared to their answers.

#### **3.9.2 Dependability**

Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2013) stated that dependability deals with the consistency of the research findings over time. For the purposes of this study, the process of data collection, interpretation, analysis, and presentation was translucent, sensible, and well documented; in that way, dependability was achieved. Experts in the field of education research proofread the work for this study.

#### **3.9.3 Confirmability**

According to Creswell (2013), confirmability refers to the degree to which other researchers confirmed the results of the study. In this study, confirmability was certified by the supervisor to prove that the results were related to the natural settings.

### **3.9.4 Transferability**

Transferability means the implementation of the research findings to other settings. It is more likely to implement the research findings and conclusions in other settings and populations. In this study, the transfer of data to other settings was possible through the participant's opinions, feelings, actions and meanings, and they were interpreted when data was collected. These were aimed at attaining transferability of the findings in other settings.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

#### **3.10.1 Informed consent**

According to Tai (2012), informed consent is important in research ethics because it is the fundamental part of research. The participants in this study were issued with a consent form before the process of data collection began to confirm that they did take part in the study. Advice was given to the teacher that it was important for them to volunteer in this study. The participants were assured that their participation in this study was voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

#### **3.10.2 Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy**

Certain ethical issues, such as confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy, were explained to the participants in this study. To ensure confidentiality, the results of this study were kept confidential. In terms of anonymity, alphabets and codes were used where necessary.

It was the responsibility of the researcher to safeguard all the information gathered in the research as per law and to protect the confidentiality and dignity of the participants (Creswell, 2013). The researcher guaranteed the participants' anonymity. This ensured the confidentiality of the participants' details. The information pertaining to participants was kept private.

### **3.10.3 Permission to conduct research**

The ethical clearance to conduct the research was requested from the Central University of Technology (FS), Welkom campus, and was approved by the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee (FRIC 09/23/11) (refer to Appendix A). The researcher also requested permission from the Free State Department of Education to conduct the research in secondary schools, which was granted (refer to Appendix B). The circuit manager, district director, and principals, among other relevant stakeholders, received approval before the study's commencement.

### **3.10.4 Deception prevention**

It is highly unethical in research to use deception. According to Tai (2012), a high standard of morality is compulsory in research. When deception is used in research, it is possible that the researcher did not inform the participants about the aim and objectives of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). To prevent any form of harm to participants, researchers are required to prevent deception when they conduct research. In this study, participants were informed about the aim and objective of the study in advance to prevent the possibility of deception. Participants therefore made an informed choice about taking part in this study. The data in this study was not altered, so the results reflect the participants' contributions.

## **3.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the study approach employed. Moreover, the aim of this chapter was to outline the study design, sampling techniques, and the method of data collection that was used in this study. Furthermore, issues of validity of the research instrument and reliability of the results were discussed. The chapter also discussed the issues relating to ethical consideration.

The next chapter presents the data analysis, discussion, and findings of this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

#### DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

##### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discussed and presented the findings of the qualitative data gathered from the interviews as well as document analysis. The interviews were recorded using the recorder, and the researcher later transcribed the data for analysis purposes. After analysing participant's comments, the transcribed results were discussed and presented using descriptions. While conducting these interviews, the researcher acquired the necessary understanding from both teachers and learners about the beliefs and possible factors contributing towards enrolment decline in commercial subjects. The interviews also assisted the researcher to better understand the challenges and opportunities in this area of the study. The researcher qualitatively interviewed the participants that included teachers and learners at the five sampled secondary schools in circuit five of TMED. Significant quotes from evolving themes and sub – themes were also discussed in this chapter and lastly analysis from documents were provided. Therefore, this chapter mainly focused on qualitative data obtained from answers provided by the participants from various questions.

The data collected in this study is intended to answer the following research questions:

- What were the main causes of decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects?
- Did the lack of resources affect the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects?
- What strategies did SMT and educators implement to ensure an increase in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects?

Moreover, the intention of the data collected was to assist the researcher in exploring factors contributing to the decline in enrolment in commercial subjects in secondary schools in the TMED. Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data, the study accomplished the following research objectives:

- Identifying contributing factors to the decline of learner's enrolment in commercial subjects.
- Establishing whether lack of resources is a contributing factor to the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects.
- Determining strategies that SMT and educators can implement to ensure an increase in the enrolment of learners in commercial subjects.

The section below presents the analysis of the responses that were provided by the participants to answer the questions presented to them and to meet set objectives.

## **4.2 SCHOOLS AND PARTICIPANTS PROFILE**

The schools sampled are in Senekal and Marquard, two towns that form part of circuit five of the Thabo Mofutsanyana District in the Free State Province. Three schools are from Senekal: Schools Bb, Cc, and Dd. School Bb is a former model C school that is based in town, and it is a quintile four school. It had a total enrolment of 825 learners, 31 teachers, and eight SMT members. The institution is a well-resourced school with a library and laboratory. Schools Cc and Dd are in Senekal township, and they are quintile-one schools that depend heavily on the DBE's allocation of funds. Both schools have functional SMTs and SGBs. School Cc has 989 learners, 30 teachers and 7 SMT members, and school Dd has a total of 1012 learners, 32 teachers and 8 SMT members.

Two schools were sampled from Marquard: School Aa and School Ee. School Aa is a quintile-four school with 528 learners, 27 teachers, and 5 SMT members. It is also well-resourced and has a functioning SGB. School Ee is in the Marquard township called Moemaneng. The institution is a quintile-one school with 1,221 learners, 35 teachers, and 9 SMT members, and it is one of the biggest secondary schools in circuit five. Each sampled school had one teacher participant and five grade nine learners. Three teachers were between the ages of 28 and 50, and two were between 20 and 40 years old, holding a Bachelor of Honours in Educational Management. Three of the teachers hold bachelor's degrees in economics and management sciences from FET. All learner participants were between the ages of 14 and 17; they were all in grade nine studying EMS, which was a compulsory subject.

The importance of schools and participants' profiles in this study was that it provided a deeper understanding of socio-economic issues that were being addressed by the research. The schools and participant profile data in the table below show information relating to the participants, who were all teachers in circuit five of the TMED. The number of years these teachers spent teaching commercial subjects in this area was also significant. Many years of teaching in circuit five indicated that these teachers had a deep understanding of learners' conduct at their respective schools. The experience of the teachers in circuit five was therefore critical in this study.

### **4.3 PARTICIPANTS CODING**

Deterding and Waters (2021) define coding as organising different parts of information by giving them a specific title or term that describes and includes all the data. Kozleski (2017) further defined coding in qualitative research as a keyword or phrase that summarises the main characteristics of a piece of written or visual information. In this study, the process of coding involved the assignment of labels or tags to responses. This coding method facilitated the identification of research participants without disclosing their actual identities. To safeguard the anonymity of the participants (teachers and learners), codes were employed. The responses of the participants were coded **PT** and **PL**, with **PT** referring to the teachers and **PL** to the learners, and the numbers **PT#1** to **PT#5** and **PL#1** to **PL#25** were assigned to teachers and learners, respectively.

**Table 4.1: Teachers Participants' profile information**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Teaching experience</b>	<b>School</b>
Participant Teacher 1 (PT#1)	Female	White	39	>11 years	Aa
Participant Teacher 2 (PT#2)	Female	White	34	<9 years	Bb
Participant Teacher 3 (PT#3)	Female	Black	23	>8 years	Cc
Participant Teacher 4 (PT#4)	Male	Black	46	>15 years	Dd
Participant Teacher 5 (PT#5)	Male	Black	29	>5 years	Ee

**Table 4.2: Learner Participants' profile information**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Current Grade</b>	<b>School</b>
Participant Learner 1 (PL#1)	Male	Black	14	9	Aa
Participant Learner 2 (PL#2)	Female	White	14	9	Aa
Participant Learner 3 (PL#3)	Female	Black	15	9	Aa
Participant Learner 4 (PL#)	Female	Black	15	9	Aa
Participant Learner 5 (PL#5)	Male	Black	15	9	Aa
Participant Learner 6 (PL#6)	Female	Black	15	9	Bb
Participant Learner 7 (PL#7)	Female	Indian	14	9	Bb
Participant Learner 8 (PL#8)	Male	Black	16	9	Bb
Participant Learner 9 (PL#9)	Female	White	15	9	Bb
Participant Learner 10 (PL#10)	Male	Black	15	9	Bb
Participant Learner 11 (PL#11)	Male	Black	16	9	Cc
Participant Learner 12 (PL#12)	Female	Black	15	9	Cc

Participant Learner 13 (PL#13)	Female	Black	15	9	Cc
Participant Learner 14 (PL#14)	Female	Black	15	9	Cc
Participant Learner 15 (PL#15)	Male	Black	15	9	Cc
Participant Learner 16 (PL#16)	Female	Black	14	9	Dd
Participant Learner 17 (PL#17)	Female	Black	14	9	Dd
Participant Learner 18 (PL#18)	Male	Black	15	9	Dd
Participant Learner 19 (PL#19)	Male	Black	16	9	Dd
Participant Learner 20 (PL#20)	Male	Black	15	9	Dd
Participant Learner 21 (PL#21)	Male	Black	16	9	Ee
Participant Learner 22 (PL#22)	Female	Black	14	9	Ee
Participant Learner 23 (PL#23)	Female	Black	15	9	Ee
Participant Learner 24 (PL#24)	Female	Black	15	9	Ee
Participant Learner 25 (PL#25)	Male	Black	15	9	Ee

#### 4.4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

##### 4.4.1 Findings according to the specific research objectives of the study

This section of the study presented the findings according to the specific objectives of the study on the factors contributing towards the enrolment decline in commercial

subjects in secondary schools. The data presentation considered the emerging themes and subthemes from the objectives.

#### **4.4.1.1 Contributing factors to the decline of learner’s enrolment in commercial subject**

Both teachers and learners highlighted different possible factors that were contributing to the decline of learners’ enrolment in commercial subjects; teachers said that learners do not choose commercial subjects due to a variety of reasons, and learners also provide possible reasons why they did not opt for commercial subjects in the FET phase. Below were possible common factors given by both teachers and learners for the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects:

- Influence from peers
- Influence from parents or family
- Learners’ perspective about commercial subjects and possible job opportunities
- Lack of guidance
- Easy subject grouping or combination
- Non-use of ICT in teaching and learning

The findings gathered from the interviews showed that influence from peers was one of the vital aspect in determining the stream learners choose.

**Table 4.3: Teachers responses on influence from peers**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PT#1	<i>“Some learners choose subject because of the influence they get from their friends. Majority of learners take advises from their friends on which subjects to choose in grade 10.” (Interview with EMS and Accounting teacher at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</i>
PT#2	<i>“Learners do not select subject according to their interest but as a response to their peers’ interest which in return made them fail to accomplish their goals.” (Interview with Business Studies and EMS teacher at school Bb on 19 August 2024)</i>

PT#3	<i>“Peer pressure contributes significantly to learner’s choice of subjects. Learners choose subject because they want to be in the same class with their friends without looking whether they can perform good or not in those subjects.” (Interview with Accounting and Mathematics teacher at school Cc on 28 August 2024)”</i>
PT#4	<i>“Many learners perform poor in grade 10 because they did not consider their performance in different subjects in grade 9 when choosing the subjects combination or stream, they only went into those stream because of their friends.” (Interview with Accounting and Economics teacher at school Dd on 30 August 2024)</i>
PT#5	<i>“Participant PT#5 shared the same sentiments with PT#4, by saying, many learners do not check which subjects they passed well in grade 9 when choosing the subjects, they choose what their friend choose hence the performance is bad in grade 10 in many schools.” (Interview with EMS and Economics teacher at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>

Regarding the influence of peers or friends, learners were asked, *“Who or what is their biggest influence in deciding on their subjects?”*

**Table 4.4: Learner’s response on influence from peers**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PL#1	<i>“I think my biggest influence is my friend who is in grade 11, I always study with her and she also help me a lot with Mathematics.” (Interview with Learners at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</i>
PL#4	<i>“We have a study group and we are all in the netball team, we give each other advises so I think my friend will help me with my subject choices in grade 10.” (Interview with learners at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</i>
PL#8	<i>“Many of my friend are doing grade 10 and they motivate me a lot but they always tell me how difficult other subjects are and that some subjects have a lot of work.” (Interview with learners at school Bb on 19 August 2024)”</i>

PL#10	<i>“Learners who are doing mathematics and accounting are always having extra classes and they tell me that teachers are very demanding.” (Interview with learners at school Bb on 19 August 2024)</i>
PL#17	<i>“My friends and I agreed that next year in grade 10 we are taking Maths and Science because we want to university and study electrical engineering” (Interview with learners at school Dd on 30 August 2024)</i>
PL#19	<i>“I find most of my subject difficult and some of my classmate help me a lot, so I will choose with those who always help me in class.” (Interview with learners at school Dd on 30 August 2024)</i>
PL#21	<i>“My biggest influence is my friend I do everything with him and we are in the same class so I think will advise each other on which subjects to take.” (Interview with learners at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>
PL#24	<i>“I do not know who or what is my biggest influence in deciding on my subject, but I like Maths and Science and I think my friend will help me with them when I struggle in grade 10 because they are doing grade 10 now.” (Interview with learners at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>

According to the responses in Tables 4.3 and 4.4, peers were encouraging learners to select subjects or streams like their own. The interviews revealed that most learners perceived their peers as role models who shared information on which subjects or streams to choose. These findings agreed with Mtemeri (2017) in the study conducted in Zimbabwe, which revealed that friends had a huge influence on students’ choice of subjects by means of encouragement and advice. This affected their choice of subjects or stream and career paths, as they often chose subjects that did not align with their interest, ability and future goals or resulted in subpar academic performance. According to Kaneez and Medha (2018), in the study conducted in Mauritius, the results revealed friends influenced the choice of subject combination. The students were influenced by their friends and peers when deciding on which subject to choose. It was highlighted that they were offering advice and encouraging them to opt for subjects they were interested in.

In relation to the factor: **Influence from parents and family,**

The study found that parents, who were the main carers in the family, encouraged their children to choose subject combinations they think would help them succeed in the future. As a result, learners tend to choose their subjects based on what their parents advised them to do. The results of the interviews indicated that parents tend to guide their children in choosing their subjects based on what the parents want, rather than considering their children's preferences. Children often followed their parents' advice when choosing the subjects or stream because they believed their parents had real-life experience and cared about them. Table 4.5 below presents the teacher's response in relation to influences from parents and family.

**Table 4.5: Teachers responses on influence from parents and family**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PT#1	<i>“Many parents see their children as investment for different reasons. Therefore, they influence them to choose subjects or streams they want in order for them to follow careers like doctors, nurses or engineers, so enrolment in commercial subject will decline.”</i> <b>(Interview with EMS and Accounting teacher at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</b>
PT#2	<i>“Every decision concerning subject choices vest with parents, not on the learner's willingness or interest. Here at our school it happens that parents come and change subjects for their children.”</i> <b>(Interview with Business Studies and EMS teacher at school Bb on 19 August 2024)</b>
PT#3	<i>“When it is time for grade 9 learners to choose subjects, some parents come to the school and choose for their children, they do this in the absence of their children, this affect other streams such as commerce.”</i> <b>(Interview with Accounting and Mathematics teacher at school Cc on 28 August 2024)</b>
PT#4	<i>“Some parents or family members are not in support with how the school subjects are grouped, they want subject groupings or combinations that suite them not children because they want their</i>

	<i>children to follow specific careers.” (Interview with Accounting and Economics teacher at school Dd on 30 August 2024)</i>
PT#5	<i>“It is sad how parents, brothers and sister force children to choose subjects like Mathematics and Science because they believe that those are the only subjects with good careers and high possibility of employment.” (Interview with EMS and Economics teacher at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>

**Table 4.6: Learners response on influence from parents and family**

Regarding the influence from parents, learners were asked, “**Who makes your final subject choice?**”

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PL#3	<i>“My mother said if I want to go to tertiary I should choose Maths and Science since there are lot of bursaries for learners who are doing mathematics and science.” (Interview with learners at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</i>
PL#5	<i>“My older brother said commerce does not offer lot of bursaries like mathematics and science.” (Interview with learners at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</i>
PL#7	<i>“My older brother who is in tertiary will decide for me because he knows better than me.” (Interview with learners at school Bb on 19 August 2024)</i>
PL#9	<i>“My sister.” (Interview with learners at school Bb on 19 August 2024)</i>
PL#12	<i>My decision is influenced by my father.” (Interview with learners at school Cc on 28 August 2024)</i>
PL#14	<i>“I think is my mother.” (Interview with learners at school Cc on 28 August 2024)</i>
PL#15	<i>“My brother and sisters.” (Interviews with learners at school Cc on 28 August 2024)</i>
PL#16	<i>“My father said to stand a chance to work in one of the successful farms in the area, I must choose agriculture as one of my subject, so</i>

	<i>I will take that advice from my father.” (Interview with learners at school Dd on 30 August 2024)</i>
PL#20	<i>“My bother said recently farm managers hires people with a background on agriculture. I will definitely choose agriculture as one on my subjects.” (Interview with learners at school Dd on 30 August 2024)</i>
PL#22	<i>“My father have his own business and I like to help him a lot, he even said that I am going to manage it when I finish my matric. So I think business will make me rich in the future.” (Interview with learners at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>
PL#25	<i>“My mother said she will come to school when is time to choose subjects and meet with my teachers.” (Interview with learners at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>

Based on the responses in Tables 4.6 and 4.7, it was clear that parents and family members were exerting influence on their children to opt for subjects or streams based on their preferences, without considering the interest and capabilities of the children. This situation led children to choose subject combinations or streams that were not their original intention. The findings of the study were like those of Arif et al. (2019) in Pakistan, who revealed that many parents were forcing children to choose certain subjects without being mindful of their interests. It was discovered that this practice was causing learners to choose subject combinations that were not suitable for them and that they did not have the ability to succeed. Sota and Agi (2020) also stated that parents can influence their children's subject choices based on factors like financial status, occupation, and resources in the environment. This meant that parents played a role in determining their children's subject combination or academic streams, rather than the children themselves.

#### In relation to the factor: **Learners perspective about commercial subject and possible job opportunities**

How learners perceive commerce and future employment possibilities greatly influences the decline in learners' enrolment in commercial subjects. It was discovered during the interviews that amid various important decisions, learners were not fully

interested in commercial subjects, and they believed that pursuing a career in commerce did not offer many opportunities for success.

The teachers emphasised that the absence of practical experience hindered learners from applying their knowledge and skills, leading them to think that the commercial stream is not a viable option. Teachers further highlighted the importance of not only teaching theory but also providing learners with hands-on experience to better prepare them for the future.

**Table 4.7: Teachers response on learner’s perspective about commercial subject and possible job opportunities**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PT#1	<i>“In our school, many learners opt for mathematics and science combination targeting to get better jobs in the future, They believe that Maths and Science are more important than commercial subjects.”</i> <b>(Interview with EMS and Accounting teacher at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</b>
PT#2	<i>“Learners choose subjects by taking into account the possible job opportunities in the future. As we all know we are in the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, so to be relevant and up to date learners choose Science to be able to be employed in the future. Therefore, subject such accounting and economics will experience decline.”</i> <b>(Interview with Business Studies and EMS teacher at school Bb on 19 August 2024)</b>
PT#3	<i>“Some learners think of the kind of work they want to do after matric or after graduating at the university, availability of jobs influence learners choice of subjects, Many of them think of joining private sectors immediately when they complete their matric so they do not see commercial stream as an option for them.”</i> <b>(Interview with Accounting and Mathematics teacher at school Cc on 28 August 2024)</b>
PT#4	<i>“Learners are influenced by what they see and interact with every day, so in our area there are no big companies that have auditors and accountants. They know of careers like nurses and doctors because</i>

	<i>they interact with them. Therefore, learners do not perceive commercial stream as a good choice for them because they want to become nurses and doctors in the future.” (Interview with Accounting and Economics teacher at school Dd on 30 August 2024)</i>
PT#5	<i>“Many people in this area work in farms or agricultural sectors and many learners who completed matric in the previous years are also working in the farms. As a result learners see farms as the only opportunity for sustainable job opportunity for them in the future.” (Interview with EMS and Economics teacher at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>

Regarding learner’s perspectives about commercial subject and possible job opportunities. Learners were asked, **“What is their understanding about commercial subject?”**

**Table 4.8: Learner’s response on their perspectives about commercial subjects and possible job opportunities**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PL#1	<i>“My understanding of commercial subjects is that they teach us how to start businesses and managing it” (Interview with learners at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</i>
PL#2	<i>“Commercial subjects teach us how to run a business and how the money is used in the banks.” (Interview with learners at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</i>
PL#3	<i>“To make a profit.” (Interview with learners at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</i>
PL#4	<i>“These subjects teach us how to sell different goods.” (Interview with learners at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</i>
PL#5	<i>“I seriously do not know anything about commerce or commercial subjects.” (Interview with learners at school Aa on 15 August 2024)</i>

PL#6	<i>“Am not interested in commercial subjects and I do not understand anything about commerce.” (Interview with learners at school Bb on 19 August 2024)</i>
PL#7	<i>“Commercial subject teaches us how to become accountants and to work with money.” (Interview with learners at school Bb on 19 August 2024)</i>
PL#8	<i>“I don’t understand anything about commercial subjects.” (Interview with learners at school Bb on 19 August 2024)</i>
PL#9	<i>“Based on my experience on EMS, I think commercial subject is about starting your own business.” (Interview with learners at school Bb on 19 August 2024)</i>
PL#10	<i>“Commercial subject is about making money.” (Interview with learners at school Bb on 19 August 2024)</i>
PL#11	<i>“Those subject are about business.” (Interview with learners at school Cc on 28 August 2024)</i>
PL#12	<i>“I don’t have idea.” (Interview with learners at school Cc on 28 August 2024)</i>
PL#13	<i>“They teach us how to count money.” (Interview with learners at school Cc on 28 August 2024)</i>
PL#14	<i>“Commerce is about business and money.” (Interview with learners at school Cc on 28 August 2024)</i>
PL#15	<i>“Commercial subjects are all about entrepreneurship.” (Interview with learners at school Cc on 28 August 2024)</i>
PL#16	<i>“I do not like EMS, so I don’t know what they are all about.” (Interview with learners at school Dd on 30 August 2024)</i>
PL#17	<i>“There is nothing that interest me about commercial subjects.” (Interview with learners at school Dd on 30 August 2024)</i>
PL#18	<i>“The reason why I perform bad in EMS is because I don’t understand anything about commerce.”</i>
PL#19	<i>“I think commercial subjects are subjects that give us foundation about business.” (Interview with learners at school Dd on 30 August 2024)</i>

PL#20	<i>“They teach us how to draw a budget.” (Interview with learners at school Dd on 30 August 2024)</i>
PL#21	<i>“Commercial subjects teach us about different type of businesses.” (Interview with learners at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>
PL#22	<i>“I don’t know.” (Interview with learners at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>
PL#23	<i>“Commercial subject is about making profit in your business.” (Interview with learners at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>
PL#24	<i>“I don’t like EMS, Am going to choose History and Geography.” (Interview with learners at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>
PL#25	<i>“I want to become a doctor, so I have not research about commercial subjects.” (Interview with learners at school Ee on 4 September 2024)</i>

Based on the responses of the participants in Table 4.8, many learners choose subjects based on their future career ambitions after completing their matric or graduation from universities. According to Table 4.8, learners were influenced by the careers they were aware of, and they are influenced by the kind of job they saw people doing every day. Tsikati (2019) also found that possible job opportunities influenced learners' choice of subject. It was found that most secondary school students believed that their future held great promise when they chose subject combinations that seemed to offer various opportunities for success. A significant number of students held onto the belief that they would have secured employment either in the public or private sector immediately after completing their secondary education. Among them, some aspire to pursue careers as engineers, accountants, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals (Tsikati, 2019). Therefore, learners needed career guidance to be able to choose suitable subjects that will connect them to their future career ambitions.

Responses of the learners in Table 4.8 regarding their perspective about commercial subjects and possible job opportunities indicate that most learners did not understand what commercial subjects were all about, and some were not even showing an interest in commercial subjects. These results agreed with those of Harackiewicz, Smith and Priniski (2016), who indicated that interest is regarded as the most powerful

motivational tool that encourages learning, and without it, learners were unable to do their academic activities.

In relation to the factor: **Lack of guidance**,

The study found that learners lacked guidance when choosing subjects in the FET phase. The study revealed that schools were not providing sufficient support to learners in making subject choices. Several teachers revealed that many students lacked exposure to diverse subject groups or combinations. They said most learners were not familiar with different subjects offered in school. Table 4.9 below provides teachers' responses regarding the lack of guidance.

**Table 4.9: Teachers response on lack of guidance**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PT#2	<i>“Our school does not necessary offer leaners career guidance especially in relation to subject choices, hence other streams do not have many learners. In short I can say we do not guide learners when it comes to subject choices.” (Interview with Business Studies and EMS teacher at school Bb on 12 September 2024)</i>
PT#3	<i>“Lack of information makes it difficult to assist leaners on which subjects to choose, We lack information that would assist learners to choose subject based on their career paths.” (Interview with Accounting and Mathematics teacher at school Cc on 16 September 2024)</i>
PT#5	<i>“Some learners seek assistance from other teachers with regard to subject choices, but disadvantage is that those teachers may not have information with regard to other careers apart from what they studied.” (Interview with EMS and Economics teacher at school Ee on 20 September 2024)</i>

Regarding lack of guidance, learners were asked, **“Whether they will choose commercial subjects in the FET phase? If yes, Why?”**

**Table 4.10: Learner's response on lack of guidance**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PL#2	<i>"I will not choose commercial subject because I don't have any information about them. I have enquired about which subjects I must do to be a doctor so commerce is not in my plans."</i> <b>(Interview with learners at school Aa on 9 September 2024)</b>
PL#5	<i>"I do not know anything relating to commercial subjects, so I am not choosing any commercial subjects in grade 10."</i> <b>(Interview with learners at school Aa on 9 September 2024)</b>
PL#6	<i>"Like I stated earlier, Am not interested at all in commercial subjects. Therefore, I am not choosing accounting, economics or business studies."</i> <b>(Interview with learners at school Bb on 12 September 2024)</b>
PL#10	<i>"I am not doing bad in EMS, I might choose commerce but I am not sure. If it happens that I choose commerce it will be because I want to start my own business."</i> <b>(Interview with learners at school Bb on 12 September 2024)</b>
PL#12	<i>"As for me, I want to be a nurse, so Am choosing life sciences and Mathematics not commercial subjects."</i> <b>(Interview with learners at school Cc on 16 September 2024)</b>
PL#15	<i>"I really enjoy EMS. I will definitely choose commercial subjects because I have good foundation from EMS."</i> <b>(Interview with learners at school Cc on 16 September 2024)</b>
PL#17	<i>"No ways, I am not choosing commerce."</i> <b>(Interview with learners at school Dd on 18 September 2024)</b>
PL#19	<i>"I want Maths and Science."</i> <b>(Interview with learners at school Dd on 18 September 2024)</b>
PL#21	<i>"I like computers, I do not like commercial subjects."</i> <b>(Interview with learners at school Ee on 20 September 2024)</b>
PL#24	<i>"My dream is to become a lawyer, so I will choose History and Geography."</i> <b>(Interview with learners at school Ee on 20 September 2024)</b>

The quotes of the participants in Tables 4.9 and 4.10 indicated that learners lacked direction or guidance when choosing their subjects or streams, resulting in hindrance to acquiring the necessary information for choosing the right subject combination. It is important to highlight that learners did not receive adequate guidance in making informed decisions regarding their choice of subjects or streams. These findings are like those of Ndalichako and Komba (2014), who revealed that learners were not getting sufficient guidance when making subject choices in secondary schools, which resulted in them opting for unrelated combinations of subjects. It is important to highlight that a lack of guidance hindered learners from obtaining proper information regarding the choice of subjects they should choose. This led them to choosing inappropriate subject combinations. These results aligned with those on Maganga (2016), who revealed that many public secondary school students in Tanzania were not receiving guidance services on subject selection. Furthermore, Sefotho (2017) found that many of the learners in previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa lack adequate access to career guidance services because their schools do not have qualified counsellors or psychologists onsite. Because of a lack of adequate information, secondary school learners were unable to effectively assess their self-confidence and make informed decisions regarding their choice of subjects. Consequently, their decision-making process was negatively affected by the absence of proper guidance. Due to the absence of relevant information regarding subject combinations or streams, learners were unable to realise their dreams, and streams such as commerce experienced low enrolment of learners.

In relation to the factor: **Easy subject grouping or combination,**

It had emerged through the interviews that most learners preferred subject combinations that they perceived to be easy and avoided subjects that they believed to be challenging or difficult. The findings of the study indicated that learners determine their choice of subject based on their ability and how they previously performed in those subjects. Table 4.11 below gives the teacher's response regarding easy subject grouping or combination.

**Table 4.11: Teachers response on easy subject grouping or combination**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PT#1	<i>“What I have observed is that learners choose subjects based on their ability. If a learner fails a particular subject in grade 9, it is likely possible that learner will not choose that specific subject in grade 10.”</i> <b>(Interview with EMS and Accounting teacher at school Aa on 9 September 2024)</b>
PT#2	<i>“Some learners in this school choose certain subjects in other to avoid subject like mathematics and accounting. For example, a learner will rather opt for consumer studies and life science rather than combining mathematics and life science.”</i> <b>(Interview with Business Studies and EMS teacher at school Bb on 12 September 2024)</b>
PT#3	<i>“History and geography always have more learners than other streams because learners believe that they are not challenging and are easy to pass.”</i> <b>(Interview with Accounting and Mathematics teacher at school Cc on 16 September 2024)</b>
PT#4	<i>“Majority of learners do not like challenging subject like mathematics, physics or accounting, they will rather choose subjects that they believe are easy and do not have lot of work without doing proper research before making their subject choices.”</i> <b>(Interview with Accounting and Economics teacher at school Dd on 18 September 2024)</b>
PT#5	<i>“Many learners choose subject groupings based on their previous performance in those subjects. If a learner performed well in EMS in grade 9 that learner will have one or two commercial subject in grade 10.”</i> <b>(Interview with EMS and Economics teacher at school Ee on 20 September 2024)</b>

Regarding easy subject grouping or combination, learners were asked, “**Why they will not choose commercial subjects in FET phase?**”

**Table 4.12: Learner’s response on easy subject grouping or combination**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PL#1	<i>“If I choose accounting I must also take mathematics and I don’t want mathematics, so Am not choosing accounting because I don’t want to do pure Maths.” (Interview with learners at school Aa on 9 September 2024)</i>
PL#3	<i>“I am not going to choose commerce because, I am failing EMS.” (Interview with learners at school Aa on 9 September 2024)</i>
PL#7	<i>“EMS is difficult, so I am not going to do commerce.” (Interview with learners at school Bb on 12 September 2024)</i>
PL#9	<i>“My friend tell me that commerce has a lot of work. I am going to choose History.” (Interview with learners at school Bb on 12 September 2024)</i>
PL#11	<i>“The way subjects are group in this school, is like all difficult subjects are grouped together like Maths, Accounting and Economics. I am currently not doing well in Mathematics so taking Maths and Accounting is not an option.” (Interview with learners at school Cc on 16 September 2024)</i>
PL#14	<i>“Am currently performing poor in EMS. I don’t think I will choose commercial subjects.” (Interview with learners at school Cc on 16 September 2024)</i>
PL#18	<i>“My Social Science marks are good. Next year Am taking SS subjects.” (Interview with learners at school Dd on 18 September 2024)</i>
PL#20	<i>“Because of pure Maths I do not think I will choose commercial subjects, but I am not sure.” (Interview with learners at school Dd on 18 September 2024)</i>
PL#22	<i>“Am passing NS and SS but I am failing EMS, so I think I will choose between Sciences and History.” (Interview with learners at school Ee on 20 September 2024)</i>
PL#25	<i>“I don’t think I will take all commercial subjects, because I am sacred of combining mathematics and accounting.” (Interview with learners at school Ee on 20 September 2024)</i>

The responses of the participants in Tables 4.11 and 4.12 clearly indicated that learners were unsure about which subjects to choose. They rather choose subjects that seemed straightforward and which they previously performed better in and avoid certain subjects because they believe that they are difficult and challenging. These findings align with those of Ndiokubwayo et al. (2022), who revealed that other learners chose subjects based on their previous performance in those subjects. A learner could not choose subjects that she or he was uncertain about or lacked capability or ability in (Ndiokubwayo et al., 2022). This conclusion is related to the URT, which guided this study. The theory suggested that people were not comfortable with uncertainty and pursued means to anticipate the trajectory of social interaction. To reduce uncertainty, people prefer to use passive, active, and interactive strategies to anticipate and explain behaviour during interactions. Therefore, learners need to select specific subject groups or combinations, enabling them to embark on the right career paths for their future development. Consequently, identifying learners' capability before they opt for specific subject grouping or combinations to follow is vital for students to choose suitable subject combinations.

It was concluded that learners' choice of subject is based on how other subjects were grouped in proportion to one's intellectual capability. Fizer (2013) stated that many learners who enrolled in institutions of higher learning appeared to lack intellectual abilities; in those combinations, it seemed that most secondary school learners opted for subject combinations that did not require much effort and which are easy to perform. Secondary school learners do not want to partake in challenging activities. For learners to achieve their goals, they should be encouraged to choose subject groupings or combinations that are related to their abilities and interests.

In relation to the factor: **Non-use of ICT in teaching and learning,**

It emerged through the interviews that non-use of ICT in teaching and learning had a negative impact on the enrolment of learners in certain streams, especially in the commercial stream. It was evident that most of the sampled schools were moderately equipped with ICT resources, such as whiteboards, overhead projectors, internet connectivity, video decoders, and much more. Numerous studies conducted in developing countries indicate that while ICT had been implemented in educational institutions, there had been a limited uptake of technology by teachers (Kwet, 2017).

The limited adoption of ICT among teachers has been linked to their insufficient understanding and expertise or lack of ICT resources in schools (Jimenez, 2020). Below are the teacher's and learner's views regarding the non-use of ICT in teaching and learning.

PT#3 *"Our classrooms are not equipped with IT devices and I also do not know how to use it. Therefore, to use ICT during my lessons is not going to be possible."*  
**Interview with Accounting and Mathematics teacher at school Cc on 16 September 2024)**

PT#4 *"I mostly use computers for administration purposes, like typing assessments or capturing marks but not for teaching. In the classroom we still use chalkboard not even whiteboards let alone projectors. So using ICT in teaching and learning is impossible for me."* **(Interview with Accounting and Economics teacher at school Dd on 18 September 2024)**

PT#5 *"The use of ICT come with many challenges, such as shortage of equipment, lack of technical support and lack of connectivity. Even if I want to use ICT in my class it will be difficult based on the challenges I mentioned."* **(Interview with EMS and Economics teacher at school Ee on 20 September 2024)**

PL#12 *"I would prefer if teachers can use computers in other subjects so that we can see or watch what the teacher is talking about."* **(Interview with learners at school Cc on 16 September 2024)**

PL#16 *"Using textbooks and photocopies is not enough, we sometime need to use technology like googling and researching, but in our school we don't have access to computers."* **(Interview with learners at school Dd on 18 September 2024)**

PL#21 *"Information Technology can play important part in schools if the teachers can use it while teaching, it can also assist us to perform better in the subjects that we are struggling with."* **(Interview with learners at school Ee on 20 September 2024)**

The quotes of the participants above were clear evidence that many schools did not use ICT in the teaching and learning process. These findings were like those of Kwet (2017), who found that besides the aspiration to see that ICT becomes a game changer in the South African education system, the pace of implementing it in some schools is very slow. The challenges of slow integration of ICT in South African schools

included a lack of ICT resources, internet connectivity and inadequate teachers' ability to use ICT (Arrieta, 2020).

Sutter and Kihara (2019) stated that according to the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers, the importance of ICT in teaching and learning is to ensure that all learners are fully capacitated in the 21st century. Efficient integration of ICT in teaching and learning has enhanced learning quality by fostering engagement and communication in the classroom. This, in turn, promoted critical thinking, active participation, and a deeper comprehension of the subject matter. Consequently, learners' motivation was boosted, leading to an increase in enrolment rates.

#### ***4.4.1.2 Establishing whether lack of resources could be a contributing factor to the decline in learner's enrolment in commercial subjects***

The second objective of the study was to establish whether a lack of resources could be a contributing factor to the decline in learners' enrolment in commercial subjects. Three out of five teachers indicated that there was a huge shortage of LTSM in their schools. Because their schools lack textbooks, teachers say they make copies for students. Table 4.13 below presents teachers' responses to whether the school had sufficient resources, including LTSM, for commercial subjects.

**Table 4.13: Teachers response on sufficiency of resources and LTSM for commercial subjects**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PT#3	<i>“Our school has a big challenge with regards to teaching and learning facilities like the textbooks. I only have a few textbooks that I always carry to my accounting classes and learners are forced to share them. Textbooks, charts and poster played an important part in commercial subjects. Shortages of these resources discouraged learners to opt for commercial subjects when they got to grade 10.” (Interview with Accounting and Mathematics teacher at school Cc on 16 September 2024)</i>
PT#4	<i>“Due to a lack of resources such as textbooks, learners depended on teachers' notes. This has a negative impact on learners' performance</i>

	<i>in general. Subjects such as accounting and economics needed each learner to have a textbook, as they require a lot of practice. Insufficient teaching and learning materials caused learners to avoid commerce as this will cause them to fail.” (Interview with Accounting and Economics teacher at school Dd on 18 September 2024)</i>
PT#5	<i>“The school does not have enough resources not only for commercial subjects but for majority of the subjects especially in FET phase. If the teacher does not improvise, his or her learners will suffer. Therefore, it will be difficult for streams such as commerce to have many learners due to lack of teaching and learning resources.” (Interview with EMS and Economics teacher at school Ee on 20 September 2024)</i>

The quotes of the teachers showed that a lack of LTSM hindered the learners from choosing commercial subjects. The findings above indicated that insufficient textbooks had an impact on learners who had an interest in commercial subjects. The observation was that many learners relied on teachers’ notes, which made them solely study through memorising the work done in class. This prevented the subject’s capacity for comprehension, knowledge and creativity. It was discovered that there were inadequate textbooks in the classrooms to ensure that each learner had a copy. It was also proven that at least three learners were forced to share a textbook. These findings were like those of Veriava, Thom and Hodgson (2017), who revealed that the available number of textbooks in South African public schools was not equivalent to the number of learners; this situation affected the availability of information, as it hindered learners’ ability to study or complete assignments. Consequently, this impediment reduced the learners’ capacity to grasp a comprehensive understanding of the subject, ultimately influencing their choice of subjects in a negative manner. Furthermore, it was discovered that the learner’s choice of commercial subjects was being influenced by a shortage of supplementary reading materials such as charts and posters. As a result, a shortage of LTSM and other resources contributed to the decline in commercial subjects and other streams.

#### ***4.4.1.3 Strategies that SMT and educators can implement to ensure an increase in the enrolment of learners in commercial subjects***

The third and last objective of this study was to determine the possible strategies that SMTs and educators can implement to ensure an increase in the enrolment of learners in commercial subjects. We collected the data for this objective through interviews. The strategies listed below could potentially boost the enrolment of students in commercial subjects.

- Provide career guidance services in schools
- Availability of teaching and learning support materials (LTSM)
- Parental education on how to assist children to choose subjects
- Implementation of ICT in teaching and learning of commercial subjects
- Promoting commercial subject via social media platforms

#### **Provide career guidance services in schools**

The study discovered that career guidance helped learners to comprehend the specific requirements for different subject combinations or streams. According to the results from the interviews, learners expressed the need for career guidance to assist them in determining the most suitable subjects or streams to pursue for their desired careers. It has been found that learners needed to have the necessary knowledge relating to their choice of subjects or streams. Providing learners with accurate and relevant information is an effective way to help them enhance their ability to make informed decisions when selecting subjects. These results agreed with those of Ngussa and Charles (2019), which revealed that schools should have provided appropriate career services to assist learners in choosing the best subject combinations or stream. For learners to pursue a career path that aligned with their aspirations, it was essential to educate them on the connection between subject choices and career options. This process should begin in primary school and continue through secondary school by providing learners with valuable and relevant information. According to Ngussa and Charles (2019), guidance has the potential to motivate learners to choose the best subject combination or stream in school. Their findings indicated that schools should provide career guidance to help learners choose subjects that align with their future careers. Therefore, guidance in selecting subjects

should start early for learners to decrease uncertainties. Data gathered from the interviews revealed that career guidance had played a crucial part in assisting learners in secondary schools to choose subjects or streams. Below are responses obtained from the teachers.

PT#1 *“In this school, we did not have proper career guidance department. The teachers only convinced learners to choose subjects by highlighting the advantage of those subjects in the future but did not support them to choose subjects based on their performance.” (Interview with EMS and Accounting teacher at school Aa on 9 Septemebr2024)”*

PT#4 *“The school do not have a specific guidance unit that dealt with career guidance. Instead, there is a unit that deals with learner discipline and other matters but not careers.” (Interview with Accounting and Economics teacher at school Dd on 18 September 2024)*

The quotes of the teachers above indicated that the accessibility of guidance in schools could assist learners who were struggling with the choice of subjects by guiding them in appropriate career paths. Furthermore, learners would acquire the proper information, which could assist them in making excellent decisions when selecting the subjects or streams. Career guidance could also help learners who had grasped subject matter to be in a superior position to recognise their strengths and weaknesses regarding subject selection, therefore making reliable decisions. According to Horatius (2021), learners were benefiting from using career guidance services to help them decide on which subjects to choose based on their future career goals. Researchers discovered that helping learners choose subject combinations that match their career aspirations could reduce anxiety and facilitate decision-making. Hence, career guidance could play a crucial role in directing learners towards their desired career paths by helping them make informed choices about their subjects. Furthermore, the provision of relevant information would aid learners in making informed decisions about their subject selections. As a result, introducing career guidance in schools could be important in assisting learners to choose appropriate subjects and possibly increasing learners' enrolment in the commercial stream.

## Availability of teaching and learning support material (LTSM)

The study revealed that insufficient teaching and learning support material influenced learners not to choose commercial subjects. It was found that when teachers had access to sufficient teaching and learning resources, their motivation level tended to rise. As a result, they can teach more effectively, leading to higher learners' success rates. This, in turn, helps learners to choose subjects that align with their interests and abilities. These findings are in line with those of Ndalichako and Komba (2014), who found out that learners tend to favour subjects that have sufficient teaching and learning support materials. Therefore, insufficient LTSM led to a decline in learners' enrolment in commercial subjects. It was also found that having access to adequate funds would allow secondary schools to procure the necessary teaching and learning resources, such as textbooks, posters, and charts to support the teaching and learning process. Therefore, to successfully implement the curriculum, it is essential to have adequate LTSM in schools. It is imperative for both the government and schools to collaborate and allocate sufficient funds towards securing LTSM for effective teaching and learning.

The data gathered from the interviews indicated that the availability of teaching and learning support materials would influence secondary school learners' interest in choosing commercial subjects because they will acquire enough knowledge about the subject matter. Below are the responses of the teachers.

PT#1 *"In my schools, we generally purchased enough textbooks for different subjects. The school had enough textbooks for different commercial subjects. Adequate textbooks will help the learners to get vocabulary skills and develop critical thinking skills."* **(Interview with EMS and Accounting teacher at school Aa on 9 September 2024)**

PT#2 *"We were doing our best to ensure that every learner in this school has a textbook for every subjects including those who are doing commerce. Textbooks assist learners a lot in terms of doing their work even if they are at home. Learners had the opportunity to read content in details unlike giving them summarised copies of notes."* **(Interview with Business Studies and EMS teacher at school Bb on 12 September 2024)**

Based on the above teacher's quote, it was clear that schools needed sufficient teaching and learning support materials for the learners. The availability of LTSM, such as textbooks, posters, and charts, helped learners better comprehend the subject matter, thus leading to better performance and interest in choosing commercial subjects. These findings were in line with those of Cheung (2015), who investigated whether teaching strategies that used teaching and learning resources in lessons improved learners' performance and increased learners' interest in the subject. Therefore, the availability of LTSM gave learners a wider opportunity to choose subjects they like. Therefore, the government and schools should work together to ensure that enough teaching and learning support materials are available in secondary schools.

### **Parental education on how to assist children to choose subjects**

As per data collected from the field, there was a necessity for the different schools to arrange workshops for parents to teach them about various careers so that they could be better equipped to help and advice their children about career choices. Here are the reported conversations with teachers.

PT#1 *"As a commercial subject teacher I do my best to promote commerce subjects during different meetings with parents for example during parents meeting or phase meeting but it is extremely difficult because of the information they got from various forms of media on mathematics, science and technology and as a result they valued Maths and Science stream than other streams."* **(Interview with EMS and Accounting teacher at school Aa on 9September 2024)**

PT#5 *"It is important for parents to instil confidence in their children regarding commercial subjects, encouraging them to pursue their future goals and potentially run their businesses with the knowledge they gained."* **(Interview with EMS and Accounting teacher at school Ee on 20 September 2024)**

PT#2 *"Majority of parents around here together with their children believed that streams such commerce do not have many opportunities like Maths and Science stream."* **(Interview with Business Studies and EMS teacher at school Bb on 12 September 2024)**

According to the quotes of the participants above, improving the enrolment of learners in the commercial stream could only be achieved by educating both learners and their parents about the various career options that are available in commerce and increasing parental involvement in their children's education. It is crucial for parents to attend school meetings to learn about career options in different streams. These findings aligned with those of Yamauchi, Ponte, Ratliffe and Traynor (2017), who stated that parental involvement, family engagement and parental educational support were significant in ensuring that parents were capacitated to support and guide their children to fully participate and succeed in their education. Therefore, parents who are well informed about their children's education are in a better position to guide and assist them in choosing the suitable subjects based on their children's interests and abilities (Yamauchi et al., 2017). Therefore, parents who are educated about different career options within various fields of study could encourage their children to opt for streams such as commerce. These could assist children in circuit five in alleviating any uncertainties they may have had regarding pursuing a career in commerce. If parents are informed about various career options, they could in turn educate their children about them prior to making the crucial decision regarding which stream to follow. The government departments should also initiate awareness programmes to educate parents and provide the information regarding bursaries offered in commercial streams as they do with mathematics and science and advertise them. The idea implied that the absence of information could be eliminated in parents, and in turn, this would help in the learner's decision-making process.

### **Implementation of ICT in teaching and learning of commercials subjects**

The study revealed that the non-use of ICT has a negative impact on overall teaching and learning process. The lack of ICT in teaching and learning of commercial subjects was one of the contributing factors to the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects. According to Sumitra, Wirawan, Putra, Kusumaningrat and Maulana (2021) teaching and learning process that used technology is more effective compared to the traditional method of teaching. Below are participant's comments on the use of ICT in teaching and learning of commercial subjects.

PL#12 *“In EMS class we always used copies that the teacher made for us or write the notes. I think that sometimes we need to be allowed to use cellphones to get more information.” (Interview with learners at school Cc on 16 September 2024)*

PL#17 *“EMS and NS periods are always boring because we always write notes or the teacher is reading from the textbooks.” (Interview with learners at school Dd on 18 September 2024)*

PT#4 *“As a commerce teacher, I am forced to use traditional method of teaching due to lack of technology equipment like overhead projectors and sometimes learners lose interest in the lesson.” (Interview with learners at school Aa on 9 September 2024)*

The quotes of the participants above clearly indicated that the non-use of ICT in teaching and learning of commercial subjects had a negative impact on learners' interest in the subject. These findings concur with those of Hashim, Masek, Abdullah, Paimin and Muda (2020), who indicated that using ICT resources in the classroom would promote an active teaching and learning environment that is highly interesting and effective for both teachers and learners. Therefore, the government and schools should ensure that ICT resources are available in schools, and the teachers should be encouraged and supported to use them, especially in commercial subjects.

### **Promoting commercial subjects via social media platforms**

Social media is defined as a digital platform that allows individuals or groups to engage, exchange information, and communicate virtually (Ausat, Permana, Angellia, Subagja & Astutik, 2023). Different social media platforms, like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp, offer opportunities for both direct and indirect communication using texts, images, and videos. Additionally, social media acts as a quick and efficient method for spreading information (Ranginwala & Towbin, 2018). According to Sterling, Leung, Wright and Bishop (2017), the importance of social media is obvious in educational spheres such as schools and universities. The use of social media in education has huge advantages in the recent technological era. The use of social media has the potential to increase access to information, knowledge, and communication between teachers, learners, and parents (Sterling et al., 2017). Table 4.14 below presents teachers' responses on strategies that educators and SMT use to promote commercial subjects to the parents.

**Table 4.14: Teachers response on strategies used to promote commercial subject to the parents**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Response</b>
PT#2	<i>“The school had a Facebook page, where parents are given information regarding curriculum and co-curricular activities. We do not use it for specific subjects rather for grades in general.” (Interview with Business Studies and EMS teacher at school Bb on 12 September 2024)</i>
PT#3	<i>“As a grade 9 class teacher I created a WhatsApp group for the parents of learners in my class, where I share important information with them regarding different matters.” (Interview with Accounting and Mathematics teacher at school Cc on 16 September 2024)”</i>
PT#4	<i>“The school has a Facebook page but I am not sure who is responsible for it, but I knew parents are sometimes notified about meetings through Facebook. That is another method of how the school interacted with parents.” (Interview with Accounting and Economics teacher at school Dd on 18 September 2024)</i>

The responses of the participants above indicated that the school is using social media to interact with parents. These findings agree with those of Ansari and Khan (2020), who found that social media platforms are effective ways to disseminate information among parents, learners, and teachers. These platforms facilitate logistical communication. These platforms facilitate logistical communication and pedagogical interaction, enabling discussions and knowledge sharing that could enhance learning beyond traditional classroom settings. Therefore, commercial subject teachers and SMTs should use different social media platforms to promote commercial subjects to the parents of grade 9 learners as one of the strategies to increase learners' enrolment in commercial subjects.

#### **4.5 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

Document analysis was conducted with the intention of obtaining an inner perspective on the five sampled schools in circuit five of the Thabo Mofutsanyana district. The

documents analysed included admission registers, class registers, and summary register minutes of the staff meeting.

Below is the discussion of the analysed registers:

#### **4.5.1 Register #1 (Admission register)**

The finding was that all five sampled schools kept their admission register properly and safeguarded it. Nevertheless, in schools D and E, it was discovered that some learners were removed from the admission register, and no reasons were indicated. A small number of students were removed from the admission register in school C, while in schools A and B, the school successfully retained all students from the registration date until they completed their matriculation (grade 12). The removal or withdrawal of learners from the admission register by individual schools negatively impacted enrolment levels across all streams, including commerce.

#### **4.5.2 Register #2 (Class register)**

All the class registers for grade 10 were made available for the researcher to analyse; the class registers for all five sampled schools were correctly marked and properly controlled. These registers revealed that learners in commercial subjects were fewer than learners in other streams. When analysing the class records in school E, the researcher found out about the challenge of learner absenteeism, with some learners dropping out and others switching from the commercial stream to other streams during the year.

There was also a link between the class register and the admission register that showed when students were taken off the class register, it had a negative effect on the admission register. This is because a student who was taken off the class register had to also been taken off the admission register.

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

While analysing the documents, the researcher found out that a concrete number of learner attendance in grade 10 class registers from schools Cc, Dd, and Ee had declined drastically. During the interviews with participants from different sampled schools, it was revealed that other learners had proclivity to changing streams, and

some moved from one school to another in search of more suitable subject combinations; consequently, learners' withdrawal from one stream to another also contributed to the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects. Additionally, according to the class register in some schools, the researcher discovered that there was a high absenteeism rate of learners in grade 10. The study found that due to high rates of absenteeism, the enrolment in school Cc declined significantly. These findings are in line with those of Kim and Gently-Genitty (2020), who revealed that absenteeism contributed to poor academic achievement, a high failure rate, and ultimately a high dropout rate. Therefore, SMTs and teachers should ensure that they manage learners' attendance effectively to curb the high absenteeism rate.

#### **4.5.4 Minutes of the staff meeting**

The focus of the researcher was on commerce departmental meetings under the leadership of the departmental head of commerce. The researcher discovered that although most commercial subjects' teachers were cognisant of the issues of enrolment in their department, three schools out of five that were sampled did not hold regular departmental meetings to discuss issues such as the low number of learners opting for commercial subjects. Only schools Aa and Bb, which are quintile 4 schools, were found to be the only schools that held regular departmental meetings every second week and once a month, respectively. Previous chapters outlined the important role that teachers had to play in ensuring an increase in learner enrolment in their different subjects; the failure of the schools to hold regular departmental meetings exacerbates the decline in enrolment in the commercial stream. Furthermore, the researcher inspected the minutes of the general staff meetings and matters relating to the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP); analysis of results and infrastructure were discussed, and minutes were safely kept.

The purpose of the inspection of staff meeting minutes was to gain a better understanding, and other records of the minutes from different departments revealed the strategies that the school needed to employ to improve learners' academic performance and learners' enrolment in general; this was not found in the commerce departmental meetings in other sampled schools.

In school Dd, the minutes of general staff meetings held with different stakeholders, including parents, revealed that due to declining enrolment of learners in their school, the resolution was taken to phase out subjects such as accounting and business studies. The decision was a clear indication of the negative impact that the decrease in learners' enrolment had on schools. In school Cc, the minutes of the staff meeting showed that some commercial subject teachers were placed on the redeployment list due to the decreasing number of learners enrolling for commercial subjects in the school.

According to Amended National Norms and Standards for Schools Funding (2021), allocation for the schools was determined by the number of learners enrolled in that school. Therefore, poor enrolment of learners meant that the school would receive low allocation, and the outcome would affect daily operations of the school negatively.

#### **4.6 ACHIEVEMENT OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES VIA QUALITATIVE DATA**

The qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The research objective "*to explore factors contributing towards the enrolment decline in commercial subjects in secondary schools*" was addressed by means of qualitative methods. The qualitative method allowed in-depth comprehension of the research natural setting from explanatory and social viewpoints. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis also provided the opportunity to determine the main variables.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

By its nature, qualitative research is not intended to test hypotheses; it is aimed at supporting the researcher to investigate the area of research that requires in-depth understanding. According to the qualitative data analysed, there is clear evidence that most of the people in circuit five of the Thabo Mofutsanyana district did not have suitable education about possible career paths in commercial subjects. Some of the participants indicated that many people with good careers could only emerge from streams such as mathematics, science and technology.

Many teachers had a view that schools have the responsibility to educate parents and their learners about the importance of commercial subjects and their career paths. The

basic education department needed to roll out workshop programmes for different communities in circuit five of Thabo Mofutsanyana with the aim of educating communities about various careers in different streams and possible job opportunities to curb the rate of unemployment. Otherwise, the DBE could make use of different social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp; also, the use of community radio stations, flyers and billboards could be beneficial for the department to advertise these careers. The basic education department should also ensure that the mother tongue is used to evade language barriers. Residents without reading and writing skills should attend home-language workshops.

Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were employed by the researcher; this gave the researcher an opportunity to gain deep understanding regarding the beliefs and possible causes relating to the decline of learners' enrolment in commercial subjects. This was useful for the researcher to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of the study. Questions that arise from teachers' answers were posed to the learners of respective schools to get more details about their views relating to the issues of decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects.

## CHAPTER 5

### OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for implementation and further studies.

#### 5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter one outlines the background and the motivation of the study, problem statement together with the main aim and objectives of the study. The research questions and research methodology used were also presented in the first chapter. Chapter one concluded by giving the proposed plan of the study, which includes the total of five chapters.

Chapter two provides a brief background on commercial subjects in South Africa. It also explores factors contributing to the decline in enrolment of learners in various subjects from international perspective and possible factors impacting on learners choice of commercial subjects. Chapter two also provided the strategies to improve learners' enrolment in commercial subjects and it ends with a theoretical framework of the study, which is the uncertainty reduction theory.

Chapter three talked about the research methodology employed in the study, focusing on a qualitative approach. In this section the researcher described the data collection phases outlined by (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). These phases include the following:

Phase 1: Preparation for data collection. Ethical clearance certificate from Central University of Technology (FS) was issued prior to data collection, this was meant to guarantee that the necessary ethical standards were followed. Ethical issues included permission to conduct the study, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality.

Phase 2: Population and sampling. It was already made clear that the study's target audience would be commercial subjects' teachers and ninth-graders. Purposive sampling was used to choose participants: five teachers, one from each of the five

secondary schools that were sampled, were asked to take part in the study, and 25 grade 9s, five from each of the five secondary schools that were sampled, made up the whole population for the study. The researcher used purposeful sampling to get detailed information from participants about the reasons why learner enrolment in commercial subjects is going down.

Phase 3: The study employed two data collection methods, namely semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

Chapter four: This chapter discusses the analysis and interpretation of data. During the interviews, the participants shared their thoughts on possible factors contributing towards the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects. The data gathered was then presented and analysed. The chapter wrapped up with an analysis and interpretation of documents like the class register, school admission registers and the minutes of the staff meetings.

The main aim of the study was to explore factors contributing to the decline in enrolment in commercial subjects in secondary schools in the TMED. The specific goals were to find out what factors led to fewer students enrolling in commercial subjects, whether a lack of resources could have been one of those factors, and what SMT and teachers could do to get more students enrolling in commercial subjects. The study employed a qualitative research approach. Data was gathered using semi-structured interviews. Thirty (30) participants took part in this study, and they include five (5) commercial subjects' teachers and twenty-five (25) grade 9 learners from five (5) secondary schools with different quintiles. The study employed purposive sampling to obtain all the participants. The data was analysed and presented in table form containing quotes.

### **5.2.1 Contributing factors to the decline of learner's enrolment in commercial subjects**

The first objective of the study was to analyse contributing factors to the decline of learners' enrolment in commercial subjects. The findings had indicated that influence from peers and family, the learner's perspective about commercial subjects, lack of guidance, easy subject grouping or combination and non-use of ICT in teaching and learning were amongst the factors mentioned to contribute to the decline of the

learner's enrolment in commercial subjects. Because parents are the primary carers, they would want their children to make it in life. Therefore, they encouraged them to choose subjects or streams they believed would be beneficial to their future. It was found that children follow their parents' advice when choosing subjects or careers. It was also discovered that learners were influenced to opt for easy subject groupings or combinations to avoid subjects that seemed to be difficult and challenging. Therefore, it is crucial for learners to possess accurate knowledge regarding these factors to make informed decisions when choosing suitable subject groupings or combinations that align with their interests and capabilities.

### **5.2.2 Establishing whether lack of resources could be a contributing factor to the decline in learner's enrolment in commercial subjects**

The findings of objective two indicated that learners' ability to choose subjects of their choice was significantly impacted by the lack of teaching and learning resources such as textbooks, charts, posters and other active teaching and learning strategies, especially in commercial subjects. It was found that learners were not able to perform well in subjects like EMS in grade 9 because of the lack of teaching and learning resources. Because of this situation, learners were not learning as expected. As a result, learners developed a negative attitude towards commercial subjects, which caused a decline in learners' enrolment in commercial subjects in FET.

### **5.2.3 Strategies that SMT and educators can implement to ensure an increase in the enrolment of learners in commercial subjects**

The third objective of the study has suggested the strategies that the SMTs and educators could implement to ensure an increase in the enrolment of learners in commercial subjects. These strategies included the provision of career guidance services in schools, availability of LTSM, parental education on how to assist their children to choose subjects, implementation of ICT in teaching and learning of commercial subjects and promotion of commercial subjects via social media. These strategies could motivate learners to opt for commercial subjects. Introducing career guidance services in schools could provide learners with pertinent information about commercial subjects, potentially leading to a rise in the number of learners choosing commerce in the FET phase. It was found that the availability of sufficient teaching

and learning support materials could increase learners' interest to choose commercial subjects because they would have access to more information about the subject matter; therefore, schools and government should ensure that funds are made available to purchase sufficient LTSM. It was discovered that to increase enrolment of learners in commercial subjects, parental education on different streams such as commerce is important. If parents could be capacitated on different careers, they would be in a better position to assist their children in making an informed decision before choosing the subjects, which could increase the number of learners opting for commercial subjects. The study found that the use of ICT in teaching and learning has the potential to to increase learners' interest and create a positive learning environment. Therefore, implementation of ICT in teaching and learning of commercial subjects could increase learners' interest in commercial subjects, leading to the increase in enrolment of learners in commerce. The study also found that the school should use different social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp to promote commercial subjects to parents and the community at large, especially to the parents of grade 9 learners who are faced with the difficult decision of choosing the subjects in grade 10.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

This study identified several factors that contribute to the decline in enrolment in commercial subjects, with the following factors ranking highest: (a) Influence from peers (b) influence from parents or family (c) lack of guidance (d) easy subject groupings and possible job opportunities and (e) non-use of ICT in teaching and learning of commercial subjects.

It was found that peer pressure is one of the main factors contributing towards the subjects that learners choose, as they will simply follow their peers to other streams apart from the commercial stream. Learners do this without considering their abilities and interests in those subjects; rather, they just choose the subjects their friends choose.

One cannot ignore the influence of parents or family members. Many parents or carers control their learners directly or indirectly about which subjects learners should opt for when progressing to the FET phase. Most parents or family members encourage their

children to select subject combinations they believe will contribute to their future success. As a result, children tend to choose their subjects based on their parents' guidance or advice. It was also found that if parents are not properly informed about different streams in schools, streams such as the commercial stream will be negatively affected, as many parents would encourage their children to choose the science stream.

The study found that lack of guidance contributes significantly when learners make their subject choices. This study discovered that schools were not adequately supporting learners in choosing their subjects. Many learners, according to other teacher participants, lack exposure to diverse subject groups or combinations.

It was discovered through the interviews that most learners preferred subject combinations that they perceived to be easy and avoided subjects such as accounting and mathematics because they believed they were challenging or difficult. The study found that learners determine their choice of subjects based on their ability and how they previously performed in those subjects.

It also emerged through the interviews that the non-use of ICT in teaching and learning had a negative impact on the enrolment of learners in streams such as commerce. This effect is because most of the sampled schools were moderately equipped with ICT resources such as whiteboards, overhead projectors and internet connectivity, among many more. The non-use of these resources, especially in the commercial stream, resulted in many learners avoiding choosing commercial subjects.

### **5.3.1 Effect of decreased number of enrolment on the commercial stream**

At this point, there are no direct effects reported at the secondary school level. However, the significant impact can be observed after high school, especially in institutions of higher learning as well as in industries and the overall economy. In the study conducted by Angell, Guttersrud, Henriksen and Isnes (2004), the results revealed that there is major concern around the world regarding a declining number of learners opting for science and physics; this decrease has a direct impact on the number of learners enrolling for science programmes in institutions of higher learning. This issue is also a concern in South Africa's commercial sector. South Africa are currently facing an economic crisis that requires solutions, particularly from those with

expertise in commerce. The effects of this situation reach beyond institutions of higher learning and affect the workforce in commercial industries as well. It is therefore important to note that the low number of learners opting for the commercial stream will have a dire impact on critical skills, such as accounting and auditing that are key for the economic success of every country.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusion, two types of recommendations are presented. These are recommendations for the implementation and recommendations for further studies.

### **5.4.1 Recommendation for implementation to the stakeholders in education**

According to the findings in this study, grade 9 learners need to be equipped with enough information about commercial subjects and various careers emanating from them. Therefore, the study recommends the following strategies:

- Thabo Mofutsanyana education district (TMED) should make career guidance services compulsory in all secondary schools in circuit five, especially for the grade nine (9) learners. The main aim of offering career guidance services would be to guide and support the grade 9 learners in ensuring that they make correct subject choices or streams that align with their interests and future career ambitions.
- Secondary schools in TMED should collaborate with professional accounting and auditing firms to introduce debates and competitions among commercial subject learners that are based on various topics relating to commercial subjects and their impact on the country's economy.
- Career day, which is compulsory for all grade 9 learners, should be established in secondary schools in circuit five, and different experts and professionals should be used to assist learners with career choices.
- The stakeholders in education should develop a mandatory policy for teachers and parents to assist and support learners in choosing their subjects in FET phase.

- Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok should be used to promote different commercial subjects to learners and parents and school community.
- Secondary schools should embark on awareness campaigns programmes to address misconception about commercial subjects to reduce uncertainty among learners.
- It is also recommended that schools should procure modern teaching and learning resources and implement practical competency programmes for commercial subject's learners.
- Commercial subject teachers should ensure that they integrate ICT in teaching and learning of commercial subjects to enhance learners' engagement.
- Bursaries and scholarships should be awarded and made available for learners who are doing commercial subjects, especially for deserving learners that come from low-income families.
- Lastly, community and parental involvement should be stimulated through workshops and engagement sessions to emphasise the importance of commercial subjects in the job market.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendation for further studies**

A literature review of this study indicated that numerous studies relating to the decline in enrolment of learners and subject choices have been conducted in other subjects such as mathematics and physics but not in commercial subjects. Therefore, the following are recommended for further research:

- The study recommended that researchers should further investigate the availability and the ease of accessing information regarding the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects.
- This study used a qualitative research approach. The other studies should employ a quantitative or mixed-method approach to show the similarities and differences of the findings.

This study was conducted in one district, which was the TMED in the Free State Province. Therefore, it is recommended that other studies be conducted in more than

one district to understand factors contributing to the decline in enrolment in commercial subjects in secondary schools.

## **5.5 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study focused only on circuit five of the Thabo Mofutsanyana District and could not be expanded to include other circuits and districts due to logistical difficulties. As a result, the sample size is minimal to provide a wider perspective on the findings. A further limitation is the young age of learner participants in the study, as it created difficulties for the research. The limited time during the school day also posed a challenge, as teachers' felt pressured to complete their syllabuses on schedule. There was also limited literature available directly related to these research projects. Most of the sources used were from different streams, such as maths and science, rather than focusing solely on commercial subjects.

## **5.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

The study aimed to explore the factors contributing to the decline in enrolment in commercial subjects in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district. This study will contribute to the limited availability of the literature relating to the decline in the enrolment of learners in commercial subjects. The study will also help the DBE and its SMTs come up with strategies to increase the number of students who choose commercial subjects during the FET phase. It will also tell everyone who needs to know about possible ways to stop students from not choosing commercial subjects from not enrolling. Moreover, this study will enhance knowledge by providing findings that will greatly contribute to the existing knowledge of commercial subjects in South Africa. The researcher believes that this study might also reveal the significance of commercial subjects to both learners and parents, and the information may contribute to increasing the number of learners opting for the commercial stream. The study may help the SMTs develop strategies that are efficient and effective for increasing enrolment in commercial streams. The researcher believes that other relevant educational institutions and commercial sectors may find the study beneficial and assist in ensuring that the number of learners opting for commercial streams in secondary schools increases.

## 5.7 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was indicated that there were various factors contributing to the decline in learners' enrolment in commercial subjects, such as influences from peers and parents. The influence of parents as primary carers is significant, as they would like their children to be successful in life. For learners to accomplish their career ambitions, they need support and awareness to choose suitable subjects based on their interests and capabilities. Such an approach empowers them to progress in their career development by influencing their future commitment, desire to succeed, motivation, and capacity to earn a living. Such an approach will enable the nation to cultivate skilled professionals across diverse fields, committed to their work, thereby boosting productivity. The study also found that learners were not interested in choosing commercial subjects in the FET phase because of things like poor LTSM, schools not offering career guidance, and the lack of ICT use in teaching and learning commercial subjects.

To assist learners to opt for commercial subjects in the FET phase, the conclusion was that schools needed to offer career guidance services, make funds available to procure sufficient teaching and learning materials, promote commercial subjects via different social media platforms to the parents and ensure that the use of ICT is implemented in the teaching and learning of commercial subjects.

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## APPENDIX A: ETHICAL RESEARCH APPROVAL



### RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

Date: 28 August 2023

This is to confirm that ethical clearance has been provided by the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee  
**[01/06/16]** in view of the CUT Research Ethics and Integrity Framework, 2016.

[HREIC] ST.M.Ed 09/23/11

Ethical clearance number:

Applicant's Name and student number	MS Nyenye 2070240 22
Supervisor's Name for Student Project	Dr MA Modise
Level of Qualification for Student's Project	M.Ed
Title of research project	Exploration of factors contributing towards the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects.
FRIC approval number	<b>FRIC 09/23/11</b>

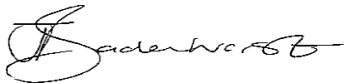
All conditions as set out below must be met as set out in your LS 262 a form. As this research focuses primarily on human beings you will be ethically responsible for:

- protecting the rights and welfare of the participants;

- gaining the trust and co-operation of all the participants with the assurance that the information collected will be kept confidential;
- informing the participants from the outset that their participation will be voluntary, and that the data collected will be conducted with the consent of the relevant authorities at the participant schools;
- adhere to the principles of rigorous data collection, analysis and interpretation consistent with the design of the study;
- keeping a data trail for possible auditing purposes and safe-keeping of raw data for a period of three years after publication of the results/findings;
- respecting the confidentiality of the data.

We wish you success with your research project.

Regards



Prof JW Badenhorst  
(Chairperson: Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics and Integrity Committee)

## APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Enquiries: M.Z. Thango  
Ref: Research Permission: M. S. Nyenye  
Tel. 051 404 8808  
Email: [MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za](mailto:MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za)



1672 Location  
Moemaneng  
Marquard  
9610

Dear Mr. M. S. Nyenye

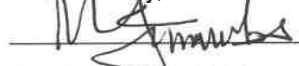
### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT

This letter serves to inform you that you have been granted permission to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education within the Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District. The details in relation to your research project with the Central University of Technology are as follows:

**Topic:** Exploring factors contributing towards the enrolment decline in commercial subjects in Secondary schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District (TMED).

- List of schools involved:** EE Monese Secondary School, Ithabiseng Secondary School, Libertas Secondary School, Marquard Combined School, Mohlodi-Thuto Secondary School and Paul Erasmus High School.
- Target Population:** Five Departmental Heads, five EMS educators, and twenty-five learners at the selected schools.
- Period of research:** From the signature of this letter until 30 September 2024. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
- The approval is subject to the following conditions:
  - The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
  - A bound copy of the research document should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 101, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Thuto House, St. Andrew Street, Bloemfontein or can be emailed to the above-mentioned email address.
  - You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
  - The ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
- Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours Sincerely,



**Mr. MZAMO W. JACOBS**  
**DIRECTOR: QUALITY ASSURANCE, M&E AND STRATEGIC PLANNING**

DATE: 09/05/2024

## APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

M.S Nyenye  
1672 Location  
Moemaneng  
Marquard  
9610

Dear Principal

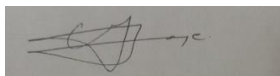
I, Malefane Steven Nyenye humbly request permission to interview one commercial subject educator as well as five grade 9 learners in the identified school, the purpose of this interview is to gather an in-depth information regarding factors contributing towards the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects. I am conducting this research in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree Master of Education in the faculty of Humanities at the Central University of Technology, Free State. The main objective is to determine the strategies that can be implemented in order to ensure an increase in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects.

Should you be willing to grant me the permission to interview a commercial subject educator and five grade 9 learners at ....., I therefore ask you to sign this consent form below:

I, ....., Hereby agree/disagree that one commercial subject educator and five grade 9 learners who are at the school indicated above to participate in the research that is conducted by **Mr Malefane Steven Nyenye**. I am aware that the above-mentioned educator and learners can withdraw at any stage of the research and shall not face any consequence for withdrawing to participate since participation is voluntary, and that the identities will be anonymous and whatever the information that is received from them will be treated with confidentiality and will not be revealed to any third party.

Signature of principal

Date



2025/03/31

Signature of the person obtaining consent

Date

Finally, I thank you for taking your valuable time to consider my request, please feel free to contact me on the following details below for clarity:

Cell phone number: 074 532 1558

Email: [dingaansteven@gmail.com](mailto:dingaansteven@gmail.com)

## APPENDIX D: PARENT(S) CONSENT FORM

M.S. Nyenye

1672 Location

Moemaneng

Marquard

9610

The Grade 9 Parent(s)

Dear parent(s)

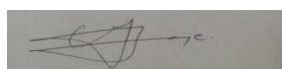
I, **Malefane Steven Nyenye** humbly request permission to interview your child in the identified school, the purpose of this interview is to gather an in-depth information regarding factors contributing towards the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects. I am conducting this research in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree Master of Education in the faculty of Humanities at the Central University of Technology, Free State. The main objective is to determine the strategies that can be implemented to ensure an increase in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects.

Should you be willing to grant me the permission to interview your child who attending school at..... I therefore request you to sign this consent form below.

I, ....., hereby **agree/disagree** that my child who is attending school indicated above to participate in the research that is conducted by Mr **Malefane Steven Nyenye**. I am aware that my child can withdraw at any stage of the mentioned nature of research and shall not face any consequence for withdrawing to participate since participation is voluntary, and that the identity of my child will be anonymous and whatever the information that is received from my child will be treated with confidentiality and will not be revealed to any third party.

Signature of parent

Date



2025/03/31

Signature of the person obtaining consent

Date

Finally, I thank you for taking your valuable time to consider my request, please feel free to contact me on the following details below for clarity:

**Cell phone number: 074 532 1558**

**Email: [dingaansteven@gmail.com](mailto:dingansteven@gmail.com)**

## APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

I \_\_\_\_\_, consent to be interviewed by **Malefane Steven Nyenye** for his study on “***Exploration of factors contributing towards the decline in enrolment of learners in commercial subjects in Thabo Mofutsanyana District (TMED)***”. I understand that: Participation in this interview is voluntary. That I may refuse to answer any question 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 be treated with confidentiality.

Initial and Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS

1. What is the most important determinant for learners choosing Commercial Stream in FET phase?
2. What other contributing factors, you think influence their individual decision on which stream to follow in FET phase?
3. What strategies do you use to promote Commercial Subjects to the learners in Grade 9?
4. What strategies do educators and SMT members use to promote Commercial Subjects to their parents?
5. Does the school have sufficient resources including LTSM for Commercial Subjects?
6. What do you think is the biggest contributor to a decrease in enrolment of learners in Commercial Subjects?

## APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LEARNERS

### Semi – Structured questions for learners

1. Would you choose Commercial Subjects stream in FET phase? If yes, Why?
2. Why would you not choose Commercial Subjects as a stream in FET phase?
3. What is your understanding of Commercial Subjects?
4. Who or what is your biggest influence in deciding on your subjects?
5. What value do you think Commercial Subjects would contribute to your school career?
6. Who makes your final subjects choice?

## APPENDIX H: LETTER OF INTENTION TO SUBMIT

**TO:** The Supervisor / Programme Head: Post Graduate Studies

Professor M.A Modise

**FROM:** Mr M.S Nyenye

207024022

[dingaansteven@gmail.com](mailto:dingaansteven@gmail.com)

1672 Moemaneng

Marquard

9610

**SUBJECT:** Intention to submit my dissertation

Dear Sir,

As a registered student at Central University of Technology (FS), Welkom campus. I am currently doing my M.Ed. degree in education; the title of dissertation is “***Exploring factors contributing towards the enrolment decline in commercial subjects in secondary schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana education district (TMED)***”

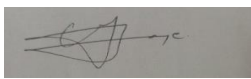
As a registered student at CUT I would like to submit my dissertation.

I rely on your positive consideration.

Yours faithfully

M.S Nyenye

Signature:



## APPENDIX I: SIMILARITY REPORT

### NYENYE

#### ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>18%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>5%</b>
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

#### PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	<b>ulspace.ul.ac.za</b> Internet Source	<b>4%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>hdl.handle.net</b> Internet Source	<b>1%</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>vital.seals.ac.za:8080</b> Internet Source	<b>1%</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>researchspace.ukzn.ac.za</b> Internet Source	<b>1%</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>uir.unisa.ac.za</b> Internet Source	<b>1%</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Submitted to Central University of Technology</b> Student Paper	<b>1%</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>wiredspace.wits.ac.za</b> Internet Source	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>ir.uew.edu.gh:8080</b> Internet Source	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>ir.cut.ac.za</b> Internet Source	<b>&lt;1%</b>

## APPENDIX J: EDITING LETTER



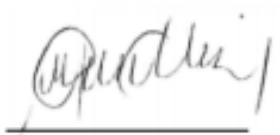
**Marieta Grundling (MBA)**

---

9 Akasia Street  
Vierfontein Ontwikkelingsgroep  
2615  
081 354 1596  
edit@profeditmba.co.za  
31 March 2025

To Whom It May Concern

This serves to confirm that the dissertation: **Exploring Factors Contributing Towards the Enrolment Decline in Commercial Subjects in Secondary Schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District**, by *Nyenyé Malefane Steven* was edited. The language, presentation, referencing system (both in-text and against the Reference List), were checked and corrected.



M Grundling  
31 March 2025