




Factors affecting Learners' Decision to enrol in Commercial Subjects - A Case of the Chris Hani District, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

Commercial subjects such as Accounting, Economics and Business Studies are an important stream in schools that help learners broaden their social and global knowledge. The purpose of the study was to identify the factors that influence learners' decisions to enrol in commercial subjects. A case study served as the foundation for the study's qualitative methodology. The study was based on Berger and Calabre's (1983) Uncertainty Reduction Theory. The study purposely sampled ten learners from two secondary schools in the Chris Hani District, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Individual interviews were used to collect the data, which were then analysed using content analysis (CA) and categorised using thematic analysis. The findings proved that several factors, including learners' ability in the subjects and the influence of teachers and parents, influenced their decision to enrol in commercial courses. The study recommends that learners should first be counselled, mentored, and assisted in making decisions about the choice of subjects. Lastly, schools should conduct aptitude and interest assessments. The contribution of this study is to provide insights on improving curriculum design and career guidance around commercial subjects in this region as well as to inform educational stakeholders on how to address potential barriers to enrolment in commercial subjects and lastly serve as a foundation for broader studies on commercial subject enrollment in South Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of commercial courses in a curriculum enables learners to deal with challenges relevant to South African society. The three topics covered by the subjects' curriculum are Business Studies, Economics, and Accounting.¹ Commerce serves as the foundation for looking at both theoretical and practical aspects of the business world and the economy as a whole. Due to this, it is essential that many students enrol in, and complete the commercial stream. Quality education is the cornerstone for the development of every person's social, economic, political, geographic, scientific, and technological

¹ Department of Education, *National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support* (Pretoria: Government Printers, 2014).

skills.² Despite several socioeconomic issues, such as poverty, crime, and unemployment, the 2009 statement is still true and still holds today. However, recent Department of Education data show a decline in the number of learners enrolling in commerce in high schools.³ Learners must be well-prepared and knowledgeable about business, finances, and economics to survive the current economic difficulties. Because no social, political, or economic issue can be solved without sufficient knowledge, commercial topics are still essential for the nation's development, and more students are expected to choose to study them.⁴

Numerous intrusive strategies have been used in this field of study to improve the situation, but little progress has been made as the decline in student numbers has continued year after year. Some school principals have even started to completely stop the stream. The failure of the strategies used to evolve expressively suggests a more pragmatic debriefing needed to identify any underlying issues and factors at play. Numerous studies have been carried out on the factors affecting student enrolment, with the majority of them being in the sciences stream, particularly in mathematics and physical sciences. The research revealed a variety of findings, including those that were considered barriers due to sociocultural and psychological problems.⁵ Existing literature falls short of investigating the commercial stream.

The goal of this study is therefore to investigate the variables that influence students' decisions to enrol in commercial subjects in two schools in the Chris Hani District. The purpose of the study is to explore the factors that affect the decision of learners to enrol in commercial subjects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The extensive body of research on the crucial elements that affect learners' enrolment in commercial subjects is presented in this section. These elements are described in this section as i) learner's ability in the subject; ii) teachers' and parents' influence.

Learner's Ability in the Subject Area

According to Lyons and Quinn's research, learners choose their academic specialisations based on their perceptions of their aptitude and potential for success in those fields.⁶ Also, learners also tend to select the subjects in which they believe they can do well despite their perceived ease of learning.⁷ According to Mathiba, a learner's perception of their abilities affected whether or not they enrolled in a particular subject.⁸ For instance, if a learner performs well in EMS in lower classes, they are more likely to choose commercial subjects in the subsequent classes than those who achieve a low academic performance in that subject.⁹ Furthermore, learners who study subjects that are more in line with their competencies and who have confidence in their abilities to achieve are more likely to receive high scores.¹⁰ The suitability of the information that learners have received at the time of making their selections depends on their ability to base their subject selection on their relative advantage.

² Agnes Ebi Maliki, Anthony Ntol Ngban, and Julie E Ibu, "Analysis of Students' Performance in Junior Secondary School Mathematics Examination in Bayelsa State of Nigeria," *Studies on Home and Community Science* 3, no. 2 (2009): 131–34.

³ Department of Education, *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination 2011 Technical Report* (Pretoria: Government Publishers, 2018).

⁴ Linda L Lyman, Jane Strachan, and Angeliki Lazaridou, *Shaping Social Justice Leadership: Insights of Women Educators Worldwide* (R&L Education, 2012).

⁵ T Lyons and F Quinn, "Understanding the Declines in Senior High School Science Enrolments," *National Centre of Science, ICT and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR Australia), University of New England*, 2010; Külli Kori et al., "Why Do Students Choose to Study Information and Communications Technology?," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 191 (2015): 2867–72.

⁶ Lyons and Quinn, "Understanding the Declines in Senior High School Science Enrolments."

⁷ Lyons and Quinn, "Understanding the Declines in Senior High School Science Enrolments."

⁸ Thema Adolph Mathiba, "Factors Influencing a Decline of Learners Enrolment in Commercial Subject: A Case of Driekop Circuit in Limpopo Province" (2021).

⁹ Nick Taylor, "What's Wrong with South African Schools," in *What's Working in School Development Conference, JET Education Services, Cape Town*, 2008.

¹⁰ Fynn-Mathis Trautwein, José Raúl Naranjo, and Stefan Schmidt, "Meditation Effects in the Social Domain: Self-Other Connectedness as a General Mechanism?," 2014, 175–98, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01634-4_10.

Self-realisation is one of the elements that influence a learner's choice of subject, according to Kori et al.¹¹ While some researchers have found that some students choose easier subjects, however, other students still choose harder subjects to demonstrate their proficiency. In addition, Kori et al., list other factors such as role models, school reputation, curriculum, and future prospects that have been noted to affect a student's choice of subjects.¹² Additionally, according to DeRidder, learners do better when they select the courses they want to take.¹³ Marsh, and Eccles and Wigfield, claim that this perceived position makes them more poised and, consequently, increases their appreciation of the subject and, eventually, feeds their passion for it, providing more support for this.¹⁴ The influence of learners' goals and interests on subject choice has been studied in various states, among them by Elsworth, Stokking, and Cleaves.¹⁵ These researchers found that when learners are highly motivated to study a subject, they are more likely to persevere in the face of difficulties. Additionally, they are more inclined to strive for in-depth education as opposed to superficial learning.

Influence by Teachers and Parents

Costantino states that teachers continue to be a key component of classroom learning and act as mediators in decisions that learners and their guardians make.¹⁶ According to this perspective, teachers have a significant impact on the subjects that learners choose to study. According to Colley, learning is a state of becoming, which means that for students to develop, teachers must contribute.¹⁷ As a result, learners' relationships with, and opinions of their teachers are crucial. Teachers adapt their pedagogy to the habits of their learners. Through occupational notions that have a similar influence on teachers' speech, learners' habits are recognised. When these elements are taken into account, it is evident that teachers have a considerable impact on students, either favourably or unfavourably.¹⁸

According to Rena, learners are more likely to succeed if teachers assume they that will not need their support or will perform well; otherwise, they are more likely to struggle and fail.¹⁹ According to this, if a teacher believes that a learner can achieve in a certain subject, then the learner is likely to succeed; but, if the teacher does not believe in the learner, then the learner will not do well and may not even continue with that particular subject. This ideal for student subject preference is a result of the teacher's interactions with and relationships with their learners. According to Omondi, several academics have highlighted the significance of the bond between the teacher and the learner.²⁰ The quality of the relationships between teachers and learners, according to Pullinger, significantly affects the overall activity of the learners, which in turn affects their learning and, ultimately, determines their subject preferences.²¹ According to Harvey, the importance of good relationships between teachers and learners affects how confident they are in their ability to learn.²² In addition, Harvey, makes the case that a teacher's familiarity with a variety of learners is crucial for enhancing

¹¹ Kori et al., "Why Do Students Choose to Study Information and Communications Technology?"

¹² Kori et al., "Why Do Students Choose to Study Information and Communications Technology?"

¹³ Larry DeRidder, "The Impact of Parents and Parenting on Career Development,," 1990.

¹⁴ Herbert W Marsh, "Verbal and Math Self-Concepts: An Internal/External Frame of Reference Model," *American Educational Research Journal* 23, no. 1 (1986): 129–49; Jacquelynne S Eccles and Allan Wigfield, "Motivational Beliefs, Values, and Goals," *Annual Review of Psychology* 53, no. 1 (2002): 109–32.

¹⁵ Gerald R Elsworth et al., "Generic Interests and School Subject Choice," *Educational Research and Evaluation* 5, no. 3 (1999): 290–318; Anna Cleaves, "The Formation of Science Choices in Secondary School," *International Journal of Science Education* 27, no. 4 (2005): 471–86.

¹⁶ Tracie E Costantino, "Teacher as Mediator: A Teacher's Influence on Students' Experiences Visiting an Art Museum," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 42, no. 4 (2008): 45–61.

¹⁷ Helen Colley, *Mentoring for Social Inclusion: A Critical Approach to Nurturing Mentor Relationships* (Routledge, 2003).

¹⁸ Clas-Uno Frykholm and Ragnhild Nitzler, "Working Life as Pedagogical Discourse: Empirical Studies of Vocational and Career Education Based on Theories of Bourdieu and Bernstein," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 25, no. 5 (1993): 433–44.

¹⁹ Ravinder Rena, "Challenges for Quality Primary Education in Papua New Guinea—A Case Study," *Education Research International* 2011 (2015).

²⁰ O. J. Omondi, "Factors Influencing the Choice of Science Subjects in Kenya's Secondary Schools: A Case Research of Langata High School in Nairobi County" (University of Nairobi, 2013).

²¹ M. Pullinger, "Interview on the Role of Business Economics as a Subject in Relation to Mathematics and Other Subject Choices,," 2018.

²² Lou Harvey, "EAP Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Motivation," *International Student Experience Journal*, 2013.

the learner's motivation.²³ Teachers' opinions may be troublesome because they might affect how learners behave or think about a subject, which can then affect how they approach other subjects.

On the other hand, parents can have a big impact on what their children study. The most significant figures in a child's life are their parents. They have a strong and constant impact on their children's personality and career development from the very beginning of childhood.²⁴ Other academics have also investigated how parents can affect their children's job decisions and how parents feel about their children's career education.²⁵ Studies have also discovered parental influence from the viewpoint of children, and it has been discovered that teenagers, particularly female students, consider parents to have a significant effect on their decision to pursue a particular job.²⁶ According to a few studies, parents' influence on their children's career choice is significant enough to be used as an effective career counselling strategy.²⁷ Numerous other studies looked closely at how parents behaved and how that affected how their children developed their careers, as well as how students perceived the impact of parents on their career choices. According to the findings of these studies, children also believed that their parents had high expectations of their academic performance and had a say in their decisions about their future careers.²⁸

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) created by Berger and Calabre served as the theoretical foundation for this investigation.²⁹ There are two different approaches to reducing uncertainty known as cognitive and behavioural approaches, as well as three interactive search strategies that people can employ to find relevant information on a topic of interest namely passive, active, and interactive. According to the theory, the major objective of communication is to reduce ambiguities because social life is full of them. These academics similarly believed that the main method of reducing people's uncertainties was through communication. It is evident from the literature presented that the students are unsure of their subject selections. As a result, the URT made sense in the context of the study as it relates to the confusion about their subject preferences.

METHODOLOGY

The paper adopted a qualitative case study research methodology with semi-structured interviews as the main data collection instrument to collect information from participants in two schools located in Chris Hani District, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data and the collected data were presented in a non-verbatim format. The population comprised ten grade 10 learners, of which each school had 5 learners who participated in the study. Schools and learners were purposively selected on the basis that they would provide rich data on the factors that affect the learners' decision to enrol in commercial subjects.

²³ Harvey, "EAP Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Motivation."

²⁴ Marie Deridder, Anaïs Ménard, and Elieth Eyebiyi, "Presentation," *Recherches Sociologiques et Anthropologiques*, no. 53–2 (December 1, 2022): 35–66, <https://doi.org/10.4000/rsa.5604>.

²⁵ Pamela M Frome and Jacquelynn S Eccles, "Parents' Influence on Children's Achievement-Related Perceptions.," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74, no. 2 (1998): 435.

²⁶ Bromley H Kniveton, "The Influences and Motivations on Which Students Base Their Choice of Career," *Research in Education* 72, no. 1 (2004): 47–59; Lin Bian, Sarah-Jane Leslie, and Andrei Cimpian, "Gender Stereotypes about Intellectual Ability Emerge Early and Influence Children's Interests," *Science* 355, no. 6323 (2017): 389–91..

²⁷ Pedro Miguel Gomes Cordeiro et al., "Parenting Styles, Identity Development, and Adjustment in Career Transitions: The Mediating Role of Psychological Needs," *Journal of Career Development* 45, no. 1 (2018): 83–97; Chance Clutter, "The Effects of Parental Influence on Their Children's Career Choices," 2010; J. Miller, *Parents Still Major Influence on Child's Decision to Pursue Science Careers* (Science Dail: Michigan State University, 2022).

²⁸ Eric B Middleton and Teri A Loughhead, "Parental Influence on Career Development: An Integrative Framework for Adolescent Career Counseling," *Journal of Career Development* 19, no. 3 (1993): 161–73; N C Letha, Najma Amin, and Jamia Milia Islamia, "Career Aspirations and Adolescents in the Indian Context," *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies. 1: 6* 17 (2012); Teresa A Fisher and Inna Padmawidjaja, "Parental Influences on Career Development Perceived by African American and Mexican American College Students," *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 27, no. 3 (1999): 136–52.

²⁹ Charles R Berger and Richard J Calabrese, "Some Explorations in Initial Interaction and beyond: Toward a Developmental Theory of Interpersonal Communication," *Human Communication Research* 1, no. 2 (1974): 99–112.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed and synthesised using a thematic method to give certain patterns that served as the foundation for the interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was sought to protect the participants' rights, and part of that process included outlining the objectives of the study and any prospective benefits (or lack thereof). The participants were made aware that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous and that they could leave the study at any time without consequences.

Presentation of Findings and Discussions

a. Learner's Ability in the Subject Area

Quite a number of comments were made by learners regarding their ability on the subject and their reasons as to why they would choose commerce or not. One of the learners had this to say:

I have chosen to do commerce because it is my favourite area. I like to understand things about the world and Economics gives me that opportunity to learn about the world in general.

Another learner revealed that he enjoys EMS because it involves business which is something he loves and practically does during school hours. He had this to say:

During break time I sell sweets and chips at school to make money. I have learnt all of this from EMS. In EMS there is what is called market day where we as learners come up with business ideas and sell things for the school. This made me love and enjoy EMS too much because I make money.

Similarly, one of the learners indicated that her ability and capacity to understand numbers is the reason that made her choose commerce over other streams of study. She had this to say:

The reason I chose commerce over any stream is because I have strength and ability when it comes to numbers, especially in accounting. Accounting is not difficult but it requires a lot of time and practice which it's something I do because at home I'm given an opportunity to focus on my studies.

In addition, another participant said that she has chosen commerce because she has been performing very well in EMS. She had this to say:

I was guided by my performance. I used to perform very well in economic and management sciences, especially in things such as tests, assignments, market day and examinations. This made me appreciate commerce hence I committed myself to it because I was getting high marks all the time.

One of the learners revealed that she embraced commerce because it provides greater career opportunities that one can choose from and the ability to pursue those career opportunities. She had this to say:

My decision to choose commerce was based on my ability and commitment to learn, but more than that I chose commerce because it provides diverse career opportunities such as chartered accountants, economist, education etc.

Although some of the learners pointed out that they chose commerce because of its nature, the majority of the learners revealed that commerce is difficult for them and they do not understand it. One of the learners had this to say:

To be honest with you, commerce is difficult and I do not understand it at all. The worst part is that it demands a lot of time and practice.

Similarly, sentiments were expressed by another learner who revealed that he lacks the ability to perform well in commerce. He said:

Personally, I do not like commerce because I lack the ability to comprehend it and it is difficult to study commerce especially when the teacher is also not that good or not clear in teaching it.

Another learner revealed that she does not have any interest in commerce because of its complexity.

I don't understand anything about commerce and I have no interest in it. Commerce is complicated and there are a lot of difficult rules to take note of especially in accounting.

Similarly, another participant reported that his lack of interest in commerce was because he had a poor background in maths which led him to choose easier subjects.

It's not like I hate commerce but I knew I was struggling in maths. My background in maths is not good, actually, it's poor so I didn't want to add another stress of accounting and economics that is why I did not do commerce because I do not have the ability to handle it.

b. Influence by Teachers and Parents

The learners were asked who or what has the most impact on their subject choices and who ultimately decides which stream to enrol in. The findings from the data indicated that parents and teachers had a significant impact on the learners' decisions on which subjects to pursue. Also, instead of enrolling in subjects because they are skilled at them, some learners simply do so because their friends are pursuing those subjects. One of the learners stated:

It was my teacher that influenced me to choose commerce and this was after she saw potential in me and my performance in my studies.

One of the learners expressed that her father believed in business and he encouraged her to choose commerce so that she could start her own business someday. She had this to say:

My father runs his own business and told me that when I graduate from high school, I will take over. So I guess it will eventually help me earn more money.

Similar views were expressed by one of the learners who indicated that his teacher encouraged him to study commerce if he wanted to start his own business. He said:

My teacher used to tell us in class that if I wanted to start a firm, I should engage in commerce in order to gain the basics of business. Because I want to run my own business, that is why I choose to major in commerce. My knowledge of business subjects will provide me with the skills I need to launch and grow my own company in the future.

It emerged from the findings that teachers also played a crucial role in influencing learners on which stream to follow. One of the learners said:

My teacher told me not to choose commerce but rather to go for science. I did not understand her reasons but I did what she suggested I should do.

Similarly, one of the learners revealed that her teacher told her to choose subjects that are not demanding and that have less of numbers.

I was told by my teacher when I asked his opinion about the streams. He said I should not go for science neither should I go for commerce. He said I should avoid numbers because I do not have enough ability and strength when it comes to numbers. Subjects such as physics and accounting are difficult therefore I should avoid them.

It also emerged from the study that the influence of teachers and parents is sometimes not considerate of the feelings and desires of the learners. One of the learners expressed that she was influenced to choose a stream that she was not comfortable with. She had this to say:

I was not asked which stream I wanted, my parents decided for me after they talked to my class teacher. I was not happy with their decision but I guess they knew what was right for me.

Another participant reported that it was her mother who told her which stream to choose.

It was my mother who went to the school and chose the stream for me together with my class teacher.

Similar sentiments were also expressed by another participant who revealed that his parents instructed him on which stream to choose and further said that the stream would provide him with a greater opportunity for employment in the future. He had this to say:

My father told me to choose science because it is in demand and I will be employed very quickly after I have passed from school and in university.

Summary of the findings

It emerged from the findings that the participants make their decision to enrol for commerce based on their ability on the subjects. A couple of participants indicated that they chose commerce because of various reasons such as the career opportunities, business knowledge it provides as well as economic knowledge.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

a. Learner's Ability in the Subject Area

The findings of this study appeared convoluted and contradictory in nature. Participants in the study generally stated that their aptitude for the subject was what led them to choose the stream. Some learners claimed that their decision to major in business was influenced by their passion for the field and their ability to take on intellectual challenges. This is supported by the literature of Kori, who claims that some learners still choose to study subjects that are regarded challenging in order to demonstrate their proficiency.³⁰ In addition, he mentions other factors that have been noted to affect a learner's choice of subjects, including role models, school reputation, curriculum, and future prospects. The research also revealed that other participants made their decision based on commerce's rich material and information, particularly when it comes to the business aspect, and because it aligns with their interests in starting a business. One of the participants also stated that she chose to engage in commerce because of her performance and achievement of excellent scores. According to research by Trautwein, learners are more likely to receive excellent marks when they study subjects that are more in line with their capabilities and when they have confidence in their ability to achieve.³¹

However, it appeared in the study that some learners did not have no interest in or understanding in the subject of commerce. This is consistent with Lyons and Quinn's finding that learners tend to select the subjects they believe they can perform better in because they are simpler, less demanding, and easier.³² The findings also showed that the learners did not comprehend commerce due to the complexity of the subject matter. The findings also showed that learners shy away from commerce due to their weak arithmetic foundation. They asserted that having a weak background in mathematics makes conducting business difficult. These findings are consistent with DeRidder's (2020) assertion that it is simple for learners to pick commerce when they have a solid understanding of mathematics and self-belief.

b. by Teachers and Parents

According to the findings of the study, teachers and parents can influence learners' decisions to enrol in other streams to increase their chances of succeeding in less difficult and demanding ones rather

³⁰ Kori et al., "Why Do Students Choose to Study Information and Communications Technology?"

³¹ Ulrich Trautwein et al., "Student Tracking and the Powerful Effects of Opt-in Courses on Self-Concept: Reflected-Glory Effects Do Exist after All," in *New Frontiers for Self Research* (Information Age Publishing, 2005), 307–27.

³² Lyons and Quinn, "Understanding the Declines in Senior High School Science Enrolments."

than choosing to study commerce. The findings also demonstrate that teachers have an impact on their learners, especially when they notice that they are strong candidates for a certain field of study. This is corroborated by Costantino, who claims that teachers continue to be a dominant component of learning in the classroom and act as mediators in decisions that learners and their parents make.³³ Teachers have a big influence on which subjects learners choose to study, which supports the perspective. In addition, it has been shown from the study that when students ask their teachers for advice, those teachers typically counsel them to choose commerce or to stay away from anything that involves numbers. This is consistent with Colley's argument that learners are more likely to succeed if teachers assume that they will not require their support or will perform better than they are to fail.³⁴ According to this viewpoint, if a teacher believes that a learner can achieve in a certain subject, then the learner is likely to succeed; but, if the teacher does not believe in the student, then the learner will not do well and may not even continue with that particular subject.

On the other hand, the study found that parents also play a significant role in deciding what career route and streams their children would follow. The study demonstrated that parents decide which stream their children should enrol in, and they work with the children's teachers to do so. Middleton and Loughead; Letha, Amin, and Islamia; and Fisher and Padmawidjaja all conducted in-depth analyses of parent behaviour and its impact on their children's career development processes as well as learner perceptions of parental influence on career choice, which lend support to this.³⁵ According to the findings of these studies, children also believed that their parents had high expectations of their academic performance and had a say in their decisions about their future careers.

Summary of the findings

The research on why students choose commerce is mixed. Some students pick it because of their interest and strong math skills, while others are pushed into it by parents and teachers who see it as an easier option. This can be problematic because some students who choose commerce have no interest or background in the subject, leading to struggles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and discussion, the study recommends that educational training be provided to learners and that frequent assessments be used to assess the learners' ability to do the subjects. Learners need to be counselled, mentored and assisted in their decision-making. Moreover, the influence of teachers and parents should not supersede that of a learner. Teachers and parents should play the role of guiding learners to the appropriate streams that have less of their influence. Lastly, schools should conduct aptitude and interest assessments.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to identify the factors that influence the learners' decisions to enrol in commercial subjects in the Chris Hani District, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. The ability of the learners and the influence of teachers and parents were found to have the greatest impact on the learners' decision to enrol in commercial subjects. When deciding which subjects to take up when moving on to the FET phase the following year, it has been noted that the learners' aptitude in the subject is one of the elements that greatly influence their choice. The misconceptions of learners regarding business-related topics are another important element, as some learners may just have their own opinions and assumptions about such topics and base their decisions on them. It is clear that most teachers routinely

³³ Costantino, "Teacher as Mediator: A Teacher's Influence on Students' Experiences Visiting an Art Museum."

³⁴ Colley, *Mentoring for Social Inclusion: A Critical Approach to Nurturing Mentor Relationships*.

³⁵ Middleton and Loughead, "Parental Influence on Career Development: An Integrative Framework for Adolescent Career Counseling"; Letha, Amin, and Islamia, "Career Aspirations and Adolescents in the Indian Context"; Fisher and Padmawidjaja, "Parental Influences on Career Development Perceived by African American and Mexican American College Students."

advise learners—especially brilliant ones—to pursue careers in the sciences rather than in business. Teachers have authority over learners and have, either directly or indirectly, influenced learners' choices of which subject to pursue as they transition into the FET phase. Entrepreneurial parents encourage their children to enrol in commerce classes because they value the opportunity to run their own enterprises, while other parents encourage their children to enrol in science because they think doing so will increase their chances of finding employment.

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