Universal Journal of Educational Research 11(3): 57-66, 2023 http://www.hrpub.org
DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2023.110303

Exploring Teacher's Perspectives on the Relevance of Teaching Economics Management Sciences in Schools

Emmanuel O Adu, Sindiswa S Zondo*

Faculty of Education, University of Fort Hare, East London 5200, South Africa

Received January 29, 2023; Revised February 24, 2023; Accepted March 27, 2023

Cite This Paper in the Following Citation Styles

(a): *[1] Emmanuel O Adu, Sindiswa S Zondo , "Exploring Teacher's Perspectives on the Relevance of Teaching Economics Management Sciences in Schools," Universal Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 57 - 66, 2023. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2023.110303.*

(b): *Emmanuel O Adu, Sindiswa S Zondo (2023). Exploring Teacher's Perspectives on the Relevance of Teaching Economics Management Sciences in Schools. Universal Journal of Educational Research, 11(3), 57 - 66. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2023.110303.*

Abstract EMS is a subject that is taught in general education and training in schools. It prepares learners for individual development thereby enabling them to develop the knowledge and basic skills they need to manage the scarce public resources to meet their basic needs. The study sought to explore teachers' perspectives on the relevance of teaching Economics Management Sciences in schools and to find out the strategies teachers use to teach EMS in schools. Thus, it will shed light on the education policy-makers whether to cut off EMS in schools, refocus it, and/or should it remains as it is. Guided by the interpretive paradigm, this paper employed a qualitative research approach and a phenomenological design. From the eight EMS teachers who were purposively sampled in the four studied schools data were collected using semi-structured interviews and document review. The findings from the study revealed a variety of strategies EMS teachers expedite in the teaching of EMS. However, the findings revealed further that in some schools under study, EMS was taught by teachers without relevant qualifications, and that impedes the effectiveness of teaching and learning EMS. Moreover, the findings revealed that EMS teachers perceive EMS relevant as it assists learners in understanding business and economic principles. On the other hand, some participants revealed that EMS is irrelevant. From the findings, it is recommended that EMS has to be refocused to enhance entrepreneurial skills so that learners learn how to start and manage their businesses, and the increased time allocated to the teaching of EMS was recommended to enhance learners' understanding of EMS. The study implies that for EMS to maintain its relevance, the department of education and policy-makers revise it to enhance learners' understanding and personal development.

Keywords EMS, Perspectives, Relevance, Teachers, Teaching Strategies

1. Introduction and Background

In theory, the teaching of Economics Management Sciences (EMS) in schools aims at affording learners with real-life skills that will assist them to grow at a personal level and grow as responsible citizens within their communities. As such, this remains ideal for enhancing growth in the economy. Far more, EMS is about educating people on how to proficiently and effectively use scarce public and private resources to satiate people's necessities. Apart from this fact, it has to teach our people [learners] how to manage their resources (i.e. finance management) in particular at a personal level. On paper, EMS is good and cutting-edge yet it does not cater to nor address the current affairs about how can an individual, with knowledge obtained from EMS as a learning area be able to survive and manage his/her finances without drowning in debt and live through the hand-to-mouth approach. Blatantly, most South African young adults face challenges with financial management yet they have done EMS in schools. The

question then remains is the teaching of EMS still relevant in helping young adults to become responsible and disciplined citizens, and educated enough about finance management for them to be able to face the real world and the financial challenges it possesses? To that, this paper aims to explore teachers' perspectives on the relevance of teaching EMS in schools.

The repercussion of political evolution and the impact it holds on education remained the centre of attention to many. De souse, Ritcher, and Raath [1] regard education as a tool to inspire change. De souse et al. [1] maintain further that education that encourages life-long learning carries a dynamic role in positive change in the community and society. Hill [2] maintains that education is considered to be the basis for societal and financial growth. And thus, schools remain the agents of change in this regard. This change called for a paradigm shift from the old curriculum to the new curricula that were outcome based. The New Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) for the senior phase (grades 7-9) of the General Education and Training (GET) band [3]. The RNCS was further revised to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2010 which also deemed EMS as an imperative learning area [4]. EMS covers three main areas which are the economy, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship [5]. According to van Wyk and Doe Reis [6], the time allocation differs with 30% time spent on the economy, 30% on entrepreneurship, and 40% on financial literacy [7]. Based on the time allocation, this was to ensure that learners learn effective management of scarce resources and acquire skills that will succor them to thrive and flourish as business owners/entrepreneurs [8,6].

CAPS curriculum called for integrated teaching strategies, for this paper, this aimed at providing learners with opportunities to understand better their education, EMS in particular, due to its relevance in holistic development [3]. The Department of Education [9] brings to attention that at the core of the EMS learning area is the idea of equipping learners with the skills and knowledge that will assist in acclimating, contributing, and enduring in a multifaceted society. To that, DoE [9], (p. 44) opines that teachers teaching EMS in GET has the following responsibilities: to be comprehensive, inspire learner participation and be dynamic in their teaching; respond to learners' diverse learning needs, and help learners subdue challenges to learning. Adu [10] concurs that by right, teaching necessitates a diversity of methods to expedite teaching or learning in the classroom, maximise learners' understanding, and develop the learner's knowledge in a learning area.

Bourn [11] declares that this move necessitated a paradigm shift to move from out-of-date teaching ways to finding new inventive and resourceful ways for expediting or simplifying teaching and learning. Rashidi [3] attests that there had to be a turnaround strategy for planning a pragmatic lesson and the teaching process. However, researchers in the field of study, have shown that when EMS was introduced in schools, none of the teachers had the expertise to teach the learning area [12, 13, 14]. These authors further pinpoint that it was only teachers who studied commerce subjects. Rashidi [3] cautions that the effectiveness of EMS lies in the fact that teachers who teach EMS have the knowledge and/or content of the learning area. Studies i.e. [14] proved that at present, EMS is flaccid in assisting learners to excel in all concepts. Assan and Lumadi [4] blame that, this is because EMS teachers do not have expertise in all areas of learning and thus they tend to be biased toward their particular area of expertise. In the same vein, [15] affirms that teachers sidestep challenging topics not because they do not want to, but because they lack the expertise and necessary skills or strategies to teach EMS. In the same line of thought, [8] argues that teacher understandings or subject matter affect the 'what and how' they teach. To that, van Wyk and Doe Reis [6] attest that teachers' theory of knowledge together with their contexts describe the magnitude of how they arbitrate teaching practice. To this end, this means that learners in the GET band exit the phase of the system lacking the necessary skills to assist them to face the real-life circumstances they encounter regarding financial management and making a meaningful contribution to the economy.

The literature clearly, shows the gap between policy and its implementation. With the discussion highlighted above, this empirical paper aims to explore teachers' perspectives on the relevance of teaching EMS in schools, with that being said it is then going to reveal the strategies teachers use in the teaching of EMS in schools. And thus, the research questions postulated in this paper are: what strategies (if any) do teachers use to teach EMS in schools and what are the teachers' perspectives on the relevance of teaching Economics Management Sciences in schools?

2. Literature Review

This section gives an overview in line with research questions posed by this paper, on the strategies teachers use to teach EMS in schools and their perspectives on the relevance of teaching EMS in schools.

2.1. Strategies Used in the Teaching of EMS in Schools

Teaching strategies according to [19] are methods of teaching that are aimed at assisting learners to learn the envisioned planned lesson content. And resultantly, learners gain competency to develop achievable goals in the future. Rashidi [3] purports that the CAPS document is the guideline that guides teachers when planning their lessons (i.e. the EMS curriculum). As such, to implement any teaching strategy it must be as prescribed in the CAPS document. van Wyk and Tshelane [20] maintain that in

general, learning processes have two dimensions, it is either teacher-oriented (participatory) or learner oriented (activity-based). These authors declare EMS as a subject that continually requires diverse teaching strategies to make the subject more appropriate for learners. For van Wyk and Tshelane [20], teaching and learning strategies involve class discussion, and group or individual activities to cater to different abilities, learning standards, and strategies allowing learners to partake and attain a higher level of achievement.

From the literature reviewed strategies teachers use are textbooks, question-and-answer methods, economic cartoons, direct instruction, and whole-class discussion for teaching large classes. The strategies mentioned hold the teacher at the centre because in all strategies the teacher delivers the content and allows learners to write and ask questions where necessary and then s/he will summarise the work covered on a day. Priestley and Philippou [21] declare that in the 21st century and beyond information and computer technology (ICT) and social media became more prevalent as innovative strategies in the teaching of EMS in schools. According to Adu and Bourn [22,11], ICT is integrated via television, DVDs, and films. Furthermore, van Wyk, M [23] mentions that EMS teachers use Web 2.0 technologies to facilitate learners' understanding. https://Mitchell.libguides.com/socialmedia (10 December 2022) refers to Web 2.0 as any web-based feature that allows users to contribute to web content. Web 2.0 includes according to [20] "*technology tools in particular blogs, wikis, Twitter, Facebook, open educational resources (OERs), mass open online courses (MOOCs), educational games, mobile learning devices, and various software programs*". These authors advocate the use of ICT and Web 2.0 as teaching strategies.

According to Rashidi [3] the strategies highlighted above see learners as 'empty vessels or information receivers' as it is the teacher who determines what is to be learned, and how and why it is learned. van Wyk [19] agrees that in these strategies the teacher remains with the responsibility to transfer the knowledge desirable to learners for progression purposes. To that, the common trend in these strategies is giving direct instructions, teaching, and telling. [23,9] argue that these strategies, therefore, do not prepare learners to able to gain lifelong personal skills they will need in life. It is at this juncture that [24] purports that teachers': knowledge, pedagogic skills, working efficiently with learners possessing different learning needs, and contributing to the profession and a school as a whole, is a prerequisite to teacher competency. America [24], (p. 38) argues further that, "a well-structured and supported teacher profile can be a great tool for aligning the elements involved in developing teachers' knowledge and skills in the teaching of EMS in schools". van Wyk, M [23] construes that a good teacher profile yields good teaching strategies that demonstrate the teacher's ability in allowing learners to enhance self-directed learning.

2.2. Teachers' Perspectives on the Relevance of Teaching Economics and Management Sciences in Schools

Mwakapenda and Dhlamini [25] maintain that the move from RNCS to CAPS curriculum mandated teachers to integrate learning areas to enhance their teaching. Admittedly, Mwakapenda and Dhlamini [25] point out worries concerning teachers not being sufficiently proficient to teach EMS nor cater for CAPS curriculum needs, given the fact that they are trained in other disciplines. Concurrently, Moloi and Molise [8] purport that in some schools EMS teachers are compelled to teach EMS and this is habitually imposed atop due to organisational necessities and working requirements. The literature, therefore, proves that EMS teachers remain inclined and focused on their specific specialisation [26,21]. Additionally, these authors put forth that in some cases EMS teachers end up avoiding challenging topics that will excavate their incompetence in EMS teaching.

The Department of Education [DoE] [15] admitted that the fact there are no teachers at a university level who studied EMS leaves teachers with little or no knowledge regarding EMS and that puts a strain on the accomplishment of the EMS goals as stated in the CAPS document. America [24] study adds that to a certain degree, some EMS teachers are also apprehensive about the EMS in its existing form. America [24] questions the time allocated to the teaching of EMS in schools (i.e. 8%) she argues that with this limited time, teachers fail to honestly teach all areas to be taught in EMS. As a result, they focus on the areas they are going to assess on and live the other content unattended. This leaves a gap between the objectives stated in the policy and the practice/implementation of the policy itself.

To this end, the above discussion raises concerns about the relevance of teaching EMS schools, as this literature proved that it remains irrelevant because young adults fail to manage their finances because of the wrong financial decisions they take emanating from the fact that as much as the teacher tries to the EMS effectively, but the fact of incompetency result to the learning area ineffective in fulfilling the goals prescribed in CAPS. And thus, learners will always have a recurring challenge to fit into this economic world.

3. Theoretical Underpinnings

This study draws on the ecological systems theory developed by [16]. Bronfenbrenner's [16] ecological systems theory defines children's development as stirring within a succession of related systems. Bronfenbrenner and Paquette & Ryan [16] [17] maintain that for a better understanding of human development, it is wise to look at the whole systems in which growth befalls.

Bronfenbrenner [16] recognises this theory as comprised of five sub-systems around children (learners) and young people's lives which all impact and are interconnected to one another in multifaceted ways.

These five sub-systems include microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem [16]. The *microsystem* according to [16,17] is the closest system to the learner's (child) everyday life as it involves people, institutions, and services that the learner openly interrelates within their immediate environment. For example, family members, school (this includes teachers, other staff, and peers); places of worship, health services, etc. The *mesosystem* is about how people in the different microsystems surrounding the child intermingle with each other. The *exosystem* consists of the wider community the child exists in. For this paper, this is inclusive of education and society, and political systems and policies. Notably, in this system, the child has no direct contact with the system but because the i.e. family, school, etc. are close to the system then the child is affected. The *macrosystem* focuses on what happens at a higher societal level and the influence it has on the other systems around the child. For example, attitudes and ideologies of the culture. The *chronosystem* is about peoples' experiences over their lifetime, i.e. it looks at the environmental changes that occur over the life course.

The implication of this theory to the present study is that learning institutions form part of the social drapery that cannot be isolated from their socio-political and economic context [18], which comprised of education, legislation, governance, economy, financial institutions, etc. as sub-systems [3]. To that, a system can be understood as a set of interconnected and interrelating fundamentals working towards achieving an objective the researcher desires to reveal. Hereafter, the researcher uses Bronfenbrenners' theory to position the EMS teacher within the social context of teaching and learning and assist in understanding educational problems in South Africa. And thus, will be able to attain a deeper insight into the relevance of teaching EMS in schools and the strategies teachers use to teach EMS.

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Research Methodology/Design

Research methodology is an outline of how the researcher aims to conduct the study. Fouché and Pistorius [27,28] purport that a research methodology is a procedure/plan indicating how the researcher anticipates conducting a study. The study was undertaken using an interpretivism paradigm, which aimed to extract the lived experiences of research participants –with regard to the relevance of teaching EMS in schools. According to Kaushik and Walsh [29] the interpretive paradigm aims at understanding the subjective world of human experience. Therefore, in this paper, the interpretivism paradigm allowed the researcher to gain a better understanding of teachers' perspectives on the relevance of the EMS learning area in schools. The paper utilised a qualitative research approach to explore teachers' perspectives on the relevance of teaching EMS in schools. Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, and Merriam [30,31] declare that qualitative research has a distinctive characteristic that the researcher attempts to understand the participant's meanings of their world on the studied phenomenon.

A phenomenological research design that seeks to understand how people experience certain situations was used as a data-collection strategy. This approach is participant-oriented, therefore, in this paper, it was deemed suitable because it was going to afford a researcher the greatest opportunity to understand the deepest thoughts or lived experiences of the participants about the teachers' perceptions of the relevance of EMS in schools. According to van de Ven [32], phenomenological design predominantly centres on lived experiences, spaces, and time the phenomenon is being studied. That allowed the use of interviews as a research instrument and allowed for a small-sized sample [33] which assisted the researcher to attain a deeper insight into the relevance of EMS in schools.

4.2. Sampling and Sampling Techniques

According to Christiansen [34], sampling requires the researcher to make decisions about people, settings, events or behaviours to be observed. The study aimed at exploring teacher's perspectives on the relevance of teaching EMS in schools, therefore, purposive sampling was used to select participants (teachers) teaching EMS in the four chosen schools, and in each school, two EMS teachers were sampled, hence, a sample comprised of eight teachers in total. Purposive sampling remained applicable to this study because it is one of the elements in qualitative research, as it allows the researcher to target an information reach population and limit the sample size base on the research objective.

4.3. Tools for Data Collection

This paper adopted semi-structured interviews and document reviews as tools for data collection to draw data from the participants about the relevance of teaching EMS in schools.

4.4. Data Analysis

Themes were used to analyse data as recommended by [35]. For these authors analysis involves: the gathering of data, coding, generating categories, sorting and categorisation, data testing emergent understanding, and report writing. With regards to data presentation, for the

four schools fictitious names were used such as school A, School B, School C, and school D. Two EMS teachers from each School A, B, C, and D were coded as EMST 1 and 2 at School A, B, C or D respectively.

4.5. Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations according to [36] mean the measure and effort the researchers undertake to safeguard the participants during the data generation process. In this study, the researcher inquired the permission from the school principals, before the commencement of the study. The teachers' consent was obtained and participants were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality.

5. Results

The study aimed to explore teachers' perspectives on the relevance of teaching EMS in schools. As such, the findings and results are presented using the following themes:

- Strategies used in the teaching of EMS in Schools.
- Teachers' perspectives on the relevance of teaching EMS in schools.

5.1. Strategies Used in the Teaching of EMS in Schools

EMS teachers were asked: "What are the strategies you use to teach EMS?" The research findings revealed a variety of strategies that teachers use to teach EMS in their respective schools. Amongst the strategies are: The chalk and chalkboard, question and answer, giving learners more classwork, homework activities, and more informal tests, issuing learners hand-outs/ notes, inquiry-based instruction, class discussions, problem-solving, games and scenario-based, presentations, demonstrations and use of ICT gadgets. The participants believed that the effectiveness of these strategies lies in the fact that the lesson is learner-centered. However, some participants felt that because their school's classrooms are overcrowded and most of the strategies teachers use were found to be teacher-centered and a little learner-oriented. To that fact, there were limited strategies found to be effective in the teaching of EMS in schools. As some stated that overcrowded classroom results in limited teaching strategies that in most cases strategies used were teacher-centered [i.e. explaining concepts, question and answer strategy] which ensures that you cover a mouthful of work as it is not time-consuming. While others believed that a learner-centered strategy is more effective and fruitful in the teaching of EMS in schools. One participant stated:

> *Learning cannot be teacher-centered only, millennia's [learners] lose interest if they are not part and parcel of their learning. At that, learner-oriented lessons allow learners to explore, question and engage by referring to real-life world connections between the subject and current happenings. That is how they can relate EMS to the real-daily happenings that learners are exposed to. […] for example, problem-solving and scenario-based are whereby you are presenting learners with current articles or scenarios and asking them to identify economic events and find possible solutions to the problems/challenges identified. That keeps them awake and learn to apply their EMS knowledge to real-life circumstances. (EMST2, School B)*

The participants acknowledged that involving learners in their learning keeps them absorbed, and interested in the lesson, and as a result, they can contribute meaningfully as they relate to the content taught in the EMS. At School A, EMST1 held a similar view:

> *I give learners hand-outs/ notes because EMS has more notes, and that saves time yet it makes learners active during the lesson. Question and answer strategy becomes very easy because learners have notes at their disposal […] and they can do self-reading. Giving scenarios, games, and presentations- gives them that interest and confidence and thus want to excel. With learners being the centre of the lesson it assists because even if the question comes out during a test the learner recalls the game or scenario h/she role played, in that manner, it will then be easy to remember[…] (learner-centered approach). (EMST1, School A)*

This finding suggests that getting learners involved in the lesson maximise their level of understanding while it avoids boredom. To that, it cultivates and improves learners' thinking skills and cognitive growth in terms of understanding EMS concepts. At School C, EMST2 stated that:

> *I give learners concepts individually and make them write tests once a week […]. Thereafter, I mark learners' work more regularly and give feedback timeously. That helps because if not marking learners' work, as a teacher you do not get to understand where your learners are struggling or what areas/concepts need to be revisited. Above that, it gives my learners that vigour and interest because they know that they will have to answer if they did not do the work. In terms of marking informal assessment tasks and class activities, I sometimes use peer assessment whereby learners exchange their exercise books and mark for one another […] even if I have done that, I take those books and check them, thereafter, I comment accordingly. (EMST2, School C)*

This finding emphasises that after the task/s is finished, the teacher marks the work and gives constructive feedback to the learners. Corroborating this finding is [23] who states that learners' work needs to be assessed to evaluate whether learners acquired the new knowledge. In support of these findings, the data collected from a review of learners' books revealed that teachers try their level best

to mark learners' work and give feedback regularly. Adu [10] construed that it is learners' responsibility to complete tasks given while it is their right to ask for clarity if they have uncertainties with a particular task given and ask for feedback. It is at this juncture, that this study sees teachers entitled to mark and provide learners with feedback. To this end, this allows learners to enhance self-directed learning, make decisions and be able to organise their work.

On the other hand, other participants revealed that overcrowded classrooms results in limited teaching strategies, and the fact that in some cases teachers are not competent to teach EMS as a learning area, because they did not specialise in it. One participant mentioned:

Teachers tend to focus more on their areas of specialisation and teach the concepts that they are comfortable with. And that leaves a gap for the learners because when learner progresses to the FET phase they lack foundational knowledge or basics of the EMS concepts. Hence, it becomes more difficult for teachers in grade 10 to bridge that gap because those omitted aspects were meant to develop learners' knowledge or act as building blocks of the commerce subjects and for learners to make a meaningful decision on which streams to take at the FET phase. Moreover, it becomes unfair for the teachers at the FET because they have to go back to recap and re-teach the concepts that should have been covered in grades 7-9. (EMST2, School D)

The participants' responses revealed that EMS was taught by teachers that did not have expertise in EMS. The participant put forth that the teachers in the FET phase find it difficult to teach commerce subjects as there are gaps in foundation knowledge on certain EMS content. Teachers are said to be "clinging" to the EMS content they understand better, living the challenging content untaught. And this impacts negatively the attainment of goals and objectives in teaching EMS in schools.

5.2 Teachers' Perspectives on the Relevance of Teaching EMS in Schools

Based on the objective of this paper, participants were asked: "What are the teachers' perspectives on the relevance of teaching Economics Management Sciences in schools"? The findings revealed that some participants believed that EMS was still relevant but it needed to be refocused to meet learner needs, and on the other hand, participants were convinced that EMS was irrelevant because it lacks transformation. With regards to the EMS relevance one participant stated:

EMS is a study concerned with the production, consumption, and distribution of wealth and resources which happens every minute and at different levels whether by buying sweets in a tuck-shop, employing a gardener, or trading oil at a global level. The flow of money and resources is a universal language that we should all be familiar with. EMS is a subject that aims at equipping learners with foundational skills and knowledge of the economic environment from distinguishing between needs and wants to understand inflation. Moreover, learners learn how to answer the three important economic questions i.e. 'what to produce, how to produce, and for whom. And thus, every functional human needs this lifetime education for not only personal development but also for the development of the society they live in. In this regard, I perceive EMS still being relevant and must be kept in the schooling system or curriculum. (EMST1, School A)

Another participant at School C echoed:

EMS is relevant, however, it should be refocused to cultivate entrepreneurial skills and business development skills. That will assist with the foundation of the economic environment and how it operates. Furthermore, EMS is the foundation of the subjects in the FET phase. Therefore, with the foundational knowledge and skills obtained in EMS which instilled young entrepreneurial development in a young mind, by the time they choose streams they will be choosing commerce subjects that will benefit them as entrepreneurs that will help them choose what types of businesses they want to venture into. (EMST1, School C)

Emanating from the findings is that EMS is crucial in assisting learners to understand business and economic language, as such, they can utilise this knowledge to reflect censoriously on the business happenings and their influence on the environment and the people in a community.

By contrast, one participant's comment revealed that EMS in its current state remains irrelevant. The participant expounded:

EMS content is not enough to prepare learners to start their businesses and manage their finances. In spite of the fact that when learners exit the system, the aim was for them to be able to enroll at FET colleges and vocational schools or study further but I still maintain that it is irrelevant. For me, it is wide and not focused on one aspect. Apart from this fact, learners of today do not watch the NEWS or read papers, they are not interested in what is happening in the economic world and how the happenings can affect them, inflation and mostly, our learner has no access to the internet where they can see/ have an idea of what is happening in the economy. For me, EMS only assist learners to progress to the FET phase and be able to determine which stream they can fit in. Looking at our circumstances as township schools, EMS remains abstract since we do not have ICT gadgets and web technology to make opportunities for EMS to be current and applicable to our learners. (EMST1 School D)

The participant invalidates the EMS teaching in schools, s/he blames this on the idea that it is too wide and not

focused, and on top of that, the participant added that the lack of ICT and web technologies integration in the EMS teaching intensifies the irrelevance of EMS. Corroborating this finding is America [24], (p. 13) sustaining that "poverty and inequity impede advanced teaching and learning and the application of technologies in EMS classrooms". It is at this juncture that one of the participants stated that EMS should be refocused to nurture business development skills and entrepreneurial skills to enforce entrepreneurship in learners.

6. Discussion

This study explored strategies teachers use to teach EMS in schools. It emerged from the findings that getting learners involved in the lesson maximise their level of understanding while it avoids boredom. Learners' active involvement was found to cultivate and improve learners' thinking skills and cognitive growth in understanding EMS concepts. Corroborating this view, is [18] who states that teachers need to find innovative and pragmatic teaching strategies whereby learners will be actively involved. This is because, a learner-centered strategy not only assists in grasping new concepts but also it increases learners' thinking capacity, and improves knowledge, social responsiveness, and attitudes so that learners can be able to face various life circumstances [6]. In this regard, the teacher facilitates and guides the learners toward achieving the set goals and objectives of the lesson. Apart from this role, [13] maintains that teachers must give organised explanations, provide step-by-step guidelines for the tasks to ensure that learners are aware of what is expected of them, and assess and give feedback after the task is finished. From the review of the CAPS document, it was revealed that the aim of teaching EMS in schools is to make learners understand basic economic concepts and develop economic thought that learners can utilise as citizens, workers, and consumers, more especially, enabling them to realise their role in the country building. Therefore, the study argues that training learners to take lead in their learning prepares them to explore and engage by referring to real-life world connections between the subject and current happenings. For example, an EMS teacher, mentioned, "I do economic activities like a market day at school where learners come with craft goods or anything to sell, and in this way, learners are exposed to the practical experience of learning how to create wealth while they are learning". This suggests that teaching EMS enables learners to efficiently and effectively use resources to satisfy needs and wants and thus, be able to use these scarce resources without any waste.

However, the findings further indicated that overcrowded classrooms result in limited teaching strategies, and the fact that in some cases teachers are not competent to teach EMS as a learning area or do not have expertise on EMS 'as such' but have on the three commerce subjects (i.e. accounting, business studies, and economics) was found to exacerbate the problem. We argue that this decreases the value and weight of EMS in schools, to the extent that whatever strategy is implemented remains ineffective as teachers cannot improvise because they lack knowledge. Resultantly, those teachers will automatically teach only the concepts h/she are comfortable with, leaving the other concepts neglected. Having teachers with no expertise in EMS whilst teaching EMS impacts negatively in achieving the goals and objectives of teaching EMS in schools, and this will have an overreaching impact on the education system, economy, and the country as a whole. These views were corroborated by [18] who states that a good teacher is one with a good profile and a good teacher's profile informs what teaching strategies to employ when preparing and delivering the lesson. To this end, that strategy should be versatile to meet learners' varying needs. Data obtained from the review of teachers' files and (i.e. profiles) proved that some teachers did not specialise in EMS. Worryingly, some were not from the commerce department. This raises concerns about the fact that how can an unqualified teacher be able to teach, improvise (if need be), and select appropriate teaching strategies if he/she is not conversant or acquainted with EMS scope/concepts? America [24] declares that teachers' subject knowledge, academic skills, and the ability to work efficiently with learners possessing different learning needs are a necessity for teachers' ability to teach.

Most of the findings obtained from the interviews on the strategies teachers use to teach EMS in schools substantiate some of the findings obtained from document reviews but refute some. For example, some of the participants during interviews stated that integrating ICT in the teaching and learning of EMS helps but a review of lesson plans did not support this finding. Therefore, the argument here is that teachers lack transformational skills when it comes to using ICT gadgets in teaching the EMS. As teachers are still glued to the old ways of doing things. We argue that the fact is that our lives are dependent and/or revolve on technology, but here is EMS teachers not making use of technology to facilitate learners' understanding and equip learners with relevant information and skills that they will apply in their lives in the future, and above all keeping learners excited, interested and active during the lesson. Priestley [21] suggests that projecting the lesson builds that interest and enhances understanding of the concept taught. Allowing learners to research on their own using ICT gadgets saves time, and it becomes even more interesting when the teacher does a power-point presentation. That change of learning space or environment enhances the lesson and the lesson becomes more interesting for the learners, moreover, the teaching and learning become fruitful. van Wyk and Tshelane [20] caution that regardless of the availability of ICT gadgets teachers' competency and creativity in utilising these is vital in achieving the goals set.

Concerning teachers' perspectives on the relevance of

teaching EMS in schools, EMS is crucial in assisting learners to understand business and economic language, because learners can use this knowledge to reflect critically on business activities and the influence these have on the environment and the people in a community. This places business knowledge and skills at the center of this economic business world. The finding of the present study emphasised that EMS prepares learners to make informed decisions about what streams to choose in the FET phase. Corroborating this finding is [24] who agrees that EMS bid a general understanding of the subject (i.e. accounting, business studies, and economics). However, notably, participants elucidate that as much as EMS is relevant but it should be refocused to assist learners to improve their entrepreneurial and business skills. We argue that EMS should be allocated more time, as in the CAPS document it is allocated two periods per week and that does not give ample time to cover all the aspects as reflected on the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP). EMS combines three subjects, therefore, when it comes to time, it is not enough to cover the aspects. At that, the knowledge and skills that learners acquire will not be sufficient enough. Hence, this calls for more time allocated to teach EMS, to sustain its value and weight, and to fortify its relevance. Our results show that it cannot be that a learning area with three important components which are stand-alone be only given two hours per week is not enough. And indeed, the review of the CAPS policy document validates this finding, [15], EMS is a combination of 3 subjects while it is allocated 2 hours per week. Therefore, the policymakers are to take re-think and consider increasing the number of hours designated to EMS.

From the findings, it emerged that the content should rather be changed so that it matches real-world circumstances and that it makes learners aware of their societal accountability in the economic world [18,21]. Furthermore, the EMS content must be changed to personal relevance like how can you manage the limited monies you get i.e. salaries, social grants, etc., something that is within the practicality. To this end, Adu [10] explains that EMS offers millennia of elementary knowledge and skills to become cognisant people, consumers, and imminent workers. At that, it is fundamental to teach them that the wealth creation process encompasses different role-players (i.e. households, the business sector, the government, etc.). Corroborating this view is, [18] who confirms that learning not only occurs in the classroom, school, community, and country but also in a political context. Therefore, the teaching of EMS will assist learners to understand the complications and the nature of various contexts as citizens of South Africa. This aligns with Bronfenbrenners' [16] ecological systems theory which views children's development as rousing within a sequence of related systems. He suggests that is always sensible to look at the system in which growth happens to understand better human development. As such, Bronfenbrenner [16] ascertains this theory as it includes five sub-systems around which children and young people exist, and all these systems influence and is intersected with one another. This theory assists the researchers to understand that EMS teachers, are to enable their learners to overcome the challenges they face within the school, and communities and the impact of educational policies in the teaching of EMS. In this way, learners will gain awareness of the current economic issues and how these issues affect the country as a whole.

On the contrary, one participant's comment revealed that EMS in its current state remains irrelevant. The participants linked this to the fact that because of many contributing factors, not all learners exit the schooling system at grade 12. For example, some learners exit the system at grade 9 with the hope that they will further their studies at vocational schools or FET colleges. However, if that does not happen, with the skills and knowledge obtained from EMS learners fail to keep up with life' demands. The results invalidate the EMS teaching in schools, it is argued that it is too wide and not focused, and on top of that, it was revealed that the lack of ICT and web technologies integration in EMS teaching intensifies the irrelevance of EMS. Corroborating this finding is America [24], (p. 13) sustaining that "poverty and inequity impede advanced teaching and learning and the application of technologies in EMS classrooms". It is at this juncture that this paper argues that EMS should be refocused and/or revised to nurture business development skills and entrepreneurial skills to enforce entrepreneurship in learners. As such, refocusing the aim not on the knowledge or background information of finance but on entrepreneurial skills will help learners to become young entrepreneurs. However, it was worth noting that not everyone reaches that stage of being an entrepreneur thus EMS has to be brought down to the level of individuals so that whatever is learned will be applied in the real world.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The teaching of EMS in the studied schools remains relevant. This is because, from the participants' utterances, it was revealed that EMS aims at assisting learners to understand the business world by equipping them with foundational skills and knowledge of the economic environment from distinguishing between needs and wants to understand inflation. Furthermore, they learn how the economy operates, how production processes take place, and also learn how to cater to the needs of the target market by satisfying the needs of the targeted group. To that, learners can be able to start their small businesses and be successful, because h/she can be able to balance the books and auditing. Apart from the economic view, the findings revealed that when learners have a good EMS foundation and knowledge they can make an informed decision when choosing subjects at the FET phase and excel in their areas of specialisation. On the other hand, other responses

revealed that EMS is irrelevant and outdated. The implication of these findings for South Africa means that the government should deploy a task team, even if it means outsourcing people with expertise from the neighbouring countries to rescue us because as it stands (if people feel that EMS should be removed in schools) the economy will decline drastically as young people see baloney in it being incorporated into the curriculum. And thus, EMS should be refocused to meet learners' current needs and assist learners to learn entrepreneurial skills to remain active citizens and acknowledge their social responsibility in the economic sector.

From the findings of the study, it is recommended that the BDE ensures that EMS is refocused to enhance entrepreneurial skills so that learners learn how to start and manage a business, and how to record business transactions that are in-flow and out-flow of money. It is also recommended that the EMS must be kept in schools because it helps learners to make sound decisions in the future as they learn to prioritise and manage resources efficiently. Notably, the study recommends that EMS teachers should be the ones who studied EMS at a university level. This is because the findings revealed that EMS was taught by teachers who did not specialise in it, thus limiting the teaching strategies that can be used as teachers lack pedagogical skills to teach EMS. The study further proposes the increased (from two –four) number of hours per week, so that EMS teachers will be able to cover the prescribed curriculum as stipulated in the CAPS document.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the participants who participated meaningfully in this study.

REFERENCES

[1] De souse, L. O., Ritcher, B.W., Raath, P., "Sustainable Environmental Management Indicators in South African Primary Schools", Sustainability, MDPI, 2017, vol. 9, No. 5, pp. 1-23.

[2] Hill, C.W., "International Business: Competing in the global market". Mc Graw-Hill: Boston, https://Mitchell.libguides.com/socialmedia (Dec. 10, 2022).

[3] Rashidi, w., "An exploration of grade 9 teachers' experiences of teaching economics and management sciences (EMS) in selected schools in Umlazi District", [Unpublished Med]. University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban, South Africa, 2019.

[4] Assan, T.E.B., Lumadi, M.W., "Facets of Integration in Economic and Management Sciences: Theory, Learning Teaching, Assessment and Metaphor", Journal of Social Sciences, 2012, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 255-264. https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2012.11893070

[5] Van Wyk, M., Alexander, G., "Approaches to teaching EMS the learner-centered approach": In van Wyk, M & Dos Reis, K (Eds). Teaching Economic and Management Sciences in the Senior Phase, Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 71-101.

[6] van Wyk, M., Doe Reis, K., "Teaching Economic and Management Sciences in the Senior Phase", Oxford university press, 2017.

[7] Department of Education (DoE)., "White Paper on e-Education. Transforming Learning and Teaching through Information and Communication Technologies", Pretoria: Department of Education, 2002.

[8] Moloi, M., Molise, H., "Professional Curriculum Practice of Economic and Management Sciences Teachers: A Case of Financial Literacy Teaching", Universal Journal of Educational Research, 2021, vol. 9, no. 5, pp. 1104-1112. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2021.090524.

[9] Department of Education (DoE)., Guidelines for Teacher Training and Professional Development in ICT. [Online], 2006. Available at: http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za/resourcedownload.aspx?id=35998. (Accessed: Dec. 10, 2022]

[10] Adu, E.O., "Theoretical foundations of teaching and learning: Insights into EMS". In van Wyk, M & Dos Reis, K (Eds), Teaching Economic and Management Sciences in the Senior Phase, Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 21-51.

[11] Bourn, D., "Teachers as agents of social change", International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning, 2015, vol. 7, no. 3. http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1475774/1/5.%20BournTeachers%20as%20agents%5B1%5D.pdf

[12] McIntyre, J., Hobson, A. J., "Supporting beginner teacher identity development external mentors and the third space", Research Papers in Education, 2016, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 1-26. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2015.1015438

[13] Sawatzki, C. M., Sullivan, P. A., "Teachers' perceptions of financial literacy and the implications for professional learning", Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 2017, vol. 42, no. 5, pp. 51-65. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2017v42n5.4.

[14] Chonjo, P. N., "The quality of education in Tanzanian primary schools: An assessment of physical facilities and teaching-learning materials", Utafiti Journal, 2018, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 36-46. ID: 73338950

[15] Department of Education [DoE], "National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS): Senior Phase Grades 7-9 Economic and Management Sciences", 2011. Pretoria.

[16] Bronfenbrenner, U., "Ecological models of human development, In International Encyclopaedia of Education", 1993, Vol. 3, 2nd Ed. Oxford: Elsevier. Reprinted in: Gauvin, M. & (Eds.), Reading on development of children, NY: Freeman, 2nd Ed in 1994, pp. 37-43.

[17] Paquette, D., Ryan, J., "Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory", 2001, file:///C|/My%20Documents/My%20Webs/Bronfnebrenner%20webquest/index.htm (1 of 4). (Accessed Nov. 30, 2022).

[18] Ngwenya, J.C., "Assets Teachers Identify for the Teaching of Accounting Education in a Rural Secondary School in Kwa-Zulu Natal", Perspectives in Education, 2020, vol. 38,

no. 1, pp. 72–87. http://dx.doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v 38i1.

[19] Van Wyk, M., "The Use of Cartoons as a Teaching Tool to Enhance the teaching of EM: The learner-centred approach", https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310818831 (accessed Dec. 15, 2022)

[20] Van Wyk, M., Tshelane, M., "Using social media as an information and communication technology tool in EMS classrooms", 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310818823, (accessed Nov. 30, 2022)

[21] Priestley, M., Philippou, S., "The Curriculum is – or Should be – at the Heart of Educational Practice", The Curriculum Journal, 2019, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2019.1598611

[22] Adu, E.O., "Effective and Creative Teaching of Economics in Schools", In M.A.Araromi; O.A.Moronkola & J.A. Ademokoya (Eds).Teaching and Evaluation in Regular and Special Secondary School. (An effective and creative approach) Royal People (Nigeria) Ltd. Ibadan, 2013, pp. 346-364.

[23] Van Wyk, M., "Economics student teachers' views on the usefulness of a flipped classroom pedagogical approach for an open distance learning", Journal of Social Sciences, 2018, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 125-133.

[24] America, C., "Integrating sustainability into Business Education teacher training". South African Journal of Education, 2017, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 1-8.

[25] America, C., "The relevance, importance, and applicability of Sustainable Development in Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) Education", [Unpublished PhD thesis], University of Stellenbosch, Faculty of Education, South Africa, 2012.

[26] Mwakapenda, W., Dhlamini, J., "Integrating mathematics and other learning areas: Emerging tensions from a study involving four classroom teachers", Pythagoras, 2010, vol.7, no.1, pp. 22-29.

[27] Schreuder, G. R., "The role of economic and management sciences (EMS) in preparing learners for accounting in grade 10", [Unpublished PhD thesis], Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, 2001.

[28] Fouché, J. P., "Academic psychobiography in South Africa: Past, present and future", South African Journal of Psychology, 2010, vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 495–507.

[29] Pistorius, Z., "Entrepreneurship competence of Economic and Management Science teachers in the Kenneth Kaunda District, MBA Mini-dissertation", North-West University, Potchefstroom, 2011.

[30] Kaushik, V., Walsh, C, "Pragmatism as a research paradigm and its implications for social work research", Social Sciences, 2019, vol. 8, pp. 1–17.

[31] Ormston, R., Spencer, L., Barnard, M., Snape, D., "The foundations of qualitative research. Qualitative Research Practice" A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers, 2014, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 52–55.

[32] Merriam, S. B., "Qualitative research", A guide to design and implementation. Jossey-Bass, 2009.

[33] Van de Ven, A., "Grounding the research phenomenon", Journal of Change Management, 2016, vol.16, no. 4, pp. 265–270.

[34] Vagle, M. D., "Crafting phenomenological research", (2nd ed.), Routledge, 2018.

[35] Christiansen, I., "Understanding research: An introduction to reading research", University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2010.

[36] Braun, V., Clarke, V., "Using thematic analysis in psychology", Qualitative Research in Psychology, 2006, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 77-101.

[37] McMillan, J. H., Schumacher, S., "Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry", (6th ed.), Pearson, 2006.