



Experiences of heads of department in managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects: A literature-based study

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Abstract—Heads Of Department (HODs) in schools have raised concerns over teacher absenteeism, tardiness, and workload. HODs are situated in the School Management team's middle management and are essential in ensuring that teaching and learning occur. To carry out this task, they must efficiently manage their time. HODs, on the other hand, face difficulties in their roles. However, this study investigated the experiences of HODs in managing commercial teaching and learning. Qualitative techniques were used in this study to better understand the roles of HODs in controlling teaching and learning on commercial topics. It adopted a desktop research design and was literature-based. The information was gleaned from published journal articles, textbooks, and document analysis. Ten books, articles, and journals were selected as the foundation for literature assessment. The study's findings showed the roles that HODs in commercial subjects follow to support them as they carry out their duties, challenges faced by HODs in managing commercial subjects, and strategies that assist the HODs to carry on with their duties regardless of the challenges they face. This study suggested that HODs must encourage teachers to attend topic workshops, and that continuous professional development is required. Teachers should devour widely, research their areas of expertise, and conduct themselves professionally. Present, timely, and actively involved in extensive course planning, preparation, and delivery. HODs are welcome to visit classrooms anytime to ensure effective teaching and learning occur at departmental or subject meetings.

Keywords: Commercial subjects, Heads of departments, Managing, quality teaching and learning

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I. INTRODUCTION

CALLS for changes in Several studies have explored different perspectives of the Heads of Departments (HODs) as professional leaders who lead teaching and learning. All these studies support the notion that HODs are the driving forces behind learning and teaching in South African schools (Mpisane, 2015). Scholars agreed that HODs must reflect trust and promote school teamwork (Swart, 2008; Visagie, 2006). HODs play a vital role in leading and ensuring that the curriculum is delivered in schools while they still lead their departmental teams and encourage quality teaching and learning (Malatji, 2018). Tlali and Matete (2020) also argued that HODs influence others to achieve the educational institution's goals, vision, and mission. The responsibilities and roles of the South African HODs are outlined in the Personnel Administrative Measure (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2022). HODs are considered curriculum heads and instructional leaders because of their responsibilities, such as overseeing school teaching and learning. HODs participate in school management, and their supervisory role is linked to teaching and learning, as this is one of the key functions ensuring that the school operates daily (Niekerk, 2019). Mthiyane et al. (2019) conducted a "Jika Imfundo" intervention. The Jika Imfundo intervention was a School Management Teams (SMT) project comprised of school HODs, deputy principals, and principals trained in one rural area (King Cetshwayo) in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province. Leading and managing school instruction was one module covered during the Jika Imfundo intervention. Approximately 20% of the HODs complained that they were having difficulties managing to teach and learn in their different schools due to challenges

such as a lack of communication between them and teachers who are under their departments, endless paperwork, and the extended hours they put in ensuring that they balance their general administrative duties and their teaching duties, as they also engage in teaching. During this intervention, HODs also indicated that they are not getting full support from the education department, which leads to a lack of resources needed for effective school monitoring.

Bush et al. (2010) posit that workload impacts the HODs' performance because some work more hours. Bush et al. (2010) elaborated and explained that when he was conducting his study, one of the interviewees, who is a HOD, mentioned that he works 15 hours a day, which makes him end up not monitoring teaching and learning in his departments, which leads his department to underperform in the school. Nonetheless, these problems are faced by almost 15% of rural secondary schools in South Africa, and this leads to 80% of rural secondary schools being dysfunctional due to poor management by the HODs and by the other members of the school management team (News 24, July 11, 2022, p. 1).

Commercial subjects are being phased out in some rural areas in the Limpopo province due to several reasons, such as poor management from the commercial stream HODs, poor performance of learners, and poor performance of teachers (Thaba-Nkadimene & Mmakola, 2020). South Africa has approximately 11, 252 elementary schools, with approximately 3060 secondary schools. In the words of Gina, the former chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education (2015), they have heard conventions from various HODs in rural areas. They have raised concerns that they are not fully assisting with all required resources, which prevents them from carrying out their duties to manage teaching and learning. Gina indicated during the Rural Schooling Conference that 'most secondary schools in rural areas are not

given attention, and such needs to change as these schools' performance improves yearly'. This takes us back to the *Jika Imfundo* intervention in the rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal, where the HODs looked out and said that the department was not fully supporting them.

Commercial stream HODs ensure that teaching and learning take place, as they are the ones who monitor Grade 12 work and supervise teachers who are teaching Grade 12. Rajoo (2012) argued that HODs from the commercial streams are not fully supported. The researcher draws attention back to 2006 when the Department of Education (DoE) introduced a new curriculum for accounting in Grade 10. Rajoo (2012) further articulated that little support from the DBE was given to the teachers teaching accounting, and little training took place. That training was conducted by other teachers who were also new to the curriculum.

Therefore, everything was left in the hands of the commercial stream HODs to introduce and orient teachers teaching accounting in their departments. Hence, this study attempts to explore the experiences of the HODs in managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Schools are places where learners receive formal education; thus, this is done under the watchful eye of the School Leadership Team, which they form part (Trinter & Hughes, 2023). For the school to improve its performance, its instructional capacity must be improved. When I was doing my teaching practice, I noticed that HODs were not fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the Personnel Administrative Measure (PAM) document on personnel administrative measures (DBE, 2022). Mpisane (2015) argued that most HODs are facing challenges in controlling teaching and learning in secondary schools around South Africa. Challenges such as workload and adding more hours to their teaching engagement make them not check and evaluate teachers' performance in their departments. Additionally, Rajoo (2012) claimed that the DoE does not assist commercial stream HODs enough.

Following the Employment Equity Act of 1998, HODs must coordinate subjects in their respective departments, support teachers, formulate policies, and supervise the work of teachers and learners. This study elaborated more on the challenges faced by commercial subjects' HODs. Moreover, it further explored the HODs' experiences managing learning and teaching in the commercial stream.

III. VALUE OF THE STUDY

This study contributed to ongoing research on the experiences of the HODs in managing teaching and learning commercial subjects. McEwan (2003) posited that many HODs encounter setbacks that hinder them from performing their duties, such as the absence of DoE support, inadequate school encouragement, and a shortage of training. Therefore, in this study, the researcher aims to explore the challenges HODs face when managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects. The study also outlines the strategies recommended to improve the management of learning and teaching in the commercial stream.

Mantekana and Du Plessis (2021) argue that implementing the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) curriculum 2012 posed many challenges in the commercial stream, especially in accounting. Adopting the new curriculum presented numerous obstacles to the subject's teachers, who were teaching accounting. Du Plessis and Mbunyuza (2014) argued that accounting teachers lacked the skills and knowledge to meet the CAPS-related challenges; moreover, the workshops that the DoE conducted did not adequately prepare the teachers for the new content being added to the subject. In addition, Du Plessis and Mbunyuza (2014) elaborated that the time allocated to complete the syllabus is insufficient, leading accounting learners to fail, especially in Grade 12. Therefore, the study aims to inform the DoE about future workshops where teachers and HODs are trained and oriented if a new curriculum is introduced so that they can deal with

any challenges the new curriculum poses. Furthermore, the DBE must provide the HODs with all the necessary resources to assist them in monitoring their departments effectively.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Lived experience theory

The lived experience theory is the theoretical framework that underpins this study. Throughout the study, the lived experience theory will explore the experiences and reflections of the commercial stream HODs in managing teaching and learning in commercial topics. The term 'lived experience' was developed by French existentialist Simone de Beauvoir in 1969. Depraz et al. (2003) define the lived experience theory as a theory that illustrates an individual's personal decisions and experiences, and the knowledge obtained from these choices and experiences. The lived experience theory is also based on a certain service or issue directed at a certain individual. Chandler and Munday (2011) argue that the lived experience theory belongs to individuals who have gained knowledge through first-hand and direct involvement in everyday events rather than through assumptions they hear from the media and other people. Moreover, Manen (1997) elaborates that the lived experience theory has four aspects that involve the lived body, lived space, lived human, and lived time; these four aspects assist in ensuring that there is an understanding of the world of lived experience.

The rationale for choosing the lived experience theory was that this study explores the lived experiences of the commercial stream's HODs, who are the managers of teaching and learning. Therefore, this theory allows us to explore the knowledge the heads of commercial stream departments have gained as they manage learning and teaching in commercial subjects. Moreover, this theory allows the researcher to identify challenges faced by commercial stream HODs and formulate recommendations that HODs can use to improve the management of teaching and learning in commercial subjects.

V. LITERATURE OF REVIEW

Roles of HODs in managing commercial subjects

HODs are professional leaders responsible for ensuring a standard of learning and teaching in schools and managing the learning environment daily (Molefe, 2015). The Personnel Administrative Measures document is a guideline to aid HODs when performing their tasks and managing their departments (DBE, 2022). Mpisane (2015) contends that HODs must carry out their roles as defined by the DBE, which include overseeing classroom instruction, guaranteeing that class tasks are carried out, marking is performed, and learners receive feedback. Moreover, the HODs assess the teacher's performance, conduct departmental meetings, and have co-curricular activities that they need to perform.

Following Naicker et al. (2013) and Tshabalala (2019), the examination structure was changed in the further education and training teaching phase of business studies, which are components of the commerce stream. The papers were separated into two papers, which left the HODs confused, and the teachers not fully trained when these changes were made. Thus, this was left in the hands of the HODs to assist the learners. Therefore, Tshabalala (2019) alluded to the fact that HODs confirmed that they are now used to the changes that are made by the DoE and never get full support from them. In addition, the HODs emphasise that, according to their own experience, they must be at the forefront and ensure that the content in the classroom is delivered. Guidance is provided to the teachers (Azzopardi, 2014). Again, Azzopardi (2014) showed that teaching commercial subjects requires someone to understand contemporary, social, and commercial trends. Most of the time, HODs who are the managers of the commercial stream have shown that they do not understand the factors mentioned above.

Moreover, Mhonyiwa (2014, p. 21) points out that HODs in the commercial stream believe their experience as instructional leaders is vital to the learner's academic performance when doing commercial

subjects. That role can be seen in two ways, which are positive and negative. Alternatively, Naicker et al. (2013) discussed that HODs believe in the teamwork approach, simply meaning that it is a norm that people must work together; however, the HODs elaborated that most of the time, there is no teamwork between them and the teachers and that according to their experience, it affects the schools' performance. In this subtopic, the lived experience theory has been highlighted because the reviewed literature has elaborated on the experiences of the HODs based on what they have learned and gained as instructional leaders.

Leadership qualities and HODs' roles and responsibilities

HODs play an essential role in the school management team and are the driving forces behind learning and teaching in schools. According to Mpisane (2015), they require leadership skills and obligations that must be met, as specified in personnel administration measures. Niekerk (2019) indicated that the commercial stream and all HODs need to have curriculum qualities that they need to portray, such as providing teachers in the commercial stream with guidance and a clear vision of the department as curriculum leaders. Niekerk further states that HODs also lead and monitor the content coverage for the subjects per term, as highlighted and stipulated in the annual teaching plan.

Furthermore, Bush et al. (2010) mentioned that HODs must monitor the learners' books and write reports based on them. Mantekana and Du Plessis (2021) argued that when the CAPS was implemented in 2012, it came with many challenges, especially in commercial subjects such as accounting. Challenges include inadequate training for teachers, a lack of resources, and insufficient support for teaching. After the changes in these subjects, teachers were not fully trained, and everything was left in the hands of the HODs. Bush et al. (2010) further stated that as part of the HODs' co-curricular duties, HODs need to control and moderate internal set examinations, the marking guidelines, and the learners' scripts. Moreover, to ensure that there is effectiveness in their departments, HODs need to compile an integrated quality management plan to ensure that proper evaluation and monitoring are taking place.

The DBE (2022) lists all department leaders' functions and responsibilities. One of HODs' significant roles and responsibilities is to participate in essential duties such as ensuring that the school budgets are in their departments and that all learning materials and resources for their departments, such as textbooks and study guides, are available to assist in controlling them. HODs also need to communicate by conveying learners' progress to the parents, communicating on behalf of the principal, and forming part of professional meetings to develop their departments and schools.

Furthermore, according to Bambi (2012), HODs are instructional leaders who must play a significant role in ensuring the school develops. Moreover, Mosoge (2008) agreed that HODs are vital in ensuring the school improves. They also contend that HODs ensure that the learning conditions are conducive, that the instructional process is well developed, and that they lead correctly as leaders.

HODs' challenges faced at schools

Borole (2010) elaborated that the HODs cannot fulfill their roles and responsibilities as stipulated by the personnel administrative measure document. Meanwhile, Malatji (2018) stated that HODs face more challenges when performing administrative tasks than managing the curriculum and technical roles. HODs encounter daily challenges that prevent them from effectively performing their duties, resulting in low performance and a dysfunctional school in learning and teaching. Some of the concerns and challenges that HODs encounter while managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects include the following:

Heavy workload

Most of the time, HODs feel they have many duties to execute. Sammons and Bakkum (2011) confirmed that HODs complained about heavy workloads that prevented them from balancing their general and curriculum duties, which made them not pay attention to promoting quality in terms of learning and teaching in the commercial subject.

Fitzgerald (2009) stated that HODs in the commercial stream complained that they supervise and teach many subjects from this

stream; they do not specialise but are trained to teach them. He further outlined that the HODs usually work beyond their normal hours because of their many duties. HODs also lamented the issue of analysing each learners' performance per task and the teachers' performance per subject as one factor that adds to their work (Torres, 2016).

Lack of development and training

For the HODs to execute their duties without proper training and development, it is a more significant challenge for them as instructional leaders. Malatji (2018) confirms that most high schools in the Mopani district of Gauteng province are dysfunctional due to poor departmental training, leaving HODs on the spot to jump in and assist the teachers even though they are also not fully trained. Malatji's (2018) point appears to be correct: when the new educational programme assessment policy statement was implemented in 2012, it presented numerous obstacles in the commercial stream because most challenges were made in commerce subjects such as accounting and business studies, and teachers did not receive proper training from the division of basic education, and HODs could not assist because they were not trained when these changes were implemented. Most of the time, HODs struggle to understand the subjects under their department because they are not their specialisation, which leads to poor subject performance (Sartori et al., 2023; Mukuna, 2020). Literature reveals that a lack of training and development is one of the challenges that almost all HODs face in South Africa.

Changes in the curriculum

The DoE made many amendments or changes to South African education after implementing the 2005 curriculum (Bantwini, 2010). Rajoo (2012, p. 4) argued that "HODs are faced with the challenge of the South African curriculum being more difficult, especially in commercial subjects, and that makes them unable to monitor and lead the teaching and learning of commercial subjects". Moreover, Taylor (2008) elaborates that most of the HODs in the commercial stream are not specialists in commercial subjects; however, most of them specialise in only one discipline, which makes them lack knowledge of other commercial subjects and makes it difficult for them to oversee the learning and teaching of those subjects. In addition, Rajoo (2012), concurred that HODs in the commercial subject lack training because they are not trained on what to manage, simply meaning that they are not given practical guidelines on how to manage the changes that are made continuously by the DoE. Changes, such as curriculum implementation, make managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects difficult.

Poor communication

Communication is one of the most critical aspects of school. Aravena (2017) stated that poor communication in a workplace is bound to be the leading cause of problems. Sammons and Bakkum (2011) allude to the fact that poor communication between the HODs and the teachers is one of the main challenges that HODs face every day, and as such, the working environment will not be conducive. Moreover, Ghavifekr and Ibrahim (2014) elaborated that most of the time, subject teachers fail to communicate with HODs whenever they are facing challenges in their subjects, and this makes it difficult for them to manage the teaching and learning if there is a lack of consultation between the teacher and HODs. Therefore, the literature shows that common challenges hinder all HODs from doing their duties in terms of overseeing learning and teaching.

Strategies for improving the management of teaching and learning **Provision of adequate training for teachers and HODs**

Flippo (1984) defined training as increasing employees' skills and knowledge when doing a certain job. Dosunmu and Adeyemo (2018) indicated that if HODs can ensure teachers are taught new teaching methods and techniques at workshops held in every cluster, their skills and expertise can improve when they deliver the content. Knowledge of the curriculum will enable the teachers to provide the content in class, making the job of HODs much more manageable. Tapala (2019) contends that HODs must collaborate with the DBE to train HODs in all

the areas they are monitoring, allowing them to comprehend the content of the subjects. Literature reveals that HODs need to attend subject specialisation workshops so that they will have a better understanding of the subject and become references for the teachers. This could be seen in the study that was done by Chen and Change (2006), where they allude to the fact that HODs need to use the multi-pronged approach, as this approach teaches and trains them on attitudes and skills and provides them with support on how to carry on being life-long learners.

Availability of resources and facilities

Bipath (2017) argues that the availability of proper resources and facilities plays a vital role in strengthening and improving learning and learning in the classroom. Moreover, in personnel administrative measures, HODs have general roles, such as ensuring that budgets for their departments are allocated and allowing them to buy resources such as textbooks, audio-visual equipment, and computers (DBE, 2022). In the words of Seobi and Wood (2016), if HODs ensure that resources are available, the standard of teaching and learning will improve, resulting in good performance. The literature has shown that teaching and learning can improve if the HODs work with different stakeholders.

Communication and support for the teachers

Dewey (2024) defines communication as sharing experiences and ensuring an understanding between one person and another. Aravena (2017) explained that poor communication causes problems and makes the working environment uncondusive. He added that if HODs promote communication in schools, important information, such as internal and external deadlines, will be shared. Moreover, Tyler (2016) argued that if the schools' communication channels are effective, all the information is transparent, and everyone is included when decisions are made, improving the schools' performance. In addition, Ghavifekr and Ibrahim (2014) elaborated that HODs, as instructional leaders, must support the teachers. They further explained that if HODs support the teachers, there will be development and better job performance from the teachers, and the standard of learning and teaching will improve.

VI. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study explores the HODs' experiences managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects. It further explores HODs' roles as instructional leaders in managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects and their challenges in managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects. It finally analyses their strategies to improve managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects.

VII. METHODS

Research paradigm

Niitembu (2006, p. 32) defines a research paradigm as a system that comprises many beliefs about the responsibilities of research and the nature of the world and directs the researcher to the proper patterns of research activity. The constructivism paradigm served as the foundation for this study. According to Honebein (1996), constructivism is a philosophy that aims to comprehend human viewpoints and experiences through their knowledge and worldviews. Ferreira (2012, p. 35) elaborates that the main aim of constructivism is to understand human experiences and see how they give meaning to different events in which they participate. The objective of using constructivism is to read and comprehend the experiences of HODs in managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects while using desktop design. This is demonstrated by Ferreira (2012, p. 35), who elaborates that constructivism's primary goal is to comprehend human experiences and determine how people provide meaning to the events in which they take part. The constructivism paradigm assists the researcher in understanding the HODs' experiences in managing learning and teaching in commercial subjects through reading journal articles, textbooks, and document analysis.

Research approach

A qualitative method was utilised to collect data on the experiences

of HODs in managing teaching and learning in commercial topics. Maree (2013) stated that qualitative researchers attempted to comprehend the phenomenon by learning about people's experiences at work or home. According to Mouton (2011), qualitative research is a technique that aims to understand and characterise the phenomenon. This approach further permitted the researcher to investigate one qualitative method strategy: the narrative researcher strategy. This qualitative approach gained a deeper understanding of complex circumstances (Phalane, 2011). According to Hennink et al. (2020), the qualitative approach is based on a phenomenological methodology that attempts to evaluate the phenomenon in context in a real-world situation, and the study is generally carried out. Researchers became aware of the experiences of HODs in managing learning and teaching in commercial subjects by reading books, articles, and journals and evaluating records. The researcher chose the qualitative technique for this study since it is commonly utilised to explore and analyse texts relevant to complex ideas of phenomena (Smith & McGannon, 2018). As a result, the quality has improved.

Research design

This study used a desktop research design. This shows that the research was literature-based, meaning the data was gathered from published journal articles, textbooks, and document analysis. A desktop research design is a secondary research method that includes the synthesis, summary, and collation of existing research (Creswell, 2014). The desktop method drew attention to the published literature on HODs' experiences managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects. This allowed the researcher to review published research and learn more about the experiences of the HODs in the commercial stream. The researcher could reveal more about the roles of the HODs in managing commercial subjects; secondly, the qualities of leadership; thirdly, the challenges faced by HODs in managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects; and lastly, strategies that HODs can implement to improve learning and teaching. Using diverse literature sources was a key advantage of the desktop research technique (Mouton, 2011; Maree, 2013). It was highlighted that this entails reading multiple publications. Several journal articles and textbooks were used in this study to investigate HODs' experiences as supervisors of commercial teaching and learning. This allowed me to comprehend the topic under investigation in its entirety.

Data collection techniques

The researcher gathered information from published books, articles, and journals, as well as document analysis made possible by Google Scholar and other websites. Data collection techniques refer to how researchers collect and analyse data from different collections (Phalane, 2011). Reducing the scope of the literature search to manageable dimensions was part of data gathering and analysis. After searching through the provided books and papers, about 24 books and article journals were discovered. The study explored the experiences of the HODs in managing teaching and learning on commercial topics, which led to the selection of ten publications, books, and articles in journals.

Data analysis

This study employed the content analysis method to examine and interpret the data gathered throughout the research. Content analysis is a research tool that is used to interpret the content of a text and understand the intentions of a particular group or individual (Heggarty, 2009). Furthermore, according to Mouton (2011), content analysis is a research method that examines words or phrases in diverse texts, such as speeches, interviews, and essays. In addition, Maree (2013) agrees with Mouton (2011) and alludes that content analysis can be used to investigate a wide range of resources, including books, brochures, written papers, transcripts, news reports, memoranda, agendas, administrative documents, and visual media. The content analysis was chosen because it was thought to be more pertinent to my study and can analyse data from books, journals, articles, and document analysis. This is because the researcher mentioned in the discussion of data generation that there were a variety of publications, journals, and articles. I,

therefore, downloaded every article pertinent to the study of HODs' management of teaching and learning in commercial subjects. This study analysed the data based on Chone's (2022) guidelines. The first step was reading all the information gathered and creating an initial list of subtopics (themes) revealed by the data. The third step was reviewing the information again. This study connects the subtopics to the data collected and identifies similarities and differences through matching words. It finally transformed the data into a narrative-based approach.

Ethical considerations

The University of the Free State Ethics Committee approved an application for ethical clearance research. According to Alderson and Morrow (2020), all educational studies incorporate research ethics because they include information. According to Bonnefon, and Rahwan (2018), ethics is a collection of frequently held moral beliefs that may serve as guidelines and social expectations for experiment participants and respondents. Furthermore, according to Alderson and Morrow (2020), research ethics corresponds with what is morally right and wrong while dealing with participants or accessing stored data. The ethical clearance process was followed throughout the study. All literature, such as articles, books, and educational journals used throughout the study, was cited and acknowledged in the in-text reference and the reference list.

VIII. RESULTS

Key roles of the commercial subjects' HODs

This theme concentrates on the critical roles of commercial HODs in supervising commercial subjects in learning and teaching. According to the findings, the fundamental job of HODs is to manage curriculum by defining the department's goals and objectives so that each teacher involved in the process of instruction and learning is involved in the process of instruction and learning understands what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. Molefe (2015) states that HODs are professional leaders who ensure a high standard of learning and teaching in schools and administer the school daily. HODs have responsibilities that must be met for their departments and the school to be successful. In the words of Mpisane (2015), HODs must carry out their tasks as specified by the DoE, which include monitoring learning and instruction and ensuring that class activities, marking, and evaluation are accomplished.

Furthermore, HODs evaluate teachers' work, hold departmental meetings, and have co-curricular activities that they must do. In the words of Bambi (2013) and Bush et al. (2010), HODs in commercial subjects are the ones who create the commerce department vision, manage instructional programmes, create a positive learning climate, and, as a result, require teachers to construct their vision to follow what they have discussed with department leaders. Mantekana and Du Plessis (2021) support this, arguing that it is the HODs' responsibility to be at the forefront and guarantee that the subject is presented in the classroom and that teachers are guided. As stated by Smith (2013), a leadership and management expert, instructional leadership assists teachers in improving their classroom performance, and HODs are held responsible for what happens in their classes. Furthermore, Trinter and Hughes (2023) stated that commerce HODs supervise learners by managing their books, allowing them to uncover material coverage difficulties. This theme has demonstrated the conclusions regarding the duties of HODs in controlling teaching and learning.

HODs' challenges encountered in the commercial subject

This theme discusses the findings about the problems that HODs have when supervising the teaching of commercial subjects. All leadership responsibilities entail significant responsibility, which leaders must overcome (Malatji, 2018). In terms of workload, HODs faced a major challenge. HODs are finding it difficult to keep up with the workload. According to a study by Sammons and Bakkum (2011), HODs complained about severe workloads that caused them to fail to balance their general and curriculum tasks, causing them to neglect increasing the quality of teaching and learning in commercial subjects.

Furthermore, Fitzgerald (2009) stated that HODs in the commercial stream complained that they supervise and teach many subjects from this stream; they do not specialise but are taught to teach them. Mantekana and Du Plessis (2021) elaborate that HODs work beyond their typical hours because of their numerous responsibilities. HODs also complained about needing to examine each learners' performance per task and the teachers' performance per subject as one of the issues that adds to their workload (Torres, 2016). According to Bantwini (2010), one of the issues that schools providing commercial topics encounter in South Africa, particularly in rural regions, is a lack of resources. The researcher goes on to say that a lack of resources makes it difficult for commercial subjects' HODs to carry out their tasks because a lack of resources causes HODs to become disoriented and unsure of what to do. This demonstrates that if sufficient resources are unavailable, HODs cannot perform their jobs and achieve their goals of controlling the teaching and learning of commercial topics. The findings suggest that the commerce stream HODs have been having difficulty administering the commerce curriculum due to changes made to the stream occasionally. This is supported by Rajoo (2012, p. 4), who said that "HODs are faced with the challenge of the South African curriculum being more difficult, especially in commercial subjects, and that makes them unable to monitor and lead the teaching and learning of commercial subjects". Findings also indicate that most commerce stream HODs lack training, making it difficult to keep up with changes to the commerce curriculum. Rajoo (2001) supports this notion and states that curriculum implementation and other changes make managing teaching and learning in commercial disciplines challenging. This theme focused on the influence of workload, a lack of resources, and curriculum changes on the performance of HODs. It was evident that HODs had failed miserably to develop teachers properly. Second, the factors above hinder HODs from performing as planned.

Techniques for HODs to manage teaching and learning better

This theme intends to elaborate on what can be implemented to aid HODs in effectively managing the commercial subject. Even though professional development was not the HODs' significant role, it is still a vital feature for HODs to implement programmes for their departments. Findings suggest that for HODs of commerce to manage learning and teaching in commercial subjects efficiently, they must be given the support they need (Tapala, 2019). This notion is supported by Dosunmu and Adeyemo (2018), who suggested that if HODs can ensure that instructors are taught new teaching methods and strategies during workshops held in each cluster, their abilities and expertise will improve.

Furthermore, HODs must attend workshops that will train them, guarantee that their topic expertise grows, and put them in a position to handle the subjects. As stated by Tapala (2019), HODs should attend subject specialisation workshops to understand the subject better and serve as resources for teachers. Moreover, the availability of resources is one of the most essential elements that can assist HODs in managing their duties. Bipath (2017) stated that the availability of appropriate resources and facilities is critical to enhancing and improving classroom teaching and learning. This is supported by Seobi and Wood (2016), who agreed that ensuring resources are available in departments will increase the standard of learning and teaching and improve performance. Simply put, the availability of resources will allow the HODs to carry out their jobs and help the instructors, resulting in learners passing.

Communication is one of the factors that might help HODs carry out their responsibilities. According to Aravena (2017), if there is inadequate communication between instructors and HODs, the HODs' jobs become tough, and they fail to fulfill their tasks. Tyler (2016), on the other hand, stated that for commerce HODs to manage the stream effectively, they must ensure that communication channels within their departments are effective, all information is transparent, and it is a democratic department in which all teachers are included if a decision is about to be made. The strategies that HODs can devise or implement to

effectively manage commercial subject learning and teaching. It is evident that the HODs needed to implement these strategies to strengthen their departments.

IX. CONCLUSION

This examines HODs' experiences in managing teaching and learning on commercial subjects. The study aims to investigate the experiences of HODs who manage the commerce stream and the difficulties that HODs may face while managing commercial subjects. Within that context, I researched ways that may be recommended to help HODs of commerce overcome the obstacles that they encounter as leaders and carry out their responsibilities. The findings are based on the reviewed literature and data from books and articles. The findings suggested the key roles of the commercial subject's HODs, the challenges that affect the HODs productivity, and techniques for HODs to manage teaching and learning better.

The findings showed that HODs must carry out their tasks well and follow their duties. In evaluating the duties of HODs, the report ensured that HODs follow and use them (DBE, 2022). This study also discovered that HODs in the commerce stream have various tasks to fulfill, which causes them to confront obstacles while managing the teaching and learning of commercial topics. Furthermore, articles and books have shown that the primary duty of commerce HODs is to build a vision for their department, which will guide them while they manage it.

According to the data gathered from articles and books, HODs, as learning leaders, face numerous obstacles when managing their departments in the commercial sector. The findings found that HODs had massive responsibilities besides teaching their topics. It was challenging to find the time to do all of this. They are unlikely to be successful learning leaders, given these expectations. HODs performed their duties to the best of their abilities. For example, one of the scholars wrote about modifying the accounting subject from Grades 10–12 in South African education and commerce HODs tried to train their teachers and assist them with implementing the new accounting curriculum. Nonetheless, one aspect of leadership that these HODs lacked was critical teacher professional development. Personal growth for teachers is critical and should be ongoing, but this does not appear to be the norm.

Findings have revealed that techniques can be proposed to aid commercial HODs in carrying out their tasks despite all the obstacles they confront. I have noticed that scholars believe that the DoE should have a role in ensuring that HODs are supported in various ways, including providing suitable facilities for disadvantaged schools, particularly those in rural locations. Furthermore, data indicate that if commercial stream HODs are given more workshops in collaboration with instructors, teaching and learning in commercial subjects can improve. Finally, experts point out that excellent communication is one of the most essential methods that HODs must apply to succeed.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends the following actions for HODs to manage the commerce stream effectively. The HODs' experiences are crucial, as they assist the HODs in effectively managing the commercial stream. Most importantly, they must be open to new ideas, be willing to learn, and be lifelong learners. The HODs should encourage teachers to participate in workshops and seminars for professional development. Continuous professional development is required. Teachers should be encouraged to read widely, study further in their areas of specialisation, and perform professionally. Present in school, punctual, and engaged in detailed lesson planning, preparation, and presentation. The HODs should visit class at any time to check for good teaching and learning. Cursory visits may be made as needed. The HODs should encourage teachers to participate in workshops and provide constructive criticism at departmental or subject meetings and in writing. More in-depth, in-house, productive workshops must be held to strengthen the content

knowledge of all teachers. Communication, teamwork, knowledge sharing, and discussion will be extremely beneficial. Academic performance improvement strategies must constantly be reviewed with teachers. The HODs should guarantee that the strategies for improving learners' academic performance are implemented correctly. Commercial subject HODs must ensure that the school collaborates with other stakeholders to promote learners' academic achievement; this includes collaboration with the community, police station, businesses, and the DoE. The HODs should attempt to lead by example; it is the most powerful motivator for others. This means they must practice what they preach by being prompt, completing their obligations on time, and sticking to school standards.

This study presented the experiences of the HODs in managing teaching and learning in commercial subjects. The outcomes of this study inspire future research, such as looking at ways that commercial HODs might be employed to improve commercial teaching and learning. The study's outcomes added to the current knowledge about the role of HODs who oversee commercial subjects. The data gained from this study aided instructors, HODs, and other education stakeholders in better understanding commerce HODs' experiences and daily difficulties. This study also gave HODs ideas on how they may help instructors enhance the commerce department regardless of obstacles.

XI. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest in this study.

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