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The Affordances of Google Classroom in Enhancing Economics Curriculum Implementation: Issues and Critiques

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Abstract The integration of technology in education, particularly tools like Google Classroom (GC), has garnered significant attention in higher education research, with limited exploration in secondary education and specific subjects like Economics. This study addresses this lacuna by investigating the potential of GC to enhance the implementation of the Economics curriculum in secondary schools. Guided by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theory, this qualitative case study employs an interpretive paradigm and utilises semi-structured interviews to gather insights from three purposively selected teachers in urban and rural high schools in South Africa. The thematic analysis reveals that while teachers praise GC for improving teacher-learner interaction, facilitating diverse and high-quality media usage, and promoting learner independence, challenges remain. Specifically, some teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully integrate GC into their teaching practices. The findings underscore the need for comprehensive training to maximise GC's potential in Economics education. This study contributes valuable insights into how secondary school teachers can utilise GC to enhance the Economics curriculum, providing a roadmap for more active technology integration in the classroom.

Keywords Curriculum Practices, Economics Education, Google Classroom, Technology Acceptance Model, Curriculum Implementation

1. Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has largely reshaped all aspects of modern life, including the education sector. The increasing access to mobile devices and internet access has ushered in opportunities to transform teachers' pedagogical practices using platforms such as Google Classroom (GC) [1,2]. Despite the documented evidence in literature on the affordances of technology-anchored pedagogical platforms such as GC in enhancing teaching and learning, their use and acceptance in secondary economics education are worrisome [2,3]. In fact, there is overwhelming evidence that current economics learning is still heavily dependent on conventional learning techniques [3-5]. This is in sharp contrast to the consensus by researchers that passive learning pedagogical approaches do not stimulate meaningful learning and the development of the knowledge, skills, and values embedded in Economics [3-6].

Research indicates that GC is a powerful tool associated with impactful teaching and learning [3,4,7]. When properly utilised, it provides learners with opportunities to explore unlimited volumes of available information without the limitations of time and space [8,9]. Further, GC encourages collaboration, problem solving, and critical

thinking through interaction between learners themselves and learners with teachers [10,11]. A myriad scholars concur that GC offers opportunities to transform teachers' curriculum practices, which ultimately would result in learners constructively enhancing their critical thinking skills whilst simultaneously improving their attitude towards the subject [4,12]. These studies further reveal that most learners are motivated to learn through GC because it is easy and attractive to use. However, its use is dependent on the teachers' perception of its usefulness and ease of use [3]. The teacher should be convinced that he/she can use it without difficulty, and that it assists in conveying the subject matter for easy comprehension by the learners. That said, although GC has been hailed for its affordances in creating active and meaningful teaching and learning environments, it does not escape criticism. Concerns such as lower grades, attention deficit, and social interaction problems have been cited as drawbacks for exposing children to technology at a tender age [13]. Notwithstanding the negative criticism that technology sometimes faces, it is undoubtedly evident that integrating technology results in impactful and quality teaching and learning.

Despite substantial literature hailing GC, not all teachers use it meaningfully to enhance their curriculum practices [9,14]. Understanding what propels Economics teachers' integration of Information and Communication Technology in their curriculum practices is a complex issue. However, literature suggests that teachers' failure to utilise GC sometimes stems from insufficient knowledge and skills in meaningfully integrating it into their teaching [5,6,9,15] and inability to utilise technology to design meaningful tasks and provide effective feedback [1,8]. Moreover, literature suggests that teachers are devoid of the technological acumen to tap into GC and provide differentiated teaching [17], enable self-regulated learning [16], and make learning materials accessible anytime [3]. These inadequacies have resulted in the over-reliance on traditional approaches, as teachers are unable to tap into the affordances of GC to untangle the complex and abstract concepts and skills embedded in the Economics curriculum. This has perpetuated the poor comprehension of Economics concepts and, consequently, poor academic achievement in the subject [5]. The researcher's experience leans heavily on what is deposited in the literature, that teachers struggle to meaningfully integrate and tap into the affordances of GC.

The above factors have sparked the interest of many researchers to explore the factors affecting the acceptance of GC [18,19]. However, most of these studies have focused on utilising GC in higher education, history education, physical science education, and Economics education in Malaysia and Nigeria. The affordances of GC in secondary Economics education, particularly in the South African context, remain an uncharted territory. Utilising insights from the voices of Economics teachers, this paper seeks to add to the debate on the affordances of GC in enhancing Economics curriculum implementation. By exploring the possibilities of GC for improving the implementation of the Economics curriculum, the researcher hopes to lay a foundation on which researchers can further explore how GC can be used to enhance the implementation of the Economics curriculum, especially within the South African context. Furthermore, the study may assist Economics teachers to maximise the affordances of GC in their endeavour to enhance their classroom practices. To achieve this, this study seeks to answer the question: "What are the Economics teachers' perceptions of the affordances of GC as a tool to enhance Economics curriculum implementation?"

In the next section, the article reviews literature on the theoretical framework, Economics education, curriculum practices, and GC. The methodology is unpacked before the study findings and discussion sections are presented. The study then concludes by providing recommendations based on the study's findings.

2. Literature Review

One of the few studies conducted on GC and secondary Economics education is that of Sari and Yin [2], who conducted a quantitative study in Malaysia to investigate the effect of GC-assisted learning on self-efficacy among Form Six Economics learners. Their quantitative study consisted of a control group and an experimental group. The findings revealed that the experimental group showed more interest in Economics education than the control group, which was not exposed to collaborative GC as a teaching approach. Contrary to this study, which was conducted in secondary Economics education, a study on the use of GC in Economics education by Obuikwu, Obiukwu, and Amanze [3] was conducted in one Nigeria's higher education institution. Although the study was conducted in higher education, the findings are in unison with the prior study of Sari and Yin [2], as all these studies argue that the GC platform promotes active learning by making learning materials more accessible to learners anywhere, anytime. However, Obuikwu, Obuikwu and Amaze [3] further posit that GC enables teachers to differentiate their instruction without some learners feeling singled out. The study recommended that all educators in the higher education system should upgrade their skills in using GC in their curriculum practices. In South Africa, Motsoeneng, Manzi, and Moreeng [8] took a slightly different angle on the affordances of GC by studying the teachers' perspectives on how GC can be used to enhance assessment for learning in secondary Accounting education. Their study findings revealed that teachers acknowledged GC as a powerful tool in delivering effective instruction and assessments in Accounting. Whilst the above-mentioned studies focused on learners' and students' views on GC in the teaching and learning of Economics in higher

education and secondary economics education elsewhere, there remains a gap in the perceptions of Economics teachers on the affordances of GC in Economics education in the South African context.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

User acceptance is imperative for the implementation of any technology or innovation. The key to determining technology usage is whether an individual has accepted it or not [20]. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which was first proposed by Fred Davis [21], mainly consisted of different variables such as attitude towards behaviour, behavioural intention, actual system use, perceived usefulness (PU), and perceived ease of use (PEOU) [22,23]. This theory was later expanded by Venkatesh and Davis [24] to explain what factors determined PU. The expanded explanation included social influence processing, cognitive instrumental processing variables (subjective norms, image, and voluntariness), and cognitive instrumental processing variables (perceived ease of use, result demonstrability, output quality, and job relevance). Later modifications of the TAM generated an innovative model. These scholars addressed critical factors such as PU in addition to PEOU [24]. As a result, the new TAM emerged from integrating the previous TAM versions with the paradigm of PEOU determinants. Venkatesh and Davis [24] believed that PU was impacted by job relevance, output quality, image, and PEOU. PU is conceptualised by Davis [21] as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his/her job performance." PU explains the users' beliefs and opinions on whether technology enhances the way they carry out their duties. Central to the TAM is that technology users' behavioural intentions are regulated by their perspective on the PU and PEOU [25]. It concerns how technology will add value and help the user perform their job better. Further, Davis [21] would make us understand that PEOU refers to "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system will be free of physical and mental human effort". This tenet suggests that a given technology should be simple and easy to use.

In the current study, the researchers deemed the TAM to be the relevant theoretical lens to determine the affordances of GC from high school Economics teachers' perspectives. The researchers believe the three main factors determining the teachers' adoption of GC are the PU of GC, knowledge of GC, and PEOU. Key to embracing GC is the teachers' belief that they are not going to struggle in using GC and that it will enable them to convey the subject matter without difficulty [26]. The researchers believe that the use of GC hinges on the subjective beliefs and opinions of Economics teachers on whether this app would make their job easier without them exerting any mental or physical effort.

The following section reviews literature on Economics education, teachers' curriculum practices, and GC.

2.2. Economics Education

Economics is an elective subject offered in the Further Education and Training Phase (grades 10-12) in the South African curriculum. The subject concerns how individuals, businesses, and government use scarce resources more efficiently and equitably [27]. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), which is the guiding document in the South African education system, stipulates that Economics is supposed to enable learners to acquire problem-solving and critical thinking skills, amongst other skills. To ensure these intended skills are acquired, learners are expected to be exposed to meaningful learning and assessment opportunities [28]. This demands various methods and platforms to enhance learners' learning. GC is one of the online platforms that can be utilised. Its utilisation depends on the teachers' perceptions about its usefulness, ease of use, and availability.

2.3. Curriculum Practices

Curriculum practice is a broad concept concerning teaching, learning, and assessment [29]. Green [30] conceptualises curriculum practice as the interactions and exchanges that exist between teachers and learners. Green [30] further posits that these interactions take place in different environments, and these environments should enable the advancement of the intended educational goals. What becomes apparent from the conceptualisation of curriculum practice by the above scholars is that curriculum practices entail instructional strategies, assessment methods, and resources used to enhance learners' learning. It is uncontested that teachers' curriculum practices determine how effective curriculum objectives are achieved [29]. Teachers' practices should be tailor-made to create conducive learning environments that enable and motivate learners to acquire knowledge individually and collaboratively as group members [31]. It is documented in literature that teachers' practices are influenced by factors such as their qualifications and experience, technological competence, availability of instructional resources, and beliefs, amongst other factors [32]. It therefore goes without saying that teachers' use of technology is heavily dependent on their technological competence. In pursuit of effective curriculum practices, it is prudent that teachers should continuously evaluate, reflect, and adapt their teaching and assessment strategies to ensure alignment between teaching and learning [30].

2.4. Google Classroom

GC is a type of Learning Management Systems (LMS) platform that allows teachers and learners to share information anywhere, anytime through electronic devices, hence democratising education [33,34]. GC is an online application provided by Google that can be linked to a

person's email address and used to upload content, assess tasks, and grade assignments [12]. This digital application has been shown to be an effective technique for accommodating an increasingly varied learner body while enhancing the learning environment [35]. It allows teachers to migrate from being fixated on face-to-face learning approaches to utilising information technology in their curriculum practices. Google developed GC to assist in creating, distributing, and evaluating assessments [33,34]. It is the contention of Obuikwu, Obiukwu, and Amanze [3] and Widiyatmoko [36] that GC enable teachers to share worksheets, assignments, and quizzes and to provide immediate feedback to learners as a class or on an individual level. GC further enables teachers to have individualised sessions with learners and provide them with individualised feedback [34]. It also enables teachers to use varied quality and attractive media to grab learners' attention for prolonged periods [33]. In addition, it allows learning to shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered, allowing learners to develop much sought-after 21st-century skills and competencies [34].

Despite this tool's invaluable role, it should, however, be noted that teachers must consider the feasibility of using it in their given context. Critics of the platform argue that one of its drawbacks is that it cannot be used offline [37,38]. These scholars further criticise GC because of learners' need to access both technology and the internet. Furthermore, Azhar and Iqbal [10] make us understand that learners who are not "technologically savvy" may face a steep learning curve, and teachers might have to spend a lot of time conscientising learners on how to use this tool. Despite these adversities, GC has colossal potential and is predicted to continue playing a starring role in the education landscape.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach drawn from the interpretivist paradigm. The choice of this paradigm and approach was based on the assertion of scholars such as Creswell [39] and Rahman [40] that the interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach allow researchers to elicit views, experiences, interactions, and interpretations of a phenomenon. In the context of this study, the interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach enabled the researchers to solicit the Economics teachers' views and perceptions on the affordances of GC in their daily curriculum practices. A case study design was employed to capture the Economics teachers' perceptions and views on the affordances of GC in enhancing Economics curriculum implementation in three schools in the Northern Cape province of South Africa. The use of the case study design was motivated by Yin's [41] postulation that the case study's primary purpose is to provide multiple perspectives rooted in a specific context.

3.1. Participants

In the current study, the qualitative research design was chosen as it allowed the researchers to obtain multiple perspectives on the affordances of GC from the three purposively selected Economic teachers. Purposeful sampling assists researchers in understanding the phenomena by deliberately selecting individuals who can provide the researcher with rich, thick descriptions [39]. The participants in this study were selected based on their experience, that they were qualified teachers, that they came from schools of varying socio-economic status, and that they had declared that they were utilising the GC app. Given participants' contexts, the researchers deemed them fit to provide rich, thick descriptions of their perceptions about the affordances of GC. It should be mentioned that whilst all Economics teachers in the Northern Cape, South Africa, formed the population of this study, time and cost constraints dictated that a few teachers be sampled.

3.2. Instruments

In an endeavour to gain more insights into the Economics teachers' perceptions of the affordances of GC, the researchers conducted semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the participants. Once-off, forty-minute interviews were conducted with each of the selected participants after school or during the teachers' free time, depending on the arrangements made by the researchers and the participants. To ensure consistency of the questions asked of the participants, an interview guide was developed tapping from the literature review [42]. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed after getting consent from the participants.

3.3. Data Analysis

In analysing data, the researchers used NVivo (Version 14) to identify connections, patterns, and emerging themes of the narrative description of the Economics teachers' experiences of GC. The software produced codes that were further organized to identify similarities and differences from the gathered data [43]. Guided by Neuman [44], functions, explanations, actions, and contexts were then labelled under appropriate categories. The data analysis process was later elevated from coding to interpretation before concluding. Trustworthiness of data was ensured through member checking as participants were allowed to confirm the accuracy of their scripts [43].

3.4. Ethical Considerations

In conformity with ethical requirements as espoused by Creswell [45], after any study that involves human beings as subjects requires ethical clearance, the researchers sought and were granted ethical clearance from the Central University of Technology. The participants' informed consent was obtained before their participation [45].

Regarding confidentiality and security, the researchers clarified to the participants that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable without any consequences [45]. In addition, besides signing confidentiality forms, the participants were assured that their responses would be treated with utmost secrecy and that no names would be associated with their responses. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured using codes T1, T2, and T3 to represent the three participants and de-identify data.

The researcher's bias was minimised through a systematic coding process, and interpretations were cross-checked by a colleague who was not involved in the study but conversant with qualitative research procedures [45]. Reflective notes were maintained to reduce the researchers' prior assumptions influencing the study's findings and enhance transparency. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants encouraged the participants to provide honest and unbiased responses [45].

4. Findings and Discussion

The study aimed to determine the Economics teachers' perceptions of the affordances of GC in South Africa. A total of three teachers from five different schools participated in this study. The criteria for choosing the teachers were that they were all qualified teachers, had varying levels of experience ranging from two years to 15 years, were teaching in schools where learners came from different socio-economic backgrounds, and had been using GC. The table below shows the participants' identifiers, qualifications and years of teaching experience.

Table 1. Participants' Profiles

Identifier	Qualification	Years of teaching experience
T1	Bachelor of Education (Economics and Business Studies)	2
T2	B. Com Economics + Postgraduate Certificate in Education	6
T3	Diploma in Education + Advanced certificate in Education (Economics and Accounting)	15

In this section, the study reports on the findings and the discussions of the Economics teachers' perceptions on the affordances of GC in enhancing their curriculum practices, which was the main theme. The following subthemes emerged: enhances teacher-learner interaction, enhances the use of quality and varied media, fosters independence of learners in their learning, is easy to use, and enables easy facilitation of assignments.

4.1. Enhances Teacher-Learner Interaction

The semi-structured interviews showed that GC enables teachers and learners to collaborate outside the physical classroom. The respondents articulated that GC provided them the opportunity to meet learners anywhere and at any time because it was not time and place restricted. For instance, T1 had this to say: "I now don't worry about meeting my learners physically every time, as we can still interact using this platform."

T1's feedback concurs with what researchers such as Suryani *et al*. [46] postulate: platforms such as GC reduce the need for a physical classroom. It means that teaching and learning can occur anytime, anywhere, increasing the interaction between learners and teachers and amongst learners themselves [34]. Furthering the narrative of enhancing interaction between the teacher and the learners, T2 opined: "This app allows me to create conversations with my learners, asking questions and their opinions on the topic under discussion."

T2's views are anchored in literature by Azhar and Iqbal [10], who state that GC allows for collaboration between learners and their teachers and learners with their peers. Teachers can easily send questions or introduce a topic and solicit learners' opinions, thereby creating conversations and debates. The teacher and learners can share, debate, and assist one another. The conversations can take place on this app as a class, or learners may be grouped to share their ideas first as groups and then give feedback to the whole class. This allows for more qualitative and robust debates and discussions to take place as learners can consolidate their positions in groups and then present a combined standpoint to the rest of the class, where other learners can also comment on their work with ease. T2's assertion underscores the tenet of PU in the TAM theory, as the teacher used GC against the backdrop that it is a useful tool that can be used to create robust discussions and debates.

T3 agreed with the sentiments shared by T1 and T2, but also mentioned that she used the announcement feature on GC. She argued that this resulted in her not depending on a WhatsApp group to communicate. She said: "As a result of GC, I don't need a WhatsApp group to communicate with my learners. This WhatsApp group thing sometimes has challenges, as some learners have auto-delete, where messages disappear after 24 hours. This does not happen with GC. Once I send work or an assignment, it stays there, and learners can always refer and find it."

T3's argument suggests that the GC app is easy to use and that she perceives it as very useful in disseminating information to her class. She applauded the app for keeping communication for learners to refer to when needed. However, T3 also bemoaned that GC sometimes deprives learners of getting immediate teacher feedback. She echoed: "Although it enables easy communication with my learners, I have issues with the loss of in-person interaction. At times, learners are left without the teachers' guidance as the teachers' response might come later. This leaves learners in a dilemma as to whether they are on the right track or not."

The study findings that GC increased the overall teacher-learner interaction are not alien to this study. Studies on GC, such as those conducted by Azhar and Iqbal [10]; Panergayo and Aliazas [34]; and Sehlako, Chibambo, and Divala [33], obtained similar findings that teachers perceived GC as a powerful tool that enabled them to effectively interact with their learners outside the four corners of a classroom without any difficulties. Again, T3's postulation on how GC deprived "in-person" interaction is also documented in literature [38].

4.2. Enhances the Use of Quality and Varied Media

Another theme that emerged from the semi-structured interviews was that GC allows teachers to use varied quality media, such as videos, pictures, and diagrams, which may capture learners' attention. The application allowed teachers to capture learners' attention through sending attractive pictures and videos, even before the class commences. The participants in this study reiterated how GC allowed them to use varied quality media. For instance, T2 said: "I use this app to share materials before the lessons, and learners get to interact with the material before the lesson. This stimulates curiosity amongst my learners."

Her assertion points to GC being an enabler of pre-lesson viewing. Learners already know what the lesson will be about and are eager for the lesson to start. This pre-exposure to content in an attractive way makes learning easy and fun. This finding is not alien to this study; previous studies [4,46] had earlier postulated that using media through GC increases the learners' motivation to learn before the lesson commences. T3 supported the position that GC captures learners' attention by reiterating: "My learners do not feel bored in my lesson because I post varied videos and diagrams on Google Classroom. This captures the attention of my learners."

T3's postulation suggests that not only does GC captivate learners' enthusiasm before the lesson commences, but it also maintains learners' motivation during the lesson as various media appeal to learners with different learning preferences and styles. What these participants echo is not new in the literature. Suryani *et al.* [46] concluded that when learners learn through media, the learning process becomes memorable and pleasurable. The assertions by the participants in this study underscore the belief that GC is useful as it enables teachers to enhance their curriculum practices. Their motivation to use GC relates to the principle of PU, which is embedded in the adopted theoretical framework of this study.

4.3. Fosters Independence of Learners in Their Learning

Data analysis also revealed that the participants agreed that GC fosters independent learning. It emerged strongly that GC enables learners to attempt quizzes or assessments to check their understanding at their own pace and time. This was evident from the interviews, as T1 said: "With this application, my learners engage with content at their own time."

T2 added: "I usually post work and quizzes. Once the learners have interacted with the content I would have posted, they can check their understanding of the concepts through the quiz."

T3 supported this by saying: "This app is doing wonders for me. My learners do not have to wait for me physically for learning to take place. They get access to the learning material, and when they feel that they want to learn, they just log in and learn independently."

The participants' assertion above applauds GC as a tool that shifts from teacher-centred learning to learner-centred learning approaches [47]. It fosters learners' independence as they can learn independently at their own time [48,49]. Once the teacher has organised the material, learners can engage with content, worksheets, and assignments on their own. T3's assertion underscores what is documented in literature [50], which states that GC enables learner-centred learning. Learners learn at their own convenient pace. They take charge of their learning as they determine when they want to learn, since the learning material is always available on the platform anytime they wish to access it.

4.4. Easy to Use

The findings of this study indicated that the participants regarded GC as an app that can be used easily. They claimed that there were no complications related to using GC in their daily practices. This conclusion is based on sentiments such as those shared by T2, who said: "One thing I like about GC is that it is simple to use. There are no complications if one has an internet connection."

This line of thought was echoed by T1, who postulated: "I enjoy using this platform because of its simplicity."

The two participants agreed that GC is a user-friendly app with no complications. Their perceptions feed into the tenets of the TAM theoretical framework utilised in this study. Scholars on the TAM, such as Panergayo and Aliazas [20], argue that using any technological app or media depends on the users' perception of how easy the application or media is to use. Equally, the two participants in this study used GC because of their perception of it. In the earlier studies on GC, scholars such as Beaumont [51] make us understand that the motivation to use GC is positively related to PEOU. Based on the data from the study participants, it is reasonable to conclude that one of the striking reasons for using GC is its ease of use, as it does not require complicated technological acumen.

It was, however, interesting to note that T2 had a contrasting view on the ease of use. Although she acknowledged the benefits of GC, she bemoaned its over-reliance on internet connection.

She said: "Whilst this application is useful, there is this problem of internet connection. This app is heavily dependent on internet access, which is sometimes not

readily available." She added: "I, however, still use it as it is handy in my teaching."

Although the three participants were in unison on the application's usefulness, there was no consensus on the ease of use. Two participants were of the view that it was easy to use, whilst one participant bemoaned its heavy reliance on internet access. When teachers perceive that using GC is easy, it will translate into them using it effectively to enhance their curriculum practices [52]. Although T2 mentioned the challenges with GC in terms of its reliance on an internet connection, she still insisted that she used it as she perceived it to be useful.

4.5. Enables Easy Facilitation of Assignments

GC facilitates easy assignment creation, distribution, and evaluation [46]. Because GC is compatible with Google Forms, teachers find it easy to create assignments [3]. In addition, this application enables assignments to be easily distributed and housed so that learners can access them easily without fear of misplacing them [53].

Confirming what is documented in the literature above, T1 said: "I upload and share assignments with the class. I, however, do not use the app to grade the assignments."

This finding is not peculiar to T1, as Suryani *et al*. [46] and Periani and Suputra [53] had earlier postulated that one of the advantages of GC is that it makes it easier for teachers to share assessments. Also, the difficulty with grading assessments using GC, as echoed by T1, is not new, as some teachers had earlier on postulated that they prefer grading assessments in the presence of learners, as this gives them an opportunity to show the learners where they went and wrong whilst the assessment is still in the process of being completed [46,53].

T2 echoed the benefits of using GC: "The stress of having to hand out hard copies of assignments is over for me.

T3 said: "[The] Google app has made it easy for me to mark assignments online without any incidences of me having misplaced my assignments."

She elaborated on another benefit of GC by saying: "I am also able to track the progress of learners in their assignments as I get a notification when a learner has submitted."

The benefit of GC as a handy tool in assessment emerged strongly from the study. This is not unique to this study, as other scholars obtained the same findings [10,34].

5. Limitations of the Study

Despite the study's contributions, it comes with limitations that should be acknowledged. The small sample size negatively affected the extent to which the findings can be generalised to a broader population, as the statistical power is diminished and variability across different contexts may not be adequately captured [45]. Creswell and Creswell [45] assert that a sample size is paramount in ensuring the reliability of qualitative and quantitative studies. Moreso, a small sample may result in limited representativeness. While it is acknowledged that the insights generated provide valuable indications about the Affordances of Google Classroom, further studies with a larger and more diverse sample are imperative to validate and extend these study findings.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study explored the Economics teachers' perceptions of the affordances of GC. The primary objective was to determine how GC can enhance Economics curriculum implementation. The study's findings reveal that educators acknowledge the affordances of GC in enhancing their curriculum practices. The participants perceive GC as a tool that can be used to overcome the impediments of time and space which usually hinder flexible teaching and learning from taking place. It also came out strongly that teachers viewed GC as a tool for assessment and to provide prompt feedback to the learners. The teachers' perceptions that GC is easy to use confines to one of the key tenets of the theoretical framework that underpinned this study (PEOU).Teachers (users) perceive GC to be easy to use. GC is highly accessible and easy to use, given the multiple devices on the market that are compatible with it. However, some educators find it challenging to use, as they prefer the face-to-face learning process due to the in-person dimension it brings. In addition, unreliable internet connectivity was raised as one of the stumbling blocks, preventing the use of GC. Given the findings of this study. The Department of Education is advised to provide reliable and cheaper internet connectivity. Moreso, continuous professional teacher development should be prioritised especially on the use of Information, Communication and Technology platforms such as GC. The study, however, had a limitation in that it was conducted with a limited number of teachers; therefore, the results might not truly represent many secondary economics teachers in South Africa.

In conclusion, although the participants in this study acknowledged the impact of GC, they bemoaned inadequate technological infrastructure and inadequate teacher training as impediments to the meaningful utilisation of this platform in enhancing the Economics curriculum. To them, it was easy to continuously depend on the conventional physical classroom, as it did not present challenges. Based on the study findings, it is therefore recommended that the Department of Education should ensure that all educators are equipped with technological skills to tap into the affordances of GC and provide the much-needed facilities such as computers and internet connection.

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