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**MANAGING PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS TO CHANGES IN GRADE 9 ECONOMIC  
AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES CURRICULUM, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, SOUTH  
AFRICA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study focused on understanding the perceptions of teachers to changes in grade 9 Economic and Management Sciences curriculum, of the Malelane circuit in Mpumalanga province, South Africa. The proposed research was carried out through a qualitative research method. A case study has been used. The case study method allowed the researchers to use multiple data collection methods to enhance the quality of the findings. In the case of this research, the researchers used interviews, lesson observations, and document review. Out of a population of 12 secondary schools at the Malelane circuit, 3 schools were conveniently sampled, out of the 3 schools, 3 participants were pulled, which was the principal, the Heads of Departments, and the Economic and Management Sciences teachers. Teachers were chosen on the basis that they were teaching Economic and Management Sciences for Grade 9. A non-probability sampling and purposeful convenient sampling was used. Lack of resources such as calculators, textbooks, workbooks, desks, lack of support from the government, chairs, overcrowded classes, changes in the curriculum and time allocation for Economic and Management Sciences subject are sources of teachers' negative perceptions towards Economic and Management Curriculum for Grade 9. The teachers' perceptions of

Economic and Management Sciences made it clear that too much content was taught in 1 subject thus causing poor performance in Economic and Management Sciences for Grade 9. Fear of change leads teachers to have a negative perception and inappropriate behaviour.

**Keywords:** Accounting; Curriculum; Economic and Management Sciences; Grade 9; Teacher's perceptions.

## **1. Introduction and Background**

There has been a perpetual poor performance in the Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) subject especially in Grade 9. When it comes to change in subject content, teachers need more training for change that can be confusing at times especially when the mind is unprepared for it. To teach EMS to Grade 9 successfully, teachers need to have a clear understanding of the 3 subjects, namely: Accounting, Business Studies and Economics. In most cases, teachers were not qualified to teach all the 3 subjects allocated to them, especially the Accounting part. This was confirmed by a study conducted by [1] that revealed that most teachers offering EMS to Grade 9 had no understanding of the Accounting part. Thus, if a teacher was not knowledgeable about something, then a negative perception was likely to emerge.

[2] stresses that perceptions can be receiving information about facts, events, or people. Therefore, the type of perception that a person creates is influenced by the way the information was obtained and interpreted as the information might be given more attention than others. For this research, perceptions of teachers had to do with the way teachers behaved towards the Curriculum, Assessment and Policy Statements (CAPS) amended curriculum which affected their lesson delivery in EMS to Grade 9. Teachers have been identified as essential individuals to ensure that any curriculum becomes a success [3]. Stakeholders of the school include the following: principals, parents, learners, and teachers. Grade 9 EMS teachers had to indicate ways and methods that can be adopted to assist them in terms of workloads and any other issues that affect their daily activities. Thus, this research aimed at exploring the perceptions of practitioners like principals, Head of Department (HOD), and teachers towards Grade 9 curriculum changes in Economic and Management Sciences. This would assist teachers, principals, HOD's and the Mpumalanga

department of education in understanding the sources of teachers' negative perceptions, challenges faced by EMS teachers in the classroom. Thus causing poor performance of learners and the impact of negative perceptions of teachers towards Grade 9 curriculum in Economics and Management Sciences.

Teachers are the heart of a classroom, and without them, no effective teaching can take place. It is essential that schools have highly motivated teachers to achieve the goals of any curriculum. Negative teachers' perceptions hinder curriculum implementation and leads to poor lesson delivery. [4] indicates that teaching is not a process of merely helping learners to acquire the necessary skills in reading and writing as it was the case before, but rather to teach learners to be critical thinkers, solve complex problems and become technologically literate. The changing curriculum creates a challenge to old and rigid teachers who could battle to adapt to change. Thus, this brings the problem of a negative perception that leads to poor lesson delivery.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Since this study used a qualitative research method, critical theory is used. The critical theory represents a different way of thinking, mainly concerned with solving problems. It is concerned with the liberation of humans from any form of the domain which is best understood as what occurs when goals and means of achieving them are prescribed [5]. According to [6], critical theory is a philosophy that claims that truth can be created or uncreated by human beings; they further indicate that the world influences ideas that come from human beings. This theory would help the researchers to understand the perceptions of EMS teachers towards curriculum change at the Malelane circuit. The study was conducted in such a way as to understand if there are certain factors that could influence the teachers' perceptions.

Critical theory was suitable for this study because it helps in unmasking the hidden assumptions and ideologies that dominate the modern world and believes that schools and teaching do not educate people. [7] further states that a critical theory is likely to help teachers reflect on their knowledge as they are teaching Economic and Management Sciences. That reflection would reveal how capable teachers are teaching, especially the Accounting part. The theory could enable teachers to be

honest in case they need transformation in handling Accounting parts as competent as they present in Business Studies and Economics sections.

### **3. Problem Statement**

Since the introduction of the CAPS, teachers appear to be holding a negative perception of the Accounting section which is part of the Grade 9 EMS syllabus. Academic analysis done at the circuit level shows persistent poor performance of EMS at the Malelane circuit compared to all other subjects. The department of education has tried to solve the problem through content workshops and organizing clusters of teachers but still, the poor performance continues.

Amongst other changes in the CAPS was the broadening of Accounting in EMS Grade 9. At the Grade 10 level the subject consists of 3 independent subjects, namely: Accounting, Business Studies, and Economics. The existing teachers had to adapt to the change and teach the Accounting part even if they did not major in Accounting at university or in teacher training programmes. [8] indicates that it is imperative that teachers understand the CAPS for the subject they are teaching. Teachers were expected to follow the guidelines required by the curriculum and develop teaching strategies that will cater for the needs of the learners. Teacher training and development were to be conducted on a regular basis for EMS teachers but that did not occur. Thus, teachers do not understand the Accounting content better.

The problem which this study addressed is the perpetual poor performance of Grade 9 EMS learners. One of the causative factors to why the Accounting part, compromises the performance in the entire EMS in Grade 9 is the fact that teachers appear to be allergic to teaching the Accounting part owing to a negative perception they harbour about Accounting [9]. This is a problem because for learners to be declared to have passed Grade 9 EMS they must pass both Accounting and Business sections as these 2 subjects are put together. In some instances, performance in Accounting in Grade 9 EMS is so poor that results in Business Studies and Economics sections does not enable a Grade 9 EMS learner to pass the subject. This is due to low marks obtained in Accounting.

## **4. Aim of the Study, Research Objectives and Research Questions**

### **4.1. Aim of the Study**

This research explored the perceptions of practitioners' alike principals, HOD, and teachers to Grade 9 curriculum changes in Economic and Management Sciences, Mpumalanga province, South Africa.

### **4.2. Research Objectives**

The following objectives were pursued to achieve the expressed research aim:

- To understand the sources of teachers' negative perceptions to Grade 9 curriculum changes in Economic and Management Sciences, Mpumalanga province, South Africa.
- To identify challenges faced by EMS teachers in the classroom, thus causing poor performance of learners, Mpumalanga province, South Africa.
- To determine the impact of negative perceptions of teachers towards Grade 9 curriculum in Economics and Management Sciences, Mpumalanga province, South Africa.

### **4.3. Research Questions**

The study was generated by the following research questions:

- What are the sources of teachers' negative perceptions to Grade 9 curriculum changes in Economic and Management Sciences, Mpumalanga province, South Africa?
- What challenges are faced by EMS teachers in the classroom, thus causing poor performance of learners, Mpumalanga province, South Africa?
- What is the impact of negative perceptions of teachers towards Grade 9 curriculum in Economic and Management Sciences, Mpumalanga province, South Africa?

## **5. Literature Review**

### **5.1. Teachers' perceptions towards curriculum changes**

Teaching and learning are more effective when teachers are happy and professionally fulfilled [10]. It is, therefore, more important to ensure that teachers are happy at their workplace so they can be able to transfer the relevant knowledge

and skills to the learners they are teaching. Since teachers with positive perceptions create a good learning environment for their learners [11].

In the Moroccan educational system perceptions of teachers were studied towards Information and Communication Technology (ICT) through a mixed-methods approach for data collection and reputational sampling to select interviews. The results identified conflicts among teachers' behavioural readiness towards the use of ICT in the classroom and the range of barriers that slowed the systems. Despite teachers' positive perceptions towards ICT, it is largely underused. The study found that this was mainly ascribable to curricular, infrastructural, and logistical barriers that must be moved to boost teachers' perceptions towards Information and Communication Technology [12]. Incongruent with the above finding teachers with positive perceptions can be influenced by some factors in the school environment for class sizes. Large classes are very difficult to be taught because sometimes you must start by managing the class first before teaching and that consumes teaching time.

In Nigeria a study of the teacher's perceptions towards teaching and learning social sciences was conducted. The study was done to examine and evaluate a teacher's perceptions towards the teaching of social studies in secondary schools. The study findings were that teachers had negative perceptions towards teaching social studies in secondary schools. Therefore, there is a need for school stakeholders to motivate teachers in teaching the subject effectively to develop future leaders [13].

[14] in their study of the teacher's perceptions towards the teaching profession has found that the teachers' perceptions towards the teaching profession are positive and there is no difference of perceptions between male and female teachers' perceptions of the secondary school towards the profession. Also, there is no difference between married and unmarried teachers, there is no difference between private and government teachers and lastly, there is no difference between old and young teachers, however, the researchers emphasise that there are always factors that affect teachers' perceptions towards teaching profession especially the number of years of teaching the subject. Old teachers seem to be rigid to change, they seem to forget that we live in a global world, and the education system of a country must get updated to meet the demand of global skills. So, this implies that the education

systems of all countries will keep on changing to meet the constantly changing standard of the world.

## **5.2. Factors that influence teacher's perceptions**

[15] suggested that teachers' perceptions can be influenced by several teacher-related variables which are, in many ways, interrelated. These factors are gender, age, years of teaching experience, training, grade level, and other personality factors which might affect teacher acceptance of inclusion principles.

Perceptions can influence a person's behaviour either positive or negative [16]. Negative teachers' perceptions can destroy learners' academic progression and increase learners' psychological disorders and physical symptoms of stress. Educators who humiliate learners can leave them feeling belittled [17]. The researchers agree with the above author statement since different learners respond differently to learning situations.

Positive or negative perceptions can be influenced by change as well. In this research, the CAPS curriculum implemented by the minister of education in January 2012 has been identified as a policy that focuses on strengthening the implementation of the former curriculum and provides clear guidelines about what is to be done in the classroom to improve teaching, learning, and assessment [18]. However, teachers who are in the system believe that the new curriculum negatively affects them since they must adapt to the new curriculum now and then.

Change can sometimes be confusing, especially when 1 does not understand it or when they do not think it was necessary. Fear of change can lead to inappropriate behaviour. In South Africa, the minister of education felt there was a need for change in the curriculum. [19] indicates that change in the curriculum is not something unique to South Africa. It happens in almost all countries; curriculum change typically reflects changes in the needs of the community. He further indicates that the Minister of Education Angie Motshekga has indicated that as a nation we must work against the fear of change to build confidence and enthusiasm in learners and teachers. However, proper training and development need to be done to enhance positive perceptions, especially on teachers.

A study conducted by [20] also confirms the researcher's assumption of teachers are not willing to accept change. It indicates that their past experiences influence conceptions that Math's teachers have about Curriculum, Assessment and Policy Statements. Teachers also want to be part of any curriculum reform rather than to be excluded. The resentment of old teachers leads to not accepting change. One of the 7 roles of the teacher is to be a lifelong learner. This indicates that they should be flexible to any change in the curriculum since the curriculum needs to constantly be in line with the real world for it to be relevant [21].

### **5.3. Challenges faced by EMS teachers**

Based on the study conducted by [22] at Umhlathuze circuit teachers teaching EMS Grade 9 had faced several challenges, the study revealed that the time allocated for EMS as an integrated subject was limited and teachers teaching EMS did not have enough resources to teach EMS at full capacity. This was also confirmed by the study conducted by [23] in Umlazi KwaZulu Natal indicated that EMS teachers were faced with several challenges. The challenges were those teachers were not well equipped to teach EMS as an integrated subject. Most teachers had problems understanding Accounting curriculum in EMS, also the study revealed that learners in schools have lost the culture of learning, they bunk school and do not write work given to them. The study also revealed that the schools did not have enough textbooks which resulted in time being wasted when teachers must first make copies for learners.

[24] argues that a textbook is the most important teaching aid in the classroom. Therefore, each learner must have a textbook. A textbook serves as a link to authoritative sources that may supplement the work done in class [25]. Learners must have all resources required for learning to ensure effective teaching and learning takes place in the classroom.

### **5.4. Impact of negative perceptions of teachers towards Economic and Management Sciences**

Economic and Management Sciences have been regarded as a long and not interesting subject by some learners, teachers, and parents. The subject has been neglected since in most cases, parents and learners want to enrol in a science

subject which seems to be everyone's talk in this century. Thus, a lack of interest from learners can influence teachers to lack interest in the subject [26].

[27] indicate that having a positive perception of teaching and learning is essential. Positive teaching identity is contagious; it can be easily transferred to one's learners. A positive perception leads to positive thinking and hope of good results, an optimistic outlook and a particular belief in oneself and one's abilities [28]. It is, therefore, clear that all teachers need to have a positive perception to enhance job satisfaction and to understand the Curriculum, Assessment and Policy Statements. This was also proved by a study conducted by [29] which concluded that the right perception assists teachers in being role models for the future generation of learners. Teachers' perceptions can improve or destroy confidence, achievement, and the wellbeing of learners. Negative teachers' perceptions can destroy learners' academic progression and increase learners' psychological disorders and physical symptoms of stress. Educators who humiliate learners can leave them feeling belittled [30].

## **6. Methodology**

The proposed research was carried out through a qualitative research method. A research method is important because it is the lens through which the researcher, viewed and made decisions about the study [31]. A case study was used, and it is a systematic inquiry of an event or set of related events that aims to explain a problem that has sparked an interest [32]. The case study method enabled the researchers to collect rich descriptive data through being an insider [33]. The case study method allowed the researchers to use multiple data collection methods to enhance the quality of the findings [34]. In the case of this research, the researchers have used interviews, lesson observations, and document review [35].

## **7. Study Implementation**

The researchers observed a lesson on EMS in each school. Interviews: for this study, the researchers conducted interviews with the participants in their natural environment to make sure that they were comfortable. Enough time was given to participants. A tape recorder was used to record data from interviews. The researchers also took notes without instilling ideas to respondents. The participants were aware of the aim of the interview. The researchers talked less and listened to the participants. Participants were given a chance to ask for clarity of questions

where they could not understand. Observations: were made after the interviews. The researchers observed a lesson on EMS in each school. This was done to verify the responses. Document review: was done to collect data. The documents reviewed were documents that were used to teach EMS, lesson plans of the teachers, and teachers' portfolios. The researchers requested the teacher's portfolios before observation to check if the teacher had teachers file with all the policies required by the CAPS curriculum to teach Economic and Management Sciences. To check if schools do monitor teaching and content covered by the teachers.

## **8. Population and Sampling**

Out of a population of 12 secondary schools at the Malelane circuit, 3 schools were conveniently sampled, out of the 3 schools, 3 participants were pulled, which was the principal, the HOD, and the EMS teachers. Teachers were chosen on the basis that they were teaching EMS Grade 9. At Grade 9 it is believed that it is where Financial Literacy foundation and Entrepreneurship skills are properly laid. The total number of participants was 9. Participants were selected based on availability, accessibility, and proximity.

For identification, the 3 schools were named school A, school B, and school C by the researchers. This was done to ensure confidentiality. These were which was the principal A of school A, HOD A of school A, and the EMS teacher as participant 1 of school A. In school B principal B of school B, HOD B of school B and participant 2 of school B. Lastly, on school C principal C of school C, HOD C of school C and participant 3 of school C. A non-probability sampling and purposeful convenient sampling were used.

## **9. Data Analysis and Reporting**

[36] explains that in qualitative research when data has been gathered, there are 2 methods of analysis that could be used to analyse collected data, which are thematic analysis and constant comparative methods.

**Thematic Analysis:** The researchers used thematic analysis as a technique of analysing qualitative data. Each interview was recorded by a recorder using a tape recorder, then the interviews that were recorded were transliterated into a computer. The researchers listened to the tape recorder and transcribed data from interviews,

according to different themes. Similar statements were grouped according to different themes identified by the researchers, [37]. Then similarities from the document review and interviews were merged.

**The Constant Comparative Method:** In this study, the researchers grouped data according to similarities (relationships of data) and differences. Also, afterwards the researchers read the notes from the observation sheet and again looked for similarities (relationships of data) and differences in participants. After that, a comparison was made of both the observation and interviews.

## 10. Results and Discussion

### 10.1. Themes associated with interviews of teachers

#### 10.1.1. Teachers' perceptions on Economic and Management Science, Mpumalanga province, South Africa

Teachers' perceptions have to do with the teacher's opinion on the EMS subject, it is what they find challenging in teaching EMS in the classrooms. The removal of General Ledger: In this study most, participants seem to have a challenge with the General Ledger. It has been highlighted that it must be removed. From the principal component it has been highlighted that most of our teachers are lazy to teach Financial Literacy, teachers have a problem with Financial Literacy thus, they might not teach the General Ledger since it is done after the journals this was quoted from principal B of school B when asked on reasons for a perpetual poor performance she added:

*"...Secondly is the issue some of the teachers of EMS or the learners our learners are lazy and in Accounting they when they have to draw to do some number of drawing some learners end up confusing those drawing and they will end up not knowing..."*

Also, HOD C of school C also confirmed this when also on any change to bring in EMS Grade 9 she said:

*"...I will remove the General Ledger to be in Grade 10 Accounting reason being most learners do not understand the General Ledger at least if they can do Accounting equation only it will be better because it is an introduction to the General Ledger..."*

Lastly participant 2 of school B after being asked what advice she can give to Grade 9 curriculum implementers she said:

*"...Eh if they can shift the issue of General Ledger to Grade 10 and leave of Accounting equation cause of Accounting equation it's a guide to take us to General Ledger so if the content can be done in such a way that is taken up to Accounting equation and leave out this thing of General Ledger maybe for FET when they are doing Accounting cause this thing of the General Ledger is chasing away even the learners once you start this General Ledger thing they can see that maybe Accounting is difficult so they decide not to even take it on FET so if General Ledger can be suspended a little in the GET and be started on FET..."*

All this response highlighted the fact that teachers were not comfortable with teaching the General Ledger in Grade 9. It indicates that teachers and HODs had negative perceptions about the General Ledger. The General Ledger might end up not being taught by the teachers and learners will suffer eventually or even in the case where it is taught it might not be taught properly. Apart from the removal of the General Ledger teachers have requested that an EMS needs a workbook for it to be fully taught. The Introduction of EMS workbook: EMS is a practical subject, especially Financial Literacy. Learners are expected to prepare journals, post to the ledger, do Accounting equations, and post to trial balance. It requires a learner to be familiar with the columns required for all 6 subsidiary journals and the General Ledger. Teachers seem to have a perception that learners must be provided with a workbook for EMS to improve performance, this was confirmed from their responses of principal B of school B shared his view when asked on strategies to improve EMS performance she mentioned that:

*"...amongst other things that should be done to enhance performance is if our schools could afford to provide workbooks for the learners because it looks like the department only be able to provide for other subjects not for EMS so if they could have workbooks that will be much easier, and it will be easier for the teacher to be able to assist the learners..."*

Also, HOD A of school A when asked to give advice to EMS curriculum developers she said:

*“...I think the EMS curriculum developers must reduce the topics in EMS. There is too much work and increased time allocation in EMS, and they must also prepare EMS workbooks exactly as they are doing in Mathematics...”*

This was also confirmed by participant 1 of school A when asked about strategies to improve learners' performance she said:

*“...I think if the department can provide us with the workbook, Accounting workbook like in Grade 10,11 and 12 we do have a workbook for Accounting like if they can provide us, it can be better...”*

From all the quotes from the participants, a conclusion can be said that for teachers to teach Financial Literacy effectively they need to have workbooks for all learners. Apart from the above perceptions teachers has also requested that Accounting needs to be separated from Entrepreneurship and Economy. These were their quotes that suggested the need to make Accounting a subject in Grade 9. Principal B of school B mentioned that apart from other challenges they have a school it is also challenging for them to place teachers with Accounting in Grade 9 this was her quote:

*“...Then you find that that teacher is a specialist in Business Studies and if they are Accounting issues that teacher might not do justice and it will and when you know that you are going to teach something that you are not familiar with you might lose interest and sometimes that is why they complain...”*

Also, HOD B of school B when asked about a change that she can bring on EMS she said:

*“...The first thing that I would change would separate Financial Accounting from Economy...”*

Lastly from a teacher perspective when they were asked what their teaching strategy was? Participant 1 said:

*“...oh, I prefer teaching EMS by separating the Financial part and Economics and Entrepreneurship part...”*

Meaning that it works best for teachers to break down EMS into Accounting and Entrepreneurship like the Department of Education (DoE) has done with that of separating EMS exam questions papers into paper 1 (Financial Literacy) and paper 2 (Economy and Entrepreneurship).

### **10.1.2. Factors influencing teachers' perceptions**

Research outcomes on the sources, factors, and the impact of teachers' negative perceptions towards Grade 9 curriculum changes in Economics and Management Sciences. In this study sources and factors that might influence teachers' perceptions refers to the challenges that hinder curriculum delivery. All participants have voiced out that in teaching EMS Grade 9 they come across several challenges in the classroom thus causing poor performance of learners. The HOD and the principal also agreed with the challenges that were mentioned by the teachers. These challenges were a lack of resources and time allocation.

#### **10.1.2.1. Lack of resources**

Teaching and learning material's main purpose are to assist teaching and learning in different contexts. The main purpose of teaching and learning resources is to give a source of learning experience that is effective enough to invoke interaction amongst the students and teachers in the teaching or learning process [38]. There are certain resources that one needs to have before teaching, this helps the teacher to teach the lesson with a specific aim. Economic and Management Sciences is a practical subject so the teacher must engage with the learners during the lesson. All 3 teacher participants were familiar with the resources required to teach Economic and Management Sciences. They all had a challenge with learners without a textbook and those who tend to leave textbooks at home, learners also did not have calculators.

The following participants stated the following sources and factors that create negative perceptions towards Grade 9 curriculum changes in Economics and Management Sciences:

Participant 2 of school B said:

*"...learners do not have calculators when it comes to making calculations, it is a problem because you will calculate alone on the board and sometimes learners ah, they do not take care of textbooks sometimes they leave textbooks at home because they are lazy to carry them, so it is very difficult to continue to reference and that is the challenge..."*

Also, HOD B of school B also said:

*"...the first thing I think is a lack of resources because almost 80% of our learners do not have calculators to practice at home and the textbooks to study. You will find out that 3 learners share the same textbook which is highly impossible for them to go and practice at home..."*

Lastly, the principal C of school C also confirmed the issue of resources by adding:

*"...lack of resources in our schools here in rural areas are different from schools in suburbs wherein they got a variety of textbook for example wherein they have got support teachers are given in some other instances lesson plans eh they do not have to spend time focusing on having to plan by themselves come up with exercises there is to go to class and deliver content..."*

Textbooks and calculators seem to be crucial resources for one to learn Economic and Management Sciences. All 3 schools have textbooks and calculator challenges. Economic and Management Sciences is a practical subject, especially Financial Literacy. It requires the learner to read a transaction, classify it and record it so without textbooks effective teaching and learning cannot take place. Certain calculations must be done in class for example the calculation of the cost of sales. Learners need to practically do it together with the teacher in class so they can remember it when doing classwork or homework. Since learners do not have calculators, it becomes very difficult for the teacher to teach. Upon observation, in school C only 2 learners had calculators. The teacher had to ask learners to calculate the cost of sales for a transaction and they did not do it. The teacher ended up calculating the cost of sales for the learners.

### 10.1.2.2. Time allocation

Time allocation refers to the time allocated to teach the subject per week. The CAPS has allocated 2 hours per week for EMS Grade 9. These 2 hours must be divided into 1 hour for Economy and Entrepreneurship the other 1 hour for Financial Literacy. All teachers in this study have indicated that time is the number one challenge they face in teaching EMS this was highlighted in their quotes below.

Principal B also indicated that time was one of the challenges that cause poor performance in EMS he said:

*"...Ok the challenges that the teachers are usually facing they are complaining about the workload that the work that they are supposed to do in EMS is too much and time allocated for the subject is not enough and unfortunately the school is using the national time form the national time that means whoever was designing that did not notice that EMS has a lot of things to do only to find out that it has been given 2 hours per week of which the work that needs to be done by the teacher is too much and then in some other instances their specialisation is not EMS, also EMS still have Economics, Accounting and Business Studies "khona lapho" in that same mhh" ..."*

Also, HOD C of school C when asked about the reason for poor performance in EMS she said:

*"...Grade 9 has a lot of Accounting content therefore it needs a lot of time meaning the time is limited to teach EMS in a Grade 9..."*

Lastly, participant 1 of school A stated that:

*" ...There is too much content, there is too much Accounting content, so the problem is usually teachers do not finish the content on time..."*

The above quotes from the participants indicate that time is one of the challenges in teaching EMS effectively. As mentioned in the literature that EMS comprises 3 different subjects therefore 2 hours seems not to be enough to teach the whole content. Teachers teaching EMS are not happy with the time allocated to teach the subject.

### 10.1.3. Teacher support

[39], defines teacher support as the number of numerous activities in an organisation or school that they can engage in which are aimed at development based on a job experience or performance. It is the duty of the HOD to ensure that teaching and learning take place in the classroom. Principals of schools seem not to be aware of aware that support also has to do with ensuring that teaching and learning take place in the classroom. When asked how they support teachers none of them mentioned monitoring tools. Principal A of school A said:

*"...although it's difficult like I'm saying but I support them through recruiting these learners telling them the importance of doing EMS and at the same time when arranging classes I also have to be there for them encourage learners to come and also to market the subject to the parents so that they can see the importance of the subject eh getting the right resources for the subject, for example, the textbook and any other material that they are using also encourage them for the market day so that they can sell the idea to the learners'..."*

However, the HODs seem to understand that support also involves monitoring of teaching and learning HOD B of school B when asked on how they support their teachers said:

*"...Ah the support that am giving them my EMS teachers is to make sure that I do class visits when they are teaching and monitor extra classes for example when they are teaching on Saturdays or after 2 and am always there the extra classes and again, I go to classes where they teach EMS to motivate the learners and also reminding the learners the importance of eh studying EMS..."*

Head Of Departments were aware of their duties which include monitoring teaching and learning in the classroom however when document study was done it was not verified if HODs in all three schools have done any monitoring because no monitoring tool was found on the teachers' file.

Teachers also feel that they have been neglected and nothing has been done to solve the problem of poor performance in EMS Grade 9. When asked what has been done to solve the problem participant 2 of school B said:

*“...ah not much except that, the little they have done is that one of separating the papers because it was too much for them to write about entrepreneurship, economy and financial literacy in one paper at least a little bit I would appreciate that one when they write financial literacy is financial literacy only they concentrate on financial literacy and then when it's entrepreneurship and Economy they do that at least that one is better...”*

Most teachers in the field or in the classes have been affected by curriculum change and due to the complex of EMS which contains three subjects it makes it difficult to find a teacher with all three subjects to teach it is either one teacher has Accounting and Business Studies or has Economics and Business Studies.

Even though principal B of school B when asked on what to be done to improve the poor performance she said:

*“...Ok our teachers in our school we sometimes invite expertise to assist them in the areas where they are saying they can't do or they don't know how to do the department is having curriculum implementers who usually come to the school and assist and give guidance and we also assist them by the development isn't that the department is having the programme of Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). Integrated Quality Management System once the teacher has presented and the Development Support Group (DSG) they will be able to develop that particular teacher if there is an area where you know that the teacher is lacking in that particular area, and we also tell our teachers that if there is something that they need that they think will assist them in teaching...”*

However, in all three schools IQMS files are available meaning it is done but no evidence of teacher development after the IQMS is done. Also, none of the HOD's mention training of educators during the interviews HOD A of school A when asked on how he/she supports her teachers she said:

*“...We also have departmental meetings where we discuss the matters and challenges and come out with the resolutions. I also support them by doing class visits and call parents when the learners give any problem. Award the teachers for their good performances, motivate the learners and organise motivational speakers for their learners and the teachers...”*

This is also evident from the three participants of this study; none of them had majored in all three subjects. Teacher training and development is a crucial part of curriculum implementation. It also forms part of teaching support that is supposed to be done by HODs at the school level. In all three schools, there is no teacher development taking place. The only training teachers receive it is offered by the district this is based on the quote below from the teachers. Participant 1 of school A also when asked if anything has been done to solve the problem she said:

*"... Yes, the last year 2019 the DoE at district level organised a three days' workshop where now they teach Accounting teachers, eh EMS teachers the financial part of EMS..."*

Meaning at the school level nothing has been done and the department only did a workshop once which I believe is not sufficient to equip teachers for the whole year.

## **10.2. Themes associated with document review**

### **10.2.1. Teachers Files**

All 3 teachers had a teachers' file. All subject teachers are required to have teachers file for all subjects from Grade R-12. All files had proper file covers with the names of teachers, school, subject, and grade. The organisation of the file was problematic to all teachers. All 3 teachers had a table of contents, unfortunately, the table of contents varied from school to school. There is no standardized table of contents. Only participant 2 had all policy documents required to teach which is the CAPS policy document for EMS Grade 7-9, the National Policy Pertaining on the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12 (NPPPPR) and the National Protocol for Assessment Grade R-12 (NPA). Participant 1 and participant 3 did not have all the policy documents; they only had the CAPS policy document for Economic and Management Sciences. All the teacher's files did not have file dividers. No monitoring tools were found in all 3 teacher's files. No evidence of class visits by HOD and this contradicts the statements about how they support their teachers.

### **10.2.2. Annual Teaching Plan**

All 3 teachers had an ATP (Annual Teaching Plan) with dates. Unfortunately, teachers were not teaching according to the annual teaching plan. Even though all of them were teaching Financial Literacy. Participant 1 and participant 2 were on the recording of Cash Transactions; participant 3 was on posting to the Ledger Accounts. The ATP specified that they were supposed to be teaching sectors of the economy.

From the document, observation, and interview one can refer to the literature that apart from other reasons of poor performance the combinations of 3 subjects in one learning is one of the reasons most learners do not perform well in EMS Grade 9.

### **10.2.3. Lesson plan**

The department of education has made it a requirement that all teachers plan their lessons daily. Lesson plans were only available in 2 out of the 3 schools. In the 2 lesson plans available 1 lesson plan was downloaded from the internet. The author of the downloaded lesson plan was viva publishers however the teacher was using today Economic and Management Sciences. The lesson plan was not updated to fit the needs of the class, for example, the accommodation of diversity in the classroom. The second lesson plan received was well structured and indicated the teacher's activities and learner's activities. It also did not specify how the teacher was going to accommodate the diverse needs of learners.

All 3 teacher participants had copies of the CAPS document and were aware of the contents of the policy document. They were aware that they needed the document for the successful teaching of Economic and Management Sciences. This includes the planning of their lesson using the ATP, topics, and subtopics. It also discusses the types of assessment required per topic and term.

## **10.3. Themes associated with observations**

### **10.3.1. Classroom Management**

Classroom management has to do with how well the teacher organizes his or her classroom to make it possible for teaching and learning to take place without

disturbances. Teacher's action plays a crucial role on how well the classroom is managed. Classroom management has been divided into 2 sub-themes: learners sitting arrangement and discipline.

#### **10.3.1.1. Sitting arrangement**

The learner's sitting arrangement was organized before the observation took place. The researchers and the teacher were responsible for arranging the classroom. In all 3 schools, classrooms are overcrowded with learners ranging from 61 to 70 per class. [40] has mentioned 2 challenges that are posed by overcrowded or large classes:

- the provision of opportunity for discussion or any kind of oral input to the written work is difficult.
- The amount of marking involved can dissuade even the not enthusiastic teacher from setting the amount of written work that he or she feels would benefit the students.

The classroom observation has made it clear that class size has a big influence on learners' performance. In school A, 3 learners had no chairs and a table they had to stand for the whole duration of the lesson which was 50 minutes. All other learners were sharing tables. In all 3 schools, teachers' movement was limited to the front row due to overcrowding in the classroom. The learners did not show interest in learning 1 learner was even caught writing Mathematics homework during the EMS lesson.

In school B 2 of the learners at the back were sleeping during the lesson. In school C all learners were seated but in 3 learners per table. Which also caused a lot of noise during the lesson. Large classes seem to be problematic, [41] also confirms that large classes create difficulty for learners to hear the teacher and concentrate because they are normally disturbed by the actions of their peers. For the teacher to teach effectively in large classes he or she needs to apply effective disciplinary measures.

### **10.3.1.2. Discipline in the classroom**

[42] defines discipline as a teacher-directed activity in which the teachers seek to lead, guide, direct, manage or confront a learner about behaviour that causes disruption. Discipline plays a vital role in teaching and learning. It is impossible to teach in a class environment that is disorderly, disruptive, and unsafe [43]. In all the schools some learners left the classroom during the lesson and the teacher did not say anything to the learners. Learners were moving up and down without permission from the teacher. Some learners will come back after 10 minutes. In school B it was better with no movements from the learners however the class was very noisy.

The teacher only stood in front and continued with the lesson. Only learners in front could concentrate on the lesson. Lastly in school C, the teacher started with checking previous work given to learners as homework half of the class did not write the work. The teacher did not mention any disciplinary measures for those who did not write the schoolwork. This highlighted that schools still lack proper disciplinary measures.

### **10.3.2. Teaching strategies**

The teaching strategy has to do with the method that the teacher uses in teaching to ensure effective teaching takes place and the diverse needs of all learners are accommodated. [44] suggests that teachers need to use relevant teaching strategies to equip learners with opportunities to develop critical thinking and develop problem-solving skills. There are different types of teaching strategies that can be used in teaching. The EMS teacher decides on a teaching strategy depending on the topic that is going to be taught. There are 2 main teaching-methods and that is teacher centred-method and learner centred method.

#### **10.3.2.1. Teacher-centred method**

The teacher-centred method allows the teacher to take full control of the classroom activities. Learners are told what to do and they follow the instructions. When all 3 teacher participants were asked about which teaching strategy they used in teaching EMS, Participant 3 response referred to the teacher-centred approach. However,

participant 2 of school B could not clearly understand what a teaching strategy was but rather she spoke about content on how best she teaches it in terms of diving it.

### **10.3.2.2. Learner-centred approach**

[45] mentioned that teaching and learning is expected to be learner-centred and thus, responsive to the needs of the children being taught. The learner-centred approach happens when the teacher engages with the learners. Learners are allowed to participate in the learning through discussions and asking questions throughout the lesson. When asked about the teaching strategy only participant 2 responded referred to her teaching strategy as a learner-centred approach.

However, during lesson observation, she did not do any classroom demonstrations. She only involved learners by asking questions during the lesson. As mentioned in the literature, EMS consists of 3 independent subjects which are Accounting, Business Studies, and Economics. It is also very difficult to find a teacher that has specialized in all 3 subjects. You normally find that a teacher has 1 of the clusters or 2 of the subjects. None of the participants has majored in all 3 subjects; they either had 1 commercial subject major or 2.

## **11. Limitations of the study**

[46] has defined limitations to the study to be a certain type of biases that the researcher would not be able to control which will eventually have a negative influence on the findings of the study. In this study since the researchers have used a qualitative research methodology, the sample size was too small since only 3 schools have been sampled with 9 participants and if the research was conducted from a large group using a quantitative research methodology the findings could have been different. Another limitation of this study is derived from the research title whose focus is the perceptions of teachers. Perceptions of Grade 9 learners in EMS could have helped in mitigating the limitation of the study.

## **12. Conclusion and Implications**

It is inconceivable for a researcher to conduct a study that is detached from contributing to the improvement of a particular situation. The study has highlighted the sources, challenges, and impact of both negative and positive teachers'

perceptions towards teaching EMS; this would assist the teachers in understanding the importance of having a positive perception. This study identified a lack of resources such as calculators, textbooks, workbooks, desks, lack of support from the government, chairs, overcrowded classes, changes in the curriculum and time allocation for EMS subject as a source of teachers' negative perceptions towards Grade 9 curriculum in Economic and Management Sciences. Thus, the Mpumalanga department of education should create solutions based on the findings of this study to address these challenges.

The teachers' perception of EMS made it clear that too much content was taught in 1 subject thus, causing poor performance in EMS Grade 9. Teachers perceive that General Ledger was 1 of the causes of poor performance in EMS Grade 9. They requested the removal of General Ledger from Grade 9 content. This will help learners develop an interest in doing Economic and Management Sciences. Teachers believe that Accounting should be treated as a subject rather than being combined with Economy and Entrepreneurship. It has been clear that combining the 3 subjects in Grade 9 was also one of the causes of the high failure rate. It is difficult for teachers to juggle between the 3 subjects. The efficiency of the teachers' knowledge in one of the subjects will make the teacher teach well the subject that they have majored with. Lastly, this study will assist the circuit and schools in finding ways to develop their teachers, especially when there is a change in a subject they are teaching.

### **13. Recommendations**

The primary research findings provide the basic foundations for the following recommendations:

- Teachers need to make copies for learners of content to be taught in class.
- For schools to improve the performance of the learners the government must ensure that every learner in every school has all the necessary resources required by EMS subject.
- The government should separate the 3 subjects, namely: Accounting, Business Studies, and Economics for Grade 9 and be taught as independent subjects.

## 14. Suggestions for future researchers

The following future or further research studies are being proposed:

- Additional research studies may well apply a quantitative method or mixed study.
- A relative study of both public and private sector schools can be investigated.
- A study to understand the source of Grade 9 learners' negative perception in Economics and Management Sciences.

### Competing Interests

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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