

https://dspace.org/

Exploring Grade 10 learners' perceptions of the importance of Economics subject in Turffontein Secondary schools

Olagunju, Olayinka Samual

2019
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/29468

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Exploring Grade 10 learners' perceptions of the importance of Economics subject in Turffontein Secondary schools

A research dissertation presented to the Faculty of Humanities (School Of Education)

By

Olayinka Samuel Olagunju
Student Number: 1422829

In Partial Fulfilment
Of the requirement for the degree
Masters of Education by Coursework



University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
Date of submission: July 12 2019
Supervisors:
Dr Mathakga Botha
And
Dr Thabisile Nkambule

DECLARATION

I O.S. OLAGUNJU (Student number 1422829)

am a student registered for Master in Education by Coursework in the year 2018

* I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong

* I confirm that the work submitted for research report is my own unaided work except where I have explicitly indicated otherwise

* I have followed the required convention in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others.

* I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

Signature: 

Date July 12 2019

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore Grade 10 learners' perception of the importance of economics subject in selected secondary schools in Turffontein, Gauteng province, South Africa. Furthermore, the study sought to identify factors that shape learners' perception of the importance economics subject. This study used phenomenological qualitative approach to interrogate learners' perception of economics subject, and data was collected through semi-structured one-to-one individual interviews and focused group interviews. Four learners from each schools participated in the semi-structured one-to-one individual interviews, and eight learners from both schools participated in the focused group interviews. Critical discourse analysis was used as theoretical framework and Fairclough's analytical framework of critical discourse analysis was used as a lens to makes sense of the meaning provided by learners about their perceptions of the importance of economics subject.

The results from data analysis reveal the following. First, learners perceived that economics as a subject has value. Regards for economics seem to come from learners' belief that studying it help them understand real life issues and offers a path to their future career. Second, they thought of economics as a social science and synonymous with history. Third, Factors such as the prospect of getting a job and the influence of peers were identified as factors that shape these perceptions. This suggested that learners' choice of studying economics is influenced by extrinsic factors. These findings have considerable implications for further research, policy and practice, as well as the nature of the subject itself.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

DBE: Department of Basic Education

EMS: Economic and Management Science

FET: Further Education and Training

GDE: Gauteng Department of Education

NCS: National Curriculum Statement

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My profound gratitude goes to the Almighty God and the father of our Lord Jesus Christ who gave me the willingness, strength and perseverance to go through this course of study, overcoming all challenges and for his eternal blessings, he bestows on me by His Spirit which enabled me to complete this research.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my supervisors **Dr. Mathakga** Botha and **Dr. Thabisile** Nkambule**,** for the love, empathy, patience, understanding and professionalism with which you shepherd me in the course of this study. Your dedication and the extra effort you put into supervising me, is deeply appreciated, without which this work would have been impossible. No amount of words can capture the depth of my gratitude to you for the love you shown me during my studies; I give glory to God for making you part of my success story.

To my family, I thank you all for your words of encouragement during the course of this study. To my father **Samson Aderemi Olagunju**, thank you for been a valuable mirror for life, for always praying for me and for your words of encouragement it is much appreciated. To my beloved mother and stepmother, thank you for keeping me in your prayers. Your understanding and support have been a major source of courage. To my amiable, mother in-law, thank you for the unflinching support you gave to my family and me in the course of this study. I am most grateful for your words of encouragement, your sacrifice, support and love in the most challenging time during this process.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the University of Witwatersrand and the Postgraduate Merit Award your financial support is highly appreciated. A special mention and thanks is to Education International (El) who provided me with the funds to further my studies and completing my dissertation, I am humbled that you believed in me and funded my studies so I can achieve my goals of being a researcher and young academic.

Thank you to all my friends and colleagues, for making this experience worthwhile. Thank you for your love and support. I am blessed to share my academic journey with you. Very special thanks to all principals and the schools that made it possible for me to conduct interviews in their institutions. This study would not have been successful without your input, thank you to learners that participated and offered their time to contribute to the study. To the

Gauteng Department of Education and Educational district 14, without your permission to conduct this study in your region this study would not have been possible, so thank you.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Josephine Omowumi Olayinka - Olagunju, my son Isaac Jesuloba Olayinka-Olagunju and to myself.

To darling wife **Omowumi Olayinka – Olagunju**, thank you for the support you gave me during this endeavor and for being patient when I was absent for many months from home and even in our relationship, you stood strong. You dedicated time and sleepless nights helping me edit, motivating me and looking out for me. You are truly a woman of unique character and one in a billion. I am blessed to share my academic journey with you and for believing in me when I did not believe in myself.

To my buddy, my champion, my son **Isaac Olayinka – olagunju**, you are the best gift I could have ever wished for. A blessing from God. Thank you for bearing all the time I was absent from your life for the sake of this work. Knowing that you are my son, gave me the drive to be a better person and to add value to myself. I am grateful to God for making you and your mother part of my life.

To me, for having the will to persevere and pursue my dreams on a journey to becoming a young academic

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ii
ABBREVIATIONS iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v
DEDICATION vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS viii
LIST OF FIGURES xi
LIST OF TABLES xi

CHAPTER ONE
THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC EDUCATION

1.1. Significance of Education and Secondary School Economics 1
1.2. Background of the study 2
1.3. Statement of the Problem 3
1.4. Rationale of the study 4
1.5. Purpose of the study 5
1.6. Objectives of the Study 5
1.7. Research Questions 6
1.7.1. Main research question: 6
1.7.2. Sub-questions 6
1.8. Significance of the Study 6
1.9. Operational Definitions of Concepts in the Study 6
1.10. Chapter Outlines 7
1.11. Conclusion 8

CHAPTER TWO
UNDERSTANDING LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ECONOMICS SUBJECT: A LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction 9
2.2. Economics as a Secondary School Subject 9
2.3. Locating Economics Within Economic and Management Science 10
2.4. Rationale for Economics in the Further Education and Training Phase 11
2.5. Perceptions and learning of Economics 11

2.6. Learners' perceptions of Economics subject 12
2.7. Critical Discourse Analysis: A Theoretical framework 14
2.8. Chapter Synthesis 16

CHAPTER THREE
UNDERSTANDING LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction 18
3.2. Research Paradigm 18
3.3. Phenomenology: A Research Design 20
3.4 Research Approach 21
3.5. Qualitative Data Collection Methods 22
3.5.1 Semi-structured individual face-to-face interviews 23
3.5.2. Focused Group Interview 24
3.6. Sampling Strategy 25
3.7. The distinctive features of the two schools 28
3.8. Organization of Data and analysis 29
3.8.1. Outline of Schweitzer's adaptation of Giorgi's phenomenological method 29
3.9. Research Quality 32
3.9.1 Credibility 33
3.9.2. Transferability 34
3.9.3. Dependability 34
3.9.4 Confirmability 34
3.10. Ethical considerations 35
3.10.1. Access and acceptance 35
3.10.2. Concealing Learners' and schools' identity 36
3.11Chapter synthesis 36

CHAPTER FOUR
PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMICS SUBJECT

4.1. Introduction 38
4.2. Perceptions of the importance of Economics subject 38
4.2.1 Economics as important to understand real life issues 39
4.2.2. Economics as useful for future career 40

4.3. Learners conceptions of Economics as a subject. ... 42
4.3.1. Economics as a social science ... 43
4.3.2. Economics as historical ... 44
4.4. Factors influencing learners' perception of the importance of ... 45
4.4.1. The Job prospect Factor ... 46
4.4.2. Influence of Peers ... 48

CHAPTER FIVE
BEYOND DEFICIT UNDERSTANDING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMICS SUBJECT

5.1 Introduction ... 51
5.2 Summary of the research findings ... 51
5.3. Research Implications and Contributions ... 52
5.3.1 Implications and Contributions for Research ... 53
5.3.2. Implications for policy and practice ... 54
5.4. Limitations of the study ... 55
5.5. Recommendations for further studies ... 55
5.6. Concluding Thoughts ... 55
List of references ... 57
Appendices ... 65
Appendix 1: Letter to the principal, SGB chair, ... 65
Appendix 2: Teachers information sheet ... 66
Appendix 3: Learners information sheet ... 68
Appendix 4: Parents information sheet ... 70
Appendix 5: Sample of the Interview Schedule ... 72
Appendix 6: Interview Transcript ... 73
Appendix 7: Ethics Clearance ... 78
Appendix 8: GDE Approval ... 79
Appendix 9: Johannesburg District 14 Approval letter ... 80
Appendix10: Data Analysis: Initial list of categories ... 81

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Pages
Figure 1: Fairclough's dimensions of discourse analysis	30
Figure2: Major Themes	37
Figure3: Perceptions of the importance of economics subject	38
Figure 4: Learners conceptions of economics	42
Figure 5: Factors influencing learners' perceptions of the importance of economics subject.	45

LIST OF TABLES

Tables Pages

Table 1: Operational Definitions of Concepts in the Study 7

Table 2: The time taken to complete semi-structured interviews 24

Table 3: Themes and Sub-themes for grade 10 learners' perceptions of the importance of economics subject 29

CHAPTER ONE

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER: THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC EDUCATION

1.1. Significance of Education and Secondary School Economics

The believe that education is essential for collective advancement and progress has, for many years in different society, highlight the role it plays in transforming society and its status as a fundamental human right (UN Treaty Collection, 1976). It is from this point of view that the South African Department of Education (DBE) observe that, "the importance of education as well as its role in human and social development is hardly in doubt today" (DBE, 2010, p. 7), to improve the quality of livelihood. Thus, education can equip individuals with the knowledge and skills they need to improve their living standard, realize their full potential and participate meaningfully in society. While education could impact into learners different knowledge and skills, Economics as a subject in school inculcates intellectual and problem-solving skills and desirable attitudes and values (Olusola & Emunemu, 2008), useful to stimulate individual, national and global advancement and progress. Idris and Yusuf (2017) are of the view that Economics as a subject might equip learners with the basic principles for successful and responsible financial future. It further improve learners' decision-making process, inculcated in them the knowledge necessary for proffering practical solutions to economic problems in the society, and laying the foundation for successful participation in global, regional and national economy.

According to Khadka (2016), the

> *"important ideas of teaching and learning Economics in classroom are to help students master the principles vital for understanding the financial problem and precise economic issues, and also to reason, understand then apply the economic perspective accurately and empirically with economic matters" (p.100).*

Economic education is thus essential for learners to promote intellectual and vocational training, and a technique for thinking and drawing logical conclusions on economic issues (Hultberg & Calonge, 2017). Considering the brief introduction on importance of economic education, this study explores learners' perceptions of the importance of economics subject, and factors that influence their perceptions because there is little existing research in South Africa. Several studies focus on investigating perceptions that learners' have about economics internationally. For Example, Mearman, Papa and Webber (2014)'s study in the

United Kingdom shows that students' negative perception that economics is a difficult subject result to them becoming less successful and lack interest in studying economics, despite its academic and career values. Similarly, Round and Shanahan (2010) in Australia and Agnew (2015) in New Zealand, shows that students' negative perceptions contributed to the decline in the number of students that enrolled to study economics or write economics related examinations. Despite this large body of international studies, in the South African context, studies that explore learners' perceptions, experiences and understanding of economics and its importance as a school subject have not been popular for economic education researchers.

1.2. Background of the study

In an era of rapid change that is being enforced by technological innovations, globalisation, market expansion and mass production, countries are faced with enormous economic challenges (van Wyk, 2012). Making sense of this world requires education in the basic concepts of economics and their application to diverse economic issues. In South Africa, the importance of economics as a subject is reflected in the Curriculum and Assessment policy statement for economics (CAPS) (DBE, 2011a), when it states that the aim of teaching economics in secondary school is:

> *"to help learners acquire an advanced economics vocabulary that will allow them to debate and communicate the essential of the subject and collect, analyse and interpret production, consumption, and exchange data as well as other information in order to solve problems and make informed decisions (p.9)".*

This means the DBE has already realised the importance of introducing learners to the basic important concepts of economics, to make sense of everyday issues and practices, a reason DBE emphasized on sensitising learners to the contemporary economics issues that the nation is facing (DBE, 2011a).

The dominant existing research have been done internationally as indicated previously, and have presented complex picture on economic education. For example, in the United Kingdom, Davies and Durden (2010) reported a decline in the number of students writing A-level examination for economics in the advanced level entries, as compared to the increase in A-level Business Studies within the same period. A similar decline in the enrolment was identified by Round and Shanahan (2010) using the data from the Australian Government Department of Education. This data shows that the number of commencing student-studying economics at tertiary level dropped to 1.20% in 2001 and hit the lowest of 1.07% in 2005,

and improved by 1.13% in 2007. At secondary school level, there was a 50% decline within 1996 and 2007, which was caused by rigid secondary school curricula, lack of time to broaden learners horizon as it relate to the subject and lack of prior knowledge as to what economics really is, before embarking on subject selection. In Korea, Hahn and Jang (2010, p.444) reported a minimal enrolment for economics courses in grades 11 and 12, because economics was regarded as a difficult subject, suitable for more intellectually competent learners and generally disadvantageous for most students in terms of university entrance. The Nigerian experience present a different picture, studies by Idris and Yusuf,(2017); Adu, Galloway and Olaoye, (2014); Adu and Adeyanju, (2013); Yusuf, (2010); and Oziegbe, (2017) suggest that economics subject is widely taught in most secondary schools and have high numbers of learners' enrolment, even though the large percentage of learners fail the subject exam. In South Africa, the National Senior Certificate Diagnostic Report shows a similar decline of economics subject status in secondary schools from 2013 to 2017 (DBE, 2017). It shows a persistent decline in the number of Grade 12 learners enrolling to write economics examination. Even though a decline was also noticed in Accounting and Business studies, the percentage decline is higher in economics for the years reviewed.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Economic education is concerned with the study of how people make choices with scarce resources (Robbins, 1935 cited in Khadka, 2016), thus giving learners access to such knowledge is important. Especially that they can also learn about strategies for decision-making and informed choices that can be applied in other facets of their lives. While old, much of the mainstream economic education research from 1979 to 2006 has predominantly focused on the benefits, costs, production, and financing part at the post–secondary level (Nazeer, 2006 citing Siegfried & Fels, 1979). Although the number of research conducted on these aspects of economic education at that level has declined during the past decade (2006 – 2016) , a considerable amount of research at the secondary school level was done on the process of teaching economics in the same period (Oziegbe, 2017; Idris & Yusuf, 2017; Khadka, 2016, Van wyk, 2007, 2012). From the research of existing literature on economic education, there are few studies that have been done at secondary level in relation to perceptions about the subject and suggest that such research has been generally neglected (Walstad, 2001), particularly in South Africa. van Wyk's (2007, 2012) research focused on general issues regarding the nature of economic literacy, such as basic knowledge and skills needed for citizenship, and exploring ways of improving teaching and learning of economics

in secondary schools. While van Wyk contributed certain knowledge in the area of research, it is still concerning that 24 years of democracy, especially after the government realized the importance of encouraging learners to do economics, limited studies have been done on the state of economic education.

The lack of research on learners' conceptions of and perceptions of the importance of economics is another identified gap, in particular when Mearman et al., (2014); Webber and Mearman (2012) state that learners have a perceived notion about economics subject, which, in most cases, influences their attitude, performance and desire for further study. However, it is still unclear whether negative perception is solely responsible for the declining performance and enrolment in the subject, which suggest more research is needed in the field. Without overlooking the importance and role of teacher's voice in research, this study believes that learners can provide important information about their beliefs, meanings and experiences of economics as a subject, as they make choices. This will further help with making sense of the diagnostic report and the decline on performance, as learners will provide information that is unknown about economic education. Researching issues related to learners' perception of economics subject is essential, because learners' perceptions have an effect on their understanding and practices in economics education (Van Wyk, 2012). Furthermore, considering the impact of economics subject on the present and future lives (and livelihood) of learners, it is important to understand economics and its teaching practices from learners perspective. The teachers' pedagogical approaches to economics subject is also under researched in South Africa, considering the methodological and philosophical shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred approach in 1994. This gap will be addressed in a PhD degree, which plan to engage with teachers and observe their pedagogical practices in relation to their conceptions and perceptions of the importance of economics.

1.4. Rationale of the study

The educational goal of teaching economics at any level is to produce certain desirable learning outcome in the learner. Such learning outcome could be in the form of stimulating intellectual development, acquiring problem-solving skills, preparation for economic participation as a citizen of a free society and instilling desirable attitudes and values (Olusola & Emunemu, 2008). Although economic education goes on in all aspect of human endeavour, one motive for introducing economics into the school curriculum is to equip its recipients' with future ability to contribute to the economic advancement of society and in a sense,

manage their daily life (van Wyk, 2016). It is because of this importance of economic education this study was conceptualised, though not much research and literature is existing in South Africa, to gain insight of learners' perceptions of economics. In particular, when van Wyk (2012) posits that the reason for teaching economics in school is to develop in learners the thinking skills, substantial economic knowledge and attitudes necessary to become effective and participating citizens. In addition, the effectiveness of teaching economics and the attitude of learners towards learning economics have been questioned in recent years (Adu, Galloway & Olaoye, 2014; van Wyk, 2012, 2016). The lack of pedagogical content knowledge for teachers and lack of relevant skills and inability to perform effectively in workplaces for learners, raises serious concerns amongst researchers, employers and policy makers.

My Honours degree study in 2018 revealed knowledge and skills deficiencies amongst secondary school economics learners in South Africa. The findings showed that their lack of knowledge and skills was largely attributable to learners thinking of economics as a rigorous and highly mathematically formalised subject. In that study, learners expressed frustration because they were not confident of performing well, and they were concerned about the possibility of failing the national senior certificate examination (Matric). This resulted to memorizing facts during learning and studying processes, which they quickly forget during examinations. These findings motivated further research with learners, to understand their perception of the importance of economics and the influence of such perceptions. Especially that perceptions and beliefs about Economics originate from previous experiences, comprising both cognitive and affective dimensions (Aguilar, Rosas & Juan Zavaleta, 2012).

1.5. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is three fold: first, to critically explore grade 10 economics learners' perception of the importance of economics in two selected secondary schools. Secondly, to examine learners' conception of economics as a subject and third, to describe and critically discuss factors that influences learners' perceptions.

1.6. Objectives of the Study

In view of the aims of this study, the specific objectives are as follows,

1. To interrogate Grade 10 learners' perceptions of the importance of economics as a

Subject in Turffontein Secondary Schools.

2. To gain an insight into learners' conception of economics subject.
3. To identify and discuss the factors that influence learners' perception of the importance of economics subject.

1.7. Research Questions

In relation to the above-mentioned objectives, the study is answering the following research questions:

1.7.1. Main research question:

The main research question is: "What are the Grade 10 learners' perceptions of the importance of economics subject in Turffontein Secondary Schools?"

1.7.2. Sub-questions

1. How do learners conceptualise economics as a Subject?

2. What influences learners' perception of the importance of economics subject?

1.8. Significance of the Study

The study is significant because the findings will contribute to current knowledge of secondary school learners' perceptions of the importance of economics. In addition, knowing how learners perceive economics and how this could influence their opinion about the importance of economics subject might help teachers reflect on their pedagogical practices. The findings will also inform curriculum designers and DoE about learners' perceptions of economics, and factors that influence such perceptions. Learners' views of the importance of economics subject can shape the way in which they learn economics, which makes this study significant because they might be conscious of their learning approaches. Particularly, when little is known of learners' conceptions of economics and their learning approaches, even though the latter was not the focus of the study, but is still important to know the former because it shape the learners' approaches to learning.

1.9. Operational Definitions of Concepts in the Study

Table 1: The operational definitions of concepts in the study

Concepts	Operational Definition
Perceptions	According to Aguilar, Rosas and Juan Zavaleta (2012) perceptions comprises of both cognitive and affective dimensions. The cognitive

	component of perception relates to a person's knowledge, beliefs, and other cognitive representations while the affective component refers to a person's attitudes, feelings and emotions. Therefore, in this study the concept is understood broadly to include all visual, verbal representations, metaphorical images and associations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings related to economics and economics learning experiences.
Economics	According to Robbins (1935) "Economics is a science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses". It is also understood as the study of how individuals, businesses, government, and other organisations within our society choose to use scarce resources to satisfy their numerous needs and wants in a manner that is efficient, equitable and sustainable (DBE, 2011, p. 8).

1.10. Chapter Outlines

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter focused on the background to the study, the problem statement, the research questions, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and the definition of terms related to the study on learners' perceptions of the importance of economics subject.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter provides a literature review and a detailed theoretical framework of the research. It presents literature that focus on issues related to economics and learners' perceptions of economics subject. Issues discussed, as well, are rationale for economics in the further education and training (FET) phase, perceptions and learning economics and learners' perceptions of economics subject. The theoretical framework in this study serves as a lens to unearth the unknown information and to understand learners' perceptions and their originality of the importance of economics.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

With the title of the study in mind, this chapter outlines the methodology and research approach of the study, and discusses the reasons for choosing a particular methodology and methods. The chapter further provides details on the sampling strategy and the justification of the chosen sample, research methods and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: Findings and Discussions

This chapter consists of the presentation of data that was gathered, analysis, interpretation and discussion. The chapter integrates the data, findings and the discussion using the theoretical framework, for a more robust and critical engagement with the findings that have emerged in the study and a summary of results for each question under investigation was discussed.

Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter gives the summary of the findings about the research, the conclusions and the recommendations. The discussion of the findings are based on the research questions that were asked in chapter one.

1.11. Conclusion

As indicated in this chapter, the introduction and background of the study has been discussed and it provides the rationale and premises of why conducting a study on learners' perception of the importance of economics subject is important, particularly in South African secondary schools. Furthermore, the discussion also includes the purpose of the study, the research questions and the significance of the study. Definitions of the major terms used in the study, such as perceptions, economics and experience, and an outline of the research study were also presented. The next chapter deals with the literature review. In this chapter issues related to the learners' perceptions of the importance of economics subject are addressed. The chapter explores, among other issues, rationale for economics in the FET phase, together with perceptions of learning economics.

CHAPTER TWO

UNDERSTANDING LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ECONOMICS SUBJECT: A LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

The focus of this study, as indicated in chapter one, is to explore grade 10 learners' perceptions of the importance of Economics subject. The purpose of the chapter is to explore themes, which are at the core of literature review. In addition, my goal in this chapter is to present a blend of relevant literatures pertinent to my research questions, as such presenting critical issues and arguments around themes. I conclude this chapter by also discussing the theoretical framework that guides the study.

2.2. Economics as a Secondary School Subject

The last three decades has seen economic education taking a range of forms in secondary schools (Jephcote, 2004) with varieties of attractive features (Baumol & Blinder, 1991). For example, economics as a dynamic subject that engages with current and future economic issues, is interested in people, has a personal impact on recipient's life and is concerned with human behaviour in their various aspects (Baumol & Blinder, 1991). It is therefore a suitable subject to be studied at all educational levels (Walstad, 1994). Given this relevance, economics subject seeks to inculcate the knowledge and skills that will enable young people contribute to wealth creation and satisfaction of human needs and wants (Baumol &Blinder 1991). However, a global overview of the status of economics as a subject suggests that there is a significant decline in the offering of the subject in schools (Ashworth & Evans; 2001; Round & Shanahan, 2010; Agnew, 2015). In some African countries like Nigeria and Botswana the decline in performances is also evident (Yusuf, 2010; Idris & Yusuf, 2017), and this is also the case in South Africa as was revealed by the national senior certificate diagnostic report (DBE, 2016).

Becker, Highsmith, Kennedy, and Walstad, (1991) indicates that there has been paucity of research in economic education at post-secondary level in the past three decades, however recent studies have shown increase in research effort in post-secondary level. Similarly, very little research in economic education at secondary school level have been carried out within

the same period (Walstad, 1990), and even more recently, particularly in South Africa. However, there is research that has been done on teaching and learning in economics (Van Wyk, 2016; 2012; 2007), with little focus on understanding learners' conceptions and experiences of learning the subject. In particular, that curriculum reforms witnessed the inclusion of economics as a learning area, to address the use of scarce resources in a sustainable manner. According to Department of Education (DBE, 2011a, p.8), "Economics is the study of how individuals, businesses, governments and other organizations within our society choose to use scarce resources to satisfy their numerous needs and wants in a manner that is efficient, equitable and sustainable". With this brief discussion in mind, this study explores Grade ten learners' perception of the importance of economics subject and the factors that influence the perceptions, to address the research gap. Before the existing literature is presented, the next section briefly locates the economics subject within the introduction of Economic and Management Science subject in schools after 1994.

2.3. Locating Economics Within Economic and Management Science

EMS was initially introduced as a learning area for the intermediate phase (Grade 4-6) and the senior phase (Grade 7-9) in the National Curriculum statement (NCS) (van Wyk, 2012, p. 28), and "is concerned with the efficient and effective use of different types of private, public or collective resources to satisfy people's needs and wants" (DBE, 2011b, p.8). The introduction of EMS was to stimulate learners' willingness to learn economics and engender a positive attitude towards the subject, and shape learners' perception of the importance of the subject (van Wyk, 2012). Thus, the teaching of EMS provides learners with the foundational knowledge needed for the understanding of economics, and guide their choice of the subject at FET level. The introduction of EMS was to expose learners to different topics such as: economy and entrepreneurship and financial literacy, and it is clear from the curriculum weighting that the teaching of financial literacy is privileged. This might mean the importance of economics is lessened as compared to financial literacy, and could constrict learners' prospects, attitude, and perception of the importance of economics. There are various topics that are taught in Grade 7 to Grade 9, for example, history of money, needs and wants, inequality and poverty, standard of living, savings and budgets, entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, to mention a few. It is assumed that some of the topics could influence learners' understanding of the importance of economics subject, while EMS curriculum lays the foundation for the study of the subject at the FET phase.

2.4. Rationale for Economics in the Further Education and Training Phase

Economics forms part of program requirements for Grade 10 – 12 in the FET Phase (Umalusi, 2014, P.106). As a subject, it is part of an integrated curriculum for the FET phase (Grade 10 -12), although it is studied separately as an optional subject. Some of the reasons to include this learning area was firstly to introduce learners to the knowledge and skills on the use of resources efficiently to satisfy the competing needs and wants of individuals and society. Secondly, to acquire an advance economic vocabulary that will allow learners to debate and communicate the essentials of the subject, thirdly, to understand human rights concerns, reflect on the wealth creation process, and engage in poverty alleviation (DoE, 2011a, pp 7-8). To be concise, the justification for introducing this learning field is as follows:

> *"South Africa needs to have a sustainable economic plan in order to survive. This learning field prepares citizens to understand the importance of reconstruction, development and economic growth for the future. Furthermore, it promotes active participation amongst all our people by equipping them with knowledge and understanding of economics, management skills and wealth creation" (van Wyk, 2007, p. 85).*

As such, learners will be able to contribute towards economic development of the country by improving individual and collective standard of living, human resources development, basic conditions of service, productivity, by so doing improving individual and national economic welfare (ibid).

Considering the above rationality, it is unsurprising that Umalusi (2014) insist that economics should not be taught as an abstract subject, but as a subject that have a link to learners' everyday knowledge and life (Umalusi, 2014). If this is the way economics subject is to be conceived and taught, it is important to explore learners' perception of its importance, and to what extent it links with the curriculum goals of promoting responsible citizens. Of interest is that, even though economic education is considered one of the important subjects to empower the citizens, considering inequality during apartheid education, it is positioned as an optional and not compulsory subject, suggesting lack of power as a specialised subject (Bernstein, 1975).

2.5. Perceptions and learning of Economics

Authors have identified numerous issues that seem to influence students' learning (e.g Taylor, 2015; Jin, Muriel, & Sibieta, 2011; Tripney, Newman, Bangpan, Niza, MacKintosh, & Sinclair, 2010; Springate, Harland, Lord, & Wilkin, 2008). Common to all are the

enjoyment of the subject, perceived usefulness of the subject (e.g. for entrance into the university and for future careers), difficulty and ability, and the advice of friends, teachers, and parents. Relevant to this current study is Webber and Mearman's (2012) study that explored students' perception of economics from different countries, at different levels of study, to identify reasons that influence the desire to continue studying economics. The findings suggest that the demand for economics is connected to combinations of perceptions learners have about the subject, specifically, students that have positive perceptions of economics. Such perceptions - as economics guarantees a successful future career, etc. (Webber & Mearman, 2012, p. 12), is connected to the desire to study more about economics. Mearman et al., (2014) examined students' reasons for studying economics in the United Kingdom, using a mixed method approach. They found that student's perception of studying Economics are negative, even though they regard economics as a value adding subject to study. They regard economics subject as difficult, rigorous and highly mathematically formalized. Many of them view economics as a subject for the clever ones, or only for those who have mathematical abilities (Hahn & Kyungho, 2010).

In a different but relevant study, Sidki and Boll (2017) analysed the perception and opinion of non-economic majors on economics in Germany. The authors found that students have a job and high-income expectations related motivation for studying economics, as compared to content related motivation. While the results are not surprising, of interest is that the expectations seem not to influence the manner of engagement with the subject, to shape successful performance. Such studies have not been done constantly in South Africa, irrespective of the subject being considered important alongside mathematics, science and Technology, to understand the complexities of perceptions. Thus, even though these different studies are essential in presenting different views about economics and learning economics, and even though some studies indirectly engage with students' perceptions of the importance of economics, there is still research gap in secondary school learners' perceptions, especially in South African context. A reason this study is relevant and essential, to contribute knowledge to the existing literature in economic education.

2.6. Learners' perceptions of Economics subject

As indicated above, economics is generally perceived as a highly mathematically formalised subject, rigorous, demanding, and a subject for brilliant students (Davies & Durden, 2010; Hahn & Kyungho, 2010). In South Africa, the same perception about economics seems to be

a source of worry for learners, even though Van Wyk (2012) posit that perceptions are developed at an early age and can be changed based on school and classroom contexts. While the school and classroom contexts could change perceptions, it appears that multifaceted factors shape the formation of perceptions, which are beyond the school and classrooms. Mearman et al. (2014) investigated reasons students study economics, and the findings suggest that some learners did not find economics relevant and useful to their lives, resulting in discontinuation due to invaluable perception. Similarly, Van Wyk (2012) found that enjoyment of the subject, usefulness of the subject and the difficult nature of the subject are factors that influence learners' perception of economics. Webber and Mearman (2012) research on student's perception of economics, with a focus on identifying demand for further studies, indicated that the majority of participants find economics hard, frustrating and confusing. Of interest with their findings is that the majority of the students preferred not to pursue economics further, although they consider it a valuable subject.

The studies highlight the complexity of factors that shape perceptions of economics because they represent the way a learner think about, interpret and experience economics. These varying perceptions about economics as a subject, might be attributed to the individual life histories that each learner brings to economics learning, which influence the manner in which learners position themselves in the classroom, the way they engage with economics subject, teachers and peers and the way they make sense of or interpret economics experiences. Then again, there are contextual factors that learners in the same class share with one another. For example, the teachers' personality, the quality of teaching and learning, as well as support materials, interest in economics, self –confidence and general proficiency in the subject (Paul & Ngirande, 2014). All learners in class are influenced by all these factors and are the basis of shared experiences. Likewise, learners' individual experiences are in part shaped by the shared happenings in the classroom. Even though the focus of this study is not learners' classroom experiences, of interest is that classroom experiences seem to play a particular role in shaping learners' conceptions of economics as a subject, as well as perceptions about the importance of the subject.

Researchers in the field of economic education have indicated that identifying and understanding the ways learners represent the value of economics as a subject is critical to the promotion of current and lifelong economics participation (Ashworth & Evans, 2000; Mearman et al., 2014). Van Wyk (2012) affirms that the perceptions of learners emanate

from beliefs, attitude and opinion about the subject, and from classroom experiences and information about performance. This suggests that the learners' views about economics and their potential success in economics are influenced by various factors such as information by their predecessors, their experiences of the subject in the classroom, which also affect their attitude and consequently performance. Thus, to unearth and understand South African learners' conceptions and perceptions of the importance of economic education, the theory of critical discourse analysis is chosen, because it provides the opportunity to make meaning of the voiceless.

2.7. Critical Discourse Analysis: A Theoretical framework

This section of the chapter discusses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the theoretical framework for this study, to access the taken for granted knowledge of the Grade 10 learners' perceptions of the importance of economics as a subject. A theoretical framework according to Grant and Osanloo (2014) is the 'Blueprint' or template for a research inquiry. It is a pattern that a researcher usually follows to construct his/her own research inquiry. Thus, to develop a detailed analysis of learners' perception of the importance of economics subject, critical discourse analysis (CDA) was chosen for this study. CDA is one of the scholarly orientations that view language as a social practice tied to specific social and historical context, and are means by which social reality are constituted, (Janks, 1997). This theory takes into account the role that discourses plays in representing the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning (Fairclough, 1992). It also offers theoretical tool to uncover the taken for granted use of language as a social practice, that can also conscientize individuals about their overlooked meanings. Consequently, at the centre of CDA is the assumption that discourse is constitutive, as well as constituted (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002), which means it creates and gives meaning to the social world and takes up meaning in other social practices (Fairclough, 2001). Discourse, as much as it contributes to the shaping and reshaping of social realities, it also reflects them, and this makes it important to understand how various social discourses influences learners' perceptions, if at all.

Based on these discussions, it becomes clear that learners' perceptions of the importance of economics did not emerge from the vacuum. Thus, this study intend to uncover the meaning embedded in the language learners use to talk about their perceptions of the importance of economics, and uncover the influence of socio-historical situations. For CDA, language is seen as a social practice and a unique way of speaking and giving meaning to experiences

from a particular perspective (Fairclough, 1993; 1995a; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). In this study CDA provides a nuanced understanding of how language is used to represent the social world (Fairclough, 1992, p. 37), which is the importance of economics subject. The explanation of language usage considers the role of discourse that allows us to think and speak in a given culture, and emanates from an interaction between groups and institutions. Thus, CDA is useful to explore how language is shaped by context and help to shape context (Fairclough, 2001) and in this study, it means describing learners' choice of words as they talk about the importance of economics. This will help to understand their originality, because language also influence the way learners express themselves within the context where it is used. Language use is not neutral, it is shaped by social factors like socio-cultural and political structures (Fairclough, 1992), and learners use it to construct and represent social reality in particular way that privilege one conception of economics over another. Some of these factors, which are currently unknown, might shape learners' conceptions of economics and the perceptions of the importance of economics education.

Fairclough's CDA is of particular interest in this study because it incorporates text, discursive practices and social practices, (Janks,1997), which serves as the lens to make sense of the language that is used by the participant to make sense of their social and discursive practices that could be taken for granted. The power of language can influence learners to construct and represent social realities in a particular way as they talk about economics subject, and the lens of CDA is chosen to uncover the concealed meanings that are not easily evident. The meaning of 'critical' in this study speaks to the effort to unearth any taken for granted perceptions and meanings of economics from the learners' interviews transcripts, interrogate the nature of language and its relationship with other elements (Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough, 1995; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2001). The elements include how language works ideologically, as well as the negotiation of personal and social identities (pervasively problematized through changes in social life) in its linguistic and semiotic aspect (Fairclough, 2001). This view of being critical, aligns with Jurgen Habermas' (1989) notion of 'critical consciousness' in reading of text, which leverage the critical position readers should adopt when engaging and analysing what they read, as it would help them take an informed position if it is necessary (Janks, 1997, pp 330 – 331).

According to Fairclough:

> Discourse analysis aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (Fairclough, 1993: 135).

In summary, CDA is concerned with unearthing the relations between discursive practices, social practices, and social structures, relations that might be opaque to a novice. In this study, the interview transcript is considered a discursive practice that produce text on learners' perception of the importance of economics subject, which have been constructed within social context like home, community and the school that influence the knowledge that is produced. According to McGregor (2004, p. 34) "...our words should be seen as having meaning in a particular historical, social, cultural and political condition", similarly this study seriously considers that learners' words and their meanings are not independent of the socio-cultural and economic experiences and conditions. This way of thinking about CDA and language specifically, will hopefully de-normalize the traditional understanding of economics, and present a different way of thinking that is influenced by different 'real' experiences that have been silenced and marginalised.

This means CDA aims at making transparent the connections between discourse practices, social practices, and social structures connections that might be opaque to a novice. According to Chuliaraki and Fairclough (1999), CDA help theorize transformations and create awareness "of what is, how it has come to be, and what it might become, on the basis of which people may be able to make and remake their lives" (p. 4). This aspect is important in this study, because it tries to understand the nature of economics from learners' perspectives, where and how it originates, and the nature of contributions the conceptions and perceptions can make and re-make. CDA as a theoretical lens for this study focuses on the inter-textual and inter-discursive analyses of texts, by tracing patterns of discourse and genres (Fairclough 1989, 1995, 2003; Locke 2004) in the social realities and practices.

2.8. Chapter Synthesis

In this chapter literature related to learners' perceptions of the importance of economics subject and the theoretical frameworks for the study were discussed. The chapter began by discussing the importance of economics as a secondary school subject. The literature review

made it clear that economics, as a subject is important for ensuring the economic well-being of South Africa and it citizens. In addition, the discussion also extends to how learners' previous experience of Economic and management science influence their decision to choose economics as a subject and the rationale for the introduction of economics at the FET phase. I also explored literature on learners' perception of learning economics and economics as subject, and shows that learners' perception of economics varies. The perception determines how learners position themselves in economics classrooms and serves a motivation for learning the subject. For example, if learners think economics subject is not important it might shapes their perceptions and manner of engagement with the subject.

This chapter has illustrated that there is a great need for more research to be done in secondary school about economic education in South Africa, in particular with learners. In addition, the theoretical framework for the study was also discussed. CDA as discussed in this chapter as the potential to give insight into the taken for granted language that learners use to represent their perception of the importance of economics subject. The next chapter will focus on the discussion about the research methods that were used in exploring learners' perceptions of the importance of economics.

CHAPTER THREE

UNDERSTANDING LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on research methodology, which begins by presenting the philosophical assumptions, that is epistemological assumption, which is linked with the research paradigm, that serve as a guide for the researcher in the process of conducting a research. This is followed by a discussion on qualitative research approach used in this study, and then the research methods appropriate to answer the research questions. For the purpose of familiarity, a concise but broad description of the context within which the study is located is also presented. Furthermore, it includes the research quality, which includes discussion of trustworthiness, reliability and validity. The last part of this chapter is centred on issues related to ethical considerations.

3.2. Research Paradigm

Research inquiry as a systematic and organised process demand detailed planning and organisation, to enable a researcher deal with and make sense of differing social and educational issues to contribute to the existing knowledge in a field of study. According to Morrell and Carroll (2010), research in education involves the generation of new ideas and the assessment of existing body of knowledge, with the aim to generate a deeper understanding of an educational problem and to improve teaching and learning. The planning of educational research requires a careful sample selection, methods of data collection and analytic approach, to arrive at an in-depth, methodical and ethically acceptable outcome.

In this section, a brief discussion of epistemological and ontological positions for this study are presented and successively the paradigmatic position. The motive is to clarify my position in relation to the chosen paradigm, design and methodology for this study. Creswell (2013, p.44) is of the view that qualitative research flows from the "philosophical assumptions to the interpretive frameworks that inform the study of research problems, addressing the meaning individuals or group ascribe to a social or human problem" and the philosophical position about what represents beliefs, values, reality and knowledge. The researcher is to interact and observe the world through this overall worldview, and decides the appropriate research method and data analysis (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Ontology denotes "the study of being" and focuses on the "kind of world we are investigating, with the nature of existence and structure of reality as such" (Creswell, 2013, p.20). This suggests that the researcher's ontological assumptions are concerned with the quest to understand the nature of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 83). As such, the ontological assumption underpinning this study is that a human being (learners) who experience the phenomenon creates multiple realties; consequently, there is no objective reality (Krauss, 2005, p.760). Simply put, what is regarded as reality in this study, is what learners from different contexts perceive as reality, as a result the existence of several and diverse realities is recognized in this study. While ontology is about the nature of 'knowledge', epistemology refers to the ways we come to acquire such particular knowledge about the phenomena. As such, epistemological assumptions is concerned with the connection between the knower (learners), and what would-be-known, that is, the importance of economic subject (Mertens, 2007, p. 215). This refers to the relationship between the phenomena that the researcher seeks to understand, and the assumptions they make about the nature of knowledge. Thus, this suggests that the researcher's point of view about educational knowledge is linked to the chosen methodology for the study, as it relates to the purpose and the preconceived goals for using such a methodology. In this study, it is believed that knowledge is subjective and experiential, because it is socially constructed and mind dependent (Mertens, 2009).

As such, the epistemological stance of this study is social constructivism, which means knowledge and truth about economics are not discovered, but socially constructed, and learners forms part of the constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing processes of such truths and knowledge (Creswell, 2013, pp.24-25). Given the brief discussion, having clear understanding of learners' explanations and meanings of the phenomenon is crucial, because it gives the researcher a first-hand knowledge into participants' world view about the phenomena under study. Shah and Corley (2006, p.1823) state that this can only be realized by understanding the interpretations of the phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it, in this study it is the learners. Thus, understanding learners' conception of economics in relation to their perception is essential, because conception shape how we think and talk about and act in relation to the phenomena.

In view of the discussion of this study's ontological and epistemological positions above, the philosophical assumptions underpin this study largely come from interpretative paradigm.

The interpretive paradigm views the world as a product of human consciousness (Denzin, 1994: p,7). Which means it views the world through the perceptions and experiences of individuals in order to understand how individuals by interacting with their social environment construct reality, (Sherman and Web 1990: p, 7). Consequently, in seeking the answers for research, the investigator who follows interpretive paradigm uses those experiences to construct and interpret his understanding of the meaning people have constructed, how they make sense of their world, as it is "lived" or "felt" or "undergone", (Sherman and Web, 1990). This links with phenomenology the research method used in this study, which focuses on interrogating the perception and lived experiences of people in a critical way, to explore and probe the possible overlooked assumptions individuals make of their lived experiences (Cohen, 2007), which in this study is the perceptions of the importance of economics subject. Moreover, in trying to understand the meaning that people have constructed, understanding the context is critical to the interpretation of the data gathered (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Since the reality economics teaches are socially constructed (Van Wyk, 2007) and learners are active participant during the process of teaching and learning within the classroom context, interpretative paradigm is used to explore and uncover the reality of learners' perceptions of the importance of economics education as an under-researched area. In addition, it used to describe the factors that influence the perceptions to understand their originality. Furthermore, learners' conception of economics subject is examined to make sense of their particular experiences of it, which is related to the context holistically.

3.3. Phenomenology: A Research Design

Research design refers to the plan the researcher configures to address the research questions and objectives, and links closely with the paradigm (Babbie and Mouton 2007). Devising a research design for the study involves determining the strategies that the researcher intends to use in addressing the objectives, questions and focus of the study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The focus of this study is to understand learners' views and beliefs (meanings) about the importance of economic subject, and phenomenology is appropriate because it focuses on the perception and lived experiences of people in a critical way, to explore and describe the possible overlooked assumptions participants make of their lived experiences (Cohen, 2007). Furthermore, the choice of phenomenology is that learners are meaning makers in a particular social context, and their representation of this social reality might be part of understanding the importance of economic education. As such, it is by

gaining in-depth understanding of these unknown representations and beliefs that grade 10 economics learners hold, and this study seeks to uncover and describe learners' perceptions of the importance of economics in South African context. Creswell (2009) state that "phenomenology aims to open up possibilities for creating formative relations between being and acting, between who we are and how we act, between thoughtfulness and tact" (p. 13). In this study, making sense of learners' views, beliefs and thinking about the relations and importance of economics education, who they are within social context practices is important, and assumes that this relation will form part of the perceptions and factors.

The researcher, therefore, is focused on the subjective experience (which shape perception) of the students in order to accentuate the voice of learners through this research design. Conducting research with the intent of "capturing the voice" of learners is obtaining a "grasp of the very nature of the thing" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 177), because the researcher collects data directly from the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, Hanson, Plano, and Morales, 2007). In this case, the phenomenon under investigation is the perceptions of grade 10 learners towards the importance Economics subject. Thus, phenomenological approach, as a qualitative research method, form basis for the research design of this study. In the same light, since the goal is to describe learners' lived experiences as articulated, rather than to quantify it, data was gathered through individual and focus group interviews, to paint a picture of what these learners think and belief about the importance of Economics subject. The analysis of data derived from the study will allow policy makers and educators to understand Economics education and its importance through the experiences of learners. Ary et al. (2006) stated that, "from an analysis of the interview data, the researcher writes descriptions of the participants' experiences and how those experiences were perceived" (p. 462).

3.4 Research Approach

Given the discussion on research design, this study adopts qualitative approach because it allows an in-depth look at a particular phenomenon in the natural setting of the participants, in order to inquire into specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). A qualitative research design is used in this study to explore the perceptions of grade 10 learners, to capture their voice and understand their thinking and beliefs about the importance of economics subject. In educational research qualitative, quantitative and mixed method research approaches are widely used, depending on the subject disciplines and the purpose of the study. "Qualitative

research is characterised by its aims to understand some aspects of social phenomenon, and its methods which transforms social reality into words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis" (Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p.3). Considering the chosen theoretical framework, paradigm and research design for this study, quantitative and mixed methods are not suitable for this study because the purpose is not to measure anything rather to understand and describe learners' perceptions and conceptions of the importance economic education. The relevancy of qualitative approach is the flexibility it allows for 'open-ended' dialogues with each participant, in order to elicit the deepest meaning of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Of importance for this study is allowing participants to speak freely about their experiences, guided by follow up questions, to give voice and uncover the under-researched conceptions of and perceptions of the importance of economic education.

Qualitative approach further creates opportunities to interact closely with the participants in natural setting for experiential information, especially that learners construct meanings in social settings like school and community. During this study, interaction with learners was done in the respective schools, which is considered a natural setting, considering the focus on perceptions of economic education. Creswell (2013 p. 47) posits that qualitative research emphasises on the existence of multiple perspectives about the phenomenon being investigated, and allows participants, influenced by their context and other social factors, to interpret the phenomenon in different ways. This study also critically explores the extent in which complex social factors influence learners' perceptions of the importance of economic education. The combination of critical discourse analysis, interpretative paradigm and phenomenology with the theoretical framework enable researcher to unearth meanings and understandings of learners, which could be overlooked as 'powerless voices'.

3.5. Qualitative Data Collection Methods

According to Walliman (2011) data collection methods are techniques researchers use to gather information about the subject under examination, and these include interviews, semi-structured face-to-face individual and focused group interviews were used in this study (Appendix 5) to collect in-depth information from learners. Interviews are understood to involve a purposeful conversation, with the intention to gather information that is relevant for the research questions (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014, p. 188). Similar to qualitative research approach, the discussion is usually flexible and promotes active interaction between the participants and the researcher and this does not overlook the possible imbalance of

power-relation. McMillian and Schumacher (2010, p. 355) state that in semi-structured interviews, "the researcher decides on the sequence and wording of the questions during the interview", to ensure that all research questions are attended to. In the current study, even though the sequence and wording of the questions has been framed, researcher also listen carefully to learners' responses to identify more questions that might have been overlooked.

3.5.1 Semi-structured individual face-to-face interviews

All interviews were conducted after school hours, to ensure that learners' classes are not disrupted and in order to have minimal disturbance, because complete quietness cannot be guaranteed in school even when the school is out. For example, in Kstick and Flakky secondary schools there were brief disruptions from classroom cleaners, although it did not disturb the quality of the collected data. These interview sessions were guided by the interview schedule and follow up questions were asked in order to allow elaboration where clarity was needed. The interviews took approximately 3hours. The Table below illustrate the time taken to complete each interview.

Table 2: Table showing the time taken to complete semi-structured interview

PARTICIPANTS' NAME	***TIME TAKEN***
Learner 1	21 minutes: 28seconds
Learner 2	22 minutes: 01 seconds
Learner 3	15minutes :24 seconds
Learner 4	17minutes: 06 seconds
Learner 5	30 minutes : 58 seconds
Learner 6	22 minutes: 10 seconds
Learner 7	16 minutes: 59 seconds
Learner 8	16minutes: 57 seconds

Note: Pseudonyms were used to protect learners' identity

As shown by the above table, the time taken to complete each interview varies, and this is due to the nature of semi – structured interviews as some participants share more information than others. In line with this, Irvine (2011, p. 207), argues that there can be a "substantial variation in the duration of interviews" because some participants may be able to express themselves more freely than others. Although the maximum time scheduled for each interview was forty minutes, however all the participants were unable able to speak for that long due to limited time they are willing to spare after school hours. Some of the reasons

were because of the fast approaching examination, as well as different family and social commitments. Since the maximum time planned to interview each of the eight learners was forty minutes, they indicated that this would encroach into their study, family and social time, bearing in mind that all interviews were conducted after schooling hours as stipulated in the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) guidelines for research in their schools.

Given all of these, and in order to ensure that the interviewed learner would not stay behind for too longer at school, since they walk long distances to get home, I planned two interviews per day with the two schools. Arrangements were made prior to the commencement of each interview for transportation in case any learner stays very far from the school; the researchers could take them home, ensuring they could get home before it was late and dark. In order to make sure all information were properly captured; an audiotape was used to record the detailed responses from the participants. This preserves the integrity of the data and allows the researcher to listen in multiple times, forward and backward, to accurately capture participant's responses. It was also important that I am aware of my preconceptions during the interview processes; I therefore listen attentively, which was helpful to identify follow up questions or probe more information where necessary.

3.5.2. Focused Group Interview

A focus group discussion facilitates in-depth discussions and involves a relatively small number of people (usually between 6 and 12 people) (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014, p. 182). In this study, eight participants from two schools (four participants from each participating schools) participated in the focused group session, which took place in Kstick secondary school. The session lasted between 45– 60 minutes, and time availability depended on learners' availability, even though all interviews were done after school hours. As with other types of interview, it focused on specific area of interest, however allows participants to engage with the topic of interest in greater details. The advantage of the focused group interview is that it is socially oriented allowing for interaction among participants, which gives the researcher access to a rich data on the phenomenon under study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This characteristic distinguishes the method from the individual in-depth interview, as the participants usually have shared characteristics that relate to the topic of the study (in this case all participants are economics learners). A facilitator, who is often also the researcher, introduces the topic and assists the participants to discuss it, encouraging interaction and guiding the conversation (De Vos et al., 2011, p.360). The facilitator plays a

major role in obtaining good and accurate information from the focus groups (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

In this study, focus group discussions were conducted in the second phase of data generation, and encouraged constructive dialogues about the importance of Economics Education. This method allowed participants to draw from each other's responses to demonstrate their positions, something that did not happen during individual interviews, because there was no one to trigger a particular response. Focus group discussions allowed participants to challenge each other's ideas drawing from their experiences and perceptions. This is good for the research because it enables the researcher to understand the phenomenon under study from diverse angles and viewpoints. Although the individual interview give the researcher substantial insight into participants' perceptions, the focused group interviews offers a profound insight into participant views, beliefs and experiences by "allowing group dynamics to generate debate and some degree of consensus (Mearman et al., 2014). Furthermore, it affords the researcher the chance to investigate and substantiate perspectives and experiences that emerged during the individual interviews (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014,)

The researcher facilitated the focus group discussions at an arranged time and venue (school premises) after permission was obtained to record the interviews. The focused group allows group dynamics to generate discussions and some degree of consensus, which allows for deeper exploration of the topic area. Consent to participate in focus group was read and signed by participants prior the first phase of data collection (see Appendix 5). The focused group discussions were recorded separately on different days, and learners from Kstick secondary school were recorded first and were followed by Flakky secondary school. An audiotape recorder was used to capture learners' voices, and a round table setting arrangement was used in which learners set around the recording table/device to ensure that they were closer and audible while the recording was in session. Participants were randomly given an opportunity to speak and the facilitator ensured that every learner was given the opportunity to say something.

3.6. Sampling Strategy

According to McMillian and Schumacher, (2010) samples are selected based on beliefs that participants have knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation. This implies that participants are regarded as individuals divulging information about themselves, hence

enabling the researcher to create a conceptual map of the population represented by these individuals (Babbie & Mouton, 2007, p. 168). This view resonates with the view of McMillan and Schumacher (2010) that when selecting individuals to participate in a qualitative research, researchers assumes that the group of people selected have the relevant knowledge and information about the object of the study. Therefore, Migiro and Magangi (2011), aver that sampling system is a representation of a clear technique a researcher uses to select units such as people, groups, settings and events that are suitable for the study. Migiro and Magangi (2011) identified two categories of sampling techniques, namely, probabilistic (probability sampling) and non- probabilistic sampling (non-probability sampling). However, with the purpose of the study in view, a probability sampling will not be suitable technique because by randomly selecting samples I might not successfully select participants with relevant knowledge or information about the object of my study. A non-probability sample on the other hand, is a sampling technique that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances to be selected (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Strydom (2011) in non-probability sampling, there is no randomisation. This sampling technique is suitably used in this study because it permit me to choose a particular kind of participants – Grade 10 Economics learners – whom I supposed had the relevant information for my study. Non-probability sample comprises of strategies such as convenience sampling, dimensional sampling and purposive sampling, to mention a few sampling strategies (Cohen et al., 2007).

3.6.1. Sampling

While Marshall and Rossman (2011) are of the opinion that carefully selected sample is essential for the soundness of a study, and there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. In this respect, De Vos et al., (2011) posits that "sample size depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with the available time and resources" (p. 391). Thus, this study used purposeful sampling to select learners who have the characteristics of interest to the research and might engage with the research questions in detailed. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) qualitative research approach," emphasise relying on the judgement of the researcher to select a sample ... that includes subjects with needed characteristics ... as qualitative researchers are more interested in selecting cases that are information rich" (p.138). It is for this reason that makes purposive sampling suitable for this study, because the most relevant and "most informative"

(McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 138) learners to talk about their perception of importance of Economics as a subject were selected. In addition, the schools were selected using convenience sampling strategy. The schools were selected based on their proximity to where the researcher resides. The two schools were about 500 meters away from the researcher's residence; this was an advantage because on a daily basis I could shuttle between the two schools for my scheduled interview session, which made the collection of data easier.

3.6.2. Participants

In order to select the most suitable samples, given the brief information above, this study purposively selected eight (8) grade 10 Economics learners, who are currently studying Economics as a subject from two Turffontein Secondary Schools. The table shows the criteria for the selection of the learners.

Currently studying:	Economics
School:	Government public secondary schools (Former Model "C" Schools).
Province:	Gauteng
Area:	Turffontein
Grade:	10
Performance level:	High, average and low

Table 1: General participant selection criteria

This corroborates with the underlying assumptions of phenomenology that emphasises a purposive selection of samples, and the acceptable sample size for a phenomenological study is within the range of 5-25 participants and six learners are within the criteria (Creswell, 2003). To select participating learners, the performance according to marks was used, where high mean was 70% -80%, the average mean was 50% - 60% and low mean was 30% - 49%, even though 30% is allowed as a pass in schools.

Table 2: Participant's Profile

The focus of this study is on exploring grade 10 learners' perception of the importance of Economics as a subject in two South African secondary schools. The research question that was asked seek to explore the perceptions of those learning or experiencing the subject, which are learners. There were eight learners selected from two schools, all of whom were interviewed. Table 2 below present a summary of the learners' educational status. As

indicated in the table below, letter ‘F’ denotes ‘Flakky’ and ‘K’ denotes ‘Kstick’, which are pseudonyms of the schools where data was generated, ’L’ to denote ‘Learners’. ‘L1 to L8’ in sequence as the acronym for the eight learners.

Table 2: *Participant’s profile*

Acronyms	Grade	Subject Stream in the Present Grade	Performance Level
KL1	Grade 10	Commerce	High
KL2	Grade 10	Commerce	High
KL3	Grade 10	Commerce	Average
KL4	Grade 10	Commerce	Low
FL5	Grade 10	Commerce	High
FL6	Grade 10	Commerce	Average
FL7	Grade 10	Commerce	Average
FL8	Grade 10	Commerce	Low

Eight learners were considered suitable in line with the phenomenology principle of purposively selecting a ‘theoretical sample’, an even mix of learners experience and performance level, ensuring that there is variation in the sample. In addition, to have a considerably manageable data, considering qualitative research, requires a sizeable data to ensure in-depth analysis. The data generation process took four weeks, and all learners that participated in this research were doing grade 10 and Economics a subject.

3.7. The distinctive features of the two schools

The research was conducted in two secondary schools; Kstick and Flakky in Turffontein. Turffontein is located in Region F of the city of Johannesburg metropolitan municipality, Gauteng. The schools are situated at the heart of Turffontein; hence, they both have a quintile 5 status. Quintile 5 schools are categorized as fee-paying schools, not situated close to squatter camps, built with mortar and bricks with some steel and tile roofs, as such requires minimal support in terms finances from the department of education. These schools cater for learners from diverse social, economic and racial backgrounds. These schools are situated close to residential areas. In order to describe the distinctive characteristics of these schools, I rely on the Department of Education, (2009) specifications of the school space norm. This norm identified three important space every school in the country requires to provide quality

education: namely, educational spaces, administrative spaces and support education spaces. Concerning learning space, both schools have overcrowded classrooms, particularly in economics classrooms impeding effective teaching and learning. For example, teacher (s) cannot give individual learners attention due to the difficulty of moving around because of lack of space in the classrooms. However, Kstick is an ordinary public secondary school originally built as primary school, later changed to a junior secondary and currently operates as a secondary school. Some of the classes were built with bricks; others were mobile classes.

3.8. Organization of Data and analysis

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, (2011, p. 537) avers that qualitative data analysis involves categorising, accounting for and explicating the data. It demands making sense of data according to the participants' description of the situation, identifying the patterns, themes, types and regularities in the data. While the organization of the data and the analysis processes are not straightforward processes, but messy and tedious processes that requires rigor to achieve its systematical engagement, it is also a fascinating and innovative learning experience. There are different methods used to analyse qualitative data (Madill and Gough 2008), which includes discursive, thematic, structured, or instrumental (Carrera-Fernández, 2014, p. 22), in this study data is analysed using a method of phenomenological enquiry adapted by Schweitzer from Giorgi's step-wise method. The raw qualitative data sets for this study were eight transcribed interviews and were subjected to the procedure outlined below.

3.8.1. Outline of Schweitzer's adaptation of Giorgi's phenomenological method

Schweitzer (1998) adapted this model from Giorgi (1997) and formulated a methodological approach for explicating experience. **Stage 1.** Intuitive/Holistic Understanding of the Raw Data: this stage requires reading data, recurrently if necessary, in order to have a holistic and spontaneous understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Importantly, a researcher must bracket, that is, identify, and keep in check, any preconceived beliefs, opinions or notions about the phenomenon under investigation. **Stage 2.** Forming a Constituent Profile: a researcher summarize raw data from each participant. 2.1 Natural Meaning Units: (NMUs) are self-definable, discrete segments of expression of individual aspects of the participant's experience. Thus, a researcher defines and discretely segments expressions of individual aspects of participant's experiences. 2.2 Central Themes: By creating central themes, a researcher reduce the NMUs to recognizable sentences that conveys a discrete expression of experience. 2.3 Constituent Profile: this refers to the reconstitution of central themes that

provides a non-repetitive list of descriptive meaning-statements for each participant. **Stage 3.** Forming a Thematic Index: At this stage a researcher, use constituent profiles from each participant as a basis to construct a thematic index, which highlights major themes that have emerged. 3.1 Delineating Constituent Profiles: As with central themes, researcher reconstituted constituent profiles to remove any repeated or irrelevant statements.

3.2 Extracting Referents: referents are defined as specific words that highlight the meaning of the experience being researched. A researcher looked for referents in constituent profiles, which are extracted and listed separately. 3.3 Thematic Index: The thematic index establishes a non-repetitive, sequenced list of meaning statements and referents used to search for interpretive themes. The thematic index contains the constituent profiles, statements attributed to singular meanings of experience. From here on the data is examined collectively. **Stage 4.** Searching the Thematic Index: this enables the comparison of referents, central themes and constituent profiles to form a set of interpretive themes. It is important to note that the focus is on the explication of data that reports the meaning of experience**. Stage 5**. Arriving at an Extended Description: interpretive themes are used to rigorously explicate meaning attributed to the phenomena under investigation. **Stage 6**. Synthesis of Extended Descriptions: this is a summary of the interpretive themes to produce an in-depth picture of participants' experience of the phenomena under investigation (Sherwood & Silver, 1999, pp. 10-13), (adopted from Holroyd, 2001, pp 2-3).

In the first stage of the phenomenological method used, before reading the interview transcripts, I took upon the 'phenomenological attitude' (Holroyd, 2001, p.3). This practice is two-fold, it involve the epoché or bracketing and the eidetic reduction. Both steps are imperative to phenomenological methodology. Bracketing is described as setting aside ones 'natural attitude', or our taken for-granted approach to everyday living informed by culture and education, as well as our "past knowledge of the phenomenon encountered" (Giorgi, 1997, p. 240). It demands laborious reflection on one's bias, opinions, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. In a few words, McKenna (1997, p. 177) captures its essence in saying: "…epoché then is a way of making the transition from our more normal way of considering consciousness and the world to the properly phenomenological way of considering them". After bracketing, I engaged with eidetic reduction, which "involves the movement from objects as facts to objects as exemplars (essences). In this process, a

researcher set aside particular characteristics of the phenomenon under investigation so that notes can be taken of that which shows itself as universal" (Ehrich, 1999, p. 25).

Guided by the attitude of bracketing, the following steps constitute the eidetic reduction process: a) the transcripts were read several times in order to have a complete, in depth and spontaneous understanding of the phenomenon. b) Afterwards, the transcripts were then divided into natural meaning units (NMUs) which are distinct sections of terminologies of the participant's experience. c) The researcher at that moment streamline the NMUs, by removing redundant or repeated words, ensuring that key experiential description were not altered, and each NMU were numbered. This was a sub-step included by Holroyd, (2001) in Schweitzer's method to ensure easy identification of transcripts. d) Subsequently, the NMUs that have been streamlined and numbered were then categorized into central themes, which are, sentences communicating distinct expressions of participants' experience. Noted, by adopting the ideas of Holroyd, (2001), I applied the following variation to the transcripts: Central themes were organized into groups under particular headings e.g. 'Importance', 'Factors', etc. These themes were further re-arranged into concise statements relating to the key words. These statements were then organized as described below. A referent search was initially conducted (see step g) and the results listed. e) A constituent profile was then created by searching through the central themes for statements that were repeated and these repeated statements were removed, leaving a non-repetitive list of descriptive meaning statements for each participant. f) The constituent profile was reorganized to form a thematic index, which enumerate major themes that have emerged. g) The thematic index was then searched for words or referents which conveyed meaning relevant to the phenomenon under investigation; for example the word 'relevant' and its derivative, relevance were mentioned a number of times by one of the participants. h) Using these referents, redundant and any repeated words were then removed to produce a combined thematic index of the essential aspects of the phenomenon of learners' perceptions of the importance of economics subject.

The thematic index is an "ideographic" (Holroyd, 2001) or personal list of relevant themes. The above stated procedures were applied to the transcripts of each individual participant. Afterwards, individual thematic index was combined into one document. From this point on, the data was examined collectively. With this step, the researcher moves from "an ideographic explication of an individual's experience to a more generalized nomothetic description" (Holroyd, 2001, p.3). Then, I thoroughly read the combined thematic index severally and immersed myself in the data. By deliberating and reflecting on the data three

interpretive themes emerged (See table 3 below) which reported the meaning of experience. Each interpretive theme were further divided into two sub-themes each relating to various aspects of the experience of learners' perceptions of the importance of economics subject. It is important that the relationship between interpretive themes and the context in which they arose in the central themes and constituent profiles is kept in mind. Table 3 below shows the interpretive themes that was explicated from the data.

Table 3: Themes and sub-themes for grade 10 learners' perception of the importance of Economics subject

Main Themes	Sub-themes
Perception of the importance of economics subject	• *Economics as important to understand real life issues* • *Economics as a useful path to chosen career*
Learners' conceptions of Economics as a subject.	• *Economics as a social science* • *Economics as History*
Factors influencing learners' perception of the importance of Economics Subject.	• *The Job prospect factor* • *The teacher factor*

Once more I checked the interpretive themes against the original transcripts for verification and accuracy using a process of 'imaginative free variation'. During this process, the context was imaginatively altered in order to examine the invariant structure of participants' experience expressed in their perceptions of the importance of economics subject, as captured in the interpretive themes. Meaning, if the themes remain the same through this process they are taken to be universal and invariant aspects of the essence of the phenomena under investigation. As Haney (1994, p. 8) says: "the 'unbuilding' of the first phase of phenomenological method [the eidetic reduction], must be complemented by the rebuilding of the world as intentional constitution [interpretive themes and the extended description]." The 'rebuilding' phase commenced by using the interpretive themes to explicate meaning attributed to the phenomena under investigation, which is presented in chapter 4.

3.9. Research Quality

The issues of quality are important for the credibility of the research findings. In line with this claim, Loh (2013) believes it is imperative to ensure the validity, reliability and generalisability of a research, since it serves as the precondition for accepting "the research

into the collections of knowledge and to be received as suitable for use in various means and ways" (p.4). Bashir, Afzal, and Azeem (2008, p. 43), however argued that reliability and validity are posited as trustworthiness, rigor and quality in qualitative paradigm. According to these authors, trustworthiness, which replaces reliability and validity in qualitative research paradigm, is interested in the justification and confidence researchers have in the research findings. Trustworthiness is classified into credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Loh, 2013).

3.9.1 Credibility

A credible empirical research requires that the researcher make sure the findings of the study replicates the information provided by participants, and Anney (2014, p. 276) describes it as "the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings". In this study, credibility was ensured by research supervisors who checked the interview questions before commencing, enquired about my first interview experiences in the research field to ensure that the process continues appropriately. I described and explained what happened and how I conducted the interview, and they advised on how to improve, especially with focus group interviews. I also asked my PhD colleague to be a member check of my interview schedules and read one individual and focus group interview transcripts, to make sure that I asked relevant questions, especially probing questions. I realized that conducting interviews for Honours research and Masters research are not same, especially that I added focus group interviews that I never done before.

Interacting with my supervisors while designing focus group interviews made me aware of the different features of questions as compared to individual interviews, I gained knowledge and some skills I will use in PhD. In addition, I member-checked with participants after transcription by giving them a copy of the transcripts of the interview, to confirm if the conversation as contained in the transcript was what was intended without any inconsistencies. Being aware of my biases, I ensured not to superimpose my opinion and personal view on what the interviewee was trying to say during the transcription of the audio tape, which further increase the credibility of the study. Finally, audiotaping participants' interviews was crucial as it added another level of credibility because learners' responses can be inferred between the two data gathering methods to find consistencies.

3.9.2. Transferability

According to Merriam (1998), cited in Shenton (2004, p. 69) transferability has to do with the external validity of qualitative research, which "is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to another situation". According to Guba and Lincoln (1985), in order to ensure that data can be transferable to other contexts the data must provide rich and detailed explanations of the data collected, so that other researchers can transfer it to other contexts. In this study, while it is not easy to ensure that findings of one study can be applied to another situation due to the role that context and participants within the context play in shaping the findings, the detailed process of data gathering has been provided. The collected data was analysed and meanings drawn from the interviewees was detailed in order to authentically represent the responses of the learners.

3.9.3. Dependability

According Cohen, (2011) dependability determines whether the results would be consistent if the same study were to be repeated with the same participant in similar context. Guba and Lincoln (1985) however have observed and emphasised the close relationship between credibility and dependability, and argue that in real practice a demonstration of credibility goes a long way to ensure dependability. In the same light, Shenton (2004, p. 71) suggests that dependability "may be achieved through the use of overlapping methods" such as focused groups and individual interviews to compare results for the triangulation of these methods. In the light of the forgoing, in this study, by identifying the similarities and differences within participant's responses in the focused groups and individual interviews; the data has a high rate of dependability. Additional way to ensure that the data collected is consistent with the interpretation is through the advice of the research supervisor checking if the data is consistent and correctly transcribed (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). My supervisors read and helped with analysing sample of the data.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Conformability is the final effort geared towards ensuring trustworthiness. It is about objectivity in research. It focuses on the correlation between the researchers' descriptions and interpretations of the information provided by participants and the participants actual responses voiced during the interviews. For Babbie and Mouton (2007, p. 278) confirmability refers to "the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not the biases of the researcher". Firstly, I achieved confirmability by being a research instrument

in the study and building a relationship with the interviewees. I immersed myself in the study by interacting with the social and school contexts and participants with their responses, for understanding their experiences and meanings within their contexts. In addition, during transcription, when listening to the conversations from the audiotape, there are times when some of the utterances from both the researcher and the participants was inaudible. In order to ensure that I did not write the fabrications of my own imagination as the researcher, I listened to the audio clips multiple times to ensure that the transcripts reflect the information provided by the participants accurately. Finally, I have given sufficient details concerning the procedure of the study so that readers can come up with their interpretation as well as meaning, because there are many meanings as there are readers in the world. Therefore, the researcher ensured confirmability in this study by making an in-depth methodological description to allow for the examination of the integrity of the research result.

3.10. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are important considerations during a research process and influence the decision of the researcher during the research process. According to Cohen et al., (2011, p. 84) social researchers are obligated to consider the effects of research on participants and to act in a manner which sustain their dignity as human beings. However, according to Strydom (2011, p. 113) ethical issues are therefore general and complicated since data should not be gathered at the expense of human beings. In conducting this study, the researcher ensured that he adhered to strict ethical standards and the research was conducted in a morally acceptable manner. The researcher took the rights and interests of those affected by the research into consideration. In this part of the study, I introduce the reader to various ethical considerations that were adhered to during the course of the study.

3.10.1. Access and acceptance

Since the study was carried out in schools categorized under district 14, Johannesburg central in Gauteng province, authorization to gain access to the school was obtained from the Gauteng department of education (GDE) and the district manager of Johannesburg central district (See appendix 8 & 9). According to Cohen et al., (2011, p. 81) this is the first stage which involves getting the official permission to commence one's research. I also applied for ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand, my proposal was approved, and ethical clearance certificate was issued for the study to commence (see Appendix 7). In addition to the request from the above-mentioned

institutions, I also wrote a letter to the participating school principals requesting permission to use their schools as sites for interviews (see Appendix 1). Although this study does not focus on teachers, a letter of consent was also delivered by hand to the teachers whose learners were participating in the study, detailing the nature of the study (see appendix 2). The teachers were assured that their classroom routines would not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Considering that grade 10 learners are considered minors because their ages ranged between 15 – 16 years depending on when their birthday occurs, I secured the consent of the parent/guardian, (see appendix 4).

3.10.2. Concealing Learners' and schools' identity

According to (Babbie & Mouton, 2007) "the clearest concern in the protection of the subject's interest and wellbeing is the protection of their identity", (p. 523). Since participants are required to divulge personal information, it is essential that their identities are kept secret. Regarding this, Babbie and Mouton (2007) suggest two ways of ensuring that the identities of the participants are protected, namely confidentiality and anonymity. In this study, in order to ensure confidentiality, only my supervisors and I knew the identity of the participants and the school, although my supervisors only knew their real names and I interacted with them. As indicated by Cohen et al., (2011, p. 92), while the researcher might know the details of the participants who provided the information, he/she is not expected to disclose that information to the public. Researcher adhere to this throughout the whole process of this study, and I achieved anonymity by using pseudonyms such as 'learner 1-8' to conceal real identities of the participants. Similarly, pseudonyms such as 'Kstick' and 'Flakky' were used to conceal the real identities of the schools. The transcriptions from the audiotape are stored in a password-protected folder in my computer, and a remote flash drive is only accessible to the researcher and supervisors. Transcripts are stored safely on my computer for 5 years before deleting it.

3.11. Chapter synthesis

In this chapter, I discussed the process and methods that were used for data gathering, sorting and analysis. The qualitative data was gathered by means of semi-structured individual face-to-face interviews and focused group interviews. The process included explanations and justifications of the choice of participants and data analysis techniques and processes for this study. The data analysis framework and process were also discussed. Issues around ensuring the quality of the study were also discussed in depth. This chapter also outlined the ethical

considerations for this study. Chapter four focuses on data presentation and discussion of the main themes of this study, also using theory and reviewed literature.

CHAPTER FOUR

PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMICS SUBJECT: THE REASONING OF GENERATION 'WHY'

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is organized according to the three main themes that emerged through the process of data analysis. These themes are perceptions of the importance of economics subject, learners' conception of economics and factors that influence learners' perception of the importance of economics subject. The themes are presented in a diagram in Figure 2, and learners' direct responses are used to support the theme or sub-themes.

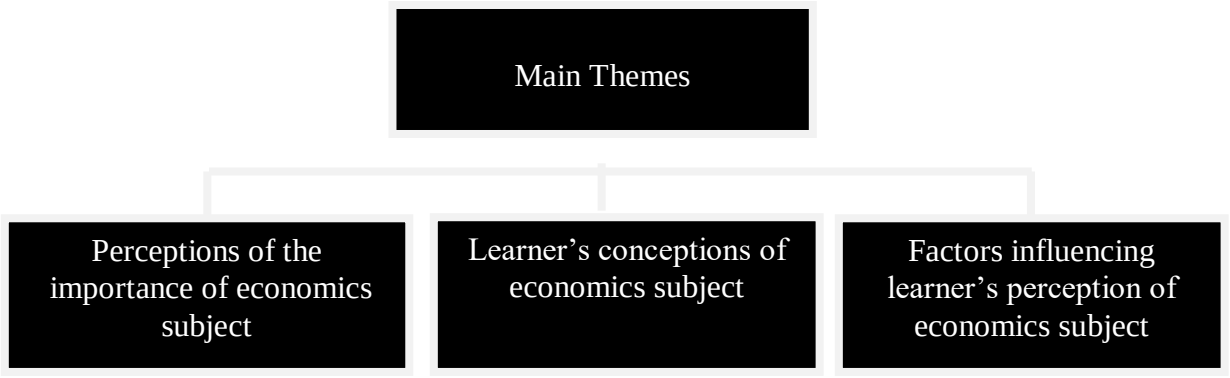


Figure 2: Major Themes

4.2. Perceptions of the importance of Economics subject

As was discussed in chapter two, individuals' perceptions can influence how they make sense of a phenomenon, their decision-making and the outcome of their decisions. From data analysis, two sub-themes emerged from the theme and is presented in Figure 3 below, and while they are presented separately but they should be read relationally.

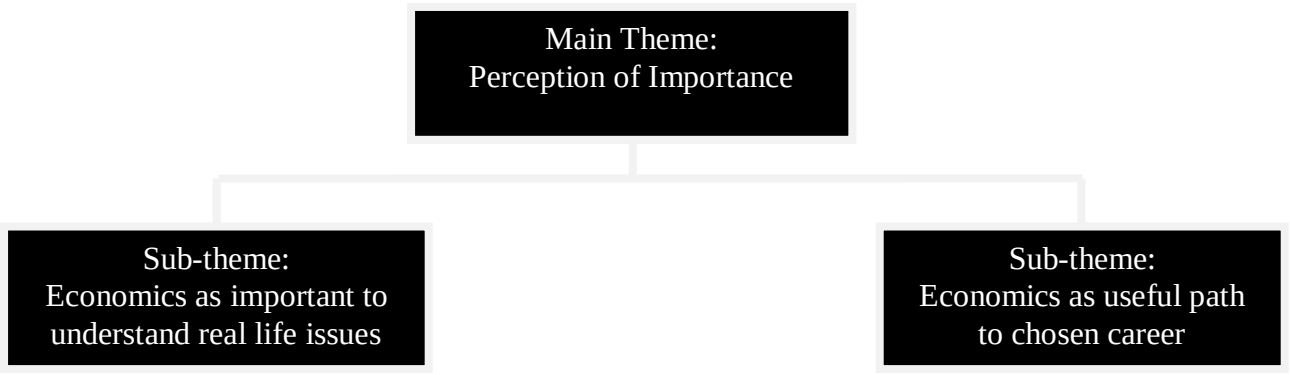


Figure 3: perception of the importance of Economics subject

4.2.1 Economics as important to understand real life issues

In this sub-theme, learners said they perceived economics as important because it confer deep, non-trivial insight into the economic world, which implies its applicability and benefit to understand real life events. In this study economic subject, introduce learners to knowledge that has real life benefits or enable them to make sense of real life economic activities. In addition, real life benefits include making sense of the value of money and use of resources appropriately, e.g. land and labour, which could be taken for granted while important. These responses is evident:

> *Economics knowledge is relevant in helping me making sense of issues … there are other people who are less fortunate … make sense of economics issues locally and Internationally. Economics is important because it is interwoven with everyone else's life* ***(Learner 8, Flakky School)***

> *Economics is important for me, because it shows me the value of money. How the money you have should be used. It shows that money has value and every cent should be spent wisely … it [Economics] is important because it develops your mind and empowers you to participate in relevant discussion about the economy* ***(Learner 7, Flakky School)***

> *For me Economics is about people and money … it is important for me because I know it can change people's lives … Economics helps me to understand why we do not have everything that we need, and how I can change that situation for my family. It involves everyone's life from small income earners to high-income earners … I think everyone needs to learn a bit of the knowledge of Economics" (****Learner 1, Kstick School).***

> *I think Economics is very important for everyone because I think although we might not see it, Economics is part of our everyday life. We have to be informed about the things that are going in the economy of our country. Economics is important because* ***I think*** *is like the way we live with people … is about the way people interact and their social needs. It shows the interaction between how you spend money and sustain yourself with your limited resources* ***(Learner 2, Kstick School).***

The responses suggest that economics is not only about money but also interrelationship between the understandings of how the money links with the different activities within the society, as "…it involves everyone's life…" (KL1) making it "…important for everyone… (KL1)" irrespective of financial background. This way of thinking about the importance of economics, and specifically economic education, shows that learners have recognized the role it can play for individuals, in understanding "…the way we live… (KL2)" and be aware of the decisions people make with money, and the nature of interactions in relation to social needs. Foucault (1972) stated that discourses "articulate our ways of seeing the world" (p.49), which means that discourses shapes learners' way of thinking, seeing and talking about the importance of economics. The manner of talking about the importance of economics suggests that learners are aware that economics is part of social practice, and inform individuals about the nature of economy in the country. This is noticed in the learners' choice of words to express their perceptions in details, addressing the power of language "to construct some aspect of reality from the particular perspective" (Chouliarraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 63).

In addition, given that learners' responses links social experiences, real life situations, and the importance of economics knowledge, it addresses the role that "our words are never neutral, they have meaning in a particular social and political condition and the meaning we convey with those words is identified by our immediate social and political conditions" (Fiske, 1994, p. 11). Thus, learners' choice of words and the meanings emerge from different social experiences and interactions either at school, at home with the parents, or mass media. This is particularly true if participants' choice of words, for example, "*economics knowledge is relevant in helping me making sense of issues … there are other people who are less fortunate* and *… shows me the value of money …" (FL8)* is illustrative of the social information embedded in how participants make use of language within a broader social order.

4.2.2. Economics as useful for future career

The career paths of students are influenced and shaped by the subject choices that are made in the final three years (Grade 10 -12) of secondary schooling, preparing for tertiary education. Thus, learners' view of economics as a subject that enables them to pursue their career is one of the perceptions that emerged during data analysis. Participant stated that economics subject exposed them to ideas they would need later in their degree as chartered accountant, political scientist or sociologist, economist or commercial lawyer. When making decisions

about which subjects they might choose to study, students gives substantial attention to how useful they thought each subject would be, in terms of access to their preferred university course or career. The responses below illustrate the perceptions:

> *I choose to study Economics because of the subjects I am doing and because of what I want to be… In order for me to know more about the path to my career… I choose commerce (Economics)… because if I go the university I will have more knowledge… for my career* ***(Learner 5 Flakky School).***

Similarly, Learner 8 from Flakky secondary school said, *"It is because of the kind of career I want to pursue, so I want to get more knowledge about economics. It is important for me,"* suggesting awareness of the relationship between the chosen career(s) and economics. The nature of economics is linked to social aspects, as a social practice, and the interdependence of politics and economics is noticed when decisions of the former influence the activities of the latter. For example, the direction of the government tax and expenditure policy can either increase or reduce disposable income available for consumption, which has significant impact on economic growth.

Furthermore, learner 4 from Kstick School had a similar opinion and said:

> *Economics is relevant, because it will help me do commercial law in the university.* To be *honest, I do not really like Economics. I am just studying because of what I want to study in the university… I think is important, because it can help people who want to become economist and pursue my kind of career – commercial law. As well as those who wants to pursue career in commercial courses.*

By looking at these responses, it is evident that participants considers the prospect of a future career significant in their decisions of choosing to study economics as a subject. This actually overruled other intrinsic motivation for choosing economics subject in some cases. For example, interest or enjoyment are inherent satisfaction. The prospect of future career is an extrinsic motivation, which appeared to stimulate learners' inclination towards economics, as several reported that the prospect of a future career made them more motivated in studying economics. When this is the case, it is assumed they might put more time into their work, therefore improving the possibility of achieving higher grades in their assessments. Learners seemed willing to overlook inherent satisfaction like interest and enjoyment when they felt they needed to take economics subject.

These findings suggest that career related issues drive learners when it comes to choosing economics subject. This way of talking about the importance of economics appears to suggests that these learners are compelled more by the extrinsic rewards offered by economics than by the intrinsic nature of the subject. These responses suggest that learners

perceive economics as a learning area that will open doors for them to *"know more about their career path…" (FL5), "…further their career of interest in the university" (KL4),* as such become what they want to be. Learners' responses are unsurprising when Meiriza (2015) state that education, in whatever discipline, is perceived as an investment in human resources and has long-term strategic value for survival, especially in an ever-changing economic world. There is little doubt that in recent time, as it has been in the past that the key attractions to a career in economics have been a perceived ready supply of jobs and good salaries (Meiriza, 2015). This extrinsic factor related to finding a career path in (or through) economics subject underscores the relevance of economics to the life aspirations of its recipients. The learners' manner of talking about economics further suggest that the hope of building a successful career becomes the purpose for these participants, and perceived economic education as important in order to achieve this goal. It can also be inferred from the participants' use of language that the topics they are learning in economics is exposing them to ideas they would be needing later in their degree, and that the thinking would remain with them after they had graduated and the ideas will be useful in any commercial or related career. Research shows that students who think economics will help their future career considers it a valuable subject of study (Mearman et al., 2014).

4.3. Learners conceptions of Economics as a subject.

The understanding of learners' perceptions of the importance of economics is as important as gaining insight on their conception of economics, because the latter is the "fundamental way a person understands the phenomenon or an object in the surrounding world" (Eklund-Myrskog, 1998, p. 299). Thus, the influence of beliefs and ideas in the origin of conceptions of economics can be traced, because they are closely related to one's experience, in this study, school, home, and/or peers. Of importance for this study is to examine learners' conceptions of economics because of research gap in South Africa, and to ascertain whether and how learners' conceptions link with their perceptions. Especially when Cornbleth (1988, p. 85) states that "...conceptions and ways of reasoning … reflect and shape how we think and talk about, and act on the education made available to students". Conceptions are therefore not theoretical, but emerge and "enter into practice" (Cornbleth, 1988, p. 85), which means they link with reasoning and practice. In this study, the focus is how learners think and talk about economics and its importance, and make sense of the factors that influence the manner of thinking and talking about it. From the analysed data, participants conceptualised Economics as a *social science* and as *historical*, which seem to link with their perception of

its importance, and formed two sub-themes. The first sub theme of economics as a *social science* links with the study of human behavior in relation to their resources, and as *historical* conception focuses on the past and the origin of Economics (see, Figure 4 below).

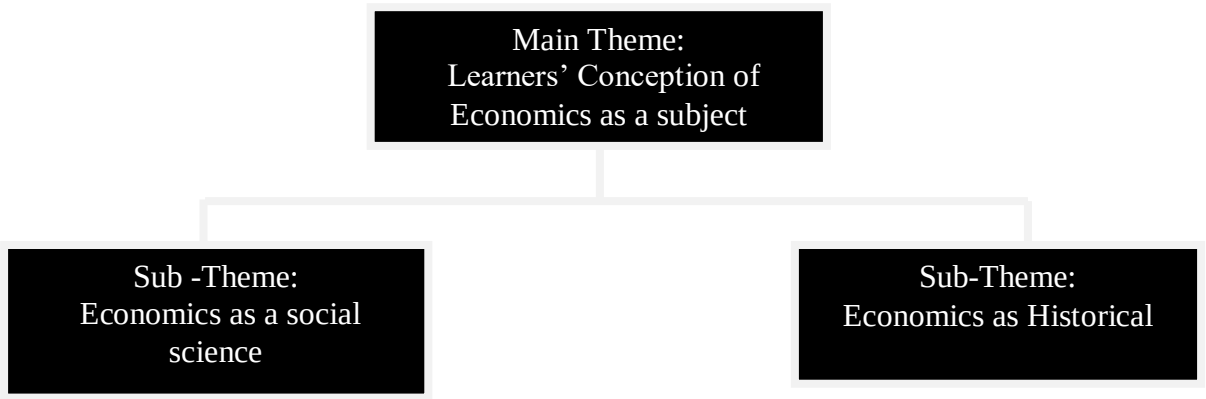


Figure 4: Learners' conception of economics as a subject

4.3.1. Economics as a social science

In these sub-theme participants talked about economics subject as a study of people and how they make choices about the allocation of scarce resources. The responses below demonstrate this:

> *Economics is a social science, it involve studying of people's behaviour … it involves the study of our daily lives, the flow of money. Economics is about what happens in the economy and how we benefit from it … it looks at people's needs and how we should be able to satisfy our needs* ***(Learner 2, Kstick School).***

> *Economics is a study that shows how people use scarce resources to satisfy their limited wants … is about the economy, how everything run and how people are struggling. It is social science, it relates to everyday issues that affect our life, study how people use scarce resources to satisfy their unlimited wants* ***(Learner 4, Kstick School).***

The participants' responses supports the traditional view that "economics is a science which studies human behaviour" (Robbins, 1932), even though some learners' responses also suggest moving beyond to include *"every day issues that affect our life" (KL4)*. Considering CDA emphasis on the importance of focusing on the meanings beyond the words to unearth any taken for granted interpretation, the learners' responses address the practical aspect of economics in relation to community struggles, needs and experiences, which could be something they experience and observe continuously. This could mean that, for the learners, economics is an analytical tool to make sense and be aware of "our daily lives" in relation to

the flow of money and our relationship with it. In relation to this, Mearman, Shiob, Wakeley and Webber (2011) discuss how pluralistic curricula might generate critical and other cognitive faculties more effectively than monist curricula, which could be linked with economics curricula that is considered a pluralistic subject.

The 'scarce resources" might refer to money, in particular when it is linked to "satisfying the unlimited wants" (KL4), especially when KL3 said, "*economics is that subject that teaches us how to use our scarce resources as an economy … it can also be called a social science"*. The response suggest that economics subject knowledge educate beyond learners' immediate social context, instead make them conscious of different ways of using scarce resources as part of the society. In addition, economic education help learners make sense of their current community, including family, financial and economic behaviour and decision-making, a reason "…*economics is a social science and it is the study of people" **(FL8)***. This links with Mearman, et al., (2014, p.10) findings that "economics confers distinct benefits pertaining to the understanding of real events". The multidisciplinary nature of economics appears to develop learners' critical awareness and thinking about the various roles that economics can be used for in and outside the community. It is helpful to make meaning of the relationship between people decisions about their economic struggles and their habits, and the political decisions.

4.3.2. Economics as historical

It is unsurprising that participants also conceptualized Economics as historical, given the traditional link with social sciences, especially when one learner said *"Economics is like history" **(FL 4)*** and another stated *"… economics is synonymous with history" **(FL 1)***. In this sub-theme participants talked about economics subject as teaching them the origin and emergence of economic phenomenon like trade, money, etc, in relation to economic education. Economics is perceived as historical in nature and provides historical information about the various issues of the economy (or economic activities), and the responses below illustrate the points:

> *Because Economics does not look at the money, it also looks at people's needs and how we should be able to satisfy our needs. Basically, as history also because it also looks at the history of money and how we come into terms with money **(Learner 1, Kstick School).***

*It can help me understand things that are happening today in the economy that I don't know about and since we do not know how it started, economics can help a little bit to know how it first started… You have to know the dates, etc, because Economics is almost synonymous with history, (**Learner 5, Flakky School)***

*The part I like about Economics is the history about the development of banking. Because that provides me with knowledge about how some of the Economic entities came into existence…it teaches us about the history of Economics, where it started, for example like barter trading. Simply put, the historical part of the subject is what I like, **(Learner 7, Flakky School).***

*Yes, it is important. Because just like I said, we all know how we got here in the 21st century. The thing is that with Economics it is almost like history. It is like we are doing history in class. For example, we have to trace how trade began with the barter system, remember dates of events that have happened in the past, etc. **(Learner 8, Flakky School).***

The responses suggest that Economics is historical because it provides the knowledge and understanding of the past economics event, to make sense of the present economic events. It is unsurprising, giving the history of economic inequalities and its continuous perpetuation even in the current economic system (Bhorat & Van Der Westhuizen, 2010; Gelb, 2003). However, learners' conceptions also indicate the importance of gaining insight on the origins of economics in relation to other subjects, to understand what distinguish it from others. Some learners likes the historical section of the subject (FL7) "… we have to trace… and remember dates of events…", because the nature of economics is also about knowing why and how to understand that it's not only about finances and managing them but is holistic.

4.4. Factors influencing learners' perception of the importance of Economics Subject.

This study acknowledges that perceptions do not develop in a vacuum; there are certain factors that influence them. It is therefore important in this study to understand the factors that shape learners' perceptions of the importance of economics subject. Understanding the influences of perceptions of the importance of economics that are unique to learners has potential in informing how learners come to know and talk about the phenomenon under study the way they do. Participants mentioned different factors such as: Job prospects, teacher and teaching strategy, other economics learners, peers or parental influence, and overcrowded classrooms, but two factors were dominantly mentioned and are represented in Figure 5.

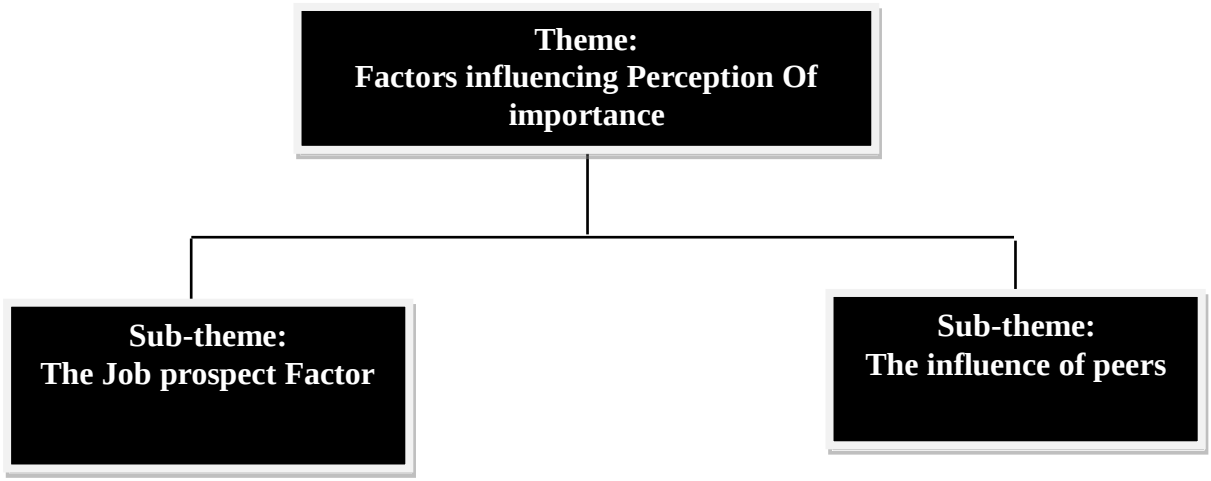


Figure 5: Factors influencing learners' perception of the importance of economics subject

4.4.1. The Job prospect Factor

Given that learners perceived economics to be important to pursuit their future career, it is unsurprising that they mentioned job prospect as one of the important factors that shape their perceptions of the importance of economics. Learners' were confident that economics subject could help to secure a job in the future, and useful if they decide to start a business. For example, learner 1 from Kstick School said,

> *When I sat to review other options that are open to me, between becoming a lawyer or an Economist, I thought that becoming an Economist will really be better… With Economics, you know how to start a business and maintain it… it tells us how money gets in and out. Solutions to the problems that arises within a business, tells us whether business is making profit, loss or if it is average, (learner 1, Kstick School).*

In support of this view, learner 7, Flakky school gave an interesting response in the focused group discussion:

> *The main reason why a lot of learners take Economics is because they have this tendency to think that it is the easy way into the world of work. If [you] look at the banking sector, a lot of our matriculates wants to go and work in the call centre. So they also feel they need to pass through the economics class to qualify them to work in the call centre (Learner7, Flakky School).*

This suggests that participants see high employment prospect as incentive for choosing to study economics as subject. When deciding to choose economics as a subject, students paid attention to how useful they thought the subject would be in terms of increasing their chances of getting a job. As it is with the perception of economics being a path to their future career, students seemed to be aware of the relationship between economics knowledge and the

possibility of future job opportunity. Furthermore, Learner 8 from Flakky school also said, *"I believe that learners choose to study economics …because they think it is an easy way into the world of work. They see Economics as a gateway to getting a Job", (FL8).* Again, this response implies that learners felt the need to take economics to ensure that they increase their chances for future opportunities, in terms of employability.

It can therefore be assumed that learners' choice of economics is also informed by the pressure of securing a well-paid job given the high rate of youth unemployment in South Africa, (Trading economics, 2019). This is similar to findings amongst ICT students. Seymour, Hart, Haralambous, Natha, and Weng (2005) carried out a study amongst secondary school pupils in South Africa and found that job availability was significantly associated with interest in ICT, as well as economics (my addition). It is understandable that all participants' responses shows that the direct effect of the anticipation of getting a job on the perceived importance of economics is sacrosanct, indicating that learners had high job expectation as motivation for studying economics. This finding relates to learners' perceptions of the importance of economics subject, as perceived improvement in understanding *of real life issues* and future career prospect are associated with the desire to find … *the easy way into the world of work (FL5)*, as such stresses the value learners associated with learning economics. Furthermore, it underscore the relevance of economics to the real world. This is not surprising particularly when one learners said "… *It* is a very highly qualified subject…*It can help aspire for a highly professional work", (FL6)*. According to Gee's (1990), "discourse are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, beliefs, attitudes, social identities...below the level of consciousness," (p. 142). The responses connect the learners' perceptions with the factors, which might have been overlooked, because as individuals we are sometimes not aware of what we say and how it influences our decisions. Furthermore, the language that is used by learners is not neutral, but is shaped by social and institutional factors, and the way learners talked about the factors draws from these discourses. The responses also link with current findings by Sidki and Boll (2017) in Germany that students have job and high-income expectations that motivates studying economics compared to other social science subjects.

In addition, the responses from interviews suggest that learners are not the genuine creators of text, they are "compiled from pre-existing discourses and that a text is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from

other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (Kristeva 1980, p. 69). This was noticed when learners' responses triggered information that might have been forgotten by others, to talk about how some learners think of economics, which might have been missed if only individual interviews was use as data generation. Thus, this discursive practice articulates the continuous cycle of construction and re-construction of events, through discourses that have been influenced by history and equally influence history by their interrelatedness, (Kristeva 1986).

4.4.2. Influence of Peers

Participants identified the influence of peers as the second factor that shape their perception of the importance of economics subject. This sub-theme discuss how participants' choice of economics as subject might have been influenced by their peers in order to understand whether they believed that they were guided towards or away from choosing economics as subject, based on other people's perception of the importance of the subject. Participants' responses identified family members (like the father), teacher and peers as the significant others who influenced their choice of the subject. However, the influence of peers emerged predominantly from the data analysis. Although, few learners stated that nobody influence their decision. Rather their choice was their own opinion based on their previous experience with EMS. The following responses is illustrative of this point,

> *My daddy did not necessarily force me to study economics but he told me why it is important to study Economics but when I told him I like to study it, he encourages me. Like he encourages me in everything I want to do, even when I wanted to change subjects from science to Economics, he was really supportive,* ***(Learner1, Kstick School).***

> *"The way my EMS teacher in grade 9 teaches economics make me have the gut that I can do this, this very interesting. The way the teacher have made me like economics since primary, has made me want to have an open eye more to the economic world****,(learner 4, Flakky School).***

> *People choose economics because… they hear that economics is an easy subject to pass, or because their friends are doing it, (Learner 5, Flakky* ***School).***

> *Learners choose economics because they think that it is easy…because someone told them it is easy,* ***(Learner 6, Flakky School).***

These responses shows predominantly that learners appear to have selected economics because they do not want to be separated from their friends, without their research into the career options, curriculum content and the importance of economics.

> *Some learners also choose economics because of their friends. They feel they do not want to be separated from their friends, so they all choose economics in order to be in one class* ***(Learner 6, Flakky School)****.*
>
> *I believe that learners choose to study economics because of their friends… As a person, you must believe in your own decisions. You cannot want to be influenced by what others are saying, at the end of the day, it is you alone. Every man for himself. So make your decisions wisely,* ***(Learner 7, Flakky School)****.*

Overall, these responses suggest that participants thinks that learners took economics subject because of their friends. This finding is similar to the observation of Davies, Adnett and Turnbull (2003) who asserted that students' choice of subject maybe influenced by their peers because of the information shared. This means peers can play a key role in shaping learners' beliefs, attitude or perception towards a subject, in this case economics. Thus, to answer the third research question, the influence of peers and perception of importance of economics subject do appear to link, but this link is also dependent upon whether the relationship with their peers help learners' see economics as important. Similarly, social cognitive theory, according to Alexander and Holmner (2010, p.17) posits that external sources of advice have impact on affective, personal aspects and most relevant to this study, on the perception of the importance of economics subject. Along this same line, Janks (2010, p.60) elaborates that, "when people use language (for example when giving advice), selection from the system takes place … in order to say what they want to say". However, this selection serves to convey particular meanings in particular ways, which have particular effects, including being believed (Janks, 2010, p. 61). This indicates that perhaps learners' perception of the importance of economics subject is shaped by their peers' advice, particularly if learners think economics … *"is an easy way into the world of work … and a gateway to getting a Job", (FL8)* as indicated in the previous session.

Since language is a social practice within the social field of the school, in this case it functions to privilege the value of economics. Therefore, it can be assumed that the linguistic choice made by peers produce an effect that position learners to see the importance of economics as a subject, thus informing their decision to choose the subject. This means that the advice they receive from other their peers might have created a positive attitude and perception about the worth of the subject. This can help to reduce the level of anxiety and

enables learners enjoy learning the subject, which have the tendency to improve performance (Bachan & Reilly, 2003). This suggests that peer groups are significant factors that influence the choice of economics among secondary school learners.

4.5. Chapter Synthesis

This study investigated the range of perception constructs towards importance of economics subject shared by learners at selected South African secondary school using a combination of data collected via one-one-individual interview and focused group interview. The data gathering from the focused group allows for deeper exploration of the topic area. Throughout the research process, there was interaction between the different data gathering and analysis process. These findings are categorised according to themes related to the research questions, and they are used to develop recommendations and strategies that will be helpful for teaching and learning processes of economics subject. The findings shared in this chapter include learners' perception of the importance of economics, their conception of economics as a subject and the factors influencing their perception of the importance of economics as a subject, hence the research questions identified at the onset of this study.

Results from data analysis show that learners value economics for different reasons namely: its ability to understand real life economic issues and as a useful path to future career. The findings also revealed that learners perceived importance of economics as a subject is shaped by their conception of economics as a social science and historical in nature. As a social science participants thinks economics is concerned with human behavior and the how to use scarce resources as such put them in a position not only to make sense of it, but to also find possible solution using economic ideas and principles. As historical, participants think economics looks at how some economics entities came into being. In addition, irrespective of which conception of economics subject learners oriented towards, various factors influenced their understanding of the importance of economics subject. These factors varied between job prospect factors and the influence of peers. Due to these factors, some learners became motivated and attracted to learn the subject. The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

BEYOND DEFICIT UNDERSTANDING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMICS SUBJECT

5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I present a summary of the findings of the study: perceptions of the importance of economics subject, learners' conceptions of economics, the factors influencing leaners perception of the importance of economics and the recommendations. This chapter begins by presenting the summary of the findings in relation to the research question as described in chapter 1, and then followed by a discussion on the implication and limitation of the study. Finally, the chapter concludes with recommendations for further research, stressing the need for more research with teachers and observe their pedagogical practices in relation to their conceptions and perceptions of the importance of economics subject.

5.2 Summary of the research findings

One of the key findings was learners' perceptions of the importance of economics. The learners' perceived economics as an important subject. They noted that by learning economics they acquire profound and significant understanding of the real life economics issues and has a good future career prospect. These findings show the perceived value of economics that may shape the desire of learners for more of economics: as perceived progress in understanding, real life economic issues and future career prospect are associated with the desire to study economics. Furthermore, they underscore the significance of economics subject to the real world. In addition, the two sub-themes substantiate the fact that learners give great deal of attention to how useful they perceive economics as a subject, in terms of its relevance to their real life situations and allowing them access to their preferred university choice of study

Secondly, the findings show that learners have different sets of conceptions about economics as a subject and two conceptions of economics were identified namely: *economics as a social science and economics as history.* These sub-themes add another dimension of prestige to economics as a subject. As a social science, participants think economics is concerned with economic issues that are happening around them; as such, it put them in a position not only to make sense of it, but also to figure out possible solution using economic ideas and principles. Additionally, economics is also conceived as historical in nature, because it is in some cases

directed at accounting for the origin and emergence of economic phenomenon in relation to economic education. The results shows that participant think it provides them with knowledge about how some of the economic entities like money and trade came into existence. As such, by understanding the past, they can know how the present economic situation is shaped and probably make an informed decision about their economic future, perhaps their career, both of which has a connection of their perception of importance.

Thirdly, in addition to identifying the perceptions constructs towards the importance of economics subject shared by learners at selected secondary schools in Turffontein. The result of the data analysis revealed that two key factors were found to be influential in shaping learners' perception of the importance of economics. The influence of factors that are job related and peers (particularly other economics peers), were identified as the cause of such perceptions. The results of this study suggest that learners are strongly driven by job related issues and their peers when it comes to choosing economics subject. This suggests that these learners are driven by extrinsic factors rather than intrinsic factors like interest, etc. However, these factors being external can be utilized by how well they are able to integrate their individual ability, beliefs, expectations and perceived (or subjective) assessment of the usefulness or importance of economics subject with longer-term objectives. Such motivating factors are based on the expectation (real or imaginary) of external reward (potential or actual), such as money, grades or praise. These rewards are expected to provide the satisfaction and pleasure that the task itself may not provide. Of concern is the fact that learners that are extrinsically motivated are more likely to resort to 'surface' or 'rote' learning which, in turn, is associated with lower academic achievement; students simply regurgitate information in quantitative details, in contrast to deep learning which produce more meaningful work demonstrating understanding.

5.3. Research Implications and Contributions

The findings of this study led to the emergence of several implications for the field of economic education as a whole and specifically for research focused on secondary economics. The following two subsections outline and examine both the theoretical and practical implications and contributions of the research findings of this study discussed in the previous chapter.

5.3.1 Implications and Contributions for Research

The implications and contributions of the research can be summarized as follows.

First, bearing in mind that there is paucity of study done in relation to secondary school economics education undertaken in South Africa, which focused on exploring the views and beliefs held by secondary school learners about economics as a subject. There it is implied that, this present study adds to the existing literature as the findings corroborated the usefulness and relevance of learning economics in South African secondary schools where enrolment for and performance in the subject appear to be declining. Although issues related to enrolment and performance are not the focus of this study, it can be implied from the findings of this study that there is the need to keep economics subject attractive and improve performance in the subject in order to stimulate and sustained learners' interest and sense of value. In addition, the findings of this study which is based on secondary school learners' view and beliefs promotes learners' perspective, which by implication gives a voice to the voiceless.

Second, unlike the previous investigations on learners' perception of economics in which the majority of the studies is characterized by research-designed interventions using quantitative methods, this study employed qualitative methods to explore different perceptual constructs shared by secondary school learners. The application of qualitative research methods facilitated the contributions of the present study to the existing literature on economic education in general and secondary school economics in particular. Hence, this study by using phenomenology as opposed to quantitative design, shifted attention from generalization of findings to rich context-specific description of learners' perception of the importance of economics subject in natural setting. In addition, using qualitative research method provided a comprehensive illustration of a study focused on the learners in South in Africa where limited study focusing on learners have been conducted in either the field of economic education or the literature on secondary school economics.

Hence, it is believed that the findings of this study provide a unique contribution to the field and to the existing literature on secondary school economics learning by identifying the some of the perceptual constructs towards economics as a subject shared by secondary learners and the appropriateness of learning economics as a subject in South African secondary schools. Therefore, considering the dearth of research that focused on learners' perceptions of learning economics and the factors that is shaping those perceptions in South Africa, the current study

recommend that more research need to be conducted to continue to gain insight on learners' perceptions of teaching and learning economics. The complexity of perceptions from learners' responses suggests more research in general, as their voices have not been heard. As a result, the findings of the present study have the potential to inform researchers investigating the implementation of evidence-based educational interventions in unique environments like South Africa.

5.3.2. Implications for policy and practice

The findings also highlighted implications for teachers' professional practice. Perceptions of the importance of economics that learners held showed their views and beliefs about economics as a subject, as well as their expectations of learning subject. The findings showed that meaningful learning of economics requires that economics curricula and teaching should be designed specifically targeting using economics as a tool for dealing with real world economic problems. Furthermore, from the research findings, it was established that job expectations and peer groups are significant factors that influence the choice of economics subjects among secondary school students in South Africa. The implication is that the counselling units in the department of education should organize orientation programme that will provide information on the wide variety of careers which are open to students who offer economics subjects. In addition, in order to encourage students to choose economics subject, schools should strengthen the guidance and counselling services to encourage career exploration and informed decisions by learners.

The findings of this study also have implication for professional development and teacher trainings institutions and the department of education in particular. The findings suggests that significant teacher professional development is needed to encourage the use of learning centered method like experiential and service learning and problem-based learning to teach economics in the classrooms. For teacher professional development personnel, the findings of this study suggest that participation in experiential and service learning and problem-based learning workshops was positively associated with the use of learning oriented pedagogy as an alternative method of teaching economics. The limited use of learning oriented pedagogy in economics classroom suggested that greater emphasis might need to be placed on the elements of learning oriented pedagogy during teacher development programmes.

5.4. Limitations of the study

The study was limited to two secondary schools in Turffontein that participated in the study. This is a very small sample, considering the number of secondary school in South Africa, as such cannot be seen as a representative of the remaining economics learners in South African secondary schools. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized as it was conducted with a very small group. In addition, my personal views as an economics teacher also might have influenced my interpretation of the learners' responses, even though I tried my utmost to be as objective and neutral as possible.

5.5. Recommendations for further studies

This study used a small sample of learners in two selected secondary schools in Turffontein, and for future research large scale research in different schools can be done using mixed methods approach rather than one specific approach. In addition, considering the paucity of existing research in economic education across the province or country. Further research could also be conducted on the impact of learners' perception of the importance of economics subject on learners' performance or achievement. In addition, I believe that there is need for further research to uncover a variety of factors at play in strengthening learners' perception of the importance economics, especially taken into account the intention of promoting lifelong learning in South African schools. Furthermore, consideration can be given to contextual factors and their impact on learners' perceptions about learning in general and learning economics in particular. Research concerning teachers pedagogical practices in relation to their conceptions and perceptions of the importance of economics could be another area for research as this study strictly focused on learners only.

5.6. Concluding Thoughts

This study investigated the range of perception constructs towards the importance of economics subject shared by students at a selected South African secondary school and the factors that shape them. Results from data analysis revealed that South African learners agree to the usefulness and relevance of economics subject by stressing how economics can help to understand real life issues and offer a path to future career. This suggest that learners justify their choice of economics subject by highlighting that they want their education to be relevant to their everyday life and personal development. The study provided insight on the conceptions of economics held by secondary school learners, however further research is needed to investigate the impact of these conceptions on learners enrolment for and

performance in the subject especially if transformative interventions are to be developed. I believe that continuing with this kind of research might provide information about learners' continuing decline enrolment and poor performance in economics. Result also revealed that job prospects and peers related factors have an influence on the way learners perceived the importance of economics and the choice to study the subject; however, they are not the only driver of decision-making. Specifically, although it is a possibility they, their parent or their teachers in particular may also motivate learners to choose economics, nevertheless it is assumed that they are often willing to choose to study economics when they enjoy it and/or believe that they are useful for their future aspirations. It is noteworthy that there are additional factors that are not investigated here which may further interact with these relationships, adding greater complexity to the decision making process. By continuing research into this field, we can add to our understanding of how and why students make their decisions, potentially enhancing our ability to encourage greater interest in the enrolment for and performance in economics subject. Conducting research with learners is important because it enables researcher to gains knowledge about how learners are thinking and talking about the subject, as well as helping learners obtain information about the nature of their learning and the way to enhance it.

List of references

Adu, E.O. & Adeyanju, H.I. (2013). Home and school factors as determinant of students' achievement in senior secondary school Economics in Botswana. *ARPN Journal of Science and Technology*, (2), 219-223.

Adu, E.O., Galloway, G., & Olaoye, O. (2014). Teachers' characteristics and students' attitude towards economics in secondary schools: Students' perspectives. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, (16), 455-462.*

Adu, E.O. & Ngibe, N.C.P. (2014). Continuous Change in Curriculum: South African teachers' Perceptions. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences,* (23), 983-989.

Agnew, S. (2015). Current trends in economics enrolments at secondary and tertiary level. *New Zealand Economic Papers*, (1), 33-43. doi:10.1080/00779954.2014.914428.

Aguilar, M. S., Rosas, A., & Zavaleta, J. G. M. (2012). 12th International Congress on Mathematical Education. COEX, Seoul, Korea.

Alexander, P.M., Holmner, M., Lotriet, H.H., Matthee, M.C., Pieterse, H.V., Naidoo, S., Twinomurinzi, H. and Jordan, D. (2010). Factors Affecting Career Choice: Comparison between Students from Computer and other disciplines. *Journal of Science Education and Technology.* Springer.

Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the Quality of the Findings of Qualitative Research: Looking at Trustworthiness Criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, (2), 272-281.

Asghar, J. (2013). Critical Paradigm: A Preamble for Novice Researchers. *Life Science Journal*, (4), 3121 – 3127.

Ashworth, J. & Evans, J. L. (2001). Modeling Student Subject Choice at Secondary and Tertiary Level: A Cross-Section Study. *The Journal of Economic Education, (4), 311-320.*

Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2007). Qualitative methods of Data sampling. *The practice of social research*, (*7)*,187-193.

Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2001). The Practice of Social Research. Oxford: Routledge. Anderson, G. 1990. *Fundamentals* of *Educational Research*. London: the Falmer Press.

Bachan, R., & Reilly, B. (2005). A comparison of A-level performance in Economics and Business Studies: How much more difficult is Economics? *Education Economics*, (1), 85-108.

Bashir, M., Afzal, M. & Azeem, M. (2008). Reliability and validity of qualitative and Operational research paradigm. *Pakistan Journal of Statistics and Operation Research*, (1), 35-45.

Basit, T. N. (2010). Conducting research in educational contexts. *Bloomsbury Publishing*.

Baumol, W., & Blinder, A. (1991). *Economics: Principles and policies* (5 ed.). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

Becker, W., Highsmith, R., Kennedy, P., & Walstad, W. (1991). An agenda for research on economic education in college and universities. *American Economic Review*, (2), 26-31.

Bernstein, B. (1975). Class, Codes, and control: The structuring of pedagogic discourse. *London: Routledge*.

Bhorat, H. & Van Der Westhuizen, C. (2010). Poverty, inequality and the nature of economic growth in South Africa. In *Testing Democracy Which Way is South Africa Going?* Misra-Dexter N, February J (eds). IDASA: Cape Town.

Carrera-Fernández, M. J. (2014). Qualitative methods of data analysis in psychology: an analysis of the literature. *Qualitative Research*, (1), 20–36.

Chouliaraki, L. & Fairclough, N. (1999). Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Cohen, L. M. (2011). *Research Methods in Education* (7 ed.). New York: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education*. 7th (ed.). New York: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). Research methods in education (6th ed.). London and New York: Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2013).). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage. (3rd ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.

Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (*3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*: Choosing Among Five Approaches. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Creswell, J. (2003). Mixed methods procedures. Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, 208-227.

Creswell, J.W., Hanson, W.E., Clark, V.L., Plano, C., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. The Counseling Psychologist, 35(2), 236-264.

Cornbleth, C. (1988). Curriculum in and out of Context. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*,(2), 85-96.

Davies, P., Adnett, N., & Turnbull, A. (2003). Market forces and diversity: some evidence from the 14-19 curriculum. Journal of curriculum studies, (4), 479-498.

Davis, P., & Durden, G., (2010) Economic Education in Schools and Universities in England. *The Journal of Economic Education*, (4), 413-424.

Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S., (2011). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. *In The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp.1-19). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Department of Basic Education. (2017). *2016 National Senior Certificate Examination. Diagnostic report*, DBE, Pretoria.

Department of Basic Education. (2011). *Curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS)*. Grades 10-12. Pretoria.

Department of Basic Education. (2011a). *Economics: National Curriculum Statement (NCS): Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*. Grades 10-12: Pretoria. Government Printing Works.

Department of Basic Education. (2011b**)**. *Economic and Management Sciences, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement of the National Curriculum Statement Senior Phase*. Grades, 7-9. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (2009). *National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)*. Pretoria: Department of Education**.**

Department of Education (2001). Education in South Africa: Achievements since 1994 ISDN 0-970-3911-2.

De Vos A. S., Strydom, H., Fouchè, C.B., & Delport, C.S.L. (2011). *Research at Grass Root: For the Social Sciences and Human Services Professions* (4th ed.). Van Schaik.

Ehrich, L. C. (1999). Untangling the threads and coils of the web of phenomenology. *Education Research Perspectives*, (26), 219-226.

Eklund-Myrskog, G. (1998). 'Students' conceptions of learning in different educational context'. *Higher Education*, (35), 299-316.

Fairclough, N. (2003). Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research. London: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2001). Critical discourse analysis as a method in social scientific research. In *Methods of critical discourse analysis*, pp. 121–138.

Fairclough, N. (1995). Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language. New York: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1995b). Media Discourse. London: Edward Arnold.

Fairclough, N. (1993). Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: The universities. *Discourse and Society, (4),* 122-169.

Fairclough, N. (1992). Critical Language Awareness. London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1989). Language and Power. London: Longman

Fiske, J. (1994). *Media matters: Everyday culture and political change*. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minneota Press.

Foucault, M. (1972). The Archaeology of Knowledge, New York: Pantheon.

Gee, J. P. (1990). Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses. London: The Falmer Press.

Gelb, S. (2003). Inequality in South Africa: Nature, causes and responses. *The Edge Institute*, Johannesburg.

Giorgi, A. (1997). The theory, practice, and evaluation of the phenomenological method as a qualitative research procedure. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, (28), 236-60.

Grant, C. & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, Selecting, and Integrating a Theoretical Framework in Dissertation Research: Creating the Blueprint for 'House'. *Administrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice and Research*, pp. 12-22.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Sage.

Habermas, J. (1989). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Vol. II). (T. McCarthy, Trans.) Boston: Beacon.

Hahn, J. & Kyungho, J. (2010). Economic Education in Korea: Current Status and changes. *The Journal of Economics Education*, (4), 436-447.

Holroyd, C. (2001). Phenomenological Research Method, Design and Procedure: A Phenomenological Investigation of the Phenomenon of Being-in-Community as Experienced by Two Individuals Who Have Participated in a Community Building Workshop. *IndoPacific Journal of Phenomenology*, (1), 1-10.

Hultberg, P., & Calonge, D.S. (2017). "Effective Teaching of Economics: A Constrained Optimization Problem?" *The Journal of Economic Education*, 48:4, 265-275.

Idris, M.M., & Yusuf, A. (2017). Assessment of Effect of Simulation Game Method in Teaching Economics in Secondary School in Kastina State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Contemporary Research and Review*, (10), 20350-20355.

Irvine, A. (2011). Duration, dominance and depth in telephone and face-to-face interviews: A comparative exploration. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, (3), 202-220.

Janks, H. (2010). *Literacy and Power.* New York and London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

Janks, H. (1997). 'Critical discourse analysis as a research tool.' Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education, (3) 329-342.

Jephcote, M. (2004). Economics in the school curriculum: Its origins, and reflections on the workings of a subject community. *Teaching Business and Economics,* (1), 13-20.

Jin, W., Muriel, A., & Sibieta, L. (2011). 'Subject and course choices in England: insights from behavioural economics', Centre for Understanding Behaviour Change. *Research Paper, Department for Education*, London.

Jorgensen, M. & Phillips, L. (2002). Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method. London: Sage.

Khadka, C.B. (2016). Effectiveness of Teaching Economics in Higher Secondary School Level, Nepal. *Economic Journal of development Issues, (1-2).*

Kincheloe, J.L., & McLaren, P.L. (2000). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) pp. 138-157. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and Applying Research Paradigms in Educational Contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education, (5), 26.*

Krauss, S. (2005). Research Paradigms and Meaning Making: A Primer. *The Qualitative Report,* (4), 758-770.

Kristeva, J. (1980). Word, Dialogue and Novel. In L. S. Roudiez (Ed.), Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art (pp. 64-91). *New York, NY: Colombia University Press.*

Kristeva, J. (1986). The Kristeva Reader. *New York, NY: Columbia University Press.*

Lewis, A. (2001). The issue of perception: some educational implications. *Educare*, 30:272-288.

Locke, T. (2004). Critical Discourse Analysis. London: *Continuum*.

Loh, J. (2013). Inquiry into issues of trustworthiness and quality in narrative studies: A perspective. *The Qualitative Report,*(33), 1.

Madill, A., & Gough, B. (2008). Qualitative research and its place in psychological science. *Psychological Methods,* (3), 254-271.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2011). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

McKenna, W. R. (1997). In L. Embree, E. Behnke, D. Carr, C. J. Evans, J. Huertas-Jourda, & J. Kockelmans. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Phenomenology* (pp. 177-180). Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

McMillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in education: Evidenced-based inquiry* (7th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson.

Mearman, A., Papa, A., & Webber, D. (2014). Why do students study economics? *Econ Issues,* (19), 119–147.

Mearman, A., Shoib, G., Wakeley, T., & Webber, D. (2011). Does Pluralism Make Better Educated, Happier Students? *International Review of Economics Education*, (10), 50-52.

Meiriza, M.S. (2015). Students' perception on the Prospect of Economics Education Study Program. *Journal of Education and practice,* (28), 144-151.

Mertens, D. M. (2009). Transformative research and evaluation. New York: Guilford.

Mertens, D. M. (2007). Transformative paradigm: Mixed methods and social justice. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*,(3), 212–225.

Migiro, S. O., & Magangi, B. A. (2011). Mixed methods: A review of literature and the future of the new research paradigm. *African Journal of Business Management.* (10), 3757- 3764.

Morrell, P. D., & Carroll, J. B. (2010). Conducting educational research: A primer for teachers and administrators. Rotterdam, Netherlands: *Sense Publishers*.

Noor, K. B. (2008). Case Study: A Strategic Research Methodology. *American Journal of Applied Sciences,* (11), 1602-1604.

Olusola, A.E., & Emunemu, B.O. (2008). Relative Effects of Problem-solving and Concept Mapping Instructional Strategies on Student's Achievement in Economics. *African Research Review, (1).*

Oziegbe, O.E., (2017). "Effect of Student-Teacher Ratio on Senior Secondary School Students Achievement in Economics." (3), 225-36.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice,* (*1),* 261-283. doi:10.1177/1473325002001003636.

Paul, M., & Ngirande, H. (2014). The influence of student's perceptions on mathematics performance. A case of selected high school in South Africa. *Mediterranean journal*

of social science.

Round D.K., & Shanahan, M.P. (2010). The Economics Degree in Australia: Down but Not Out? *The Journal of Economic Education*, (4), 425-435.

Schweitzer, R. P. D. (1998). Phenomenological research methodology: A guide. Paper presented at Phenomenology Seminar for Edith Cowan University, Bunbury WA. Bunbury.

Seymour, L., Hart, M., Haralambous, P., Natha, T., & Weng, C.-W. (2005). Inclination of scholars to major in Information Systems or Computer Science. (35), 97-106.

Shah, S. & Corley, K. (2006). Buiding Better Theory by Bridging the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide. *Journal of Management Studies*, (43), 1821-36.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects. *Education for Information*, (22), 63-75.

Sherman, R.R. & Web, R.B. (1990). *Qualitative research in education: Focus and methods*. London: Falmers.

Sherwood, P., & Silver, A. (1999). Client experience of counselling and psychotherapy. Unpublished report, Edith Cowan University, Bunbury WA.

Sidki, M. & Boll, D. (2017). The Perception and Opinion of Non-Economic Majors on Economics. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2943644.

Springate, I., Harland, J., Lord, P., & Wilkin, A. (2008). Why choose physics and chemistry? The influences on physics and chemistry subject choices of BME students. London: *The Institute of Physics and the Royal Society of Chemistry*.

Strydom, H. (2011). Ethical aspects of research in the social sciences and human service professions. In A. De Vos, H. Strydom, C. Fouche, & C. Delport, *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professionals* (4th ed.), pp. 113-130). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Strydom, A., & Bezuidenhout, R. M. (2014). On Qualitative Research. In F.D. Plooy-Cilliers, C. Davis and R.-M. Bezuidenhout (Eds), *Research Matters* (pp. 336). Claremont, Cape Town: Juta.

Taylor, B. M. (2015). *The Integrated Dynamics of Motivation and Performance in the Workplace*. Retrieved from Wiley Online Library, (5), 28-37.

Thanh, N.C & Thanh, T. T. L.(2015). The Interconnection between Interpretivist Paradigm and Qualitative Methods in Education. *American Journal of Educational Science*. (2), pp. 24-27.

Trading Economics (2019, January). *South African Unemployment Rate*. Retrieved from https://tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/unemployment-rate.

Tripney, J., Newman, M., Bangpan, M., Niza, C., MacKintosh, M. & Sinclair, J. (2010). Factors Influencing Young People (Aged 14-19). In Education about STEM Subject Choices: A Systematic Review of the UK Literature. *Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-Ordinating Centre*. Institute of Education, University of London, London.

Umalusi. (2014). What's in the CAPS package? Business, Commerce & Management. In S. M. Maistry, M. M. van Wyk, S. Ponen, E. J. Pretorius, L. J. Johnson, & M. L. Rambuda, *Economics: A comparison of the NCS and the CAPS for the FET Phase* (pp. 106-136). Pretoria: Umalusi Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training.

"UN Treaty Collection: *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*". UN. 3 January 1976. Retrieved 21 November 2016.

Van Manen, M. (2007). Phenomenology of practice. Phenomenol. Pract. (1),11–30.

van Wyk, M. M. (2016). Using an Attitude toward Economics Education Scale to Explore Teachers' Attitudes toward the Subject in Free State Secondary Schools. *Journal of Economics & Economic Education Research*, (3), 106–117.

van Wyk, M.M. (2012). Measuring students' attitudes to economic education: a factorial analysis approach. Soc. (31), 27–4.

van Wyk MM. (2007). The Use of Cooperative Learning in Economics in the Further Education and Training Phase of the Free State Province. (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Bloemfontein, University of the Free State).

Walliman, N. (2011). Your research project: Designing and planning your work. *Sage Publications.*

Walstad, W. (2001). Improving assessment in university economics. *Journal of Economic Education*, 32(summer), 281-294.

Walstad, W. (Ed.). (1994). An international perspective on economic education. *Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.*

Walstad, W., & Soper, J. (1988). Economic attitudes of high school students: New norms for the survey on Economics attitudes. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 4(fall), 295-312.

Walstad, W. (1990). Research on high school economic education: Comment. *Journal of Economic Education*, (3), 248-253.

Webber, D.J. & Mearman, A. (2012). Students' Perceptions of Economics: Identifying demand for further study, *Applied Economics*, (9), 1121-1132. doi: 10.1080/00036846.2010.537640.

Yusuf, A. (2010). Economics Education. Nigeria: University of Ilorin.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter to the principal, SGB chair,

17th September, 2018

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is olayinka Samuel Olagunju; I am a masters student I in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I wish to request permission to conduct research in your school.

My research interest is to "explore and understand grade 10 learner's perception of the importance of economics subject. In order to have access to required information, I have to interview some grade 10 learners and they have to respond a structured questionnaire.

I have chosen your school because I believe I can count on your unwavering cooperation and will be able to assist to enable me collect the data for my study

I am inviting your school to participate in this research.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE 

NAME: Olagunju Olayinka Samuel

ADDRESS: 29 Great Britain Street, Turffontein, Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa

EMAIL: 1422829@students.wits.ac.za

TELEPHONE NUMBERS: +27625429940

Appendix 2: Teachers information sheet

17th September, 2018

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Olagunju Samuel Olayinka and I am postgraduate student in the faculty of humanities and department of curriculum studies in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

My research interest is "exploring and understanding grade 10 learner's perception of the importance of economics subject: A critical study"

My investigation involves that I hand out a structured questionnaire, to be completed by participants and to conduct a forty-five minutes interview session. I would also be analyzing the assessment report of participants.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because I believe you will offer me the cooperation and support that I need to complete this research. I was wondering whether you would mind if I ask your learners to participate in this study. I need their help to complete a structured questionnaire and participate in an interview session, which will be audiotaped.

The name of your class and identity of your learners will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Their individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Your learners will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Their participation is voluntary, so you can withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and they will not be paid for this study.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE 

NAME: Olagunju Samuel Olayinka

ADDRESS: 29 Great Britain Street Turffontein, Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa

EMAIL:1422829@students.wits.ac.za

TELEPHONE NUMBERS: +27625429940

Teachers consent form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission to review/collect documents	**Circle one**
I agree that the assessment records of my learners can be used for this study only.	YES/NO
Permission to audiotape my learners	
I agree that my learners audiotaped during the interview or observation lesson	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO
Permission to interview my learners	
I would like my learners to be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that they can stop the interview at any time and do not have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO
Permission for questionnaire	
I agree to my learners filling in a question and answer sheet for this study.	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My Learners name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- They do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- They can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

Appendix 3: Learners information sheet

17th September 2018

Dear Learner

My name is Olagunju Samuel Olayinka and I am a postgraduate student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

My research interest is "exploring and understanding grade 10 learner's perception of the importance of economics subject: A critical study"

My investigation involves that I hand out a structured questionnaire, to be completed by participants and to conduct a forty-five minutes interview session. I was wondering whether you would mind if ask you to participate in this study. I need your help with completing the questionnaires and participate in the interview session, which will be audiotaped.

Remember, this is not a test, it is not for marks and it is voluntary, which means that you don't have to do it. In addition, if you decide halfway through that you prefer to stop, this is completely your choice and will not affect you negatively in any way.

I will not be using your own name but I will make one up so no one can identify you. All information about you will be kept confidential in all my writing about the study. In addition, all collected information will be stored safely and destroyed between 3-5 years after I have completed my project.

Your parents have also been given an information sheet and consent form, but at the end of the day it is your decision to join us in the study.

I look forward to working with you!

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you

SIGNATURE 

NAME: Olagunju Samuel Olayinka

ADDRESS: 29 Great Britain Street Turffontein, Johannesburg South Africa

EMAIL: 1422829@students.wits.ac.za

TELEPHONE NUMBERS: +27625429940

Learners consent form

Please fill in the reply slip below if you agree to participate in my study called: "Exploring and Understanding grade 10 learner's perception of the importance of economics subject: A critical study"

My name is Olagunju Samuel Olayinka

	Circle one
I agree that my assessment records can be used for this study only.	YES/NO
Permission to be audiotaped	
I agree to be audiotaped during the interview or observation lesson	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO
Permission to be interviewed	
I would like to be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO
Permission for questionnaire	
I agree to fill in a question and answer sheet or write a test for this study.	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

Appendix 4: Parents information sheet

17th September 2018

Dear Parent

My name is Olagunju Samuel Olayinka and I am postgraduate student in the faculty of humanities and department of curriculum studies in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

My research interest is "exploring and understanding grade 10 learner's perception of the importance of economics subject: A critical study"

My investigation involves that I hand out a structured questionnaire, to be completed by participants and to conduct a forty-five minutes interview session. I would also be analyzing the assessment report of participants.

The reason why I have chosen your child's class is that I know that will provide me with the necessary cooperation and support that I need to complete this research. I was wondering whether you would mind if I ask you child to participate in this study. I need his/her help to complete a structured questionnaire and participate in an interview session, which will be audiotaped.

Your child will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. S/he will be reassured that s/he can withdraw her/his permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and your child will not be paid for this study.

Your child's name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. His/her individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE 

NAME: Olagunju Samuel Olayinka

ADDRESS: 29 Great Britain Street Turffontein, Johannesburg, Gauteng South Africa

EMAIL: 1422829@students.wits.ac.za

TELEPHONE NUMBERS: +27625429940

Parent consent form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to allow your child to participate in the research project called "exploring and understanding grade 10 learner's perception of the importance of economics subject: A critical study".

I, _____ the parent of _____

Permission to review/collect documents	**Circle one**
I agree that my child's assessment records can be used for this study only.	YES/NO
Permission to be audiotaped	
I agree that my child may be audiotaped during interview or observations.	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO
Permission to be interviewed	
I agree that my child may be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that he/she can stop the interview at any time and doesn't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO
Permission for questionnaire/test	
I agree t my child may be fill in a question and answer sheet or write a test for this study.	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my child's name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- he/she does not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- he/she can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

Appendix 5: Sample of the Interview Schedule

Section A: General Information

Introductory questions:

1) Which are you favourite subjects in secondary school?
2) When did you started doing Economics subject?
3) How is Economics relevant in your life?
4) Where do your parents work?

Research Question:

1. Please explain to me, what is Economics all about?
2. What is it that you like about Economics subject?
3. How is Economics important? OR Do you think Economics is important?
4. What makes Economics important for you?
5. What are some of the topics that you enjoy most in Economics in grade 10?
6. What makes the topics interesting for you?
7. What challenges have you experienced when learning Economics?
8. How do you learn Economics when alone?
9. Do you learn Economics with your friends? How do you learn it?
10. Can you please give me an overview of Economics as a subject, the way you know it?

Appendix 6: Interview Transcript

Learner 1: Flakky Secondary School

19 May 2019 (Change date)
[R]: = Researcher speaking
[L1]: = Learner 1 speaking
[Fq]: = Follow up question

{R}: What grade are you?

{L1}**:** Grade 10

{R}: What is your Favourite Subject

{L1}**:** Accounting and Economics.

{Fq}: Of these two, which is the most favourite?

{L1}**:** Economics

{Fq}: are you saying Economics for the sake of this research or Economics is the subject you really love?

{L1}**:** Economics is my most favourite; because I remember when I was doing EMS, the section I pass the most is Economics and accounting. Business I was doing great too. This is when I figure out I really like Economics.

{Fq}: So, it your performance in Economics that fuel your interest in the Subject?

{L1}**:** Yes.

{R}: When did you start doing Economics?

{L1}**:** In Grade 10. But as EMS in Grade 7

{Fq}: Can you tell me something about Ems?

{L1}**:** Ems obviously is Economic management Science. It is the combination of business studies, Economics and accounting. Basically, EMS like Economics teaches you something about what is going on around you. And if you want to be a business woman you can take EMS and learn about creative thinking, Indigenous knowledge, etc.

{R}: Why did you choose to study Economics in grade 10?

{L1}**:** I choose to study Economics because of the subjects I am doing and because of what I

want to be, because I am doing commerce subjects. In order for me to know more about the path to my career (Charted Accountant). Although, it is not a must for me to do commerce subjects if i want to become a chartered account, I can choose business, life science and accounting if want. Then I choose commerce (Economics) because, let say if I go the university I will have more knowledge than what I did in life science or physical science and for my career (Chartered accountant).

{Fq}: Simply put, what you are saying is that you choose to do study Economics as a subject because it will guide you towards your career path?

{L1}**:** Yes.

{R}: Do you think Economics is relevant to your life?

{L1}**:** Not quite, because as a chartered accountant we do not literally deal with a lot of things going on around us. What we deal with is money, statement, and adjustment. So, I do
not thinks Economics is really relevant for me. If I want to take physical science, I would have taken it and dropping Economics but then I saw that since I am good at Economics, I should take Economics and leave life science, because I have not really like sciences ever since, I am afraid about science subjects.

{Fq}: Putting aside your career intentions, in your day to day living, do you think your knowledge of Economics is helpful/useful?

{L1}**:** it is useful, because if a person does not know what is going on in the Economy, I can explain to them. Maybe with the tax rate or something, I can explain to them this is what is happening with the tax rate, this how you can figure out the currency of another country and all that.

{Fq}: can you tell me specifically, areas where you find Economics useful?

{L1} The Knowledge of Economics is relevant to the market, the Economic system; it is relevant to the bank, because it teaches us about how money developed.

{Fq}: what I am interested in is if you see any relevance of Economics to your life?

{L1}**:** I do not think I can answer that question right now.

{Fq}: for example, when you buy things in the market, do you think the knowledge of economics is useful in anyway in making a decision about what to buy?

{L1}: I think it kind of does. When buying something you have to differentiate the prices and the shops, in terms of which one is cheaper, expensive, etc. When I want to buy, I do not think about Economics, I Just buy.

{Fq}: So, what you are saying is that Economics do not have much relevance to your life?

{L1}**:** Yes.

{R}: Where do your parent work?

{L1}**:** My parent are self-employed.

{Fq): Does what your parent do, influence your love for Economics in anyway?

{L1}**:** What my parents' work did not influence my choice of economics in any way.

{R}: Can you explain to me what Economics is all about?

{L1}**:** Economics teaches about the Economy. It just makes us understand what is happening around us. Because some of us might not know what is happening in the Economy and how it started. Like the demand thing, not a lot of people know about it. It can basically teaches how this things works.

{Fq}: "How these works" in your statement will be referring to what?

{L1}: the Economy.

{R}: What do you like about Economics?

{L1}**:** What I like about Economics is that it helps you do research about what is happening. For me let say they give me an assignment and say do this, this and this. Obviously, it will need research and I love researching.

{Fq}: Can give me an example of what you are talking about, when you said it helps you to do research?

{L1}**:** let say we are talking about money. I can go to the internet and ask, where does the First money came from?

{Fq}: I believe you approach other subjects like that too. So what makes that of Economics so special?

{L1}**:** We also do research about creative thinking in business studies, but then, it does not require a lot of research, because the information is there for you.

{R}: Do you think Economics as a subject is important?

{L1}**:** it is not that important.

{Fq}: Why?

{L1}**:** Economics is just like not quite necessary to made relevant. I might not have been interested in Economics and there others who do not like Economics. Economics I do

not care about it is not my thing. Because a lot of people think Economics is too much work. It requires you to research study this and study that. You have to know the dates, etc. Because Economics is almost synonymous with history and a lot of people who do not like to do research. Other that are doing Economics now are doing it because they hear that Economics is an easy subject and when it comes to research they do not want to research. They want to do stuffs in the last minutes. So, we cannot make that important, if people are not really interested in it. For my career, I would have taken another subject.

{Fq}: But why did you choose Economics?

{L1}**:** Because it is part of the commercial thing and I do not like to do science subjects.

{Fq}: So, for you choose Economics as an alternative subject (because you do not like to do science)?

{L1}**:** Yes. So, it is not that important. Although I can also say, it is in between. Meaning, for my career it is not important, I could have chosen another subject, for example physical science. But, for other things, it can be important.

{Fq}: How do you mean?

{L1}**:** generally, in think it important. It help me to make choices better. It can help me understand things that are happening today in the economy that I don't know about and since we do not know how it started, economics can help a little bit to know how it first started.

{R}: Which topic do you enjoy most in Economics?

{L1}**:** Banking and Scarcity problem.

{Fq}: Can you explain what makes these topics interesting?

{L1}**:** Banking helps me to understand better, how money came about. What was the first bank developed before the banks we have now. The scarcity problem help me understand what are want that can/cannot be satisfied and what are my need that can/ cannot be satisfied.

{R}: What are some of the challenges you have experienced in learning Economics?

{L1}**:** I do not think I really have any challenge.

{Fq}: What are your thoughts about the graphical and mathematical aspects of Economics?

{L1}**:** I for me it is hard to remember since I am a person that forgets things easily.

{R}: How do you learn Economics?

{L1}**:** I take the study book and if I have to learn something, I make a spider diagram and write it down the important points in a way I can remember.

{R}: Do you study economics with your friends?

{L1}**:** No.

{Fq}: Why?

{L1}**:** we distract each other.

{R}: Can you give me an overview of Economics the way you know it?

{L1}**:** it is a subject that can help you understand what you do not know about the Economy. What is happening in life and the Economic system.

{R}: Does your teacher's teaching style in any way shapes the way you think about the subject?

{L1}**:** yes. My teachers teaching style shapes how I think about the subject.

Appendix 7: Ethics Clearance

Wits School of Education

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 11 717-3221 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

18 July 2018

Student Number: 1422829

Protocol Number: 2018ECE014M

Dear Olayinka Samuel Olagunju

Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate, has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

"Exploring and understanding grade 10 learners' perceptions of the importance of Economics subject: A critical study"

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that **clearance was granted**. Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely,

MMaseka

Wits School of Education

011 717-3416

cc Supervisor - Dr. Mathakga Botha

Appendix 8: GDE Approval



GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	01 August 2018
Validity of Research Approval:	05 February 2018 – 28 September 2018 2018/219
Name of Researcher:	Olagunju OS
Address of Researcher:	110 high street, Cnr Kennedy Turffontein
	Johannesburg
	Gauteng, 2190
Telephone Number:	062 542 9940
Email address:	1422829@students.wits.ac.za
Research Topic:	Exploring and understanding grade 10 learners' perception of the importance of Economics subjects: A critical study
Type of qualification	Masters
Number and type of schools:	Twi Secondary Schools.
District/s/HO	Johannesburg South.

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

02/08/2018

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

Appendix 9: Johannesburg District 14 Approval letter

GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: Caroline Tladi
File no: 2/2/1
Tel: 011 983 2135
Email: Caroline.Tladi@gauteng.gov.za
Chief Directorate: Education Planning and Research

MR O OLAGUNJU
MASTER OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERAND
110 HIGH STREET
CNR KENNEDY
TURFFONTEIN
JOHANNESBURG
2190

By Email: 1422629@students.wits.ac.za

Dear Mr Olagunju

SUBJECT: RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Correspondence received from you on 13 August 2018 title: *Exploring and understanding grade 10 learners' perception of the importance of Economics subjects: A case study* is acknowledged and has reference.

Thank you for informing the District Office of your intended research.

The following attachments are acknowledged and received:

1. GDE Research Approval letter from the Knowledge Management and Research Directorate at GDE Head Office – 13 August 2018.
2. Letter to the District Director
3. Ethics clearance letter from the University of the Witwatersrand
4. Research Proposal
5. List of schools
6. Sample of Questionnaire
7. Sample of the interview guide for learners

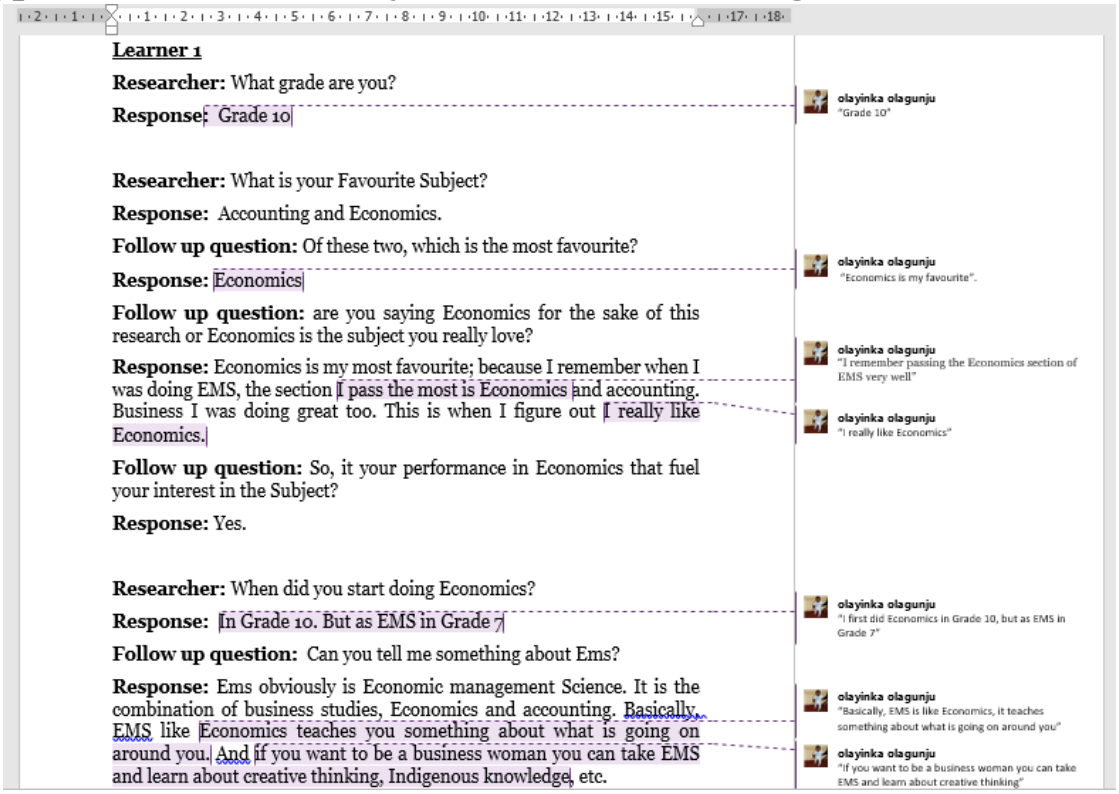
You are welcome to proceed with your research however, in the execution thereof, you are reminded to heed the President's non-negotiable and be mindful of protecting contact time.

The District Office wishes you great success with your research and reminds you to comply with the terms and conditions against which approval has been granted by the Knowledge Management and Research Directorate.

Yours sincerely

MS B. L. T. SEATE
DISTRICT DIRECTOR
DATE: 13 AUGUST 2018

Appendix10: Data Analysis: Initial list of categories



Learner 1

Researcher: What grade are you?

Response: Grade 10

Researcher: What is your Favourite Subject?

Response: Accounting and Economics.

Follow up question: Of these two, which is the most favourite?

Response: Economics

Follow up question: are you saying Economics for the sake of this research or Economics is the subject you really love?

Response: Economics is my most favourite; because I remember when I was doing EMS, the section I pass the most is Economics and accounting. Business I was doing great too. This is when I figure out I really like Economics.

Follow up question: So, it your performance in Economics that fuel your interest in the Subject?

Response: Yes.

Researcher: When did you start doing Economics?

Response: In Grade 10. But as EMS in Grade 7

Follow up question: Can you tell me something about Ems?

Response: Ems obviously is Economic management Science. It is the combination of business studies, Economics and accounting. Basically, EMS like Economics teaches you something about what is going on around you. And if you want to be a business woman you can take EMS and learn about creative thinking, Indigenous knowledge, etc.

olayinka olagunju "Grade 10"

olayinka olagunju "Economics is my favourite".

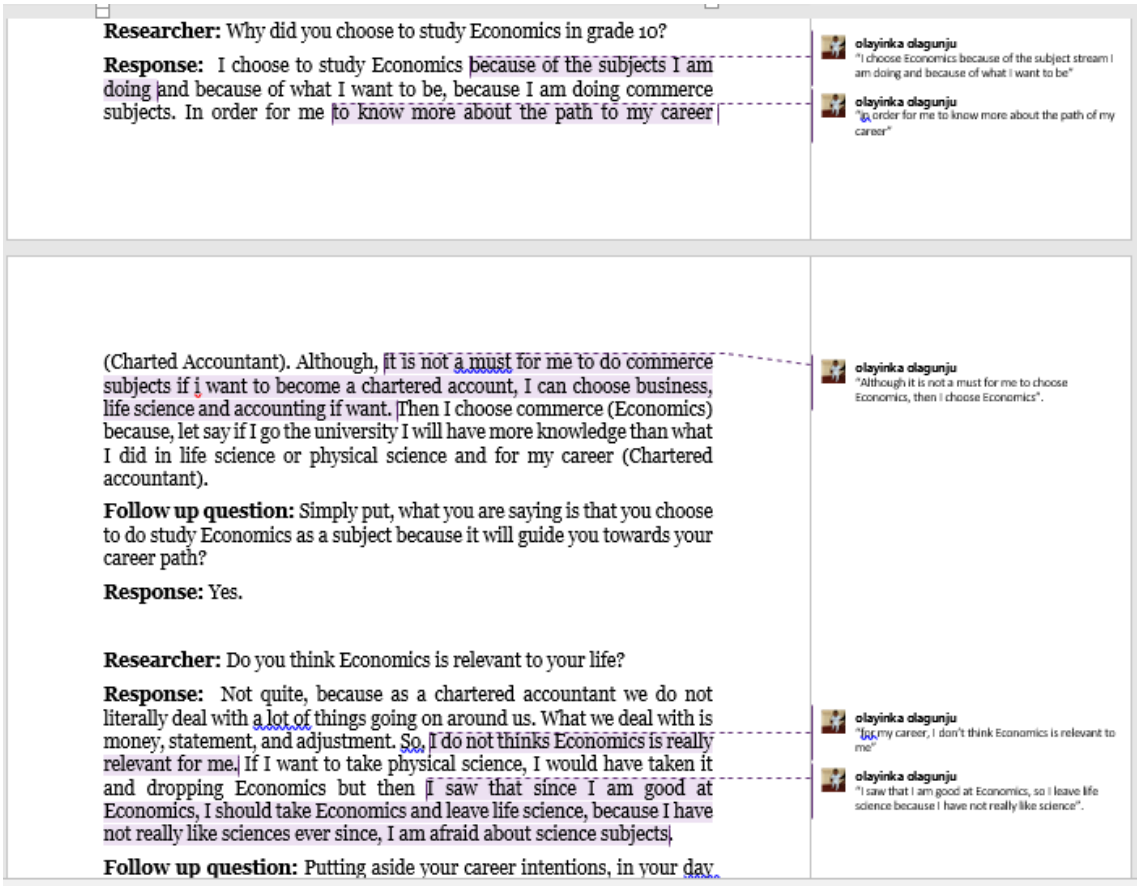
olayinka olagunju "I remember passing the Economics section of EMS very well"

olayinka olagunju "I really like Economics"

olayinka olagunju "I first did Economics in Grade 10, but as EMS in Grade 7"

olayinka olagunju "Basically, EMS is like Economics, it teaches something about what is going on around you"

olayinka olagunju "If you want to be a business woman you can take EMS and learn about creative thinking"



Researcher: Why did you choose to study Economics in grade 10?

Response: I choose to study Economics because of the subjects I am doing and because of what I want to be, because I am doing commerce subjects. In order for me to know more about the path to my career

olayinka olagunju "I choose Economics because of the subject stream I am doing and because of what I want to be"

olayinka olagunju "In order for me to know more about the path of my career"

(Charted Accountant). Although, it is not a must for me to do commerce subjects if i want to become a chartered account, I can choose business, life science and accounting if want. Then I choose commerce (Economics) because, let say if I go the university I will have more knowledge than what I did in life science or physical science and for my career (Chartered accountant).

Follow up question: Simply put, what you are saying is that you choose to do study Economics as a subject because it will guide you towards your career path?

Response: Yes.

Researcher: Do you think Economics is relevant to your life?

Response: Not quite, because as a chartered accountant we do not literally deal with a lot of things going on around us. What we deal with is money, statement, and adjustment. So, I do not thinks Economics is really relevant for me. If I want to take physical science, I would have taken it and dropping Economics but then I saw that since I am good at Economics, I should take Economics and leave life science, because I have not really like sciences ever since, I am afraid about science subjects.

Follow up question: Putting aside your career intentions, in your day

olayinka olagunju "Although it is not a must for me to choose Economics, then I choose Economics".

olayinka olagunju "for my career, I don't think Economics is relevant to me"

olayinka olagunju "I saw that I am good at Economics, so I leave life science because I have not really like science".

not really like sciences ever since, I am afraid about science subjects.

Follow up question: Putting aside your career intentions, in your day to day living, do you think your knowledge of Economics is helpful/useful?

Response: it is useful, because if a person does not know what is going on in the Economy, I can explain to them. Maybe with the tax rate or something, I can explain to them this is what is happening with the tax rate, this how you can figure out the currency of another country and all that.

olayinka olagunju
"it is useful because if a person does not know what is going on in the Economy I can teach them"

Follow up question: can you tell me specifically, areas where you find Economics useful?

Response: The Knowledge of Economics is relevant to the market, the Economic system; it is relevant to the bank, because it teaches us about how money developed.

olayinka olagunju
"Economics knowledge is relevant in the market, economic system, bank and teaches about how money develop"

Follow up question: what I am interested in is if you see any relevance of Economics to your life?

Response: I do not think I can answer that question right now.

Follow up question: for example, when you buy things in the market, do you think the knowledge of Economics is useful in anyway in making a decision about what to buy?

Response: I think it kind of does. When buying something you have to differentiate the prices and the shops, in terms of which one is cheaper, expensive, etc. When I want to buy, I do not think about Economics, I Just buy.

Follow up question: So, what you are saying is that Economics do not have much relevance to your life?

Response: Yes.

Researcher: Where do your parent work?

Response: My parent are self-employed.

Follow up question: Does what your parent do, influence your love for Economics in anyway?

Response: What my parents' work did not influence my choice of economics in any way.

olayinka olagunju
My parent have no influence on my decision to study Economics"

Researcher: Can you explain to me what Economics is all about?

Response: Economics teaches about the Economy. It just makes us understand what is happening around us. Because some of us might not know what is happening in the Economy and how it started. Like the demand thing, not a lot of people know about it. It can basically teaches how this things works.

olayinka olagunju
"Economics teaches about the Economy, it make us understand what is going on around us"

Follow up question: "How these works" in your statement will be referring to what?

Response: the Economy.

Researcher: What do you like about Economics?

Response: What I like about Economics is that it helps you do research about what is happening. For me let say they give me an assignment and say do this, this and this. Obviously, it will need research and I love researching.

olayinka olagunju
"it helps to do research about what is happening and I love research"

Follow up question: Can give me an example of what you are talking about, when you said it helps you to do research?

Response: let say we are talking about money. I can go to the internet and ask, where does the first money came from?

Follow up question: I believe you approach other subjects like that too. So what makes that of Economics so special?

Response: We also do research about creative thinking in business studies, but then, it does not require a lot of research, because the information is there for you.

Researcher: Do you think Economics as a subject is important?

Response: It is not that important.

olayinka olagunju
"It is not that important for my future career"

Follow up question: Why?

Response: Economics is just like not quite necessary to made relevant. I might not have been interested in Economics and there others who do not like Economics. Economics I do not care about it is not my thing. Because a lot of people think Economics is too much work. It requires you to research study this and study that. You have to know the dates, etc. Because Economics is almost synonymous with history and a lot of people who do not like to do research. Other that are doing Economics now are doing it because they hear that Economics is an easy subject and when it comes to research they do not want to research. They want to do stuffs in the last minutes. So, we cannot make that important, if people are not really interested in it. For my career, I would have taken another subject.

olayinka olagunju
"I might not have been in Economics and there others who do not like Economics because people think it is too much work"

olayinka olagunju
"It is Demanding because economics is synonymous with history"

olayinka olagunju
"Others that are doing Economics are now doing it because they hear that economics is an easy subject"

olayinka olagunju
"So, we cannot make Economics that important, if people are not really interested in it"

Follow up question: But why did you choose Economics?

Response: because it is part of the commercial thing and I do not like to do science subjects.

olayinka olagunju
"I choose economics because it is part of commercial thing and I do not like to do science subjects".

Follow Up question: So, for you choose Economics as an alternative subject (because you do not like to do science)?

Response: Yes. So, it is not that important. Although I can also say, it is in between. Meaning, for my career it is not important, I could have chosen another subject, for example physical science. But, for other things, it can be important.

olayinka olagunju
"For my career it is not important but for other thing it can be important"

Follow up question: How do you mean?

Response: generally, in think it important. It help me to make choices better. It can help me understand things that are happening today in the economy that I don't know about and since we do not know how it started, economics can help a little bit to know how it first started.

olayinka olagunju
"Economics raises my awareness about what is happening the Economy"

olayinka olagunju
"Economics can help a lit bit to know how if first started"

Researcher: Which topic do you enjoy most in Economics?

Response: Banking and Scarcity problem.

olayinka olagunju
"Banking and scarcity problem are my favourite topics"

Follow up question: Can you explain what makes these topics interesting?

Response: Banking helps me to understand better, how money came about. What was the first bank developed before the banks we have now. The scarcity problem help me understand what are want that can/cannot be satisfied and what are my need that can/ cannot be satisfied.

olayinka olagunju
"Teaches about how money came about, how the banks developed and understand what are want that can and cannot be satisfied."

Researcher: What are some of the challenges you have experienced in learning Economics?

olayinka olagunju