

**SUSTAINABILITY OF TEACHING CONSUMER STUDIES AT SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA.**

by

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DECLARATION

I, CHARLOTTE MISAVENI MBHENYANE, declare that:

Sustainability of Teaching Consumer Studies at Secondary Schools in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa

is my own work and that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination purpose in any other institution or university, and that all the sources I have used and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

.....

CHARLOTTE MISAVENI MBHENYANE

.....

DATE

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DEDICATION

I give my special dedication to:

- God Almighty, for his Goodness and Mercy.
- My husband, Dr Hasane Harry Hlongwane, for his support and encouragement.
- My children, Ripfumelo, Mfanelo and Ndzalo for their support.
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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was to investigate the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies as a school subject. The study was conducted in Vhembe District schools. The main purpose of the study was to establish the extent of the challenges affecting the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies and to develop the necessary measures to address them. Consumer Studies is in a struggle for legitimacy as a school subject, despite its recognition and designation by the Department of Education. The study argued that Consumer Studies as a school subject is a tool for creating a sustainable future for learners. The nature of the study demanded for the adoption of a qualitative research design. Purposeful sampling procedure was used to select the population for the study. 42 secondary schools which offered Consumer Studies in all the circuits of the Vhembe District were purposefully selected. Participants constituted of school principals, heads of departments and Consumer Studies teachers of the sampled schools. Interviews, Observation and Document analysis were used as strategies for data collection. Data was analyzed thematically. The study revealed that Consumer Studies as a school subject was gradually downgraded and was not given the value that it deserves by the relevant authorities. This was evident as five out of the fifteen sampled schools were in the process of excluding the subject from the curricular. The study also revealed that the school subject Consumer Studies was not promoted as a viable career option for learners. The subject was regarded as an elective in the curricular of most schools selected for the study. It was recommended that the value of Consumer Studies be considered in order to avoid its elimination while other learning areas were added into the system and given compulsory status as well. The study further recommends the promotion of Consumer Studies as a viable career option for learners at secondary schools. The study suggested a model for sustaining the teaching of Consumer Studies at secondary schools.

Key Terms: Consumer Studies, Curriculum, Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Economic Sector and Education for Sustainable Development.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AP	:	Assessment Program
BMI	:	Body Mass Index
BC	:	British Columbia
CASS	:	Continuous Assessment
CAPS	:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DHET	:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	:	Department of Education
ESD	:	Education for Sustainable Development
FET	:	Further Education and Training
HEA	:	Home Economics Association
HIV	:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOD	:	Head of Department
IFHE	:	International Federation of Home Economics
LTSM	:	Learning and Teaching Support Materials
LO'S	:	Learning Outcomes
NCS	:	National Curriculum Statement
NME	:	Namibia Ministry of Education
MDG	:	Millennium Development Goals
MEB	:	Ministry of Education Botswana
PAT	:	Practical Assessment Task
QSA	:	Queensland Studies Authority
SA	:	South Africa
SADC	:	Southern African Development Community
SD	:	Sustainable Development
SME	:	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMT	:	School Management Team
TA	:	Thematic Analysis
UK	:	United Kingdom
UMALUSI	:	Quality Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training

UNESCO : United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural organisation
UN : United Nations
USA : United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
LIST OF ACRONYMS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
APPENDICES	xiii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xv
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	3
1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY.....	4
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	5
1.5 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE	5
1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS	6
1.6.1 Consumer Studies	6
1.6.2 Curriculum.....	6
1.6.3 Sustainability.....	7
1.6.5 Economic Sector.....	8
1.6.6 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)	8
1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	9
1.7.1 Research Design	9
1.7.2 Methodology	9
1.7.2.1 Interviews.....	10
1.7.2.2 Observation.....	10
1.7.2.3 Document analysis.....	11
1.7.3 Sampling	11
1.7.3.1 The population of study.....	11

1.7.3.2 Sampling procedures	12
1.7.3.3 Sample	12
1.7.4 Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data	13
1.7.4.1 Credibility	13
1.7.4.2 Transferability	13
1.7.4.3 Dependability	14
1.7.4.4 Confirmability	14
1.8 DATA ANALYSIS	14
1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	15
1.9.1 Learners.....	15
1.9.2 Teachers.....	15
1.9.3 The Government.....	16
1.10 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY	17
1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	19
1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	19
1.12.1 Informed Consent.....	19
1.12.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity	20
1.13 RESEARCH OUTLINE	20
1.13 SUMMARY CHAPTER.....	21
CHAPTER 2	22
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	22
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	22
2.2 AN EXPOSITION OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	22
2.3 Application of the Concepts of Sustainable Development to the school subject Consumer Studies.....	26
2.3.2 The Natural capital stock.....	29
2.3.3 The Equity and fair trade.....	30
2.3.4 The Eco-form	31
2.3.5 The Integrative Management	32
2.3.6 The Political and Global Agenda.....	34
2.3.7 Utopianism	36
2.5 Summary Chapter	36
CHAPTER 3	37

NARRATIVE OF SUSTAINABILITY OF TEACHING CONSUMER STUDIES AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS	37
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	37
3.2 PERCEPTIONS ON THE TEACHING OF THE SCHOOL SUBJECT CONSUMER STUDIES.....	38
3.2.1 The History of Consumer Studies	40
3.2.2 Contemporary Problems of Consumer Studies.....	44
3.2.3 Consumer Studies and Career Opportunities	46
3.2.3.1 The increased concerns about healthy eating habits of humans	47
3.2.3.2 The impact of poor parenting practices	47
3.2.3.3 The impact of financial literacy	48
3.2.3.4 Increased complexity of family life	48
3.2.3.5 Increased concern about global citizenship and environmental health	48
3.3 CHALLENGES FACING CONSUMER STUDIES TEACHERS.....	50
3.3.1 Gender and Consumer Studies.....	50
3.3.2 The Consumer Studies Curriculum	51
3.3.3 Shortage of Trained Consumer Studies Teachers	53
3.3.4 Food Related Problems and Consumer Studies	56
3.3.5 The Subject Name Change.....	58
3.3.6 Consumer Related Problems	60
3.3.7 Environmental Conditions	61
3.3.8 Poverty.....	62
3.3.9 Migration and Urbanization	64
3.3.10 Globalization, Technological Changes and Industrialization.....	65
3.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL SUBJECT CONSUMER STUDIES INTO VIABLE CAREER OPTIONS.....	65
3.4.1 Consumer Studies and the Clothing Industry.....	66
3.4.2 Consumer Studies in the Hotel and Tourism Industry.....	67
3.4.3 Consumer Studies Professionals as Extension Officers	68
3.5 THE INTENTION OF CONSUMER STUDIES AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT.....	69
3.6 CONSUMER STUDIES AS BASIC IN PERSONAL AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	72
3.7 CONSUMER STUDIES AS AN INTEGRATED SUBJECT OF LEARNING.....	75
3.8 SUSTAINABILITY OF CONSUMER STUDIES AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS ..	76

3.8.1 Comparative exploration of the sustainability of Consumer Studies in Developed Countries	77
3.8.1.1 Consumer Studies in Canada	77
3.8.1.1.1 Development and the intention of Consumer Studies in Canada.....	77
3.8.1.1.2 Challenges associated with the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies in Canada.....	78
3.8.1.1.3 Curriculum Development of Home Economics in Canada	79
3.8.1.2 Consumer Studies in China	81
3.8.1.2.1 Development and the intention of Consumer Studies in China	81
3.8.1.2.2 Challenges associated with the sustainability of teaching Home Economics in China	83
3.8.1.2.3 Curriculum Development of Home Economics in China.....	85
3.8.2 Comparative exploration of sustainability of Consumer Studies in Developing countries	87
3.8.2.1 Consumer Studies in Kenya.....	87
3.8.2.1.1 Development and the Intention of Consumer Studies in Kenya	87
3.8.2.1.2 Challenges associated with the sustainability of teaching Home science in Kenya.....	88
3.8.2.1.3 Curriculum Development of Home Science in Kenya.....	89
3.8.2.2 Consumer Studies in South Africa	89
3.8.2.2.1 Development of Consumer Studies in South Africa	90
3.8.2.2.2 Challenges associated with the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies in South Africa.....	93
Source: Adapted from the Department of Education (2011:12)	97
3.8.2.2.3 Curriculum Development of Consumer Studies in South Africa	100
3.8.3 Brief comparison of the Canada, China and Kenya curricula with that of South Africa	102
3.9 SUMMARY CHAPTER.....	107
CHAPTER 4	108
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	108
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	108
4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM	108
4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	109
4.4 METHODOLOGY	110
4.5 SAMPLING.....	110

4.5.1 Population	111
4.5.2 Sampling Procedures.....	111
4.5.3 Sample.....	111
4.6 INSTRUMENTATION.....	112
4.6.1 Self-designed interview schedules.....	112
4.6.1.1 Interview schedule for the teachers on the perceptions of Consumer Studies teachers regarding the accomplishments of Consumer Studies as a secondary school subject.....	113
4.6.1.2 Interview schedule for the heads of department on their attitudes towards Consumer Studies	113
4.6.1.3 Interview schedule for the principals on their attitudes towards Consumer Studies.....	113
4.6.2 Observation schedule for data collection	114
4.6.3 Document analysis on the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies at secondary schools	114
4.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE	115
4.8 DATA ANALYSIS	115
4.9 SUMMARY CHAPTER.....	116
CHAPTER 5.....	117
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTEPRETATION.....	117
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	117
5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS	117
5.3 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS.....	118
5.3.1 The Perceptions of Consumer Studies Teachers Regarding the Accomplishments of the Subject at Secondary Schools	118
5.3.2 The HODs Attitudes towards Consumer Studies Subject	127
5.3.3 The Principal's Attitude towards Consumer Studies	131
5.3.4 Observations.....	135
5.3.5 Document Analysis	136
5.4 INTEGRATION OF THE FINDINGS.....	137
5.5 SUMMARY CHAPTER.....	138
CHAPTER 6.....	139
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES.....	139
6.1 INTRODUCTION.....	139

6.2 SUMMARY	139
6.2.1 How the Study Responds to Research Questions	139
6.2.2 Summary of the Literature Reviewed	141
6.2.3 Summary of the Empirical Studies	142
6.3 CONCLUSION	143
6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS	144
6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES	152
REFERENCES.....	154
APPENDICES	168

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PERCEPTIONS OF CONSUMER STUDIES TEACHERS REGARDING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CONSUMER STUDIES AS A SECONDARY SCHOOL SUBJECT	168
APPENDIX B: HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONSUMER STUDIES.....	170
APPENDIX C: PRINCIPALS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONSUMER STUDIES..	172
APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE OF TEACHING MATERIAL FOR CONSUMER STUDIES AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS.....	173
APPENDIX E: TEACHERS: CONCERT FORM	174
APPENDIX F: HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS: CONCERT FORM	175
APPENDIX G: PRINCIPALS: CONCERT FORM	176
APPENDIX H: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE.....	177
APPENDIX I: LETTERS OF PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA	178
APPENDIX J: EDITOR'S REPORT	183

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Example of a Budget for Practical Tasks of Food Production.....	96
Table 2: Example of a Stock Book.....	97

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of Vhembe District (Source: https://www.google.co.za)	18
Figure 2: A Conceptual framework for sustainable development adapted from a new conceptual framework for sustainable development by Jabareen. 2008. Journal of Development for Sustainability, p: 179 -192.....	24
Figure 3: Philosophy and Approach of Consumer Studies adapted from (DoE,2008:7)	92
Figure 4: A Suggested Model for the Sustenance of Consumer Studies in the South African School.....	149

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Consumer Studies has undergone transformation throughout the history of education. The subject has been eroded systematically around the world as a result of curriculum reform (Ma & Pendergast, 2011:589). The researcher teaches Consumer Studies and has experience about what is happening at schools. This subject is at present considered to be at crossroads. It is being phased out from schools due to curricula changes. With the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement, Consumer Studies was phased out from the Primary and Junior Secondary School Curriculum. The subject is currently offered at the Further Education and Training (FET) band. This creates problems as learners lack solid foundation of the subject from both primary and junior secondary school levels. From my observation, fewer learners opt to take the subject at senior secondary levels.

The reduction in the number of schools that offer the subject Consumer Studies could be attributed to smaller numbers of students enrolling for the subject, educators forced into redundancies at school level, shortage of trained teachers due to the changes of teacher training systems, gender specific stereotype, stressful working conditions and financial constraints (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:32).

Consumer Studies is likely to be perceived as a subject about “cooking and sewing” since the public knows little of its philosophical base and complexities (Ma & Pendergast, 2011:590). Uninformed people regard Consumer Studies laboratories as a cooking and sewing room. Cooking and sewing offered by competent teachers, equip learners with better knowledge and skills than a mere perfection of cooking and sewing. This perception could have some influence on the School Management Teams (SMT) and cause them to exclude the subject from the curriculum. This is evidenced by the fact that the Vhembe district consists of two hundred and eighty-

four Senior Secondary Schools and only forty-two are presently offering the subject (DoE, 2012:6).

The declining popularity of Consumer Studies as a school subject has led to huge concerns by the Consumer Studies Scientists. They engaged themselves in research in order to establish the extent of the challenges and to develop the necessary measures to address them. The question that needs to be asked is whether Consumer Studies has a future in the school curriculum. Hopefully, this study will provide some guidelines in addressing the question.

Smith and de Zwart (2010:20) reveal that Consumer Studies remarkably contributed to the education of young people as it emphasized on the nature and challenges of the people's daily lives. The knowledge acquired in the subject makes the youth to understand living challenges that contribute to the development of skills and shared responsibility. Skills and knowledge developed in Consumer Studies are worthwhile to learners in safeguarding and holding employment in business, industry and professions, and participating as active citizens in a democratic society. Consumer Studies is a combination of human development, healthy lifestyle and sustainable use of resources, social responsibility and cultural heritage and science. In fact, it falls within the domain of an applied science. It combines the levels of individuals, the community and the society and it has both historical and future dimensions (Turkki & Vincenti, 2008:28). Arkhurst (2005:33) notes that the benefits of Consumer Studies cannot be overemphasized.

Previous research on Consumer Studies focused on its elimination from Secondary School Programs due to lack of qualified professionals (Bull & Cummings, 2002:30). Other studies focused on the lack of teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities (Bull, Uerz & Yoakum, 2000:32). Dewhurst and Pendergast (2011:245) conducted another study which focused on the contribution of Consumer Studies to sustainable development education as part of the school curriculum for learners aged 11-18 years in a number of curriculum contexts. This study revealed that teachers considered sustainable development to be an important issue, and that the formal Consumer Studies curricular made significant contribution to the education for sustainable development.

McGregor (2009:27) defines Consumer Studies as a skill-oriented subject that is capable of equipping the graduates with knowledge and skills which enable them to be self-employed and contribute effectively to the socio-economic development of the individual, the family and the society. The subject contributes to manpower development, by equipping individuals with occupational skills to make them self-reliant. Arkhurst (2005:33) confirms that Consumer Studies courses are capable of preparing youths and adults for entry into the various Consumer Studies occupations. Occupations in this area of study may include teaching, research and consumer scientists in businesses such as catering, clothing construction and interior decoration. As a skills-oriented subject, Consumer Studies equips learners with marketable, management and consumer skills which will help them to save money and manage the available resources better as well as prevent diseases and poverty. This improves the quality of life of people. The intention of this study was to investigate the sustainability of the subject Consumer Studies at Secondary Schools. The subject is very vital for living and it should be included in the secondary school curriculum to prepare the youth for life. Consumer Studies education is deeply grounded in society and its services remain fundamental. Any curriculum which does not include Consumer Studies education ignores the center around which life revolves.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Consumer Studies subject is marginalised and receives little attention from school authorities as they view it as inferior. School management teams exclude it as a teaching subject. In the Vhembe district alone, out of two hundred and eighty-four Senior Secondary Schools, only forty-two offers the subject Consumer Studies (DoE, 2012:6). Almost seventy nine percent of Senior Secondary Schools in Vhembe District are not offering the subject despite its recognition and designation by the department of education. The major concern of this study was that the subject is not awarded the value that it deserves as a tool in creating a sustainable future for learners.

The Consumer Studies subject focuses on developing knowledge, skills and values in learners, to enable them to become responsible and informed consumers of food,

clothing, housing, furnishings and household equipment, and use resources optimally and in a sustainable manner (DoE, 2011:7). The number of schools that offer the subject keeps on dwindling. This creates a situation in which learner's knowledge about the use of resources optimally in a sustainable manner is threatened. In this way, an opportunity of maximizing education for sustainable development is diminished. According to Summers, Corney and Childs (2005:164), the criteria for sustainable process are the avoidance of depletion of finite resources and avoidance of damaging the planet for the future. Any attempt to teach Consumer Studies subject, has a bearing of addressing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their targets set out by UN (2015). The goals and their targets are integrated and indivisible, global in action and universally applicable. For example, Goals 6, 7, 8 and 9 below bear reference:

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all and

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

It is against this background that the study was conceptualised with the intention of investigating how the subject Consumer Studies could be sustained at secondary schools.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to investigate the potential of secondary schools to uphold the teaching of Consumer Studies as a subject. It is further hoped that the study would develop a model thereafter.

In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives were developed:

1.3.1 To identify challenges which impede the teaching of the Consumer Studies subject at secondary schools.

1.3.2 To explore the possibilities of developing the school subject Consumer Studies into a viable career option for learners.

1.3.2.1 To explore strategies of sustainable teaching of the school subject Consumer Studies.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question was: How is the teaching of Consumer Studies sustainable at secondary schools?

The following subsidiary questions were developed in order to answer the main question:

1.4.1 What are the challenges of teaching Consumer Studies at secondary schools?

1.4.2 How can Consumer Studies be developed into a viable career option for learners?

1.4.3 What are the strategies that can make the subject Consumer Studies attractive to learners?

1.5 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The study is guided by the theory of “Education for Sustainable Development” (ESD). This theory is developed by (Alberg, Aanisma & Dillon, 2005:168). These three scholars conducted a 4-year action research project involving curriculum development in education for sustainable living as part of Home Economics/ Consumer Studies in a university teacher education course in 2005. Jabareen (2008:188) came up with a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding Sustainable Development (SD) and its complexities. This theory of SD discloses the connection of the discipline Consumer Studies with ESD. The theory is “Sustainable Development”. Chapter 2 gives an in-depth exposition of the theory.

1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The concepts which are used in the study are defined in this section to clarify what they mean and to benefit the readers. The concepts are; Consumer Studies, Curriculum, Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Economic Sector and Education for Sustainable Development.

1.6.1 Consumer Studies

The International Federation of Home Economics IFHE (2008:1) defines Consumer Studies as a field of study and a profession, found in the human sciences that setup from a range of disciplines to attain optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities. Smith and de Zwart (2010:20) view Consumer Studies as a basic challenge to pedagogical practices and forms of knowledge in schools because of its importance on practical problem solving, the practical application of critical theory also counters the assumption that all problems can be solved by science and technology as the dominant mode of reasoning. This study defines Consumer Studies as a Curriculum area which facilitates learners to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life.

1.6.2 Curriculum

In its broadest sense the term Curriculum can be said to encompass the principles, underlying educational philosophy, goals, content and concrete functioning of the instructional program in the classroom, as well as the written and other materials needed to support the educational system (Farah & Ridge, 2009:1). Benavot (2006:14) explains curriculum as a concept that can be broken down into three key concepts; intended curriculum, implemented curriculum and attained curriculum. The intended curriculum typically includes the guiding documents produced by the education authorities, who dictate how much, how often and what should be taught in schools. The implemented curriculum is what actually happens in the classroom, how effectively teachers present the material, how long they spend on a topic and what resources are required to teach the content. The attained curriculum is what learners actually learn in their classroom, what skills and values they pick up, and

what content they absorb and retain. This study defines the Curriculum as an area underlying Consumer Studies as a challenge to educational practices in schools because of its emphasis on practical problem solving of everyday living. Through the engagement in Consumer Studies Curriculum, the individual is provided the learning opportunity to develop capabilities to enhance personal empowerment to act on daily contexts.

1.6.3 Sustainability

According to McGregor (2006:21), sustainability means the ability to sustain. Sustain means to keep something in existence, to keep it in good repair and use, to keep it from failing during stress and difficult times. This is done by providing support from below so that it does not sink. Sustainability refers to the way in which humans use their resources to meet their needs while ensuring that future generations will also be able to meet their needs (Van Zyl, Van Wyk, Ontong & Van der Linde, 2011:25). Sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies is the main focus of this study. Sustainability-oriented core curriculum for this subject may be the solution to the declining popularity of the subject. Consumer Studies is currently experiencing difficult times, it is marginalized in schools by school authorities as they view it as an inferior subject.

1.6.4 Sustainable Development

Cicmil, Gough and Hills (2017:290) define sustainable development (SD) as the management and conservation of natural resource base and orientation of technological and institutional change in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations. Such SD which conserves land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, is environmentally non-degrading, technically appropriate, economically viable and socially acceptable.

According to Molderez and Ceulemans (2018:760) SD focuses on human activities and other related development that meets the needs of the present without

compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. Consequently, proper management of the environment will result in sustainable development. SD in Consumer Studies requires that human basic needs are met, thus improving the quality of life of people (UNESCO, 2014:7).

1.6.5 Economic Sector

Economic Sector is assumed to be human welfare (Harris, 2003:2). Pendergast (2006:8) asserts that the economic sector certainly includes many important aspects of human welfare, food, clothing, housing, transportation, health and education services and it has the analytical advantage of reducing the problem to a measurable single-dimensional indicator. Harris (2003:2) believes that there is need for sustainability of economic activities at family and national levels. Studies have shown that economic projects started without a component of sustainability.

1.6.6 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

UNESCO (2006:5) describes Education for Sustainable Development as an educational process, meaning education that; enables people to foresee, face up to and solve problems that threaten life on our planet; it also allows people to spread values and principles that form the basis of sustainable development, such as intergenerational equity, gender parity, social tolerance, poverty reduction, environmental protection and restoration, natural resource conservation, justice and peaceful societies; and lastly, education that points out the complexity and mutual dependence of the three dimensions of sustainability, ecology, social equity and economy (UNESCO, 2006: 5).

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section addresses the research design and methodology suitable for this study.

1.7.1 Research Design

Airasian and Gay (2003:90) define research design as a general strategy or plan for conducting a research study. The description of the design indicates the basic structure and goals of the study. A qualitative research design was adopted for this study. The purpose of conducting this qualitative study was to produce findings that relate to the participant's lived experiences about the challenges facing Consumer Studies teachers at secondary schools in Vhembe District.

Cresswell (2005:232) defines qualitative research as a means for exploring and understanding the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The design involves collecting data in the participants setting, analyzing the data inductively, building from particular to general themes, and making interpretations of the meaning of data.

1.7.2 Methodology

Research methodology refers to the theory about the methods. It is about what lies behind the approaches and methods of enquiry that may be used in a piece of research (Punch, 2009:15). The following methods of data collection were selected for this study: interviews, observations and document analysis. The use of multiple sources of data in research is referred to as triangulation. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche' and Delport (2005:362) describe triangulation in qualitative research as the convergence of multiple perspectives that can provide greater confidence that what is being targeted is being accurately captured. Triangulation can be used to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate the research findings. It strengthens the study's usefulness for other settings (De Vos et al., 2005:362). Data collected from interviews, observation and document analysis were used in the triangulation process.

1.7.2.1 Interviews

Interviews were used as a basic strategy of data collection in this study. An interview is often unstructured, the researcher and the participants work together to arrive at the heart of the matter (Kumar, 2011:144). A typical interview looks more like an informal conversation, with the participant doing most of the talking and the researcher doing most of the listening. The researcher listens closely as participants describe their everyday experiences related to the phenomenon, the researcher must also be alert for subtle yet meaningful cues in participants expressions, questions and occasional side tracks (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:141). A conversational tone was also used as an interviewer's interactive style in order to indicate empathy and understanding while conveying acceptance to encourage elaboration of subtle valid data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:355). Interviews are a useful way of getting large amount of data quickly and are especially effective in obtaining depth in data (De Vos et al., 2005:315). For this study, face-to-face interviews were used effectively in obtaining in-depth information about the challenges facing Consumer Studies teacher at secondary schools in Vhembe District.

1.7.2.2 Observation

An observation schedule was designed to enable the researcher to observe learners during lessons. According to Leedy and Omrod (2014:142), observation is a scientific tool or the method of data collection for the researcher, when it serves as a formulated research purpose, is systematically planned and recorded and is subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability. Consumer Studies classes, Grades 10-12 were observed. The number of learners observed depended on the number of learners enrolled for each Grade. The difference in the number of girls and boys in class was looked at. Interaction between learners and the teacher was also observed. Availability of resources for Consumer Studies lessons is also a crucial factor which required to be observed. The observation was unstructured and free-flowing. This allowed the researcher to shift focus from one thing to another as new and significant events unfolded (Leedy & Omrod, 2010:147). This method is

known for its flexibility as it allows the researcher to take advantage of unforeseen data sources as they surface (Leedy & Omrod, 2010:147).

1.7.2.3 Document analysis

The study also employed document analysis. Document analysis denotes the analysis of any written material that contains information about the phenomenon that is being researched (De Vos et al., 2005:330). This method allowed a review of official critical documents for inquiry. This source of data is stable, reliable and accessible for future reference. Lesson plans, assessment forms, record books, practical assessment tasks, stock registers as well as the budget for were analysed in order to gather information relating to the challenges affecting Consumer Studies teachers regarding teaching this subject. One disadvantage that might have affected the study was that some documents in other schools were not available. Sometimes it is often impossible to ascertain critical factors such as the origin or the date of the document (De Vos et al., 2005:335). Sometimes documents may be presented in bulk, or in large volume which in most cases are often incomplete, unorganised or in various stages of deterioration.

1.7.3 Sampling

In this section, the following aspects are addressed: the population of the study, sampling procedures and sample.

1.7.3.1 The population of study

Population in research means a group of members similar with respect to one or more characteristics as defined by the researcher (Mulder, 2000:53). The researcher has a specific goal in mind with his description of the population. The Vhembe District comprises of twenty-seven circuits with two hundred and eighty-four senior secondary schools. Out of the two hundred and eighty-four Senior Secondary Schools in the District, only forty-two schools offered the Consumer Studies subject (DoE, 2012:6). The population therefore comprised of all the Consumer Studies

teachers, heads of department and school principals of the forty-two secondary schools that offer Consumer Studies in the Vhembe District.

1.7.3.2 Sampling procedures

Sampling is a process of selecting a subset of participants to be observed from the population under observation (Mulder, 2000:55). In qualitative research, the researcher seeks to obtain deep understanding of a relatively few participants in a single setting (Airasian & Gay, 2003:197). This means that qualitative researchers typically deal with purposefully selected samples. The forty-two schools which offered the Consumer Studies subject were scattered throughout the circuits of the Vhembe District and were purposefully selected on the basis of learner performance in matric results.

1.7.3.3 Sample

A sample is a group of people selected from the population and is thus less than the population, while remaining as representative as possible (Mulder, 2000:55). A representative sample is obtained from a defined population under discussion (Steel & Torrie, 2002:10). A sample gives the researcher a more manageable group for the purpose of the research. It is believed that conclusions from the findings also pertain to the population if the sample is representative of the population. Somekh (2011:218) states that the absolute size of the sample is the crucial factor rather than the relative size or the proportion of the sampled population. A larger sample reduces the errors of estimating the characteristics of the whole population but increases the cost of carrying out the study and the analysis of the data. Fifteen secondary schools were selected for this study. The schools were categorised as five best performing, five from the average category and five from the underperforming category. The sample was designed to consist of fifteen teachers, fifteen heads of departments and fifteen principals of the selected schools.

1.7.4 Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data

De Vos et al. (2005:362) refer to trustworthiness as establishing the true value of the study, its applicability, consistency and neutrality. In support of this view, (De Vos et al., 2005:362) proposed four alternative constructs that more accurately reflect the assumption of trustworthiness.

1.7.4.1 Credibility

According to De Vos et al. (2005:362), credibility demonstrates that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described. It is said to be an alternative to internal validity. In this study, the researcher conducted interviews, observations and analysed the documents which were selected with the assistance of two fieldworkers. The researcher checked the participants' responses against the research questions and objectives during analysis to create credibility.

1.7.4.2 Transferability

Shenton (2004:69) asserts that transferability is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. This is possible if the researcher, from the outset, provides information on the number of institutions taking part and where they are located, any restrictions in the type of people who contributed to the data, number of participants involved in the fieldwork, data collection sessions, and the period over which data were collected. In this study, the researcher was the main fieldworker with two assistants. Involving fifteen schools from the nine circuits and interviewing a total of forty-three participants is a transferability measure. The researcher constantly compared the responses with reviewed literature.

1.7.4.3 Dependability

Dependability was also catered for in this study to further strengthen trustworthiness. Dependability in research is an alternative to reliability. The researcher attempted to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for the study as well as changes in the design created by increasingly refined understanding of the setting (De Vos et al., 2005:362). In qualitative study, this refers to how the researcher can reasonably ensure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in a similar context. The use of the three data collection methods, that is, interviews, observations and document analysis ensured dependability.

1.7.4.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to objectivity. De Vos et al. (2005:362) stress the need to ask whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another. Shenton (2004:72) affirms that confirmability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern for objectivity. Steps must be taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the research findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the research participants rather than those of the researcher.

1.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is a relatively systemic process of coding, categorising and interpreting a single phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:364). Data analysis involves bringing order and meaning to the mass of collected data (De Vos et al., 2005:365). For this study, Thematic Analysis (TA) was used as a method to analyse data. This method is known for its ability to reveal insights and can often provide clues to potential interventions (Howitt & Cramer, 2007:137). Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information. The following steps are meant as guidelines in thematic analysis: collect data, coding data, code validation, themes and framework information consolidation. The researcher read and re-read

the data in order to be familiar with its content for the purpose of giving participants identity. During coding, the researcher engaged herself in searching for themes; concise labels that identified the participants were generated. For finalising the themes, the researcher engaged herself in weaving together the analytic narrative and data and contextualising the analysis in relation to the existing literature.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Consumer Studies as a school subject can play a vital role in enabling learners to gain a comprehensive view of lifelong development of human beings and life management. Teachers in Consumer Studies have as their highest goal, the raising of democratic minded citizens who will build happy homes and a free society (Makino, 2012:51).

1.9.1 Learners

The school subject Consumer Studies is effective at empowering learners to lead independent lives. According to Makino (2012:48), the subject is deeply involved with teaching children the life skills necessary to become independent members of the society. By learning basic skills in Consumer Studies, through lessons such as “Cooking and Sewing” learners acquire the knowledge on how to organize and manage their lives, experience first-hand pleasure and they recognize the value of doing things with their own hands.

1.9.2 Teachers

The findings of this study would assist teachers to prepare themselves for the challenges and rewards of the Consumer Studies classroom. Consumer Studies lessons help teachers to create a balance in life. Teachers are given the opportunity to use their creative abilities in the Consumer Studies classroom. Teachers can also gain the following actions in the Consumer Studies classroom, awareness of the challenges, taking responsibility, seeking help when needed, continuing professional development, working hard, being creative, flexible and active in their teaching

(Lorek & Wahlen, 2012:174). The study would also help to encourage teachers in developing a positive approach towards teaching the subject.

It is known that teachers within Consumer Studies have been and are still mainly females. The study done by Makino (2012:35) revealed that, In Japan the shortage of Consumer Studies teachers caused teachers of other subjects to take Consumer Studies as their teaching subject. Those teachers were motivated by their own desire for change or needs of their schools. Some of these were male teachers. This prompted the question why these male teachers switched to Consumer Studies. One of these teachers said that the knowledge that one gains in Consumer Studies is key to bringing people together. The teacher further mentioned that Consumer Studies is a subject that possesses the greatest potential of producing a methodology capable of rehabilitating humanity (Makino, 2012:35). Both of these teachers were attracted to the holistic and practical aspects of Consumer Studies with its focus on human life skills.

It is a known fact that well trained Consumer Studies teachers are capable in teaching in all specialty areas of the subject. By so doing they touch the lives of many youths and families, empowering them with the skills to balance the multiple roles they play as part of a family, community and work environment.

1.9.3 The Government

The study would assist policy and decision makers in the department of Education to redefine and reposition Consumer Studies as a school subject. The subject has a great potential in the education system of the country especially in the secondary schools (Deagonn & Pendergast, 2012:177). Curriculum planners should note that Consumer Studies has much to offer adolescents during secondary education. It could be the best source of applied knowledge, to help learners make close links between education and their daily lives. In this phase of their lives, learner's physical and psychological development is undergoing huge changes, and they need various kinds of correct guidance about life and career (Pendergast et al., 2012:70). This study could also assist curriculum planners to address gender issues related to the

subject. Consumer Studies should be promoted as a school subject for boys and girls. One way of doing this is to emphasise Consumer issues and not issues around cooking and sewing (Pendergast et al., 2012:116).

1.10 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was confined to schools that offer the subject Consumer Studies within the district of Vhembe in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. (See Figure 1). The Limpopo Province is divided into five districts, Capricorn, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Waterberg and Vhembe. The Vhembe District is situated in the northern part of the Limpopo Province and shares its borders with Zimbabwe in the north, Mozambique in the North East, Mopani District in the East and Capricorn District in the South and West.



Figure 1: Map of Vhembe District (Source: <https://www.google.co.za>)

1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher acknowledges that there were limitations associated with this study. The forty two schools which offered the subject Consumer Studies were scattered in all the circuits of the Vhembe district which required travelling. Some of the schools were visited twice due to absenteeism of participants, that is, either the principal or the head of department. The use of completely different sets of interview schedules had influences on responses. It is possible that the repeated nature of questions might have influenced the responses from the participants.

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations refer to a set of moral principles which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and participants (De Vos et al., 2005:333). Anyone involved in research needs to be aware of the agreements about what is proper and improper in a scientific research (Leedy & Omrod, 2014:107). The ethical principles that were considered in this research included informed consent as well as confidentiality and anonymity.

1.12.1 Informed Consent

De Vos et al. (2005:333) consider informed consent as one of the most important ethics in research. Informed consent implies allowing a participant to knowingly and voluntarily decide his involvement in a research (Roberts, 2015:318). According to Leedy and Omrod (2014:107) informed consent seeks to prevent assaults on the integrity of the participant. It is also a measure by which the right to autonomy is protected. In this study, the researcher assisted the participants to make informed decisions by explaining in detail the objectives of the study, its significance and methods that were used to collect the relevant data. The possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which participants may be exposed were also revealed. Freedom to be involved or withdraw participation at any point in the

research was emphasized. The researcher also sought permission from participants to record their responses.

1.12.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity are ethical issues which are closely related to the right of privacy, respect for the dignity and loyalty. Cresswell and Creswell (2018: 51) and Babbie (2010:472) distinguish between anonymity and confidentiality. They believe that confidentiality implies that only the researcher and possibly a few members of his staff should be aware of the identity of the participants, and that his staff should also have made commitment with regard to confidentiality. Jupp (2006:280) considers confidential information as privileged information. This means that the researcher has to use the information disclosed to him/her for research purposes only. On the other hand, research participants are afforded freedom to share and withhold information they wish to. Anonymity means that no one, including the researcher should be able to identify any subject afterwards. According to De Vos et al. (2005:334), anonymity means privacy, the element of personal privacy. In this study, participants were granted both confidentiality and anonymity. The information revealed was not exposed to anyone.

1.13 RESEARCH OUTLINE

Chapter One gives introduction and orientation of the study. It includes the problem statement, research questions, conceptual framework, research design and methodology.

Chapter Two presents theories and concepts related to the concerns of challenges that face teachers in teaching Consumer Studies in Secondary Schools.

Chapter Three outlines the literature of the study dealing with the comparisons of the secondary schools Consumer Studies curricular from a couple of selected counties. The chapter also discussed the differences related to culture, content and the aimed competencies.

Chapter Four outlines the research design of the study, dealing with how the researcher explored the challenges faced by Consumer Studies teachers in secondary schools. This chapter also describes the methodology, research orientation and methods which were used for data collection, analysis and interpretation and also how the researcher dealt with validity and reliability of the findings and ethical issues which arose from the study.

Chapter Five provides analysis of data collected from the chosen sample and present research findings and the interpretation thereof.

Chapter Six provides a summary of the study by outlining recommendations based on major findings as would have been discussed in Chapter Five. Other recommendations on policy were suggested to the Department of Education and to future researchers who might be having similar interests of exploring challenges experienced by Consumer Studies teachers and to those who would like to use this study as a reference.

1.13 SUMMARY CHAPTER

This chapter gave an orientation of the study. It dealt with the problem statement, research questions, conceptual framework, research design and methodology. The intention of the study was to explore the challenges encountered by Consumer Studies teachers in order to address the issues for sustaining the teaching of this subject at secondary schools. Strong, relevant and dynamic theoretical foundation is needed on which to base sustainability issues of teaching Consumer Studies at secondary schools.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

There is a dearth of developed theoretical frameworks on Sustainable Development (SD). However, Jabareen (2008:179) who also alluded to the scarcity of any notable theoretical framework afforded literature with a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding SD and its complexities. This study is guided by the theory on SD as developed by Jabareen (2008:188).

The theory of SD reveals the interconnectedness of the discipline Consumer Studies with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Both Consumer Studies and ESD are concerned with the everyday life of people. The theory is as a result of the objectives of both Consumer Studies and ESD. This chapter gives a detailed overview of the main elements of SD in regard to its application to the sustainability of Consumer Studies at secondary schools.

2.2 AN EXPOSITION OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

McGregor (2011:30) asserts that the Consumer Studies curriculum integrates well with the ESD. The curriculum for Consumer Studies links knowledge to action for SD while embracing the principles of ESD. Ahlberg et al., (2005:175) attest to the strong ties between the Consumer Studies and ESD. According to Nasibulina (2015:1078), the main aims and objectives of ESD integrate well with the aims and objectives of Consumer Studies. These objectives include; the development of the systematic worldview and critical thinking, acquisition of new knowledge and skills contributing to the SD of the society, teaching healthy lifestyles, nurturing of high moral and values, teaching of sustainable consumption and lastly, nurturing of social activism.

Nasibulina (2015:1077) regards ESD as a lifelong process going well beyond the limits of the formation of ecological culture. ESD seeks to promote and improve the quality of life for life-long education which is directed to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values for sustainability and reorienting the academic curricula, thereby creating a better understanding of the concept of SD. Studies done by Nasibulina (2015:1075) and Molderez, and Ceulemans (2018:76) confirm the interrelatedness of ESD with other subjects as it cannot be pursued as an isolated discipline. ESD ought to be supported in order to empower consumers to strive to live more sustainably and responsibly.

The conceptual analysis of Jabareen, (2008:188) identifies seven concepts which together synthesize and assemble the theoretical framework of SD. Each concept represents distinctive meanings and aspects of the theoretical foundations of sustainability. In addition, they have interwoven relations as shown in Figure 1. In this study, these concepts are elaborated in an attempt to address the interactions of the ESD and Consumer Studies curriculums.

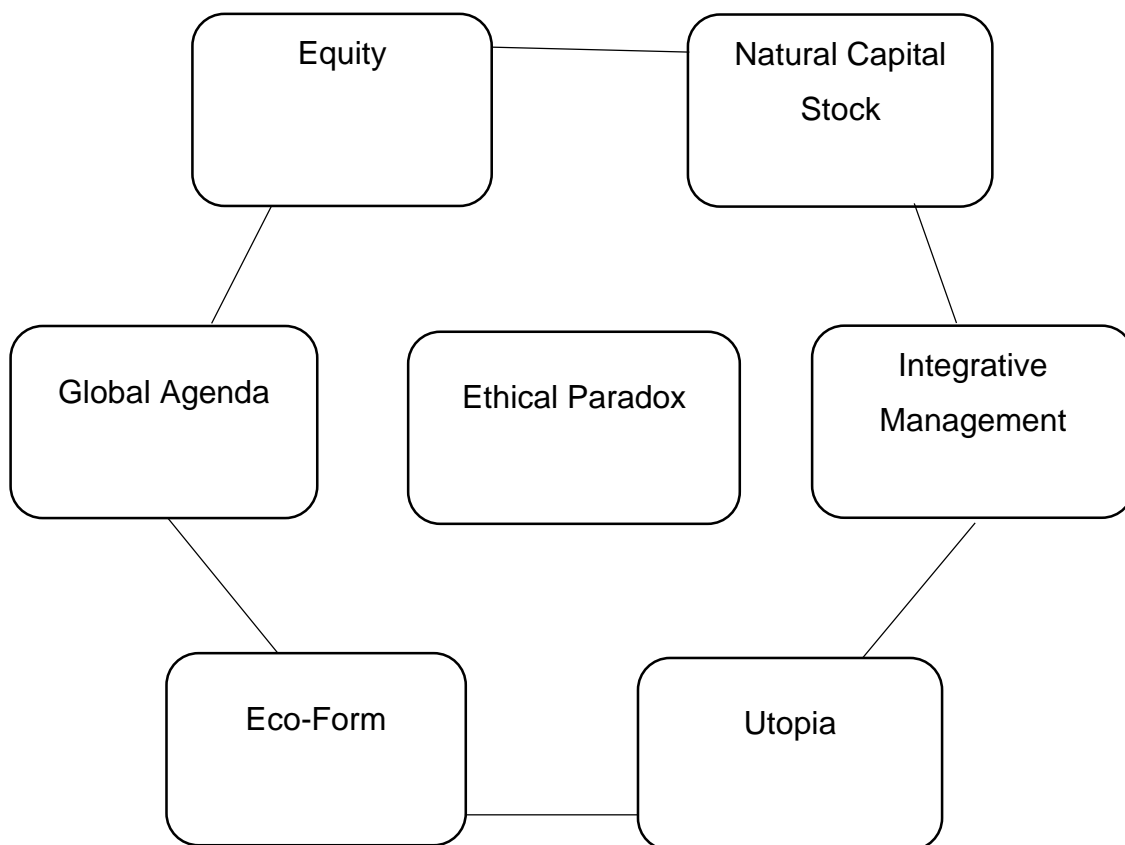


Figure 2: A Conceptual framework for sustainable development adapted from a new conceptual framework for sustainable development by Jabareen. 2008. Journal of Development for Sustainability, p: 179 -192.

According to Jabareen (2008:188) the concept of ethical paradox rests at the heart of this framework. The paradox between 'Sustainability' and 'Development' is articulated in terms of ethics. In other words, the epistemological foundation of the theoretical framework of SD is based on the unresolved and fluid paradox of sustainability, which as such can simultaneously inhabit different and contradictory environmental ideologies and practices. Consequently, SD tolerates diverse interpretations and practices that range between light 'ecology', which allows intensive interventions, and 'deep ecology', which allows minor interventions in nature.

The concept of natural capital according to Jabareen (2008:188) represents the material aspect of the theoretical world of sustainability. Natural capital represents the environmental and natural resource assets of development and preservation. The theoretical framework of sustainability advocates keeping the natural capital constant for the benefit of future generations.

The concept of equity represents the social aspects of SD (Jabareen, 2008:188). It encompasses different concepts such as environmental, social and economic justice, social equity, quality of life, freedom, democracy, participation and empowerment. Broadly, sustainability is seen as a matter of distributional equity, about sharing the capacity for well-being between current and future generations of people.

The concept of eco-form represents the ecologically desired form of urban spaces and communities (Jabareen, 2008:189). This concept represents the desired spatial form of human habitats: cities, villages and neighborhood. 'Sustainable' design aims to create eco-forms, which are energy efficient and designed for long life. Its common principles could be explained through the concept of 'time space-energy compression', which requires reductions in time and space in order to reduce energy usage.

Jabareen (2008:189) believes that the concept of integrative management represents the integrative and holistic view of the aspects of social development, economic growth and environmental protection. According to the theoretical world of sustainability, the integration of environmental, social and economic concerns in planning and management for SD is essential. It is believed that in order to achieve ecological integrity, i.e. to preserve the natural capital stock, we need integrative and holistic approaches to management.

The concept political global agenda represents a new worldwide political environmental discourse reconstituted around the ideas of sustainability (Jabareen, 2008:189). Since the Rio Summit, this discourse has extended beyond purely ecological concepts to include various international issues, such as security, peace, trade, heritage, hunger, shelter and other basic services. However, the concept reflects deep political disputes between Northern and Southern countries, where the North demands 'no development without sustainability' and the South demands 'no sustainability without development'.

The concept of utopianism represents visions for the human habitats based on SD (Jabareen, 2008:189). Generally, such utopias envision a perfect society in which justice prevails, the people are perfectly content, the people live and flourish in harmony with nature, and life moves along smoothly, without abuses or shortages. This utopia transcends the primary ecological concerns of sustainability to incorporate political and social concepts such as solidarity, spirituality, and the equal allocation of resources.

2.3 Application of the Concepts of Sustainable Development to the school subject Consumer Studies

The Consumer Studies Curriculum integrates well with SD (McGregor, 2011:30). The curriculum for Consumer Studies links knowledge to action for SD while embracing the principles of ESD. Ahlberg et al., (2005:175) attest to the strong ties between the Consumer Studies curriculum and SD. Pendergast (2006:56) also confirms that the aims and objectives of Consumer Studies are embraced in SD. According to Nosibulina (2015:1078), the main aims and objectives of SD integrate well with the

aims and objectives of the school subject Consumer Studies. These objectives include; the development of the systematic worldview and critical thinking, acquisition of new knowledge and skills contributing to the SD of the society, teaching healthy lifestyles, nurturing of high moral and values, teaching of sustainable consumption and lastly, nurturing of social activism.

Sinakou, Boede-de-Pauw, Goossens and Van Petergem (2018:322) refer to SD as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own. This idea addresses the three pillars of sustainability; environmental, economic and social (Berglund, 2014:320). Dale and Newton (2005:353) refer to SD as the management and conservation of natural resource base and orientation of technological and institutional change in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations. The management and conservation of natural resources for the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs also applies to Consumer Studies. Such SD is claimed to be environmentally, technically appropriate, economically viable, social accepted and non-degrading (Berglund et al., 2014:320).

SD helps individuals to fully develop attitudes, values, skills, perspectives and knowledge necessary to make informed decisions, so that the quality of life on a local and global scale is improved (UNESCO, 2006:31). UNESCO (2010:38) identified four sets of principles which need to be ensured as often as possible in SD. These principles include; Care for each other and value justice and peace, Protect natural systems and use resources wisely, Value appropriate development and satisfying livelihoods for all and make their decisions through fair and democratic means. Undeniably, the goals of the school subject Consumer Studies are very much akin to these principles. It is therefore clear that Consumer Studies focuses on teaching for SD. Sustainability-oriented core curriculum for Consumer Studies is destined for integrating the concept of SD as both require interdisciplinary knowledge and take-over of responsibility (IFHE, 2008:25).

2.3.1 The Ethical paradox

The concept of ethical paradox regards sustainability as an environmental “logo” and development as an economic one. SD aims to mitigate and moderate between the two (Jabareen, 2008:185). Beaten (2000:72) argues that SD has attracted such a large following because it seems to hold out the promise of bringing about an understanding between ecological sustainability and economic development interests. SD is accordingly deemed able to cope with the ecological crisis without affecting the existing economic relationships of power.

The sustainable-oriented core curriculums for Consumer Studies are the only means of assuring human wellbeing. These curriculums recognise the interrelationships between populations, resources, environment and development. Jabareen (2008:181) believes that many environmental and social factors are jeopardising the development of people and, therefore disturbing SD. The ethical paradox concept becomes a critical reflective perspective in this regard. According to McGregor (2010:10), this perspective means that critical reasoning, value judgements and ethical practices could be employed in order to enable families understand and help themselves to be empowered and autonomous.

ESD is designed in a manner which supports and respects the empowerment and autonomy of individual families at different points in time and within their context, resource constraints and opportunities. Turkki (2008:36) asserts that emancipatory approach in ESD encourages self-reflection and self-direction to determine what is and what should be done so that communities, societies and the world becomes a better place. The approach is therefore concerned with moral ethics and value judgements. Turkie (2008:36) confirms that emancipatory approach in ESD can free the individual and family to examine other and new ideas of what constitutes good life. The approach can also free them from disconnectedness, discrimination, violence, poverty and the absence of opportunity. It is therefore believed that, this practice requires an evaluation process which allows people to judge the adequacy of their environments against their own needs and goals, and vice versa. McGregor (2010:10) concludes that in Consumer Studies, this perspective assumes that people can change their norms and develop new patterns and that clarification and

reconstruction of values is pivotal to change. McGregor (2010:10) believes that effecting change means a collaborative relationship between change agent and client and the establishment of problem solving infrastructures and processes. The researcher believes that this approach assumes that persons must participate in their own re-education towards self-awareness, self-understanding and self-control. According to Jabareen (2008:182), change, which he refers to as development, involves the client as well as his/her kinship and friendship networks that may also have to be re-educated. The focus is on creativity and critical reflection as requisite to coping with adapting to and affecting change.

2.3.2 The Natural capital stock

The natural capital stock represents the natural material assets of development. Natural capital stock for Jabareen (2008:183) includes all natural assets that humans can modify to enhance reproduction, but cannot be created by humans. This may include mineral resources, food crops, water supplies and also the emissions of pollutants. Roseland (2000:78) argues that the resource stock should be held constant over time and that within the discourse on SD, constant natural capital is frequently referred to as a criterion for sustainability. Jabareen (2008:183) expounds the concept of natural capital stock by applying standard economic arrangements of man-made capital to the stock of natural capital. In this sense, sustainability means that the stock of capital should not decrease in order to endanger the opportunities of future generations to generate wealth and well-being.

The Consumer Studies curriculum provides learners with skills and competencies for developing and realising strategies for sustainable natural stock. It is essential to contribute to the reduction of environmental and to some extent the economic burden connected with food production and processing and to establish equitable feeding on a global scale (Van Zyl et al., 2011:26). In the Consumer Studies curriculum, natural capital stock is one of the principles of sustainability (Van Zyl et al., 2011:26). The principles also include sustainable material; sustainable food and also sustainable water. The sustainable material principle exposes that industries such as construction and mining often exploit natural resources. Learners are taught

to respect and protect natural resources by using healthy products sourced locally and made from renewable waste resources (Van Zyl et al., 2011:27). The second principle of sustainable food, teaches learners that industrial agriculture and livestock farming produce food of uncertain quality which may harm the local ecosystems and may have high transport impacts. The principle also reveals the need for humans to limit the intake of meat and use more organically produced local foods or grow own vegetables (Van Zyl et al., 2011:27). The third principle of “Sustainable Water” cautions humans about the insufficiency of fresh water from local sources due to pollution and depletion.

2.3.3 The Equity and fair trade

Jabareen (2008:183) observes that the concept of equity in itself encompasses various concepts such as environmental, social and economic justice, social equity and equal rights for development, quality of life, equal economic distribution, freedom, democracy, public participation and empowerment. Agyeman, Bullard and Evans (2002:77) dispute that wherever in the world environmental despoliation and degradation are happening. They are almost always linked to the question of social justice, equity, rights and people’s quality of life in the widest sense. The believe is that a truly sustainable society is one in which wider questions of social needs, equity; welfare and economic opportunity are integrally related to environmental limits imposed by supporting ecosystems. It is an undeniable statement that many people in the industrial world live in relative poverty, while many in the developing world cannot meet their basic needs from what they produce or sell. Governments need to ensure fairness through legislation and fair trade.

The school subject Consumer Studies has always had a relationship to social justice, as its aim is the well-being of individuals and families. Consumer Studies scholars, including Pendergast (2006:6) believe that sustainability could be achieved through the effective balancing of social, environmental and economic objectives. Pendergast (2006:6) refers to SD as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Pendergast (2006:6) linked SD with the three dimensions of sustainability. These include ecology/environment, economy and social equity. Van Zyl et al. (2011:30)

advocate that social equity relates to equality between industrialized and developing countries, and also between today's generation and future generations. This means that individuals are asked to reduce consumption of natural resources in a way that provides good living conditions for future generations as well. Pendergast (2006:8) regards SD as a complex approach encompassing economic development, social equity and environmental protection. According to McGregor (2010:7), this is all about revealing power in society and how this power affects the well-being, quality of life and wellness of individuals and families. It is a focus on creating safe environments where individuals can engage in dialogue and conversations with others. The outcome of this is having people working for justice, peace, security, rights, accountability freedom and equality. Therefore, the researcher espouses that Consumer Studies curriculum is capable of promoting SD and improving the capacity of people to address environment and development issues.

2.3.4 The Eco-form

According to Jabareen (2008:182) the eco-form concept represents the ecologically-desired form and design of the human habitat such as urban spaces, buildings and houses. McGregor (2010:9) posits that the eco-form approach assumes that all things are related to other things. Apparently, this is a moral vision of the world, which conceptualises it as a living organism and requires a holistic ethical conduct.

Sustainable design aims to create eco-forms, which are energy efficient and designed for long life. Its common principles could be explained through the concept of "time-space-energy compression" which requires reductions of time and space in order to reduce energy usage.

"Zero waste" is a sustainability principle in the Consumer Studies curriculum. This principle implies that, humans need to limit the amount of waste in order to preserve the resources. The use of reusable products which last longer than disposable products is encouraged. People are advised to check for energy efficiency when purchasing labour saving appliances (Van Zyl et al, 2011:27).

According to McGregor (2010:9), this SD perspective allows Consumer Studies to perceive individuals and families interacting, daily in a complex web of human and ecological relationships which connects all to the biosphere. This constitutes the principle of sustainability. Human ecosystem in Consumer Studies refers to the interactive system between humans and other species and the environments in which they live (Turkie, 2008:37). McGregor (2010:9) argues that instead of assuming that people are separate from everything else on earth, a human ecosystem perspective provides a focus on the two way relationship between individuals and families as they contribute to, and extract resources from their environments in order to meet their basic needs, enhance their quality of life and well-being, then thrive as a social institution. McGregor (2010:9) also confirms that these environments include the household and family, local community, human built, economic, social, political, cultural and other institutions, the natural environment and other species and lastly the biosphere.

2.3.5 The Integrative Management

Jabareen (2008:185) explicates that the concept of integrative management draws attention to the importance of maintaining a safe minimum standard for all living and non-living assets necessary to maintain the function of the ecosystem and life support systems. This is done along with at least representative forms of all other living natural assets. Jabareen (2008:186) recommends integrated systems of management to ensure that environmental, social and economic factors are considered together in a framework of SD. Jabareen (2008:186) also believes that an integrative approach for achieving sustainability seeks to bring together all stake holders in the development process to address everyday living of human beings. The vocational requirements of Consumer Studies, according to the position statement (IFHE, 2008:25) are surprisingly close to the competencies of ESD.

Consumer Studies has always been described as an interdisciplinary subject. McGregor (2008:8) postulates that interdisciplinary concept has a very specific meaning related to multidiscipline and must be taken into consideration in order to create new solutions to families' problems. Turkki (2008:35) argues that interdisciplinary work refers to coordinated interaction among two or more disciplines

with the intention of transferring methods from one discipline to another either for new applications, new analyses and even for the generation of the entire new disciplines. This perspective implies that an individual or family problem cannot be fixed by looking at one part of the issue. It is therefore, suggested that insight gained from many other disciplines be drawn and used by individuals and families to solve their problems.

In Consumer Studies, the term “three systems of action” refers to a complex problem solving process. This approach entails involving a person or family with a problem in deciding which combination of coping with, adapting to and shaping change is most appropriate. The challenge is to find the appropriate balance between the three ways of thinking about how to solve a problem. In more general terms, the curriculum for Consumer Studies is expected to come up with the best combination of; whether people need to gain more skills, information or techniques (technical action) in order to meet basic needs, or whether they need to talk to each other or personally reflect, about values, meanings, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs (interpretive or communicative action) so they can relate better with each other or whether they are ready to find their inner power (critical emancipatory or empowerment action) so that they can work on revealing power imbalances in society that can keep people oppressed, marginalized, exploited and persecuted. The combination of these three types of action is different for each problem being examined.

Ahlberg et al., (2005:170) state that everyday life is a complex challenge necessitating professionals to bridge one-dimensional thinking which can enable the Consumer Studies create an optimal living for individuals, families and communities. This is in some aspects similar to the concept of SD. The vocational requirements of Consumer Studies, according to the position statement (IFHE, 2008:25), are surprisingly close to the competencies of ESD.

ESD helps individuals to fully develop attitudes, values, skills, perspectives and knowledge necessary to make informed decisions, so that the quality of life on a local and global scale is improved (UNESCO, 2006:31). Consumer Studies as a school subject can bring together ideas from other disciplines in order to address everyday living. UNESCO (2009:37) reveals that the three pillars of SD focus on

environment, society and economy with the major objective being to help people develop attitudes, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others. It is therefore, clear that the Consumer Studies curriculum is predestined for integrating with sustainability issues. Cooking as an important life skill offered in the sustainability core- curriculums for Consumer Studies can develop as learners advance through school. Maths skills such as measurement, multiplication, division and fractions are essential to cooking. Chemistry, such as how protein changes when heat is applied, or why cream increases in volume when it is whipped, or how baking soda reacts to make baked goods rise, becomes an interesting subject when food is involved. Nutrition and Biology, concerning both the human body and food, for example, how yeast makes bread rise can become an offshoot of a cooking experiment (Benn, 2000:21).

Being multi-dimensional, too, the school subject Consumer Studies aims to maintain and promote good living conditions for humans with a strong focus on maintaining natural resources at the same time (Ahlberg et al., 2005:172). From these similarities, one can conclude that this subject offers excellent preconditions for integrating the concept of SD into curricula. Sustainability-oriented core curriculums for Consumer Studies, developed by McGregor (2011:30), are predestined for integrating the concept of SD as both require an interdisciplinary knowledge and take-over of responsibilities.

2.3.6 The Political and Global Agenda

The concept represents new global discourse that has been reconstructed and inspired by the ideas of SD (Jabareen, 2008:187). The discourse conceives the earth as one unified globe and aims to address global environmental and development problems at their root causes. The discourse also aims to provide the developing world with the tools and resources needed to level the playing field and to enable them to address pressing problems of deforestation, climate change, loss of biodiversity, basic survival such as population growth, disease and other poverty related problems (Jabareen, 2008:187).

The Consumer Studies curriculum discloses the major challenges faced by many families in the SADC region. These are issues related to poverty, health and disease, food security, nutrition, migration and urbanisation, conflict and technological changes (IFHE, 2008:39; Van Zyl et al., 2011:32). Environmental, water and sanitation issues are also covered in the Consumer Studies curriculum. Waste generation and disposal scenario is a common problem for many communities. McGregor (2011:32) contends that the quantity and rate of solid wastes depend on the population, level of industrialization, socio economic predominant activities and all kinds of commercial activities.

Waste management is not successful because of the unwholesome waste disposable habits of the people, especially as it concerns sanitation. The use of polythene packages and non-degradable solid waste often blocks the drainage systems thereby causing flooding in some major urban cities. McGregor (2011:32) believes that environmental sustainability is influenced by individual life styles and ethical consumerism. It becomes a responsibility that in order to avoid environmental degradation, there must be management of consumption patterns of individuals and households. That is where Consumer Studies education becomes relevant in achieving the millennium development goals (MDG) on environmental sustainability (Babayeni & Dauda, 2009:86). McGregor (2010:8) affirms that the global perspective for SD appreciates that all things are related to all other things rather than assume that each person is an island acting alone. In this perspective, people are reminded that actions taken now will affect the future. According to McGregor (2010:8), a global perspective in Consumer Studies, perceives the family or a household as an ecosystem, an environment where decisions are taken. This is possible because families are seen as dynamic systems that can adapt and change themselves. Families can be socialised to care for each other and the earth, to appreciate that living in harmony with environments demand ethical judgements about how to live differently and to see the merits of embracing stewardship rather than exploration (McGregor, 2010:8).

2.3.7 Utopianism

Jabareen (2008:186) states that the utopian concept visualises human habitats as based generally on the concept of SD. The common thinking of utopians in relation to SD according to Jabareen (2008:186), is that they imagine a perfect society, where justice prevails, people are perfectly content, where people live and flourish in harmony with nature and life moves smoothly without abuses or shortages.

The sustainability-oriented core curriculums for Consumer Studies emphasise issues of health and happiness for humans (IFHE, 2008:30). It is known that rising wealth does not mean greater health and happiness. People need to seek the true basis of wellbeing and contentment in simpler lifestyles and better human relationships. People should also be taught to slow down and take more time for themselves, grow their own gardens and take care of their own planet in the search for an ecologically responsible society.

2.5 Summary Chapter

The school subject Consumer Studies, with its vital history over the past years, has played important roles for individuals and families in their everyday lives. In order to gain further relevance, it would prove important to actively engage in discussions and activities promoting the teaching of Consumer Studies for SD. The quaternary character of Consumer Studies with its foundation in everyday life and a knowledge base in the academic arena, serves as a pivotal connection that can develop curricula. This interrelatedness might serve as an imperative aspect in overcoming the knowledge practice gap for establishing Sustainable Consumer Studies.

CHAPTER 3

NARRATIVE OF SUSTAINABILITY OF TEACHING CONSUMER STUDIES AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines literature related to the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies at secondary schools. The development of this school subject into viable careers will also be examined in this review of literature. In chapter one it was mentioned that the school subject Consumer Studies has always had criticisms and prejudices throughout the history of education. Consumer Studies teachers and other specialists in the field, continue with the struggle to legitimize the subject and literally fighting for its identity and existence. The last decade has brought changes in the education system in our country. The change continues today with the roll-out of the new curriculum and what is of interest to the researcher is that the subject remains recognised and designated despite its criticism and prejudices.

This chapter also focuses on the literature on the sustainability of Consumer Studies as a subject at secondary schools of various countries. The review focused on the sustainability of the school subject Consumer Studies in developed and developing countries. Regarding developed countries; focus is on; Canada and China. The developing countries are Kenya and South Africa. A brief comparison of the three countries' curricula: Canada, Singapore, Kenya with South Africa is also given. The unavailability of literature on Consumer Studies as a school subject in many countries is a concern to many researchers interested in this area of research. The lack of literature may be due to poor documentation of research activities and information about the existence of Consumer Studies as a school subject. This calls for extensive research to be done in order to provide more insight into and to re-evaluate the value of this subject at schools.

3.2 PERCEPTIONS ON THE TEACHING OF THE SCHOOL SUBJECT CONSUMER STUDIES

The school subject Consumer Studies attempts to achieve its major goal through educating individuals to improve quality of life in the families, improving goods and services used by families, conducting research to discover changing needs of human beings in families and means of satisfying these needs. Furthermore, these needs are extended to the communities, national and to the global conditions favorable for family living (Turkki & Vincenti, 2008:78). The outcome of the process of education should be an educated member of the family and community; an educated producer and consumer and an educated citizen. Academic subjects give emphasis to and provide training in citizenship and provide fundamentals for career training. Administrators, teachers and lay people alike agree and recognize that in addition to education for a career and citizenship, the learners need to be prepared for everyday personal and family living, as well as for living in the world of science and social problems. The school subject Consumer Studies specializes in training individuals for better personal, family and community. Now one can argue that it is therefore an important tool for the total process of educating people for living.

The fact that there is a need for teaching people how to live is undeniable. The high divorce rate, illegitimate birth rate, the upsurge of juvenile delinquency and teenage pregnancies should be taken into consideration that the family structure has been weakened, and desperately needs help. Turkki and Vincert (2008:78) maintain that the most effective subject at school level to solve the problems of the family is Consumer Studies. This view is supported by Pendergast (2010:30) who agrees that education for effective family living becomes more complex. Many people oppose this type of teaching in schools as it involves teaching morals which they believe should be left to the churches. The researcher believes that the church can help, as it does in many cases. But how can one or two hours on Sunday provide adequate preparation for living effectively during the week in today's multifaceted society with its many pressures? Furthermore, how can church educate those who rarely or never enter its doors? Some believe that family living should be taught at home. The

researcher personally agrees that parents should spend much time teaching their children good behavior and morals. It is not proposed that the school should monopolize this duty, but parents vary in their ability to teach homemaking, and school instruction helps to equalize experiences for all children.

Turkki and Vincenti (2008:79) lament that parents often find themselves at a disadvantage because of an increasing complexity of knowledge which is constantly invading the various curricular of schools. In their lamentation, Turkki and Vincenti (2008:79) expose that children can deal with content and concepts which are foreign to their parents at an early age. According to Turkki and Vincenti (2008:79), the family is still a place of shelter for security, but not necessarily the center of intellectual activity. Now one can dispute that the family is an important agent to convey values to children, but parents cannot teach concepts which they themselves do not understand or know about.

Turkki and Vincenti (2008:10) acknowledge that one of the important responsibilities of education is to improve and develop personal and family life. In the school subject Consumer Studies learners are taught about management and relationships. This subject is abundantly qualified to meet this responsibility of education. Consumer studies teachers need to be dedicated to their work and convinced that this subject has a positive contribution to make to society.

Families today are no longer producing units, but rather are consuming units, so the school subject Consumer Studies does not need to emphasize production as it once did. Effective Consumer Studies classes must meet the needs of individuals and families as consumers, and this cannot be done by emphasizing the skills of cooking and sewing. One can now argue that, there is an actual need for Consumer Studies teachers to re-assess their philosophy about their subject and to re-define their values and goals accordingly. In view of the modern trends, teachers must be able to justify what they teach to learners.

3.2.1 The History of Consumer Studies

Ma and Pendergast (2011:590) argue that it is important to understand the history of the school subject Consumer Studies in order to look to the future, and also to comprehend where past actions went wrong and to rectify the mistakes. Consumer Studies has been a subject in schools and education for more than hundred years in the western world as recognized by Pendergast, McGreggo and Turkki, (2012:52). The subject was first introduced as “Domestic Sciences” with the objective of educating women and girls in scientific management for good organization and economy of the home (Ma & Pendergast, 2011:590). Mrs Ellen Hertietta Swallow Richards (1842-1911) is known to be a pioneer of the school subject Consumer Studies. She was a chemist by profession. The lady is regarded as an extraordinary woman who achieved high scholarship and recognition in the sciences. She was the first woman to study at and later joined the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, (Pendergast ; 2006:10). Ellen had a vision of how she should plan for new directions in chemistry in order to make it practical and applicable to the needs and challenges of her contemporary society. The vision therefore inspired her to get involved in ways of applying scientific principles to solve problems such as water usage, environmental pollution, nutrition, cookery, cleaning and many others (Pendergast; 2006:11). The school subject Consumer Studies emerged out of such a vision. Emma Willards and Catherine Beecher were the two early advocates of the formal teaching of the school subject Consumer Studies which was then known as “Domestic Economy”, (Turkki in Smith, Peterant & de Zwardt, 2004:18). These two ladies from the United States of America (USA) urged that formal education for women be theoretically combined with practice. They pioneered a normal school in 1819 and emphasized the theory and practice of housewifery to females as indicated by (Turkki, in Smith et al., 2004:18).

The name “Domestic science” was challenged by purist scientists such as physicians, chemists and biologists, who asked how Domestic Science could make a claim to being a scientific principle, such as the effects of health on different food and the use of chemical agents on stain removal rather than having a defined scientific

body of knowledge. Because of the claim made by scientists, the name changed from “Domestic Sciences” to “Domestic Subjects”. The curriculum of Domestic Subjects was made up of three areas of study, namely Housecraft, Cookery and Needlework (Ma & Pendergast, 2011:590).

In 1975, the “Domestic Science” was renamed “Home Economics”, and the Domestic Subjects syllabus was replaced by “Home Economics syllabus. The emphasis in the subject ‘remained on manipulative skills and rote memorising rather than on critical thinking, problem solving and decision making, which were the imperatives of the new Home Economics syllabus’ (Ma & Pendergast, 2011:590). In 1978, it was considered that it would be more appropriate to teach the subject Consumer Studies at secondary level, and thus, it was no longer part of the primary curriculum. The introduction of National Curriculum Statement (NCS, Grade 10-12) approach in South Africa affected the name of the subject and it was changed from “Home Economics” to “Consumer Studies”. The name change of this subject was a topic at the 9th National Congress of “Home Economics Association for Africa (HEAA) in July 1991. Issues such as future directions, marketing strategies and professional boards of the subject were also addressed at the congress (Pendergast; 2006:10). Turkki (2001:59) believes that the reason for the name change is that the new name is a more accurate description of the subject and that the stereotyped central concern as associated with the old name, were to be overcome and forgotten. McGregor (2010:28) argues that, the reason for changing the name of this subject is an attempt to hide old prejudices along with the old name, in order to gain legitimacy and to improve the subject image.

The objectives of today’s Consumer Studies as a school as outlined by the NCS, Grades 10-12 (DoE, 2003:9) are to:

- Improve the quality of life experienced by people;
- Use Science and Technology effectually and critically, in order to responsibility towards the environment and the health of others;
- Collect, scrutinize and critically evaluate information to procure the skills of becoming effective consumers;

- Exploit different sources of product information to make consumer decisions using critical and ingenious thinking;
- Connect efficiently using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes;
- Distinguish environmental concerns and its effects on consumers and producers;
- Comprehend the impact of discriminatory consumption and production on the natural and economic environment;
- Escalate the mutual benefits of working with others as members of a team or group in exploring issues, solving problems and producing products;
- Improve cultural and appealing sensitivity about food, clothing and housing behavior patterns across a range of social contexts;
- Inspire positive attitudes towards work and empower individuals to become independent through the application of food, clothing, housing and furnishings, and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills; and
- Place foundation for Higher Education and Training, and explore career opportunities in food, clothing, housing and interior design.

Pendergast et al, (2012:57) describes the school Consumer Studies as a notion in the history of thought that developed on the education scene as an answer to the needs of society for a more relaxed, appropriate, satisfying and productive life for all people. Consumer Studies is a subject of formal education including topics such as the consumer, foods and nutrition, fibers and fabrics, clothing, housing, interior and entrepreneurship. Class practice about food has been recognized up to now, since Consumer Studies was newly created, by reflecting on the reality of people's lives (Makino, 2012:56). Problem solving practices were to be conducted after the war, when there was food shortage. Practices such as how to improve living conditions like, nutritional improvements were conducted. Makino (2012:56). After the growth of home economics, numerous consumer issues and experimental cooking employing a scientific viewpoint became important, for example, the process of making "rice" "eatable" was practiced with beakers in Physical Science Laboratories. Instead of cooking rice in conventional cooking pots or rice cookers, experimentation with cooking rice in beakers and observing the gelatinisation of rice was introduced. In

class, the solution to the problem of how to cook delicious rice at scientifically based on the characteristics of rice cooking which were obtained from rice cooking experiments (Makino, 2012:56).

Clothing and Textiles have also been part and parcel of the subject Consumer Studies. The clothing option consists of making clothes, clothing management, clothing material, wearing clothes, and handicrafts. Practical lessons for clothing option requires a considerable time which is always difficult to accommodate in the school time table Makino, (2012:59).

The provision of appropriate comprehensive curriculum in schools is essential for creating a generation of skilled citizens (Farah & Ridge, 2009:6). This implies that the curriculum must cover a wide scope of subjects and subject areas. Vocational skills training should be part and parcel of the curriculum. As one of the subjects that develop knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in learners, Consumer Studies is fit to be included in the school curricula. Learners need to be exposed to different technological concepts and careers at an early age. Formal Consumer Studies curricula will make significant contributions to the education of the children.

The development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in learners enable them to become responsible and informed consumers of clothing, housing, furnishings and household equipment and to use resources optimally and in a sustainable manner. The subject also promotes the application of knowledge and skills in the production of quality marketable products that will meet consumer needs (Cornelissen, 2007: xvi).

The foundation laid by the subject assists in developing learners into accountable and knowledgeable consumers. This will contribute to the enhancement of the quality of life of consumers and to the growth of the economy in South Africa (DoE, 2003:9).

3.2.2 Contemporary Problems of Consumer Studies

Consumer Studies teachers identify themselves as educators for “Cooking and Sewing”, which is a very narrow interpretation of the subject, and one that is still assumed to be the status quo by a big percentage of the general public (Ma & Pendergast, 2011:592). Gender imbalance is one of the generally known problems of the subject as it was initially meant for females. Boys are discouraged to study Consumer Studies as a school subject for various reasons. Gender stereotyping and devaluing the subject, are perpetuated and reinforced by the education system in terms of classroom strategies, curriculum documents and school administration. The negative attitudes expressed by teachers, peers, parents and the community are also identified as possible contributors to the under participation of males in this subject (Ma & Pendergast, 2011:593). The word gender simply refers to a fact of being male or female. The term gender is used interchangeably with sex. However, Scientists can differentiate between these concepts. Sex can be defined as biological classification indicated by primary genital characteristics, while gender includes those characteristics learned from culture or environment not necessarily related to sex (Mberengwa, 2003:21). Gender roles are social-cultural roles allocated to individuals by society on the basis of their bio-cultural rather than biological characteristic. Gender roles are said to be neither natural nor scientifically based (Mberengwa, 2003:21). The fact that the school subject Consumer Studies is based on women’s work and relates this work to the home raised very serious constraints for academic recognition. Because the subject remains essentially identified with women’s reproductive roles, it is therefore faced with more deeply entrenched academic stigmatization as a curriculum area.

The Home Economics Association for Africa (HEAA) in 1993 developed a mission statement for Consumer Studies as follows: The mission of the school subject Consumer Studies in Africa is to facilitate the process of individuals, families and communities becoming more responsible for improving their well-being in relation to their economic, social, cultural, political and physical environment (Mberengwa, 2003:22). Nowhere in this mission statement, is Consumer Studies assigned to women alone, nor are sex or gender types attached to the subject. Any gender can

play a part in the promotion of the subject Consumer Studies activities for the well-being of the individuals, families and the society.

Shortage of Consumer Studies specialists is also a worldwide phenomenon. The consequences of the shortage are that, schools face either disintegrating subjects, or hiring teachers with an interest in the field, but without formal teacher education in the area of specialization. Consumer Studies learners are certainly affected as they are taught at lower levels by people without the necessary knowledge of underlying principles, approaches and content. Street (2006:16) argues that the shortage of suitably trained teachers is of significant concern to short and long-term sustainability of this school subject Consumer Studies. At a time when there is increasing concern about health and well-being and the need for practical life skills to be included in the school curriculum, the profession most suited to providing the curriculum and pedagogical guidance has been eliminated from universities and teacher education programs (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:5). Mberengwa (2003:20) and Ogwu (2010:57) support this challenge by confirming that the subject Consumer Studies in African schools, including colleges and universities is characterized by a shortage of human resources and equipment, by irrelevant textbooks, and by irrelevant content amongst others.

Stressful working conditions are common problems in teaching Consumer Studies as a school subject. The practical options of this subject Consumer Studies implicate the upkeep of the laboratories and supervision of resources. Consumer Studies teachers devote a fraction of time out of class obtaining and organizing ingredients and materials. The rate of materials and food is increasingly rising, but budgets for the subject are quite fixed, meaning less practical involvements for learners (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:5). Consumer studies teachers seek other employment opportunities due to unattractive working conditions and this worsens the teacher supply crisis.

Consumer Studies is a subject in a conflict between Science (theory) and everyday life experiences (practice). This is said to be an issue which can be explored and researched in order to be able to teach in a way which combines theory and practice (Pendergast et al., 2012:59).

3.2.3 Consumer Studies and Career Opportunities

The subject Consumer Studies should contribute to manpower development, by equipping individuals with occupational skills to make them self-reliant. This is confirmed by Arkhurst (2005:33) who pointed out that, Consumer Studies occupations should thrive and that the various disciplines in the learning area are capable for preparing the youths and adults for entry into the various Consumer Studies occupations. Careers in this area of study may include teaching, Consumer Scientists in businesses such as catering, designing, clothing construction, interior decoration, community development, consultant, and research.

It is a known fact that the subject Consumer Studies provides management skills in living and it helps people to appreciate the need for healthy living through improved sanitation and environment. When a family is healthy, it can work optimally. At the same time money spent on medical bills is reduced. The subject teaches knowledge in the planning and preparation of healthy and nutritious meals which help develop the brain and maintain healthy bodies. The benefits of Consumer Studies as a school subject cannot be over-emphasized in the improvement of the quality of life for human beings.

Consumer Studies is a skill-oriented area of study that equips the individual with marketable skills. It also equips students with consumer and management skills. All these helps to make individuals save money, become self-employed and manage better the available resources as well as prevent diseases and poverty, thus improving the quality of life of people. Bull and Cumming (2002:30) argue that, “Today, the Consumer Studies classroom provides one of the very few places where youth receive life skill training”. Consumer Studies teachers are a link in preparing youth for their roles as adults, parents and wage earners. Prevention of unwanted pregnancies, wise credit use, building positive relationships, buying insurance, and avoiding eating disorders are just a few of the issues being addressed in Consumer Studies lessons.

Consumer Studies remains to be an important subject for today’s learners (Arkhuhust, 2005:34).

3.2.3.1 The increased concerns about healthy eating habits of humans

Learners acquire a lot about nutrition and healthy eating during the practical lessons that are recognized as more effective in changing behavior than knowledge transmission. The World Health Organization put emphasis on the impact of obesity and overweight on non-communicable ailments such as cardiovascular diseases, type-2 diabetes and cancer. Predictions show that the present generation of children might be the first to have shorter life expectations than their parents (Pendergast, 2010:15). As a result, there has been a demand for nutrition education at schools. Turkki (2002:47) and Reynolds, (2002:53) agree that concentrating on the acquisition of nutrition knowledge is not an answer. This view is also endorsed by Lang and Caraher (2001:49) who affirm that mastery of food and cooking skills is necessary for a full understanding of what constitutes a healthy life and to empower individuals to take control over their food intake. Without the practical, actual experience in food preparation and nutrition, dependence on processed and fast foods will increase.

3.2.3.2 The impact of poor parenting practices

Parenting practices have substantial effects on a child's social and cognitive outcomes and on the prospect that the child is vulnerable in some way (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:17). Smith and de Zwart, (2010:17) regard parenting as a most important job because it determines the character of our children and the quality of our society yet few people get any training for it. An upsetting number of children are at risk, abused, neglected or otherwise poorly cared for by incompetent prepared parents. (Willms, 2002:156) maintain that parenting practices have significant effects on a child's social and cognitive outcomes and on the likelihood that a child is vulnerable in some way. Parenting education in Consumer Studies, for secondary school children and teenagers addresses these concerns in several ways interrupting the cycle of poor parenting before young people become parents. Preparing youth to become caring, competent parents may be the single most effective way to prevent child abuse and other violence, increase mental health,

advance school preparedness, and achieve academic success for future generations (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:18).

3.2.3.3 The impact of financial literacy

Informed money administration plays an important role in raising the quality of life for individuals and families. It was declared that financial literacy, as displayed through a strong understanding of the principles of prudent financial management is an essential life skill. Consumers are better positioned to make financial decisions that affect their livelihood when they understand the financial products and services, and options that are available to them. But the skill of managing money appears to be an ability that does not come distinctively to everyone. Smith and de Zwart (2010:18) argue that unless a person is exposed to the practice of money management, he/she is likely to understand how it works and its long-term benefits. According to Smith and de Zwart (2010:18), poor spending and financial habits may be easily developed, resulting in significant negative consequences such as poor credit assessment, credit refusal for a checking account and personal insolvency, to name a few. Consumer Studies lessons offer many opportunities for learners to exercise and advance competency in making financial decisions that apply to food, clothing, shelter and family choices that people must make over the life span.

3.2.3.4 Increased complexity of family life

Consumer Studies is the one subject area that addresses work and family life balance. Smith and de Zwart (2010:19) purports that work accountabilities may hamper with the ability to fulfill responsibilities at home. Mimbs (2002:49) concurs with Smith and de Zwart by indicating that workers who experience problems in meeting family commitments often find it difficult to give their best at work.

3.2.3.5 Increased concern about global citizenship and environmental health

All Consumer Studies subsystems afford opportunities for learners to develop a sense of universal citizenship in the wise use of human and material resources

(Smith & de Zwart, 2010:19). It is believed that universal citizens are willing to think beyond boundaries of place, perceive and recognize all human beings as their equivalents while respecting humanity's inherent diversity. Within their own spheres of influence, global citizens seek to imagine and work towards a better world (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:19). Environmental sustainability has gradually developed as an international agenda and an elementary requirements of life such as water, food and safe living conditions cannot be taken for granted and the implications for the most vulnerable populations cannot be ignored (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:19). It is a well-known fact that consumers are often unaware of their own accountabilities for making sustainable choices. Developing a sense of environmental accountability goes against the consumers' culture and the autocracy of short term is one of the family's most crucial tasks (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:19).

Consumer Studies education should be able to contribute to manpower development by equipping individuals with occupational skills to make them self-reliant. Consumer Studies is a unique subject because, through its focus, it integrates knowledge and draws upon methodologies and perspectives from other recognized disciplines (Pendergast, 2010:29). Because of its unique nature, the subject Consumer Studies lies at the interface between the home and the family and the products offered by the society. Thus, the teacher of Consumer Studies has to integrate knowledge from many sources and apply it to the practical problems of everyday living. Pendergast (2010:30) indicates that because of its relevance in everyday life, the school subject Consumer Studies stimulates the interest of boys and girls, and justifies recognition as a key area of the curriculum. This study provides evidence that any curriculum which does not include Consumer Studies ignores the center around which life revolves.

3.3 CHALLENGES FACING CONSUMER STUDIES TEACHERS

The subject Consumer Studies has been described by Pendergast (2009:515) as being at a convergent moment, and a time of opportunity where several key challenges are affecting its teaching at secondary schools. Pendergast argues that these challenges serve to provide a moment of alignment of potentially facilitating factors that, when taken together, can provide an unprecedented opportunity to sustain the teaching of this subject Consumer Studies at secondary schools.

3.3.1 Gender and Consumer Studies

Consumer Studies as a school subject evolved over the years from humble beginnings of cooking and sewing, housecraft, mother care, housewife, hygiene, domestic science, rural science, domestic economy and household management to more inclusive and academically sound definitions such as Home Science and Home Economics (Mimbs, 2002:11). This definition reveals that the subject was started in a gendered female role of women as nurturers and careers of the family. The fact that this subject was based on women's work and relates this work to the home raised very serious constraints for social and academic recognition (Kiamba, 2005:6). Due to the fact that the subject remains essentially identified with women's work, it continues to be identified with women's reproductive roles and is therefore faced with more deeply entrenched academic stigmatization.

Mimbs (2002:11) claims that the gender discrimination in Consumer Studies as a school subject is a historical phenomenon and must be challenged if it is to move beyond its present status. This argument reveals that Consumer Studies subject content is about family living; both men and women live in families and should be equally responsible for individual, family and community development. No one says that only women should take care of the home. It is a worldwide fact, that when men engage themselves in women's knowledge and skills related the school subject Consumer Studies, they are treated as if they have special skills. A good example is that of a chef in a restaurant, in a hotel or in a catering industry. They are well respected as professionals and if the same men were asked to learn Consumer

Studies as a subject area at school, they would have been scoffed at by other learners and even educators.

Mimbs (2002:12) posits that men penetrated Consumer Studies content also in food processing. According to this scholar men work in food industries preparing, cooking and packaging processed foodstuffs and because this is good for the economic welfare, food preparation becomes a good male activity. Designing and tailoring is another area where men also excelled and are still excelling. It should be noted that, the content of work concerned in designing and tailoring falls in the field of this subject Consumer Studies. When women engage in this area, it is referred to as “sewing and dressmaking”. Although more men are training as nutritionists, extension workers, chefs and small-scale businesses in Consumer Studies related activities, the subject is still viewed as a female discipline.

Consumer Studies is not recognized as a science subject at schools and is treated as a marginal subject that cannot pose a threat to male centered interests in research and other activities in the academic world. Pendergast (2008:13) purports that aims, contents and forms of teaching in Consumer Studies education can contribute to making girls and boys reflect on an attitude favorable to human co-existence in the household and to society. This subject can therefore in our present social situation make an important contribution to the ability to cope with present and future problems. It is true that in the past Consumer Studies education was a component of girls’ education and was orientated to the current notions about the various duties of the sexes.

3.3.2 The Consumer Studies Curriculum

The major criticisms of the existing Consumer Studies curriculum include, irrelevant content that is operationalized through the western paradigms and lack of resources required for proper teaching and learning of the subject (Mberengwa, 2003:18). After scrutinizing the content covered by the curriculum, it was found that the teaching of Consumer Studies is still based on European and North American models of instruction. The foreign models ignore the contextual realities of an African child such as the use of indigenous knowledge systems and materials (Nwakego & Kembe,

2012:213). These foreign frameworks, therefore, guided the development of early Consumer Studies curricula and practice. Calls for change in the content and practice of the school subject Consumer Studies have been made. The Home Economics Association of Africa (HEAA; 2000:18) recommends that curriculum should be reviewed from time to time and be designed in such a way that it considers the contextual realities of the learners. Kiamba, (2005:27) supports this statement by mentioning that Consumer Studies curriculum should be reviewed in order to address the needs of the changing market. In some states, the review was done to shift a little from “family focus”. In 2010, the Swaziland Ministry of Education reviewed its Consumer Studies curriculum and is currently emphasizing on Consumer Science and Education issues. Similarly; in South Africa, Consumer issues now dominate what were traditional Home Economics topics of the old curriculum (Van Wyk, 2005:151). Molokwu and Kembe (in Pendergast et al., 2012:214) argue that Consumer Studies methods of teaching should be considered if the subject is to be sustained. The Consumer Studies teacher should be a facilitator, creating opportunities for discussion and posing questions which will help learners to develop their own understanding of their own situation in their own terms (HEAA; 2000:18). In this way more learning than teaching will take place. Molokwu and Kembe (2012:214) hold that the emphasis should be on learners acting as subjects and not passively receiving information or being acted upon as objects. According to Molokwu and Kembe (2012:214) the teaching materials should be geared toward different learners’ strengths and preferences. This view is also endorsed by Molokwu (2010:35) who contends that facilitators should adapt methods and materials to their learners needs in order to give them the opportunity to feel confident and successful. Molokwu (2010:35) avers that it is known that many learners who fail in other subjects are often successful in Consumer Studies classes, where learning can take place through non-traditional modes that rely upon practical, concrete experiences and high-interest materials.

The Home Economics Association of Africa (HEAA, 2000:18) suggests that learning styles may be used in Consumer Studies classes to empower individuals and families. Such learning styles should focus on strengths rather than weaknesses. Consumer Studies classes should provide learners with opportunities to be able to make use of their individual learning styles, making learners feel valued and

respected (HEAA, 2000:19). Molukwu and Kembe (2012:214) uphold that Consumer Studies methods of teaching often viewed families as deficient and concentrated on problems rather than strengths. According to Molukwu and Kembe (2012:214) it was common then, to find learners passively receiving information, copying recipes from cook books, and waiting for an expert to provide them with solutions to unknown problems. The researcher, suggest that the object of empowerment should not be to simply convey information or to induce specific behaviors. But to support individuals or families in making their own analyses so that they themselves can decide on what is good for them. Lack of resources required for the teaching and learning is another challenge concerning the Consumer Studies curriculum. The researcher believes that the lack of adequate resources, such as laboratories, textbooks as well as facilities and equipment necessary for teaching the subject effectively, are experienced at an implementation stage. Time factor is another constraint for the completion of the infinite Consumer Studies syllabus. The syllabus may not be adequately covered within the time allocated for the subject.

3.3.3 Shortage of Trained Consumer Studies Teachers

The supply of Consumer Studies teachers is a major concern for the schools that are still offering the subject around the world. Studies reveal that colleges which offered training of the subject closed down in most countries including South Africa. Only universities are involved in teacher training and most of them do not train teachers for Consumer Studies. This led to the elimination of the subject in some schools. The researcher put the blame on the education system which puts much emphasis on Mathematics, Science and Technology. Bull, Uerz and Yoakum (2000:35) recommend that in order to survive in today's education system, Consumer Studies as a school subject must contribute to the knowledge base, provide high quality instruction, attract outside resources and contribute to both the quality of life and the state's economic development.

Consumer Studies teachers need to actively market their subject as a viable career choice for learners. Secondary school teachers are known to be the best resources in recruiting learners to take Consumer Studies as one of their subject. Learners need to see teachers that they themselves can use as role models. They need to be

able to picture themselves as that teacher, if they are going to choose teaching Consumer Studies as a career. In the study done by Bull, Uerz and Yoakum (2000:35), one respondent shared that;

“If you want to change the world, choose one of the careers in the field of Consumer Studies”.

Mimbs (2000:54) laments that the status of Consumer Studies as a school subject is damaged due to the fact that some teachers feel embarrassed to teach it and opt to teach other subjects which they do not have training in. This shying away to be recognized as Consumer Studies teachers weakens the discipline instead of strengthening it in the academic world. Career maintenance by Consumer Studies teachers must take action in order to recruit the replacements of teachers who are leaving the subject. What this implies is that there is a prerogative out there to change communities in improving their quality of living and Consumer Studies teachers are the ones who are very close to the communities. Our innovativeness in approaches of imparting this knowledge would contribute towards building a better society and thus making a better world. According to Mimbs (2000:54) Consumer Studies teachers should always remember the larger value and outcomes of their work. Thus, improving families by educating learners, creating life-long learning and making a better world. Consumer Studies teachers need to have deep awareness of the subject and enjoy teaching it. They need to understand the responsibility which lies upon them in order to market the subject. Consumer Studies teachers are expected to persuade school administrators to support and reveal the relevance of the subject. Bull, Uerz and Yoakum (2000:35) state that teachers are also expected to exhibit a positive enthusiastic attitude about what is done in the Consumer Studies classroom. They are also reminded to build up their own programmes concerning the subject.

Attention should be given to reform teacher education at universities. Challenges for higher education related to the school subject Consumer Studies are complex and range from leading academic transformation to responding to stakeholders' needs. Universities should be able to address the future needs of this subject by repositioning it in their programmes. Mimbs (2002:54) postulates that universities

should continue to provide opportunities for Consumer Studies teachers. These opportunities should include both personal and professional development. Professional development should be designed to meet the needs of the teachers to best facilitate change related to Consumer Studies. Bull and Cumings (2002:48) reports that shortage of Consumer Studies teachers is a worldwide phenomenon. Consumer Studies teacher training programmes were also eliminated in America. The riddance of Consumer Studies teacher training programmes in America led to the elimination of the subject at secondary schools. Many Consumer Studies teachers are no longer teaching the subject and that many of them do not have a positive opinion of teaching it (Bull & Cumings, 2002:48). When teachers themselves do not have a positive opinion of their own profession, they cannot present a positive image to their many audiences including learners. It is a fact that personal identity is closely related to professional identity.

The shortage of qualified Consumer Studies teachers and the lack of teacher preparation programmes in South Africa have created a growing crisis in our education system as it directly affects the sustainability of teaching the subject in our schools. Consumer Studies teachers are also faced with other challenges as identified by (Mimbs, 2002:54). These challenges include; teachers expectations versus the realities of their job duties, environmental conditions at schools, administrative support for Consumer Studies programmes, type of learners in Consumer Studies classes, promotional posts, lack of awareness in teachers, lack of teacher expertise, teachers not being futuristic in their thinking, teachers being intimidated by new technology, methodology courses not geared to reality and not integrated with content for classroom application. Many of the Consumer Studies teachers in the previous studies done by other researchers do not need to be persuaded that what they do is important, and they are well aware of the seriousness of the challenges facing them in sustaining the teaching of this subject. The one big challenge facing Consumer Studies teachers is the diversity of the subject content. This becomes a big challenge due to the fact that some teachers lack the expertise required in teaching the subject.

3.3.4 Food Related Problems and Consumer Studies

In South Africa malnutrition is one of the challenges facing some communities. This is caused by unhealthy eating patterns that people have adopted. The unhealthy eating patterns have led to environmental social problems and unsustainability of livelihoods. For example, when teaching a topic on food choices, one learns that many people have changed their diets in that they moved away from their cultural eating patterns, thus affecting their nutrition. The biggest concern out there is the continuing change in eating patterns, which degrade the health of people. Getting a balanced diet these days depends highly on processed food. The shelf life of such food is prolonged and the 'sell-by-date' is inscribed on the packaging. Processed food comes with certain additives that may be detrimental to health of the well-being. Compared to the above preservation, in the olden days people had a particular way of processing their food and preserving it which excluded the commercial and chemically produced additives such as dehydration. Some people today are ignorant about the state of their health as they just eat anything without considering the value of food to their health and well-being. Kolodinsky and Goldstein (2011:2333) believe that the rise in the use of convenience foods, fast food chains and the substitution of purchased meals for home prepared meals has led to the loss of everyday knowledge of what is in the food and how to prepare it.

Food and Nutrition is one of the topics dealt with in the subject Consumer Studies. In this topic, learners gain knowledge on food preparation and healthy eating. They also learn that packaged and processed foods are more expensive and are higher in sodium, fats and calories. One American study in Pendergast et al, (2012:12) reveals that eating and overeating between meals have been found to be a problem for elementary school age children who fail to get the necessary nutrition they need because they are eating too many fatty foods or sweets. Such eating habits have been shown to increase obesity as well as the chance in developing lifestyle diseases such as adult onset diabetes.

Mischel Obama in Lichtenstein and Ludwig (2010:1858) developed a motion statement, "Bring back Home Economics". Mischel recommends that the subject should be repositioned at schools. In their article related to the obesity epidemic in

affluent countries, especially the United States of America, Lichtenstein and Ludwig suggest that girls and boys should be taught the basic principles they will need to feed themselves and their families within the current food environment. They argue that to date, most of the programmes meant to address obesity have had limited success because they fail to connect knowledge, skills and critical decision making, and that any solution must address the poor food quality of the average diet and how to prepare food and plan meals. They argue for the need of Consumer Studies education for all learners.

“Consumer Studies curriculum could equip young adults with the skills essential to lead long healthy lives and reverse the trends of obesity and diet related diseases, this instruction will also help the youth to re-establish a healthy relationship with food, protecting them from the constant onslaught of weight-loss diets and body building fads (Lichtenstein & Ludwig, 2010:1858)”.

The study done by Pendergast, Garvis and Kanasa (2011:428) in the United Kingdom revealed that the school curriculum Consumer Studies is one area in which to focus reform in attempts to rein in the devastating effects of poor nutrition and its contribution to child and adult obesity and related chronic health diseases. The three scholars mandate the teaching of food skills and knowledge at schools. As a confirmatory note, Pendergast, Garvis and Kanasa analyzed the commentary of members of the public regarding the role of the subject Consumer Studies to deliver food literacy.

“Participants revealed the power of Consumer Studies as a school subject to change their food literacy habits. In particular a number of males wrote of the importance of studying the subject Consumer Studies at school. Many of the males made references to using recipes they had learnt during Consumer Studies lessons at school. This snapshot provides evidence of the importance of teaching Consumer Studies for the future. Many of the male participants also wrote about building on previous skills and knowledge learned in this subject Consumer Studies, demonstrating evidence of lifelong learning with literacy (Pendergast et al., 2011:428).”

Learners can acquire correct facts about what to eat and what not to in order to build a healthy body by learning food and nutrition during Consumer Studies lessons.

Kolodinsky and Goldstein (2011:2335) support Obama that diet related diseases, around the world, especially obesity, are a global problem regardless of food availability. Kolodinsky and Goldstein believe that newer technological advancements have yet to be proven safe, including genetically modified versions of seeds, plants and even animals.

In the school subject Consumer Studies, learners also learn how to make sensible choices about what is good to eat considering the food groups and the proportion of each food group in order to get a balanced diet and concerning additives and their value to food. The subject aims to have learners learn by doing; they choose safe ingredients, cook their own food, and gain confidence in preparation in all aspects of a meal. Food handling and attitude change toward healthy eating form an integral part of any Consumer Studies curriculum.

Food and Nutrition is not the only area that has potential of improving the quality of life of human beings, for example, clothing and interior design also have this potential. The researcher decided to focus on food and nutrition as they are considered to be the upper most basic needs of humans. The researcher therefore, contends that Consumer Studies is a good school subject to choose as it affects the lives of human beings directly. Hopefully, this study may lead to changing the people's perceptions about the subject and begin to realize its relevance and value on the lives of human beings.

3.3.5 The Subject Name Change

The subject name change implies change in the way it is taught and the reality of what is actually occurring in the classroom (Mimbs, 2002:49). The name "Home Economics" is considered as a critical element in the history of the discipline. Turkki (2005:280) concurs with the fact that the name "Home Economics" as an excellent choice for "Consumer Studies" is not a precise well-defined discipline with detailed boundaries. According to Turkki (2005:280) the name of this subject, acts as an important tool for its identity and communication. Home Economics derives from many areas such as sciences and the humanities, those aspects that relate to the home and family living. This subject cannot be considered as a parasite field,

although it borrows from many other disciplines. The subject is capable of contributing to the fields from which it derives, far more than has been realized. Turkki (2005:280) emphasizes that Home Economics, interprets, shares and makes applicable for human use the concepts and appreciations of the many disciplines from which it derives, and in so doing it becomes a field of educational experience. The connotation of those two very powerful words, Home and Economics, opens many doors for the field.

The key competencies of the discipline include the flexibility of Home Economics and the capability of those in the field, teachers and other specialists, to transform their actions according to the current situation. Complexity and change are the core elements of the subject as identified by Turkki (2005:280). Competencies and knowledge base of the subject Home Economics serve as a powerful arena for learning and shaping the future. The fundamental area for actions and services locally and globally will continue to be human action in everyday life. This relates to food and nutrition, housing, clothing communication and care services. The future and innovations have always belonged to our daily lives and value creating, is one of the many human qualities to guide the practices of the discipline.

Turkki (2005:280) believes that, Home Economics as a school subject or a discipline, is in a unique position because of the way it is in the whole world and that the body of knowledge in this subject serves as a fundamental tool for global wealth and prosperity. Home Economics teachers need to continue to establish and sustain the educational landscape required to have well-grounded and sustainable platforms to foster the next generation of innovative Home Economics teachers, other professions and researchers (Mimbs, 2002:52).

Embedded in the teaching of Consumer Studies is the notion of life-long learning which is underpinned in the social constructivist theory that relates to NCS. The inception of NCS came with havoc. The subject name was changed from Home Economics to Consumer Studies. The change in the subject content is another area which brought uncertainty as some teachers were not sure of whether they would cope with the new content that was incorporated into the syllabus. In the light of the above, it is evident that Consumer Studies teachers have a vital role to play as

educators for life-long learning to improve the quality of lives of people in the country. What this implies is that there is a prerogative out there to change communities for better lives as teachers are the ones who are close to the communities. The unique name Consumer Studies answers some of the criticisms raised against the old domestic science, housecraft and home economics.

3.3.6 Consumer Related Problems

The relevance of Consumer Studies content as taught in secondary schools can be evidenced by the teaching of consumer related topics. These topics are found in the Consumer Studies learning content which emphasizes the importance of concrete and practical lessons that teach learners the best ways to take action themselves as consumers. Consumers are victims of dishonest business practices. They are sometimes overcharged for services or pressured into unnecessary purchases. In Consumer Studies, learners are taught about what to do when dishonest business practices arise.

In the subject Consumer Studies learners are also taught how to buy and use different products and services to satisfy their needs and wants. They are taught to prioritize their needs and wants based on Dr Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (Van Zyl et al, 2011:19). Maslow's theory identifies five basic levels of human needs, which rank in importance from lower level needs to higher level needs. As human beings, we need to satisfy our lower level needs before higher level needs can emerge. When our needs at the lower level are satisfied new needs emerge that we are motivated to fulfill. The satisfaction of human needs is a basic factor contributing to improving the quality of life of people which is the main aim of teaching Consumer Studies. In this subject, learners are also taught about their rights and responsibilities as consumers. Consumer rights form part of human rights of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996). Learners are made to understand that, to be a good consumer, one needs to know her/his rights and how to take responsibility for their actions and also to know what their obligations are (Van Zyl et al; 2011:19).

In view of the fact that the content of Consumer Studies curriculum focuses on activities and roles that have to do with the family, learners are taught to become economically stable. Learners are educated on how to achieve economic well-being through efficiency, exercised by individual family members in the management of economic resources and household work. Entrepreneurship is encouraged through the multi-disciplinary nature of Consumer Studies which allows learners to get into varied income generating activities such as clothing, food, home furnishings, consultancy and many others. The subject content can also influence economic decisions by reacting to social practices and policies which may hinder economic development at household level. Consumer Studies content could also help learners understand the social and political dimensions of the economic system. Sometimes resources are wasted due to lack of information on how various systems work, for example; credit cards, debit cards, insurance (Mberengwa, 2003:30).

3.3.7 Environmental Conditions

The teaching of the school subject Consumer Studies play a crucial role in the environment, water and sanitation. Since its major concern is with the wellbeing of families, issues arising from the environment which negatively impact families will therefore become a major concern. Waste generation and disposal scenario is a national problem in our country. Most of these wastes that are generated on the streets are from commercial activities of street food vendors.

The quantity and rate of solid waste generation depends on the population, level of industrialization, socio-economic predominant activities and the kinds of commercial activities (Babayeni & Dauda, 2009:86). Waste management is not successful because of the unwholesome waste disposal habits of the people especially as it concerns sanitation. The use of polythene packages and the use of non-degradable solid waste often block the drainage system thereby causing flooding in some major cities. Indeed, environmental sustainability is influenced by individual life styles and ethical consumerism. In order to avoid environmental degradation, there must be management of consumption patterns of individuals and households. That is where Consumer Studies Education is relevant in achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on environmental sustainability. Waste generated by street food

vendors end up in gutters blocking drainage. Sometimes, the used water not finding a passage may accumulate and form an eyesore that encourage the growth of bacteria and breeding of flies, mosquitoes and cockroaches at the sale points. This violates the MDG on environmental sustainability. According to Molokwu and Kembe (cited in Pendergast, 2012:213) the proportion of the population with sustainable access to improved water source in both the urban and rural areas is below the MDGs stipulation. The subject is also capable of addressing issues that may arise from street vendors and environmental hazards associated with indiscriminate street behavior (McGregory, 2009:29). Advocacy, awareness education programmes through seminars, workshops and symposia are of immense benefit to the Consumer Studies teacher. Home Economics associations like IFHE and other associations worldwide need to form regulatory bodies and vanguards for the promotion of good health and family wellbeing (McGregor, 2009:29).

It is a known fact that most small-scale businesses are centered round the life skills of Consumer Studies as a school subject. Skills include dress-making, cake making, interior decoration, day care services and bead making. Some of these business people are not trained consumer scientists and the best hands are not necessarily from Consumer Studies graduates. This means that there must be some significant difference in curriculum content and approach for the subject to continue to be relevant. The subject must develop and put emphasis on the use of technology that will compete with global standards and ways of promoting products in the global market.

3.3.8 Poverty

Satisfying basic needs for shelter, food and clothing are dreams for most African families. Wadon and Zaman (2010:164) discussed the following factors as the main causes of poverty in most African states. Political instability and harsh economic factors enforced by the governments to resort to budget cuts while eliminating access to even the most basic services such as health and education. Jobless youth are a common sight in our country and many other African states. Poor harvests caused by natural disasters result in hunger and starvation in rural households.

Food prices in urban areas increase. Lastly, conflict and war have also worsened famine in some states and thus exacerbating poverty.

Conflict including domestic violence is another issue which is covered in the Consumer Studies curriculum. South Africa is not a stranger to wars and conflict. One author, Washi (2002:37) expanded on this factor, by expressing that wars, regardless of what causes them, expose families and its members to many risks including deaths, injury, orphan-hood, sexual abuse and rape which may culminate illegitimate children. Children are left without the needed care, protection and support from families, some become 'street children' and are at risk of abuse. Women like children are exposed to vulnerability through widowhood. Female headed households are also vulnerable because men are engaged in combat. Education and socialization are disrupted because schools are destroyed. Other basic survival needs tend to dominate the time and energy of the adults, leaving little time for education. Educating a child is generally expensive for some SA families. Both primary and secondary school education is free in SA and only a minimum fee is charged, but families strive to send their children to school. This situation compounded by the negative effects of HIV/AIDS, forces most children to drop out of school in order to look after their siblings (Mberengwa, 2003:23).

Health and disease is another factor which should be covered in the curriculum for Consumer Studies as expanded by Washi (2002:41). According to Washi, millions of African children have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS. The pandemic is concentrated disproportionately among younger, economically active and often the best educated, family members, impacting the economic performance of the family. Washi (2002: 43) discussed malaria as a big killer among African children. Orphaned children are left with no older blood family members to care for them. The extended family system, which traditionally cushioned such children, is severely challenged as it fails to cope with the ever-increasing number of orphaned children.

Food Security and Nutrition; the content for Consumer Studies also covers food security. Basic food security is achieved when all people have access at all times to the food required to maintain healthy life (Lartey, 2008:107). At the household level food security refers to the ability of a household to secure adequate food that will

meet dietary intake requirements for all members of the family. In Southern African Development Community (SADC), malnutrition, due to inadequate food image and poor nutritional quality of diets causes deaths among children and women of child bearing age. It is estimated that 20 % of African woman have a low body mass index (BMI) due to the chronic hunger. Lartey (2008:107) showed in her discussion several reasons which are attributed to African's insecure food resource base. All these include erratic rainfall patterns which cause draughts, dependence on rainfall, inadequate agricultural inputs for subsistence farmers and poor harvests and lastly, food wastage resulting from having access to food during dry months. These challenges have formed and should continue to be included in the curriculum for Consumer Studies. Botswana, SA and Lesotho, are rated as the only three SADC countries likely to meet the MDG target of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

3.3.9 Migration and Urbanization

Migration and Urbanization also forms part and parcel of the Consumer Studies syllabus. Migration is identified as one of the megatrends and the largest source of urban expansion in Africa and placed extra burdens on families (Mberengwa & Mthombeni, 2012:197). No matter voluntarily or involuntarily, men and women are leaving their homes in search of better economic opportunities in cities, neighboring countries and internationally.

Working woman have now joined the workforce and are forced to combine their traditional roles of childrearing and household chores with earning money to supplement household income. Some children try to escape from hunger and bereavement and quickly become street kids. Living environments in cities become congested, thus creating environmental disasters and health risks that threaten people's lives. Urbanization has caused people to increasingly depend upon purchasing food commodities rather than producing their own. As a result, people's diets and eating patterns change as they adopt new values and lifestyles. International migration has caused disruption in family set-up and marriages. The effects of migration and urbanization are likely to continue well into the 21st century.

3.3.10 Globalization, Technological Changes and Industrialization

Globalization, technological changes and industrialization is also taught in the Consumer Studies syllabus. Technology derives from development and is a major determinant for classifying the status of countries as developed or underdeveloped. Most SADC countries are regarded as underdeveloped mostly because they lag behind in technological advancement in most economic and social sectors. Although rich in natural resources, sectors such as mining and agriculture are underexploited due to a lack of appropriate technologies that facilitate value added to most products (SADC, 2008:56).

Although the role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Africa's development has been recognized the challenge in the 21st century is to make sure that they are viable and sustainable. This success depends partly upon the acquisition and use of appropriate technologies, supported by the creation of a suitable environment, relevant and effective implementation of policies that support growth and trade, and also support SMEs. Washi (2002:42) elaborates that Information technology has both positive and negative impacts on the manner in which family members interact and on the structure of African families. With increased access to television, computers and internet, traditional ways of interaction are challenged. The structure of African families is also changing with the trend towards nuclear families. Single parenting and cohabitation are becoming more acceptable.

3.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL SUBJECT CONSUMER STUDIES INTO VIABLE CAREER OPTIONS

Consumer Studies as a school subject finds itself between the need for breadth of knowledge in varied areas and the need for specialization. The subject is equipped with the relevant knowledge to deal with these market demands because the discipline brings together knowledge from many fields to help individuals and families in all aspects of life. Anyakoha (2001:6) holds that Consumer Studies is the school subject which helps with the development, use and management of human and material resources for the greater welfare of individuals, families and human society

in its entirety. It strives to solve the most pressing problems that challenge the families now as well as emerging ones. These problems include poverty.

Learners should strive for a more reliable and independent mode of survival. This can be achieved if one is basically equipped with the relevant knowledge and practical skills. Societal factors and emerging businesses have created occupations for Consumer Scientists that were unheard of years ago. For example, in addition, being a Consumer Studies teacher, a Consumer Scientist today may become a professional caterer, chef, clothing construction specialist, an interior decorator, textile display director, nutrition consultant and a housing consultant. Therefore, Consumer Studies curriculum at secondary schools should change to reflect today's needs.

3.4.1 Consumer Studies and the Clothing Industry

Turkki and Vincenti (2008:80) maintain that Consumer Studies as a profession is geared towards improving the total quality of individual, family and community life. With the modern development and the introduction of new technologies in all spheres of human life, people's ways of life have changed very significantly from the olden days. Lima and Brown (2007:18) posit that the change in time implies the way people dress and adorn their bodies to improve their appearance for self-esteem and acceptance in the society. According to Lima and Brown (2007:18), the clothing industry is one of the biggest employers in SA. If well established, this industry has the potential of creating production and service jobs that would go far in increasing family income and earning the country foreign exchange. Deagon and Pendergast (2011:11) concurs with Lima and Brown in that the services sector, which includes clothing, is a major employer in this postindustrial period. Clothing has been one of the major focuses of Consumer Studies. The production of clothing includes the studies of fiber, adequacy of cloth for specific uses, textile conservation, modeling and making of clothing articles, as well as the relationship between clothing, sustainability and social development. McGregor (2010:36) believes that fashion is a powerful instrument which promotes status and ensures class distinctions. The fashion industry activates a large market and moves a significant parcel of the world

economy. The marketing strategies emphasize a disdain for old product and a passion for the new ones.

Turkki (2005:278) holds that the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) launched in 2003 by the United Nations (UN), favor the promotion of public policies and government actions in several countries, including South Africa, allowing Consumer Studies Professionals to act in the implantation and accompaniment of projects and social programs focusing on clothing and crafts. In terms of the eight MDG, four of them have direct relation with clothing from the perspective of Consumer Studies professionals, the goals include eradicating hunger and extreme power, promoting gender equality and women's autonomy, establishing a world partnership for development and warranting environmental sustainability. Turkki (2006:56) asserts that concerns with aspects linked to the promotion of work and income are due to the high index of unemployment.

Deagon and Pendergast (2011:11) acknowledges that the clothing sector has several cooperatives for production and commercialization of clothing and craft in relation to recycling of textile products. According to Deagon and Pendergast (2011:11) craftswoman produce pieces for the fashion and design market, in partnership with big brands such as Rene Tailor, Levies, Puma, Dona Claire and many others. The stylists of these enterprises draw pieces and the artisans give their final touch of craft to the products and are exported to various countries.

3.4.2 Consumer Studies in the Hotel and Tourism Industry

Consumer Studies, Hospitality and the Tourism industry are inseparable. Mberengwa (2003:40) postulates that there is a need to consider what implications all this has for the role Consumer Studies can play in Hotel and Tourism industry. The tourism industry, include sectors such as reservations, accommodation and catering, leisure and entertainment, food processing and many more. Mberengwa further indicated that, the hotel is just one aspect of the tourism industry and is categorized under hospitality industry. The hospitality industry then includes hotels, restaurants and other institutions that offer shelter and food for people away from

homes. This section will focus on the role of Consumer Studies in the hospitality industry.

It is a fact that increased income often causes social changes. This is true in various areas of tourism including the Consumer Studies division. Local people had been motivated to undertake and develop tourist-orientated projects. Visitors from overseas help in creating demand for new goods and call for higher standards of production. Upon their return home, visitors help to create an export demand for our local mineral, raw materials and agricultural produce. The increase in foreign trade creates the need for advanced technology and gives a vibrant effect to the local market. Touristic demands in hotels and elsewhere in the tourism industry provide an enhanced market for agricultural products. The government builds roads, airports, harbors, highways, telecommunications, training centers, hotels and restaurants to serve the tourism industry. These benefits and facilities extend to Consumer Studies professionals.

The Consumer Studies graduate joining the hotel industry need little training to be effective in the food and beverage department and housekeeping. She already possesses the skills in detail in relation to these two departments. With the acquisition of management skills (financial as well as human resource management) the Consumer Studies graduate has the potential of being the most effective employee or manager in these two departments.

The Consumer Studies graduate has the highest potential of becoming a hotelier as he or she is well rounded in many aspects of humanity and the hotel industry is the people's industry. Consumer Studies graduates have a lot to offer the hotel industry.

3.4.3 Consumer Studies Professionals as Extension Officers

Mberengwa (2003:43) defines extension as the extending of educational advantages of an institution to persons unable to avail themselves in a normal manner. Turkki (2001:58) adds that extension is a never ending educational process of development. According to Turkki (2001:58), extensions base from research

findings, applies the information gained to reach farmers, enables families to utilize available resources resulting in an improved quality of life.

Consumer Studies Extension Workers work with families in a preventive educational and development mode, reaching many rural and urban women daily with welfare issues. Issues concerning food and nutrition may be brought for discussions. They will talk about the methods of cooking, food service styles, the nutritive value of food, kitchen equipment, meal planning and management, food storage and preservation.

Issues which may also be taught during the visits may cover aspects such as laundry work, environmental and house hygiene, use and care of household appliances and first aid. In the family life unit, the importance of leisure and recreation is also encouraged. Pendergast (2010:50) emphasizes that the key person to transfer the knowledge and skills to rural women is a Consumer Studies extension agent. Kwawu (2003:16) points out that the significance of Consumer Studies programmes in national development is realised through the provision of services in agriculture, health, social sciences and women groups, and through Non-Governmental Organizations. The target groups, most of whom are women, are assisted to recognize their potential and to develop and manage resources available to them.

The Consumer Studies extension programme is offered under the department of Agriculture with the aim of helping households improve their standards of living under the following objectives: attain food security and improve their nutritional status; disseminate technologies that ease work; assist women in generating income; motivate families to practice family planning and assist families to improve sanitation in their homes.

3.5 THE INTENTION OF CONSUMER STUDIES AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT

Consumer Studies curriculum differs around the world, in a school or other educational location. IFIIE (2008:1) formulated the statement that as a curriculum area, Consumer Studies facilitates learners to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life, by directing their professional decisions and actions or preparing them for life. Hence, through the

engagement in Consumer Studies curriculum, the individual is provided the opportunity to develop capabilities to enhance personal empowerment to act in daily context (Pendergast et al., 2012:13).

The contexts covered in Consumer Studies curriculum may include; food sciences and hospitality; nutrition and health; textiles and clothing; shelter and housing; consumerism and consumer sciences; household management; design and technology; human development and community services; and lastly family studies and education. This diversity of the contexts serves as a support base which gives the subject strength as a curriculum area. Pendergast et al. (2012:13) assert that Consumer Studies is concerned with the empowerment and well-being of individuals, families and communities, and of facilitating the development of attributes for life-long learning, for paid, unpaid, voluntary work and living situations. The key concepts from the above explanation are “Well-being” and “life-long” learning. These concepts are also known as intended outcomes of Consumer Studies education.

Pendergast et al. (2012:13) affirm that Consumer Studies is explicitly concerned with optimizing well-being which is a good or satisfactory condition of existence. She further sustains that with respect to Consumer Studies education, there is a particular opportunity to focus on reducing risk and enhancing protective factors through the curriculum. According to Pendergast et al. (2012:13), developing problem solving skills, social competence and optimism are all powerful ways of enhancing protective factors to achieve well-being and are fundamental to Consumer Studies curriculum.

On the other hand developing pro-social behavior, providing opportunities for hands-on activities and success and a sense of belonging are also fundamentally incorporated in the Consumer Studies curriculum.

The school plays a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and well-being of young children, ensuring the nation’s ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion (McGregor; 2009:28). In the light of the above, Pendergast (2008:14) maintains that individual and family well-being is a powerful aspiration as an intended outcome of Consumer

Studies curriculum. Life-long learning is also stated to be the intention of Consumer Studies education. Life-long learning is characterized by four aspects; the first aspect is learning to do; this refers to acquiring and applying skills which include lifelong skills; the second aspect is learning to be; this refers to promoting creativity and personal fulfillment; the third aspect is learning to know; this implies knowing an approach to learning that is flexible, critical and capable; the last aspect is learning to live together, this refers to exercising tolerance, understanding and mutual respect. Pendergast (2008:14) strongly contends that a curriculum review auditing the opportunities of lifelong learning characteristics; offer the opportunity to understand the contribution made by the subject.

Consumer Studies is singled out as a school subject of central importance in teaching the value of equality of the sexes (Pendergast et al., 2012:480). In this light the subject can be considered innovative. It is effective at empowering learners to lead independent lives. Independence therefore does not only include economic and mental self-reliance, but also a concern for community affairs, the society and government. Acting as a responsible citizen is an important part of being independent. In other words, it is necessary to develop children not only capable of making judgments for themselves and acting as individuals, at home or at work, but also empowering them to participate actively in society (Pendergast et al., 2012:50). Consumer Studies is a subject that can help learners acquire the practical knowledge they need on a daily basis in order to be truly independent and to develop a sympathetic understanding of others, as well as the desire to support one another (Pendergast et al., 2012:50).

The subject is made up of learning areas that cover all the basic life skills that children will need later in life. This is evidenced by the core areas of the subject listed above. The way the subject is taught now implies that learners begin their learning at the very personal, everyday level. They examine various issues related to food, consumption and environment. In support to this statement, through the study of Consumer Studies, learners become aware of problems. They can draw upon their own experiences and learn to examine problems critically. They develop the desire and capacity to try and solve these problems. In this sense, this subject has a vital role of citizenship education.

Consumer Studies on the other hand encourages learners to learn about social problems, within the context of their lives. Such as eating habits, wearing clothes, living, and taking care of people.

From this commonplace of activities, learners are encouraged to think about what is important in their own life and in society. In support of this statement above, Mberengwa (2003:47) agrees that apart from economic development, Consumer Studies content also covers the issue of social development. The family is a social system, and as such it has functions in the social development of individuals in the family. The following factors can interfere with individual satisfaction: the economic situation, conflict between culture, individual and the family, conflict in the family leading to separation, divorce and deceit behavior of children, communication problems within the family system and within the social systems and subsystems. Consumer Studies teachers, have a vital role during the process of teaching learners in the classroom. Learners should be assisted to develop their values. Teachers in this subject have as their highest goal, the raising of democratic minded citizens who will build happy homes and a fair and free society (Pendergast et al., 2012:51).

3.6 CONSUMER STUDIES AS BASIC IN PERSONAL AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The school subject Consumer Studies has made several claims about its educational purpose. One claim that has persisted is that this subject is an applied science, that is; it applies the principles of science to everyday living; contributing to an appreciation of right living, and in general improving the quality of life of people. Benn (2000:19) and McGregor (2009:32) ardently believe that the school subject Consumer Studies would gain intellectual recognition and social value as an applied science. Early Consumer Studies scientists established the field in post- secondary education and the subject gained recognition in the public schools. During that time this subject was known as Domestic Science and Household Science.

Benn (2000:20) describes Consumer Studies as a school subject which has enlarged its claims as an integrated field while synthesizing knowledge from many other basic disciplines. In this way Consumer Studies as a school subject, entails teaching about certain aspects of the basic disciplines in the interest of solving problems in the families. To illustrate this, Benn (2000:20), notes that the chemical composition of food in Chemistry is the same with the food composition in Food Science. Amino acids in proteins are the same in Chemistry or Consumer Studies. From the science content, learners in Consumer Studies apply the principles of dissolving, crystalizing and emulsifying. They explain the action of bacteria, yeast and enzymes on food; they describe chemical and physical properties of fibers; they explain the reaction of nutrients to heat, air and light; and they also comprehend the digestive and reproductive systems during nutrition lessons. According to Benn (2000:20), as a process of science, Consumer Studies learners will be able to query the whys of their material world in clothing and textiles and also in foods and nutrition. They will also be able to develop an experimental approach to hypothesizing solutions to various personal and social problems, testing and anticipating new or alternative hypotheses.

Benn (2000:21) also claims that, as an applied science, Consumer Studies learners will use their knowledge and skills from Mathematics to increase and decrease recipes and pattern sizes during their practical lessons. These compute costs and nutrient values of different food forms are attained during nutrition lessons and they also use banking skills and prepare income tax forms and family budgets during consumer related issues lessons. Benn, maintains that as a process of Mathematics, Consumer Studies learners will be able to consider alternative solutions to problems considering the limited resources of families. Through questioning learners will be able to develop the linear logic of cause and effect in reasoning. Learners will also be able to seek the unknown in considering alternative ways for achieving a balanced diet when money and possible foods are limited.

In relation to language, Benn (2000:21) made the following findings; she claims that in reading content, learners in Consumer Studies are expected to follow directions, to interpret graphs and charts, to know definitions, abbreviations and new words and they are also expected to summarize ideas. As a process of reading an interpretive

act Consumer Studies learners will be able to read and write children's literature. Then they will also read adolescent novels and vicariously experience other personal and family situations, problems and events. These learners will also be able to read fictional accounts of the future, the past and learn about themselves and their social world. From the writing content, learners in Consumer Studies are expected to prepare directions for laboratories, write responses essay questions, practice grammar and sentence structure, and also organize notebooks. As a process of writing, a creative and expressive act, learners will be able to analyze other views and formulate their own. They will be able to write letters and position papers expressively, bringing to words and naming their feelings and experience, to describe situations and events. They will also be able to reflect upon and analyze decisions and actions (Benn, 2000:21).

Benn (2000:22) claims that the specialty of art and design is viewed primarily in various environmental design majors as textile, apparel and interior design has been a long- standing part of the interdisciplinary holistic nature of the Consumer Studies. In view of the interpretation of these philosophies discussed above, one may conclude that as life's problems emerge and change, the emphasis given to various branches of knowledge becomes paramount because practical problems are not limited to any single facet of knowledge. This implies that teachers have the responsibility to help learners understand the relationships that exist across all areas of study. Some Consumer Studies teachers understand mathematics, biology, economics and others well enough to teach some principles and help learners to apply them to real life problems. It is clear that the school subject Consumer Studies provides real problems and materials for learners to practice the skills taught in the basic disciplines. This subject is known for its ability in allowing learners to use and choose various thinking processes from all the basic disciplines for deliberating alternative solutions and courses of action. It is a discipline which allows learners to use and choose various thinking processes in solving problems. It is a discipline in which learners not only think, but also must think about their thinking. The school subject Consumer Studies teaches the basic disciplines and contribute to the general education (Benn, 2000:22).

3.7 CONSUMER STUDIES AS AN INTEGRATED SUBJECT OF LEARNING

Integrated teaching has similar objectives, themes and activities to those of Consumer Studies (Umalusi, 2015:21). Umalusi (2015:21) note that integrated teaching has the objective to develop a problem-solving ability and explore how to plan a person's future life. The practical problem solving approach provides a perspective from which the subject Consumer Studies can enlighten. This takes the subject Consumer Studies beyond technical and theoretical approaches to solving problems. This implies doing things for, showing or demonstrating how to do things and explaining why things are the way they are without any critique or dialogue.

Umalusi (2015:21) expose the three dimensions of integration in Consumer Studies, namely, between-subject integration, intra-subject integration and between the subject and everyday world and knowledge. Most topics covered in the subject deal with everyday life issues, relevant to the lives of the learners. Examples include nutritional content, planning a wardrobe, food safety and hygiene. The subject also reveals a high level of internal integration where relationships and connections between different topics within the subject are explicitly indicated. Examples include concepts such as "consumer cycle and the consumer" within the topics of the subject. Umalusi (2015:21) also reveal integration between Consumer Studies and other subjects such as Mathematics, Mathematical Literacy, Business Studies, Visual Art, Life Sciences and Agricultural Science.

Integrated teaching is also known for its ability of dealing with themes concerning environmental problems and social welfare which includes hand-on activities (Turkki, 2005:280). According to (Turkki, 2005:280) the school subject Consumer Studies involves teaching theory and practice. This implies that valuable learning and teaching as interaction and communication are both integrated in the teaching-studying-learning process. The promotion of high quality learning is an outcome of an integrated teaching strategy.

Ahlberge et al, (2005:170) developed and tested a tentative teaching strategy for Consumer Studies with 13 aspects. The five aspects directly related to the teaching of Consumer Studies are;

- Meaningful learning in the sense that it corresponds to the real needs of individuals, society and humankind. It is a meaningful also in the sense that new, learnt knowledge is connected to earlier knowledge.
- Deep learning in the sense that the grounds and justifications for knowledge are actively sought and the consequences of knowledge are actively tested in practice both theoretically and empirically.
- Proactive, creative, expanding, and transformative learning that surpasses earlier knowledge and expertise in the sense that real human needs are met, real problems are solved, or at least alleviated, and a better future is sought. It often means seeing the world, its problems and human needs in new perspectives and reframing questions and problems accordingly.
- Meta cognitive learning in the sense that it utilizes methods to monitor and promote personal learning and also that it
- Promotes collaborative knowledge building.

3.8 SUSTAINABILITY OF CONSUMER STUDIES AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The future of Consumer Studies as a school subject is a persistent topic on the agenda of educational issues in many countries. In various regions around the world, the subject as a whole has been eradicated analytically as a result of curriculum transformation at the compulsory and post-compulsory levels, with the loss of dedicated professional Consumer Studies Teachers. This percolating degradation of Consumer Studies has implications for the associated loss of the unique curriculum of the subject, including the focus on consumer related issues. South Africa has not been excluded from this pattern, leading to concerns about the capacity of society to engage effectively in SD and Consumer Studies related issues. This section provides an insight into the current positioning of Consumer Studies at secondary schools of various countries and the likely outcomes of failing to sustain a preferred future of this subject.

3.8.1 Comparative exploration of the sustainability of Consumer Studies in Developed Countries

Below is an exploration of the sustainability of Consumer Studies at the secondary schools of Canada and China. This exploration will focus on the development and intention, curriculum development as well as the challenges associated with the subject.

3.8.1.1 Consumer Studies in Canada

The exploration of the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies in China will focus on the development and intention, curriculum development as well as the challenges associated with the subject.

3.8.1.1.1 Development and the intention of Consumer Studies in Canada

In Canada the subject is referred to as Home Economics (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:8). Williamson (2007:84) reports about the beginning of Home Economics as a school subject in Canada. According to Williamson (2007:84), the subject began as a response to world-wide change and development. The agrarian way of life that had sustained untold generations with food, clothing and shelter was gradually giving way to industrialization, resulting in migration to cities and large-scale emigration abroad. The social issues of family life, health and the rights of women and children became critically important. Williamson (2007:84) indicates that the establishment of Home Economics as part of the general curriculum in Canada is largely attributed to the lobbying and organization efforts of women like Adelaide Hoodless in Ontario in the 1890s. Adelaide actively promoted Home Economics as part manual training, and managed to obtain funding for the Macdonald Institute in Guelph, Ontario, in 1903, the first Canadian facility for preparing Home Economics teachers.

Williamson, (2007:85) notes that women advocated so strongly for Home Economics at both the public school and University level for the following reasons; To improve

general health and hygiene, to recognize women's rights to education and participation in Canadian society and to promote worthy home membership. It was also revealed in Williamson (2007:86) that in 1903, the local council of women in Victoria equipped the first Home Economics classroom, and the school board agreed to pay half a year's salary for a teacher. Williamson, (2007:85) affirms that the new subject Home Economics became popular and that the Vancouver School Board hired its first Home Economics teacher in 1905. By 1911 Home Economics supervisors had been hired in both Vancouver and Victoria to manage the growing programs. Williamson (2007:86) avers that in 1926, Jessie McLenglen became the first director of Home Economics for the Department of Education. The woman organized the curriculum and even produced the first manual for teachers.

3.8.1.1.2 Challenges associated with the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies in Canada

The development of Home Economics in Canada was not without challenges. Williamson (2007:86) notes that the Chaut Commission of 1960 recommended that Home Economics and other elective subjects be moved to the outer core, and that Science and Mathematics were to be given more emphasis. The Commission also removed Home Economics from the Grade 7 curriculum. The 1988 report of the Royal Commission as revealed by Williamson (2007:87) offers much hope for Home Economics Teachers. Teachers felt that the report was an affirmation of the importance of Home Economics and they looked forward to increased opportunities especially at the elementary level, unfortunately it did not come to pass. Poor placement of Home Economics teachers continued. Home Economics teachers were expected to assist in other subjects. This affected their performance as teachers. Williamson (2007:87) also reports that in 1995, in schools where Home Economics was executed as an additional compulsory subject, Learners had one less elective that impacted Home Economics.

The "Personal Planning" portion covered by content in the Family Studies curriculum influenced increased enrolments in the subject and some Home Economics teachers were moved to teach this subject. In 1998, new Home Economics curriculum

document, called an integrated resource pack was released Williamson, (2007:88). The challenge with the integrated study was that, objectives were not consistent and that the details of content of the themes were not given.

In 2002, many Home Economics laboratories were built and equipped in Canada. Relevant Home Economics textbooks were also supplied to schools. Enrolment of learners in the subject increased (Williamson, 2007:88). The main challenge of the subject during that period was the shortage of Home Economics teachers. The findings of the study done by Smith and de Zwart (2010:8) reveal that there was evidence of Home Economics teacher shortages at the secondary schools in all the 12 districts of Canada. The shortage of qualified Home Economics teachers in Canada is not an isolated phenomenon as it is also occurring in many other countries. Shortages were also reported in United States, Australia, New Zealand, Scotland and Britain (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:9).

Williamson (2007:89) also reports that, in 2006, budgets for Home Economics were cut down or disallowed. During this time, there was a continued concern about safety and learning conditions in Home Economics laboratories that were built. Stressful working conditions of Home Economics teachers were reported to be challenging during this period (Smith & de Zwart, 2010: 25).

The major challenge which characterized all the stages of Home Economics development in Canada was gender discrimination. Home Economics in Canada was a requirement for girls only. Girls were expected to learn how to maintain their future homes by learning the skills necessary to manage a household. The course content of early Home Economics in Canada consisted of household management, cooking and nutrition, clothing, home life and child rearing (Williamson, 2007:89). The study done by Smith and de Zwart (2010:8) reveals that Home Economics teachers and other personnel in the field were females in all the districts of Canada.

3.8.1.1.3 Curriculum Development of Home Economics in Canada

Werham and Way (2006:21) describe Home Economics education as an important subject in Canada for its increased concerns about healthy eating habits of

Canadians. According to Werham and Way (2006:89), the Home Economics foods and nutrition topics provide the only opportunity for learners to learn about nutrition and healthy eating through the hands-on food preparation that is recognized as more effective in changing behavior than knowledge transmission. The food and nutrition lessons, prepares learners for careers such as catering and dietetics.

Chao and Willms (2002:155) believe that the subject is also important in Canada as it responds to the impact of poor parenting practices. The Family Studies topics are the only provision in the curriculum that offer parenting education. Learners with Family Studies knowledge can own and manage day care centers properly.

Nixon (2008: 68) believes that the impact of financial illiteracy is another reason for the sustenance of teaching Home Economics in Canada. Home Economics classes provide many opportunities for learners to practice and gain competency in making financial decisions, that apply to food, clothing, shelter and family living choices that people must make over their life span. The Home Economics classroom in Canada provides one of the very few places where youth receive life skills training. Home Economics teachers are expected to be a link in preparing the youth for their roles as adults, parents and wage earners. Prevention of unwanted pregnancies, wise credit use, building positive relationships, buying insurance and avoiding eating disorders are just a few of the contemporary issues being addressed in the Home Economics classroom.

Smith and de Zwart (2010:19) note their concern about the increasing complexity of family life in Canada. Home Economics is the only subject that addresses work and balance. Home Economics will always remain important in Canada for its increased concern about global citizenship and environmental health (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:19). Home Economics topics provide opportunities for learners to develop a sense of global citizenship in the wise use of human and material resources.

The education system of Canada has succeeded in sustaining the teaching of Home Economics at the secondary schools despite the challenges which existed throughout the development of the subject. Home Economics in Canada has become part of the secondary school programs since it was introduced 100 years

back. Smith and de Zwart (2010:15) acknowledge the fact that many Home Economics teachers assist and give leadership in other subjects, such as Planning, Health and Careers, Culinary Arts and Tourism. The subject is currently elective for both boys and girls. The subject emphasizes personal decision-making, career and management skills, personal and family development. The Home Economics curriculum of Canada was revised in 2007, and has been divided into three specific documents, with content specified according to the following curriculum organizers; Home Economics/Food and Nutrition 8-10, Home Economics/Textile 8-10 and Home Economics/Family Studies 10-12 (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:22). Home Economics is reported to be growing in popularity in Canada. School enrolment is declining in Canada, but the number of Home Economics learners appear to be better. A wide range of sections of the subject were developed by the Home Economics teachers. The sections included Fashion Design, Technology, Child Development, International Cuisine and independent living (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:22).

3.8.1.2 Consumer Studies in China

An exploration of the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies in China is discussed in this section.

3.8.1.2.1 Development and the intention of Consumer Studies in China

The school subject Consumer Studies is still referred to as Home Economics in China. Home Economics in the people's republic of China has experienced different stages of development from its introduction, cancelation to its reconstruction. These stages of development were not without challenges like in other countries.

The history and the development of Home Economics in China are closely related to the nation's modernization process and with the evolution of women's social status (Pendergast et al, 2012:62). In the Chinese feudal society, education for women was gendered. Women were separated from men. The content of women's education was all about effective knowledge and skills accumulated by the ancestors under the guidance of Confucianism (Pendergast, 2012:64). Women were attached to men and what they learned was much less valuable than what men learned. Although all

levels paid much attention to the family, men were asked to be far removed from household activities, considered to be the domain of women. Women were isolated from the public domain, accepting different education than that was provided for men. They were asked to stay at home and learn their legal duty systematically, which was the requirement of the patriarchal society. The woman's ideal role was to be an understanding wife and a loving mother. The content of women's education during that time included sericulture and silk reeling, weaving, cooking, sweeping, the festival rite, how to conduct oneself for all occasions, et cetera.

China was forced into the modernization process after the opium in the 1840's (Pendergast et al, 2012:65). Foreign missionaries began to establish missionary schools and recruit female students, teaching them the knowledge and abilities of housekeeping and a character formation. More importantly, the missionaries intended for female students to have careers and to live independently in society. At the end of the 19th century, several Chinese reformers started female schools and advocated for women to attend. All this followed the awakening of people's consciousness. In 1907 the Chinese government established the women's normal school around the goal of creating an understanding wife and a loving mother. Consequently, women's education was formally incorporated into the school system. According to (Pendergast et al, 2012:65) the republic of China was established after 1911. The new government continued the women's education policy which existed during that time. This was done to solve the teacher shortages. In 1920 the Beijing woman's higher normal school began to offer Home Economics as one of the subjects. Some missionary universities introduced Home Economics from the U.S., training many professionals for China, such as dieticians and early childhood teachers. in 1938, the ministry of education formulated the Home Economics education extension methods below the secondary education, which promoted the spread of home economics in many elementary and secondary schools (Pendergast et al, 2012:66).

3.8.1.2.2 Challenges associated with the sustainability of teaching Home Economics in China

Gender discrimination was a challenge which characterized the early developmental stages of Home Economics in the people's republic of China. Pendergast et al., (2012:64) report that in the Chinese feudal society, education for women was gendered. Girls were separated from boys and that the content of girls' education was all about women's effective knowledge and skills accumulated by ancestors under the guidance of Confucianism. The woman's ideal role was to be an understanding wife and a loving mother. The content of Home Economics at that time included sericulture, silk reeling, weaving, cooking, sweeping, the festival right and how to conduct oneself for several occasions.

McGregor (2011:564) indicates that Home Economics in China was included in the school curriculum as one means of spreading new values. The making of good citizenship was seen as the responsibility of Social Studies curriculum, while the making of good families was under the auspice of Home Economics (Miyazaki, 2012:143). Home Economics in China was established to strengthen gender roles in society and it was meant for girls only because of its nature of focusing on family issues.

Pendergast, (2009:510) reports that Home Economics was included as a school subject during the nineteenth century in China. According to Pendergast (2009:510), the ministry of Education formulated the Home Economics education extension methods below the secondary education, which promoted the spread of Home Economics in many elementary and secondary schools. The subject was still offered for girls only. During the 20th century, Chinese women challenged the traditional gender roles and called for gender equity (Pendergast et al., 2012:64).

Pendergast et al. (2012:65) report that gender equity became a national policy in 1949. The report indicates that the Chinese government advocated that women should go outside of the family and take part in all kinds of activities, just like men. Like in other countries, besides working outside the home, most women undertook

household duties after work when they returned home. In that context, gendered education, such as Home Economics, was criticized, also with the political tension between socialism and the capitalism coalition, Home Economics was considered to be rotten, hedonic, adhering to capitalism. It was seen as not meeting the needs of the times in China, in the middle of the 20th century. As a result, in the 1950s, the subject was cancelled in all levels of education when the government adjusted all national colleges and universities (Pendergast et al., 2012:66).

Teachers and equipment in Home Economics stream were merged into related departments, for example, food and nutrition was incorporated into the medical college, early Childhood into the Education College, and textile and interior design into the art college. During this time women's education was called gender neutral education. During that time women and men accepted non-gendered education in the schools. Government officials thought it was an effective way to liberate women; hence, they cancelled gendered education, which was considered a hindrance to the growth of female learners. In this instance learning Home Economics was equated to being housewives at home, such women were seen as lagging behind the times. Even today, this idea influences numerous women in China, remaining an important obstacle to rebuilding Home Economics as a school subject (Pendergast et al., 2012:67).

Pendergast et al. (2012:68) made the following findings on the reconstruction of Home Economics in China. China implemented the reform policy and opened up after 1948. With high economic growth and improved quality of life, Home Economics reappeared again though in a very narrow and fragmented form. With the enhancement of living standards, Chinese people now pay attention to their daily life and to individual's well-being, which are the key focus of Home Economics, normally, Home Economics should attract attention from all kinds of communities. But it is severely despised that it equals the nanny service. Although some scholars are calling for the reestablishment of Home Economics, their weak voices have not been brought to the forefront. It is noted that Home Economics as a gendered school subject has depreciated under severe attacks over the past years in China and it is seen as a stumbling block to women's development. The value and significance of

Home Economics is greatly overlooked by the Chinese mainstream thinkers (Pendergast et al., 2012:68).

In her findings Pendergast et al. (2012:68) indicate that Education, Research and Extension Services provide developmental possibilities for Home Economics as a field of study in China. According to Pendergast et al. (2012:68) Home Economics is not appropriately positioned as a field of study in the Chinese Education system. At university level, Home Economics does not have its own separate entry, instead, it is under Sociology and it is characterized as experimental in nature rather than formal (Pendergast et al., 2012:68). This classification means it is not readily visible and is not considered legitimate as a discipline on its own. The original reason for re-introducing the school subject Home Economics in China was to strengthen the economy and to relieve the economic pressure. Currently, career-oriented programs are welcomed and valued in higher education settings, because they are seen as family services industry which create more jobs, improve people's livelihood, expand domestic consumer demand and adjust the industrial structure. This situation creates good opportunity for Home Economics as a discipline. The policy focuses on the family services industry, rather than the full scope of Home Economics as a discipline (Pendergast et al., 2012:68).

People in China regard Home Economics as a component of the family services industry, which confuse their understanding about the subject. Indeed, some college administrative staff members think Home Economics programmes may be a good way to relieve college employment pressure and to meet a huge demand of the family service industry. In China Home Economics is a new term in elementary and secondary education. The educational reform in China is called quality education. It emphasizes student's moral quality, human ability, physical and mental health. It reflects humanistic thought and pays special attention to the students making close links between education and their life (Pendergast et al., 2012:70).

3.8.1.2.3 Curriculum Development of Home Economics in China

In secondary education, big college entrance pressure, exam-oriented education is in vogue. Because many schools consider graduation rates to be the only standard

of success, it is challenging in China, to spread Home Economics education in middle schools and high schools. Home Economics education is focused on the home, the individual, the family well-being and quality of life, which includes, but is not limited to success in one's career. China needs more insights into how to integrate the full spectrum of Home Economics content and processes into the secondary curriculum, because its inclusion would be so valuable (Pendergast et al., 2012:71).

Research on Home Economics and by Home Economics scientists is still in the initial stages in China. First, Home Economics research lacks social recognition or legitimacy. This subject bears so many prejudices, and it is often classified into skills training rather than academic research. Second, Home Economics research forces are scattered. The different dimensions or aspects of Home Economics are no longer in one department but are spread all over the departments. This fragmentation makes it difficult for the subject Home Economics to be whole again. Thirdly, existing Home Economics research lacks deep analysis. This is due to the fact that there are few professional Home Economists in China (9). Fourthly, the research resources are limited and repeated, mainly focusing on the present situation in China and achievements overseas which has less value for revelation. Fifth, the research forces are less powerful. Home Economics researchers and institutions are mostly from university or vocational and technical college. Only few first-class universities pay attention to Home Economics in China. Lastly, research achievements are poor. There are few published Home Economics papers or monographs in China, and those that are published are featured in low level, poor quality and marginalized venues (Pendergast et al., 2012:71).

Extension services in the name of Home Economics are not carried out in large scale. A perfect Home Economics extension system like that in the US is needed in China. Home Economics extension training is seen as an effective way to further human modernization, especially in the rural area. Home Economics in China needs to establish an integrated, cooperative system of education, scientific research and social extension. Home Economics is said to have a great potential in all levels of educational system, especially elementary, secondary and higher education

(Pendergast et al., 2012:73). Home Economics extension services could play a significant role in the modernization process especially in the construction.

3.8.2 Comparative exploration of sustainability of Consumer Studies in Developing countries

In this section the sustainability of Consumer Studies at secondary schools of the developing countries is explored. The focus countries are Kenya and South Africa.

3.8.2.1 Consumer Studies in Kenya

An exploration of the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies in Kenya is discussed below.

3.8.2.1.1 Development and the Intention of Consumer Studies in Kenya

The subject in Kenya dates back about 70 years (IFHE, 2008:14). Missionaries introduced the subject to their Kenyan servants during the 19th century before the introduction of formal education. The converts, normally the woman and girls, were taught skills in house care, laundry and kitchen activities. Girls were also trained in order to qualify for vocational jobs. Domestic Science as it was known by then was introduced in 1925 with formal education (IFHE, 2008:14). Gender discrimination was evident with the introduction of the subject as it was meant for women and girls only. The position statement (IFHE, 2004:14) indicates that Home Economics was included in the school curriculum and it became an examination subject under the Kenya African Primary Education (KAPE) syllabus. At this stage, the basis for teaching Domestic Science was to enable girls to become home makers, welfare workers and teachers at primary schools. According to the position statement, the teaching of this subject increased and universities offered diplomas in Domestic Science.

After the independence of Kenya, events that followed hampered the growth of the subject (IFHE, 2008:15). According to the position statement, Domestic Science

ceased to be examinable in schools because practical subjects were viewed to be less bright.

In the 1970's, educational institutions offering various courses in Home Science came up. The courses included fashion, dressmaking and catering. Factors such as the strong bias of the subject towards women, its introduction outside the formal classroom unlike other subjects and the fact that it was being looked down as a vocational subject led to the slow development of the Domestic Science in Kenya (IFHE, 2008:15).

The position statement (IFHE, 2008:15) outlines the outcomes of the education reports of 1971, 1976 and 1982 which gave emphasis to the subject. These reports quoted the subject of Home Science as one which helped to curb unemployment which was still seen as a major problem in Kenya. The position statement (IFHE, 2008:17) also gives the picture of Home Science in Kenya during the 90's. The subject was offered from primary, secondary to college. The name was changed from "Domestic Science" to "Home Science". The subject entailed units such as, clothing and textiles, foods and nutrition, home management, housing and furnishings, consumer education, maternal and childcare, art in the home, science in the home and health in the home.

The subject was taught mostly at girls' schools as an option alongside other technical subjects. Boys were encouraged to take the subject, and few showed interest. The main objective of Home Science in Kenya was to help individuals to acquire knowledge and skills to enable him/her to be self-reliant. This objective was in line with the main aim of education in Kenya.

3.8.2.1.2 Challenges associated with the sustainability of teaching Home science in Kenya

Major challenges of Home Science during the 90's were lack of adequate trained teachers, relevant textbooks with up-to-date information, facilities and equipment for teaching the subject effectively and that the curriculum laid no emphasis on the

development of entrepreneurial skills. The subject was taught mainly theoretically because of the constraints outlined above. This, therefore, meant that many recipients of that time did not acquire the practical skills which are crucial in this subject. No emphasis was laid on the application of skills to solve day to day problems.

3.8.2.1.3 Curriculum Development of Home Science in Kenya

The position statement (IFHE, 2008:19) also gives the current image of Home Science in Kenya. The teaching of Home Science is still sustained in the Kenyan education system. The subject as taught from primary, secondary, college and tertiary level includes a broad range of academic disciplines and specialties which are under the umbrella of Home Science. All these specialties boil down to a single field with the purpose of serving the needs of families and consumers. Umalusi (2008:42) confirms that Home Science is offered from primary to secondary schools in Kenya. Umalusi (2008:42) describes the primary Home Science of Kenya as a subject which was taught from classes 4-8 and not as a core like English and Mathematics which are taught from class one. According to Umalusi (2008:42), the subject is compulsory for both boys and girls at primary level. This is because the teaching of practical skills and knowledge is viewed as a means of enabling primary school graduates who could not continue with education to be self-reliant. The Umalusi (2008:43) report also confirms that in Kenya, secondary school learners are exposed to the Home Science syllabus in form 1 and 2 and that the subject is done mostly by girls. The subject becomes elective in form 3. When learners reach form 3, they have to choose the subject. The choice is reported to attract many learners to other subjects of study resulting in very few learners taking the subject to the end of form 5. Umalusi (2008:43) assert that the main purpose of Home Science in Kenya is integrated science which aims at improving the quality of life for the individual, family and the community.

3.8.2.2 Consumer Studies in South Africa

The subject name “Home Economics” is still used in the many countries around the world. In SA, this name was replaced with “Consumer Studies” from the beginning of

2004, an exclusively South African term. This alteration of name and some modification in content has made the subject more relevant to the South African context. Learners are taught to be responsible consumers and entrepreneurs, who are able to make informed decisions outside the home. Even though the subject names differ, many topics and content overlap among the national curricula compared with Consumer Studies. The Consumer Studies curriculum content is comparable to similar subjects in the US (Family and Consumer Sciences), Australia (Home Economics), Ghana (Home Economics) Kenya (Home Science), China (Home Science) and Canada (Home Economics). The topics Food, Nutrition and Clothing are most consistent throughout the countries researched.

3.8.2.2.1 Development of Consumer Studies in South Africa

Consumer Studies as a school subject was introduced with the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in SA. The adoption of the constitution of the republic of SA (Act 108 of 1996) provided the basis for curriculum transformation and development (DoE: 2003:2). The NCS Grade 10-12 positioned a foundation for the achievement of goals by specifying learning outcomes and assessment standards and by bringing out the key principles and values that supported the curriculum.

The DoE (2003:2) was based on the following principles: social transformation; outcome-based education; high knowledge and high skills; Integration and applied competence; progression; articulation and portability; human rights; inclusivity; environmental and social justice; valuing indigenous knowledge systems; and credibility, quality and efficiency.

South Africa had changed the curricula for schools therefore required revision to reflect new values and principles, especially those of the constitution of the country. The appraisal of Curriculum 2005 provided the basis for the development of the NCS for General Education and Training (Grade R-9) and the NCS for Grade 10-12 (DoE; 2008:2). The constant curriculum challenges resulted in another review in 2009 which came out with the single document known as the National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12. The DoE (2008:2) comprised of 29 subjects, which included Consumer Studies in the stream of services. The NCS Grade R-12 was built on the

previous curriculum and also updated and aimed at providing clearer specifications of what was to be taught and learnt.

The subject Consumer Studies in SA puts emphases on developing the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes to enable learners to become responsible and informed citizens and consumers of food, clothing, housing, furnishings and household equipment in as far as good decision making is concerned. This involves ideal and sustainable use of human and material resources to improve human well-being. Well-being refers to the physical, material, social, psychological, aesthetic and cultural welfare of individuals, families, households, groups, communities and societies (DoE, 2003:11). A consumer as an individual or part of the family or group does not function in isolation but continually interacts within the environment. The interaction of a consumer with the environment forms the background content of the subject Consumer Studies. Figure 2 illustrates the interaction between a consumer and the environment as part and parcel of the school subject Consumer Studies.

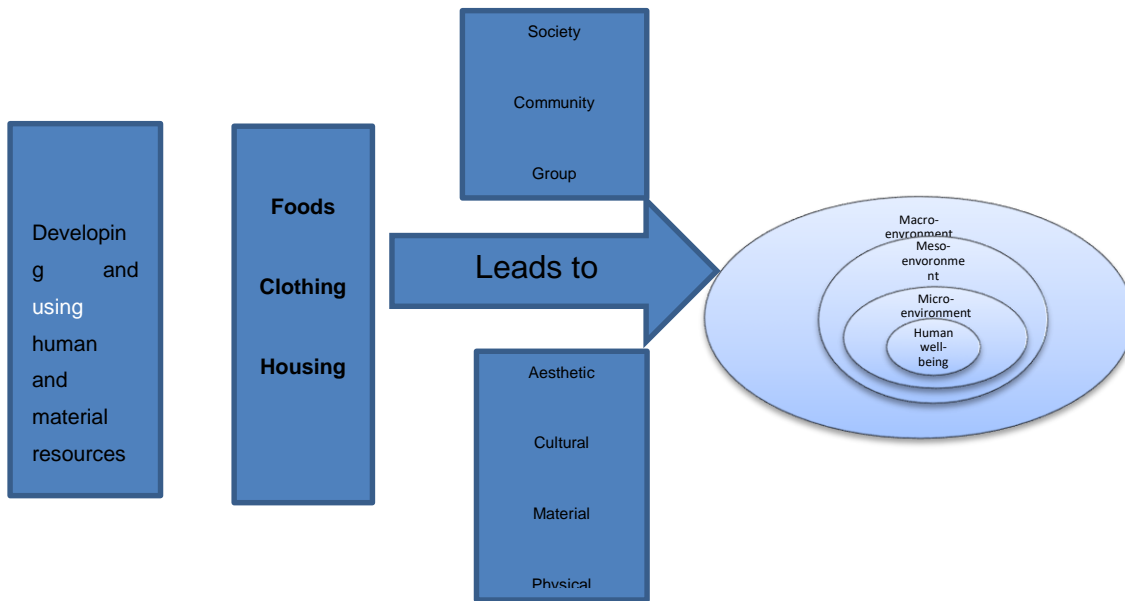


Figure 3: Philosophy and Approach of Consumer Studies adapted from (DoE,2008:7)

3.8.2.2.2 Challenges associated with the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies in South Africa

It is indicated in DoE (2003:11) that learners entering Grade 10 do not have any prior knowledge of Consumer Studies and will be introduced to the subject for the first time in Grade 10. It should be noted that the realization of a new subject is a huge responsibility to learners. This resulted in few learners opting to take the subject in Grade 10. Although Consumer Studies does not link directly to any of the General Education and Training band learning areas, it relies on the base knowledge acquired in Mathematics, Languages, Economics and Management Sciences, Life orientation, Technology and Natural Sciences learning areas (DoE, 2003:11). Base knowledge acquired in the General Education and Training band by learners to enter Consumer Studies in the Further Education and Training Band may include the following: Recognition of the impact that technological developments have on the quality of people's lives (Technology); skills in calculating, planning and organizing (Mathematics, Economic and Management Sciences); Conducting investigations and drawing up reports (Languages and Natural Sciences); and application of decision making strategies and problem solving skills (Life Orientation). Learners come from various racial, linguistic, economic and cultural backgrounds, each with their own individual experiences, interests, strengths and barriers. The subject recognizes the perspectives of learners coming from different backgrounds (DoE, 2003:11).

The DoE (2011:9) indicates that the choice of the practical option is informed by the infrastructure and the schools available funds. Schools with more than 32 learners per class are not allowed to offer the food practical option as it becomes a safety risk. The number of learners in a foods practical class should not exceed 32 learners working on eight stoves. Space between for learners to move around freely when performing practical tasks should be enough. The infrastructure, equipment and finances for the subject are the responsibility of the school and will be determined by the practical option chosen by the school (DoE, 2011:9) the various practical options of Consumer Studies depend on the availability of the required infrastructure, equipment and finances.

DoE (2011:10) made the following recommendations of a foods laboratory: A fitted and equipped training kitchen with electricity supply is required. Electrical current must be able to accommodate all stoves and other electrical equipment at the same time. Four-plate stoves with ovens, adjacent to work surface should be available. No more than four learners should share a stove; in other words, there must be at least eight stoves for 32 learners in the training kitchen. A fridge and electrical kettles are also essential. Electrical hand beaters and a microwave oven are strongly recommended. There should be one sink for each stove. There should be hot and cold-water supplies with taps at the sinks, or an urn if hot water taps are not installed. The kitchen should be equipped with large work surface that are easy to clean. Pantries should be large enough to store ingredients and equipment. The pantry should have a safety door and a burglar proof window (and a burglar proof ceiling, if possible). Burglar bars should be fixed on all windows and doors of the classroom. An alarm is recommended. Trolleys to push ingredients and equipment out of the storeroom for practical lessons should be available. Electric plugs should be supplied at all work surfaces and various other places, such as near the fridge, urn and microwave oven.

All the necessary kitchen equipment and kitchen smalls for 24-32 learners working simultaneously must be available. The budget must allow for ingredients for at least 12 practical lessons per year for Grades 10 and 11 learners, six practical lessons for Grade 12 learners, as well as two practical lessons per year per learner. A budget for maintenance of equipment such as stoves, and replacement of broken items must be available. Learners should have access to South African recipe books. A separate classroom for theory is also recommended (DoE, 2011:10).

The DoE (2011:10) document also indicates that clothing laboratory should be a large classroom with a storeroom, cupboards and electricity supply. Large tables for cutting and sewing are essential. Chairs for all learners are needed. At least 12 electrical zigzag sewing machines and four over lockers (two learners share one sewing machine; six learners share one over locker). There must be electricity supply and sufficient wall plugs and extension cords. Irons, ironing boards and other small sewing equipment such as scissors, needles, pins and cotton are needed.

Burglar bars had to be fixed on all windows and doors of the classroom and the storeroom. The alarm system was recommended as well. There had to be a budget to buy fabric, patterns and haberdashery for all learners. The budget to maintain equipment such as sewing machines and to replace broken items was necessary. (DoE, 2011:11). According to DoE (2011:11) there is no special classroom needed for the knitting and crocheting option, but strong cupboards that can be locked are essential. Knitting needles and crocheting hooks are essential. A budget to buy patterns and yarn for knitting and crocheting must be available. Patchwork and quilting by hand is a practical option which do not require special classroom for practical lessons, but strong cupboards that can be locked are essential. Equipment, such as cutting boards and scissors for patchwork is necessary. Rotary cutters and quilter's rulers are recommended. Equipment for sewing and embroidery by hand is needed. A budget for patterns, fabric and thread must be available (DoE, 2011:11).

DoE (2011:12) indicates that, the management of the subject's resources is the responsibility of the teacher. This view is endorsed by Smith and de Zwart (2010:5) who argues that the practical options of Consumer Studies involve the maintenance of the laboratories and management of resources. Financial resources are a measure requirement and a constraint for the subject. An amount must be allocated per year per learner for practical tasks. The budget should be revised each year according to the number of learners and the inflation rate. If learners are added to the Consumer Studies class during the year, the budget must be adapted to make provision for the practical tasks for those learners.

Table.1 on page 98 is an example of a budget for a food production practical option. DoE (2011:12) gives an indication of the annual budget provided to school by the Provincial Department of Education. The budget includes finances for each subject the school offers. It also makes provision for practical tasks by learners in practical subjects. Equipment and apparatus are purchased from the school budget, and they must be used for teaching purposes only. The teacher becomes responsible for the stock, and to keep the foods laboratory and storeroom locked at all times when he/she is not present in the classroom. Annual stock control is undertaken by the

teacher at the end of the year after the practical tasks have been completed. Table .2 on page 99 is an example of a stock register:

Table 1: Example of a Budget for Practical Tasks of Food Production

Grade	Number of tasks	Cost per Task/ Lesson	Cost per Practical Exam (Individual Work)
10	9	R10 per recipe per pair	R10 per learner
11	12	R15 per recipe per pair	R15 per practical exam per learner
12	6	R20 per recipe per learner	R30 per practical exam per learner (2 recipes)

Grade	Number of Learners	Number of Recipes	Total Cost for Tasks	Cost for Two Practical Examinations	Total
10	32	16 (pairs)	R10 x 16 pairs x 9 tasks = R1440	R10x32 learners x 2 practical examinations = R640	R2 080
11	26	13 (pairs)	R15 x 13 pairs x 12 tasks = R2340	R115x26 learners x 2 practical examinations = R780	R3 120
12	24	24 learners	R15 x 24 learners x 6 tasks = R2160	R30x24 learners x 2 practical examinations = R1440	R3 600
Total for practical work to be done by learners					R8 800
Maintenance and/or upgrading of stoves, fridges and etc. Example: servicing of 8 stoves @ R300 each = R2 400					R2 400
Purchasing new equipment, replacing broken articles: Example: 2 electric kettles @ R200 each = R400					R400
Total including maintenance and new equipment					R11 600

Source: Adapted from Department of Education (2011:12).

Table 2: Example of a Stock Book

	Name and description of item <i>(alphabetical order)</i>	Stock on hand 2012	Number received 2013	Date received	Supplier	Invoice number	Stock on hand 2013	Number received 2014	Date received	Supplier	Invoice number	Stock on hand 2014	Number received 2015	Date received	Supplier	Invoice number	Stock on hand 2015	Number received 2016	Date received	Supplier	Invoice number	
1	Mixing bowls stainless steel 20 cm diameter	20																				
2																						
3																						
4																						
5																						

Source: Adapted from the Department of Education (2011:12)

Umalusi (2012:45) report that Consumer Studies is recognized as a school subject for the fact that it teaches valuable life skills provided that the policy about the production option being compatible with the facilities available at schools is rigorously enforced. According to Umalusi (2012:45), the central aim of the subject Consumer Studies is to help learners become responsible citizens in local, national and international communities. Learners should also learn to produce marketable products, which open opportunities for entrepreneurial projects in future. It develops an informed learner who is able to make sensible choices with regards to buying and using services, not only knowing their rights as consumers, but also having a good understanding of their responsibilities in the marketplace in South Africa and abroad.

The subject affords learners an opportunity to make and then market a product which would increase their independence, making them more confident and prepared for the world post-school, giving them marketable skills. Consumer Studies as a school subject thus lays the foundation for consumer education to develop learners into responsible, informed consumers who will be able to contribute to the improvement of life in their families and their communities, and to the development of the economy and in SA. Due to the production content, they will have been exposed to a good level of structured thinking skills, basic business management, and market analysis would further develop the operational skills or systematic thinking skills in question.

It is also evident that the Consumer Studies school subject in SA, potentially prepares learners for a wide range of occupations and careers without it feeding directly into a specific industry. The subject also provides the learner with entrepreneurial skills for small and micro-enterprises, a sector that the government wishes to grow for the purpose of boosting job creation. CAPS could be improved by including more about career paths and opportunities, as well as the qualifications that are linked to Consumer Studies at FET and HET level. The research team of (Umalusi, 2012:45) endorses that more detailed pedagogical approaches for effective teaching of this subject should be suggested and included in curriculum development as a priority.

DoE (2011:6) report on Consumer Studies as a school subject in SA which is aimed at educating learners to become wise consumers by developing knowledge, values and attitudes to; advance their own and their community's quality of life; practice science and technology efficiently and judgmentally while showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; gather, review and analytically evaluate information to acquire the skills to be effective consumers; use different sources of product information to make consumer decisions using critical and creative thinking; communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and language skills in various modes; recognize environmental concerns and the effect of these on consumer and producers (e.g. decreasing supply of natural resources and the excess of waste); understand the impact of unfair and irresponsible consumption and production on the natural and economic environment; Appreciate the mutual benefits of working with others as members of a team or group investigating issues, solving problems and producing products; develop cultural and aesthetic sensitivity about food, clothing and housing patterns across a range of social contexts; encourage positive attitudes towards work and empower individuals to become self-reliant by applying the knowledge of food, clothing, housing and furnishings, and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills; and lay foundation for Higher Education and Training and explore career opportunities in food, clothing, housing and interior design.

The subject specific aims in the DoE (2011:8) are expressed as a list of topics, rather than as aims. The following are some of the learning areas which learners are expected to study; consumer rights and responsibilities, consumer protection policies and channels for complaints, how to evaluate design features of interiors, furniture and appliances, responsible buying behavior when purchasing food, clothing, furniture and household appliances, responsible use of resources, such as water and electricity, ways to curb global warming, the planning and managing of personal finances and payment methods, taxes, interest rates and inflation. Nutrition and the impact of food choices on health, Food Hygiene, Properties and uses of textile fibers and fabrics, Fashion Cycle, Different housing options, the needs of disabled people, small-scale production, entrepreneurship and marketing of quality products.

The NCS gave very diminutive indication of the depth in which a topic had to be covered. Though it seemed that a large time was spent on practical production, it does not mean that this topic was dealt with in great depth. Learners were expected to produce a marketable product, but often the theory to support to the successful outcome of the product was not studied in enough depth. Seven main topics with a large number of sub-topics are covered in the CAPS. Most of the time is spent on three of the seven theory topics, namely the consumer, food, nutrition and entrepreneurship in all the grades. These three topics are addressed in depth and they give learners a powerful grasp of the content. Topics with less weighting are not covered in every grade. The assortment of topics covered in Consumer Studies over the three years from Grade 10 to 12 is extensive and the complexity of each topic is comprehensive, making it a challenging subject (Umalusi, 2012:10).

3.8.2.2.3 Curriculum Development of Consumer Studies in South Africa

In comparison, other countries have designated and stretched one topic (e.g. food and nutrition) as their Home Economics curriculum. In the UK, learners have a choice between Food Technology and Textile Technology as one of their option, while in Consumer Studies, food and textiles are both addressed, together with other topics such as housing, finance and entrepreneurship (Umalusi, 2012:10). The extensive nature of the Consumer Studies curriculum enables the learner to gain relevant knowledge and skills to cope with real life situations. In addition, the learner develops skills to produce a saleable product with which to generate an income. Similar learning experiences are evident in other African countries such as Botswana (MEB, 2010:10) and Ghana, though their curricular are not as far-reaching as that of SA. The addition of entrepreneurship as a topic in Consumer Studies has a strong point, especially taking into account the South African context of high unemployment, few resources and a large population. Topics not covered in the Consumer Studies curriculum, but included in some other countries, are family studies, career opportunities and home management. The US and Canadian curricula include topics such as Career Paths and Employability after completing the subject in Grade 12. Such topics are not included in the Consumer Studies curriculum of South Africa. Umalusi (2015:43) report that the CAPS is an improvement on NCS as the curriculum and assessment policies and practices are consolidated in one document,

resulting in greater user-friendliness. The CAPS has gone a long way towards addressing the complexities and confusion created by the NCS curriculum and assessment policy vagueness, its lack of specification, as well as the document proliferation and misinterpretation. The greater level of specification in the CAPS as opposed to the NCS is helpful for guiding teachers who do not have strong Consumer Studies knowledge base or teaching expertise in the subject. In addition, the CAPS document gives a very comprehensive annual teaching plan which assist teachers in their lesson planning and delivery.

The content covered by the curriculum, seems to be basically satisfactory in terms of the attainment of knowledge and skills. DoE (2011:7) report that a large portion of the subject content remains unaffected from the NCS to the CAPS. Changes in content are principally the extension or re-packaging of content from the NCS to the CAPS, the reassignment of content and changes in terminology. The annexation of other practical options in the CAPS document implies an expansion in the possible skills that learners could develop in the subject, since these options (knitting and crocheting, applique' and embroidery by hand) were not previously included in the NCS.

The NCS Grade 10-12 (CAPS) theory focuses on the following topics; the consumer, food and nutrition, design elements and principles, fibers and fabrics, clothing, housing and entrepreneurship. A school chooses one of the following topics for practical (small-scale production); food option, clothing option, soft furnishing option, knitting and crocheting, and lastly, patchwork quilting by hand.

It is specified in the DoE (2011:9) that approximately 70% of the time spent in the NCS is fervent to learning about the consumer and consumer activities within the discipline of food and nutrition; clothing and textiles; consumer and housing and furnishings. The balance of 30% is spent on practical production. In the CAPS, more weighting of 37.5% is given to the practical option. The remaining theoretical time focuses on the consumer (26.6%), food and nutrition (24.4%) and entrepreneurship (20%) (DoE, 2011:9).

The compulsory teaching time for Consumer Studies is four hours per week. The annual teaching plan DoE (2011:9) indicates that the theory part for the subject and the practical tasks should have separate timeslots, that is 2,5 hours for examinable theory (four periods of 40 minutes each). About 1.5 hours for practical work and the theory for practical work (one continuous period of 80 minutes or more). The practical assessment task (PAT) should consist of two practical examinations per year for each grade. Practical examinations are allocated the following timeslots; 1½ hour in grade 10 for food preparation, two hours for all other options. Two hours in Grade 11 for food preparation, three hours for all other options. 2½ hours in Grade 12 for food preparation, three hours for all the other options, Practical examinations for Grade 11 and 12 are conducted in the time set aside for examinations/tests (DoE, 2011:9). Only 12 learners can do practical examination simultaneously in Grades 11 and 12 in the section food preparation. In view of this, there may have to be two timeslots per term per class. For the clothing and soft furnishing practical examinations, the allocated time exclude the layout and cutting of the item.

3.8.3 Brief comparison of the Canada, China and Kenya curricula with that of South Africa

Curriculum design and documentation Canada, China and Kenya are compared with the CAPS of South Africa. Umalusi (2010:16) gives a brief comparison of Canada, China and Kenya with South Africa. The CAPS Consumer Studies curriculum comprises of three documents totaling 179 pages. BC has four documents with 270 pages altogether. Kenya has one document of 19 pages. There is no formal document for Home Economics in China. The subject is viewed as experimental and not formal. The CAPS document and the Canada documents are the most user-friendly. The language used in all four curricula compared is accessible for their readers. The central design principle of the CAPS and the Kenya curriculum are content-based, while the Canada and China are outcome-based. According to Umalusi (2010:16) there is no standard reference and no common approach in the formulation of curriculum objectives across the four curricular in comparison, for example, the Canada curriculum uses prescribed learning outcomes whereas Kenya uses specific objectives. The comparative analysis indicates that the CAPS, Canada,

China and Kenya curricular are strongly aligned, in terms of content that addresses the objectives or specific aims. There is minimal alignment with the objectives or specific aims of the CAPS (Umalusi, 2012:16).

The four curricula in comparison reflect a wide range of topics covered by learners working towards the school exit qualification. A number of common topics are covered across the four curricula. In China, the subject is done in elementary and secondary education. The subject Home Economics find exciting opportunities in primary schools. Topics are covered around needlecraft and housecraft in the primary curriculum. The Chinese Curriculum for secondary level appears to be limited to technical orientation with little evidence of interpretative and emancipatory practice which together is regarded to be the three basic tenants of the Home Economics curriculum. It is perceptible that the topics that are not held in common declare to the contextual issues of that particular country. In order to benchmark the curriculum coverage in terms of content, the concepts and skills covered in the curricula and the number of topics patent in the curricula determine the content breadth, while the complexity and extent of cognitive challenge specifies the depth of the content. The Kenya curriculum covers a broad range of 45 topics allocated to specific forms (1-4) over four years, compared to the CAPS which offered seven topics over three years. Topics in the secondary school's curriculum for China include clothing, food, housing, consumer and family. China still needs more insight into how to integrate the full spectrum of the content and process into the secondary curriculum, because its inclusion would be so valuable. There is some recurrence of topics in each year in the CAPS (Umalusi, 2012:16).

The CAPS and the Canada curriculum have a high degree of prerequisite with very little opportunity for multiple interpretations. On the other hand, the curriculum from Kenya has a least degree of prerequisite. The emphasis of the curriculum in China remained on manipulative skills and rote memorizing rather than critical thinking, problem solving and decision making, which were the imperatives of the new Home Economics syllabus. In the CAPS Consumer Studies, clear guidelines per grade, per term are provided. The curriculum is highly structured, specifying time frames and specific content as well as specific skills that need to be covered in each grade. It is a discipline-based curriculum with clear guidance for the teacher on implementation.

It covers topics which address South African needs. The inclusion of the topics entrepreneurship and consumerism is integral to implementing the shift from Home Economics to Consumer Studies with its core focus on the consumer. The Canada Home Economics curriculum of 2007 is clear and unambiguous, providing for prescribed LOs and suggested achievement indicators for each topic in each of the subject's courses in each of the grades (Umalusi, 2012:16). Guidance is given to the teacher on understanding the prescribed learning outcomes, with a tabulated overview of these outcomes per grade.

The Kenya's Home Science Curriculum (2002) is static in its structure, showing no development or additional information added in the last 13 years. The content of this curriculum is relevant to the needs of Kenyan citizens. The focus is on the family and the traditional role of the female within the family and the home environment. In China, currently Home Economics is interpreted as cultural, practical and a technical subject. Starting from 2009-2010 senior Home Economics was renamed as Technology and Living. The emphasis is on utilizing technology effectively and flexibly to solve daily problems with a positive attitude at home, in the community and around the world, and also to create new solutions, products and services for the wellbeing of humankind. The learning aims of the new Technology and Living syllabus were to promote the well-being of individuals, families, societies and the world as a whole through the study of contemporary issues and concerns related to food or clothing from different perspectives, as well as promoting effective resources management (Turkkie; 2009:104). The future of Home Economics in China is threatened by strong push for technical career paths, success and narrow understanding of its mission and potential, many Chinese Women are still concerned of its concerned focus on women.

According to Umalusi (2012:16), the CAPS emphasize the topic consumerism as well as entrepreneurship. There is also emphasis on food and nutrition. Learners are exposed to the topic of textiles in some detail, which will be strengthened if they choose the practical option of soft furnishing, clothing, patchwork and quilting by hand. There is emphasis on the skills of producing a marketable product by following a set of preparation instructions. These instructions are repeated and reinforced in Grade 10, Grade 11 and Grade 12. The Canada Home Economics curriculum has

an opportunity for learners to develop skills and attitudes and acquire knowledge to ensure that they are able to deal with their personal and family situations in their daily lives as well as being able to deal with local and global issues. The Kenya curriculum put strong emphasis on child care and the skills needed to produce needlework and food products. Clear emphasis on practical skills is evident across all the curricula and a similar emphasis is placed on food and nutrition within each curriculum.

Curriculum pacing of the countries in contrast is articulated in terms of the number of topics to offered teaching time. CAPS document has the highest ratio of topics per teaching time (0.0046:1) which results in a faster pace. The Kenya curriculum document does not require teaching hours, pacing in this document was not determined. The Canada and curriculum display strong progression within grades and topics, there is clear movement from one type of content, content and skill to another. There is progression in terms of increasing complexity or difficulty from one level to the next. The Canada curriculum provides the most guidance regarding the preferred subject-specific pedagogic approach, whereas no guidance is provided in the CAPS curriculum.

In SA the number and the types of formative assessment as well as the types of formative assessment that has to be completed by learners is prescribed in the CAPS document. Grades 10 and 11 require 12 assessment tasks and in Grade 12 a total of 11 tasks are required. There is a dearth of some important information for comparisons in the Canada and the Kenya documentation. In terms of a logical, hierarchical sequence of knowledge, practical shifts in contents, indication of a particular form of reasoning and an abstract rationality in the ordering of the knowledge, the Canada curriculum has a high coherence in terms of content knowledge through progression over the years of study. In the CAPS, the coverage of content and concepts increases in breadth within grades but not necessarily in complexity or difficulty (Umalusi, 2012:17).

Anecdotal

The curricula of Canada, Kenya and South Africa are contextualized within their environments. The key concepts and content of both grades 11 and 12 Consumer studies curriculum in Canada are consistent with each other hence progression from

one year to the other is absolutely clear. The approach in Canada led to the growth and development within the subject content. In an endeavor to emulate the Canadian Approach, CAPS in South Africa outlined similar topics from Grades 10 -12. There is no clear progression of the topic from one grade to the subsequent grade. In the Canada curriculum, key concepts such as career opportunities are offered over a period of two years. Career opportunities as key concepts topics are not clearly outlined in the CAPS. Thus learners found it very difficult to connect the subject with the world of work and possible career opportunities. As an example, In the Canada Consumer studies curriculum, the topic Textiles guides learners towards specific career paths whilst still at school. Compared to the Canadian curriculum, the topic Textiles in CAPS is superficially dealt with. Learners aspiring to pursue a career in fashion design are disadvantaged as they receive less textiles knowledge and skills. The Kenya curriculum offer Rechauffe cooking as a career opportunity that entails the reheating and use of leftovers in new dishes. Rechauffe cooking prevents wastage and it strives for the optimal use of food and resources (Umalusi, 2012:17).

In SA, where the nation is faced with many social issues such as poverty and unemployment, food insecurity and lack of resources, rechauffe as a way of cooking needs more consideration. The Kenya curriculum deals with first aid at an elementary level, where learners consider their home safety and contextual health factors. Our Consumer Studies curriculum does not include any basic first-aid course. It should be taken into consideration that learners deal with food and dangerous equipment in the classroom which requires that they should be taught basic first-aid principles. The Canada curriculum for food and nutrition incorporates a section on food and science and food reactions as part of the science of the subject. The CAPS consider food science as an important aspect of the curriculum but underpins the reactions involved in food preparation and cooking. Our curriculum does not take into consideration the difficulty in developing and making a product without understanding the reactions taking place between ingredients within the food products. Food science can explain the reactions resulting in successful and unsuccessful products. Understanding the digestive system in relation to nutrients and their absorption as well as food related diseases and the concept of energy balance as in the Canada curriculum should be included in the CAPS (Umalusi, 2012:17).

3.9 SUMMARY CHAPTER

This chapter dealt with reviewing the literature related to the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies at secondary schools. Consumer Studies has been described by Pendergast (2009:515) as being at a convergent moment, a time of opportunity where several key challenges are questioning its sustainability at secondary schools. Pendergast (2009:515) believes that the challenges of Consumer Studies serve to provide a moment of alignment of potentially facilitating factors that, when taken together, can provide an exceptional opportunity to sustain the teaching of this subject at secondary schools. The intention of Consumer Studies as a secondary school subject was also discussed. The researcher also explored the possibilities of the subject as basic in personal and educational development. The main aim was to arouse the teachers concern of the subject in order to improve and sustain its teaching.

A review of existing literature from various countries both developed and developing revealed that in some countries the subject is still referred to as Home Economics. The literature also revealed that the situation of Consumer Studies teaching differs from federal state to federal state and from school type to school type within the education system. To gain deeper contextual understanding about the development of the subject at various countries, its history was also analyzed.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research paradigm, design and methodology of the study. The research design was influenced by the research objectives of the study. The design served as a guide to the research. The methodology used in this research entailed a sound foundation on which the findings were based as well as from which valid conclusions were drawn. An outline of the sampling process which involved selecting the population and drawing samples is also given. The research instruments that were used to collect data are also described in length. The procedure of data collection, analysis and interpretation is also advanced.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A paradigm is a pattern or a set of assumptions that is shared by a community or scientists (Azizi, 2014:1575). In research a paradigm denotes a specific culture comprised of beliefs, values and predictions that researchers have in common regarding the nature and conduct of a scientific investigation. Corbin and Strauss (2008:1) perceive paradigms as a guide for researchers in their search for truth about certain phenomenon and influence the choice of a particular research design and methodology. Wahyuni (2012:69) affirms that research paradigms address fundamental assumptions, such as beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between knowledge and how it can be acquired (epistemology). Mack (2010:6) postulates that ontology precedes epistemology which logically precedes methodology. Ontology relates to the nature of social and political world, epistemology focuses on what can be acquired. Ontological and epistemological orientations have borne three main research paradigms which are positivism, anti-positivism (interpretivism) and a critical paradigm. In this research, a constructivist approach was used.

Social constructivists, including Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011:24) believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences and meanings directed towards certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. Martens (2010:16) hold that the goal of a researcher in constructivism is to rely as much as possible on the views of the participants of the situation being studied. According to Martens (2010:16), the questions become broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons. The more open-ended the questioning, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do in their life settings. Fowler (2014:54) recognizes that the subjective meanings in constructivism are negotiated socially (hence social constructivism) and historically through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals lives. Cresswell (2016:40) believes that the constructivist researchers often address the process of interaction among individuals. These researchers also focus on specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants. Fowler (2014:54) adds that constructivist researchers recognize that their own backgrounds shape their interpretation, and that they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural and historical experiences. The researcher's intention is to make a sense of the meanings others have about the world. The following section focuses on research design that was considered relevant for the study.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a strategy specifying which approach will be used for gathering and analyzing data. Babbie (2007:31) defines a research design as the approach the researcher selects to study a particular phenomenon. A research design ensures that the evidence or data collected from the chosen participants, through employing various research instruments assists in answering the research questions and achieving the set objectives. The description of the design indicates the basic structure and goals of the study. A qualitative research design was adopted for this study. The purpose of conducting this qualitative study was to produce findings that

relate to the participant's lived experiences about the challenges facing Consumer Studies teachers at secondary schools in Vhembe District.

Cresswell (2012:10) defines qualitative research as a means for exploring and understanding the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The design involves collecting data in the participants setting, analyzing the data inductively, building from particular to general themes, and making interpretations of the meaning of data.

4.4 METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the theory about the methods. It is about what lies behind the approaches and methods of enquiry that may be used in a piece of research (Punch, 2009:15). Qualitative research methods follow an inductive research process and involve the analysis of qualitative data to search for patterns, themes and holistic features (Allwood, 2012:1419). Qualitative data reflects the views, attitudes and opinions of participants under study. Common qualitative research methods include content analysis, focus group discussions (FGDs), observations (narrative, comments) and interviews. The following methods of data collection were selected for this study: interviews, observations and document analysis. The use of multiple sources of data in research is referred to as triangulation. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011:362) describe triangulation in qualitative research as the convergence of multiple perspectives that can provide greater confidence that what is being targeted is being accurately captured. Triangulation can be used to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate the research findings. It strengthens the study's usefulness for other settings (De Vos et al., 2011:362). Data collected from interviews, observation and document analysis were used in the triangulation process.

4.5 SAMPLING

In this section, the following aspects were addressed: the population of the study, sampling procedures and sample.

4.5.1 Population

Population in research means a group of members similar with respect to one or more characteristics that the researcher is interested in and from which a sample is drawn (Pandey & Pandey, 2015:40). The researcher has a specific goal in mind with his description of the population. The Vhembe District comprises of twenty-seven circuits with two hundred and eighty-four senior secondary schools. Out of the two hundred and eighty-four Senior Secondary Schools in the District, only forty-two schools offered the subject Consumer Studies (DoE, 2012:6). The population therefore comprised of all the teachers of Consumer Studies, heads of departments and school principals of the forty-two secondary schools that offer Consumer Studies in the Vhembe District.

4.5.2 Sampling Procedures

Sampling is a process of selecting a subset of participants to be observed from the population under observation (Mulder, 2000:55). In qualitative research, the researcher seeks to obtain deep understanding of a relatively few participants in a single setting (Airasian & Gay, 2003:197). This explains that qualitative researchers typically deal with purposefully selected samples. The forty-two schools which offered the subject Consumer Studies were distributed in all the circuits of the Vhembe district and were purposefully selected on the basis of learner performance in matric results.

4.5.3 Sample

A sample is a group of units which is selected from the population and is thus less than the population, while remaining as representative as possible (Mulder, 2000:55). A representative sample is obtained from a defined population under discussion (Steel & Torrie, 2002:10). A sample gives the researcher a more manageable group for the purpose of the research. It is believed that conclusions from the findings also pertain to the population if the sample is representative of the population. Somekh (2011:218) states that the absolute size of the sample is the crucial factor rather than the relative size or the proportion of the sampled

population. A larger sample reduces the errors of estimating the characteristics of the whole population but increases the cost of carrying out the study and the analysis of the data. Fifteen secondary schools were selected for this study. The schools were categorised as five best performing, five from the average category and five from the underperforming category. The sample was designed to consist of fifteen teachers, fifteen heads of departments and fifteen principals of the selected schools.

4.6 INSTRUMENTATION

Instrumentation refers to the tools used by a researcher or an investigator in an attempt to measure variables or items of interest in data collection. It is not only related to instrument design, selection, and assessment, but also to the conditions under which the designated instruments are administered (Hsu & Sandford, 2012:2). Instrumentation can also be seen as the use of, or work completed by planned instruments. This section discusses the instruments that were used for data collection in this study; interviews, observation and document analysis.

4.6.1 Self-designed interview schedules

The following self-designed interview schedules were used to solicit the data:

- Interview schedule on the perceptions of Consumer Studies teachers regarding the accomplishments of this subject at secondary schools (see Appendix A).
- Interview schedule for the heads of department on their attitudes towards Consumer Studies (see Appendix B).
- Interview schedule for the principals on their attitudes towards Consumer Studies (see Appendix C).

4.6.1.1 Interview schedule on the perceptions of Consumer Studies teachers regarding the accomplishments of the subject at secondary schools.

The interview schedule used for the Consumer Studies teachers was divided into two parts, that is section A and B. section A sought out to gather the participants' bibliographical information which included gender, age in years, home language, highest educational qualification and experience in teaching the subject. Section B was composed of contextual questions that were derived from the research objectives of the study. These demanded information on Consumer Studies subject challenges.

4.6.1.2 Interview schedule for the heads of department on their attitudes towards Consumer Studies

The interview schedule used for the heads of departments was composed of two parts, that is section A and B. Section A, sought to gather the participants' bibliographical information which included gender, age in years, home language, highest educational qualification and experience as HOD. Section B was composed of contextual questions that mainly focused on the heads of departments' attitudes towards Consumer Studies. These also demanded information from the Consumer Studies subject challenges.

4.6.1.3 Interview schedule for the principals on their attitudes towards Consumer Studies

The interview schedule used for the principals was divided into two parts, that is, section A and B. Section A, sought to gather the participants' bibliographical information which included gender, age in years, home language, highest educational qualification and experience as principal in years. Section B was also composed of contextual research questions which of the study. These also demanded information from the Consumer Studies subject challenges.

Face-to-face interviews were the main data collecting tools. Semi-structured interview schedule (Appendices A-C) with open-ended questions were designed. The questions were based and linked to the various aspects of the reviewed literature. The questions were designed to obtain first-hand information from Consumer Studies teachers, heads of departments for the subject and principals of the participating schools. These questions allowed the participants to explain their views concerning the sustainability of Consumer Studies at secondary schools.

4.6.2 Observation schedule for data collection

An observation schedule (Appendix D) was used to enable the researcher to observe the activities which prevailed in the Consumer Studies laboratories of the participating schools on the day of visit. Availability of resources for the subject was also observed. The observation was unstructured and free flowing which allowed the researcher to shift focus from one thing to another as new and significant events unfolded (Leedy & Omrod, 2010:147). De Vos et al. (2014:56) confirm that in qualitative observation, the researcher takes field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site.

4.6.3 Document analysis on the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies at secondary schools

Document analysis involves a detailed examination of certain documents produced across a wide range of topics (Ahmed, 2010:2). These take a variety of forms, from the written word to the visual image. Such sources of data are more informative, reliable and accessible for future reference. In this study, few documents of the subject were requested and analysed by the researcher. These documents included; the subject budget, textbooks control lists, minutes of the subject committee meetings, work schedules, lesson plans, subject assessment program and the school time table.

4.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher sought permission from the University of Venda to conduct a study and collect relevant data from the Vhembe district secondary schools. A clearance letter was granted by the ethics committee of the University (see Appendix H). The researcher made another request to the Vhembe district education manager for the permission to access the selected schools (see Appendix F). Prior to data collection, the researcher informed the nine circuits and the selected schools about the visit (see Appendix L). In addition, the researcher sought informed consent (see Appendix E-G) and permission to use an audio tape recorder prior to conducting interviews. The quality of interview schedules (see Appendix A-D) was tested by means of experimental interviews with three Consumer Studies teachers, heads of departments and principals who will not be part of the final results. The responses revealed the need to rephrase some of the questions.

Forty-two individual interviews were conducted for the study; fifteen teachers, twelve heads of departments and fifteen principals. The interviewing sessions with the teachers lasted between thirty and forty-five minutes. The sessions for the heads of departments and principals lasted between fifteen and twenty minutes. During the interview sessions, the researcher together with the research assistants took down field notes. The researcher also performed member checks during and after each interviewing session. As a verifying measure, the researcher expanded the field notes immediately after completion of each interview. The entire data collection lasted for twenty days during September and October. Some of the schools were visited twice due to absenteeism of participants, that is, either the principal or the head of department.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is a relatively systemic process of coding, categorising and interpreting a single phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:364). Data analysis involves bringing order and meaning to the mass of collected data (De Vos et al., 2011:365). For this study, Thematic Analysis (TA) was used as a method to analyse data. This method is known for its ability to reveal insights and can often

provide clues to potential interventions (Howitt & Cramer, 2007:137). Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information. The following steps are meant as guidelines in thematic analysis: collect data, coding data, code validation, themes, and framework information consolidation. The researcher read and re-read the data in order to be familiar with its content for the purpose of giving participants identity. During coding, the researcher engaged herself in searching for themes; concise labels that identified the participants were generated. For finalising the themes, the researcher engaged herself in weaving together the analytic narrative and contextualising the analysis in relation to the existing literature.

4.9 SUMMARY CHAPTER

In this chapter, the research paradigm, design and methodology for the study were described. Data collection, analysis and interpretation processes were also described. The qualitative research design was adopted for this study. A qualitative research design is a general strategy or plan for conducting a research. The constructivism theory underpinned this study. This paradigm takes into consideration that humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives. Thus, qualitative researchers seek to understand the context of setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally. The sampling procedure which included the identification of the population, sampling procedures and sample were discussed. The management and analysis of data were also shared with the reader. Data was generated through interviews, observation and document analysis. The data was analysed thematically. The next chapter presents analyses and interprets the collected data.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the results of the study on the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies at Secondary schools of the Vhembe District are presented, analyzed and interpreted. Data are drawn from the interview responses of teachers, heads of departments and principals, observations of Consumer Studies classes and availability of resources and lastly, documents which included Consumer Studies budgets, control lists for textbooks, minutes of subject committee meetings, work schedules, lesson plans, assessment program and school time table were analyzed.

5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

A total number of 42 participants were interviewed in this study. The 42 participants comprised of 15 principals, 12 heads of department and 15 teachers. Nine of the participant principals were males and the other 6 were females. The male principals were aged between 50 and 62 while the female principals were aged between 47 and 64. The eldest female principal held a doctoral degree and the other five female Principals had senior degrees. The 9 male principals indicated that they have senior degrees. The 12 heads of department consisted of six males and six females. Three out of the 15 participating schools did not have heads of department for Consumer Studies hence the subject was headed by the principals. Four out of the 12 HODs held qualifications in Consumer Studies while the other 8 were not qualified to teach the subject. Four out of the 12 HODs held teacher's diploma only. One of them had a degree and the remaining 7 had senior degrees. All the 15 sampled teachers were females and they had more than 10 years' experience of teaching the subject. The 15 teachers were aged between 44 and 56. All teachers in the study were qualified to teach the subject Consumer Studies. About 64% of teachers had additional qualifications above teacher's diploma. The remaining 36% had a teacher's diploma only.

5.3 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Data analyzed were derived from interviews with teachers, heads of departments and principals, observations of Consumer Studies classes and availability of resources, and lastly a list of documents which included budgets, control lists for textbooks, minutes for subject committee meetings, work schedules, lesson plans, assessment program and school time table. The interview schedule had three sections; Firstly, the perceptions of Consumer Studies teachers regarding the accomplishments of the subject at secondary schools, secondly the heads of departments' attitudes towards the subject and lastly, the principals' attitudes towards the subject. Questions were analyzed as they appeared on the interview schedule. Codes were used to distinguish the participants. The schools were coded **A-O** and the participants were coded as follows; **T** for the teacher, **HOD** for the heads of department and **P** for the principals. Each of these codes was followed by the letter of the participating school throughout the discussion. For example: **PA** represented the principal for school **A**. The analysis began with the interpretation of participant's bibliography information, the responses thereafter, analysis of all the questions from the interview schedule. Teachers' responses were analyzed first, Heads of Departments second and lastly the Principals' responses. Results from analyzed documents and observations were also presented in this chapter.

5.3.1 The Perceptions of Consumer Studies Teachers Regarding the Accomplishments of the Subject at Secondary Schools

Question 1

Since you teach Consumer Studies, what are the challenges that you encounter in the teaching of the subject?

All participant teachers in the study complained about stressful working conditions related to teaching Consumer Studies at secondary schools. All teachers in the study indicated that they are responsible for the management of the subject's resources. One teacher had this to say;

TD: *“Sometimes laboratory and equipment control is so frustrating. The subject policy does not allow the use of the laboratory and equipment for any school function. Colleagues do not believe or understand all this. It destroys the working relations”.*

All teacher respondents indicated that lack of Consumer Studies learning material and adequate funding for the subject contributed to stressful working conditions. The following responses give the perception of some teachers;

TB: *“The cost of materials and ingredients is steadily climbing, but budgets are relatively static, meaning less hands-on experiences for learners”.*

TD: *“My concern is about money. With the price of food going up and no way to charge fees. I don’t feel like I am able to let the learners use the best ingredients (i.e., organic, fresh produce, 0 trans-fat and low-sodium products) that fit under healthy eating. The only way that I can come up with is to do practical lab may be once a week. This does not work, since most of the learners want hands on cooking experiences”.*

TI: *“I have for many years used my own vehicle and time to price- compare for the benefit of the school, are all Consumer Studies teachers willing to do this and should it be expected of them?”*

Almost all of teacher respondents indicated that other teachers not teaching the subject perceive it as having low status. The reason for the apparent low status has been attributed to its limited academic challenge and lack of vocational relevance (Ma & Pendergast, 2011:167) and (McGregor et al., 2008:180). These colleagues often linked the subject with the provision of education to the less gifted and unmotivated learners, as well as those with severe learning problems. Mimbs, (2002:54) supports this view as she identified the type of learners in Consumer Studies classes as one of the contributing challenges which affects its teaching at secondary schools. Respondents further indicated that slow learners from Grade 9 were channeled to enroll for Consumer Studies by the SMT because they believed that the subject was not so difficult to pass. One teacher said this;

TD: *“It is very difficult and frustrating to teach the theory in Consumer Studies to the type of learners in the stream”.*

Almost all teachers in the study indicated that learners who failed sciences and commerce in grade 10 and 11 were compelled to do Consumer Studies as a relief from those difficult subjects. Though the subject was taken by the underachievers, Consumer Studies learners were expected to pass with high levels but to the contrary, they performed badly in all the other subjects. Some teachers made the following sentiments;

TA: *“I have noticed that there is lack of awareness about careers related to Consumer Studies”.*

TD: *“Learners are discouraged to take Consumer Studies because of its low weighting. It is not considered an important subject by other teachers and thus they also discourage parents to allow their children to enroll for Consumer Studies.*

TH: *“Boys who choose Consumer Studies are scoffed and humiliated by other learners. They even call them names like; cooks, dress makers or even cleaners”.*

TO: *“The attitude of other teachers and learners towards the subject is not good. Boys and bright learners are often discouraged to enroll for Consumer Studies”.*

These responses indicated that the negative attitude of teachers not involved in the subject appeared to be a common challenge in almost all schools in the study. Almost all teacher respondents confirmed this statement. Most of them indicated that boys were discouraged from taking Consumer Studies for various offensive reasons. This view was supported by McGregor (2011:565) who mentions that gender stereotyping and devaluing the subject were also perpetuated and reinforced by the education system.

The majority of teacher respondents complained that the subject is not considered for promotional posts for a variety of unacceptable reasons. One teacher said this;

TA: *“A promotional post for Consumer Studies was never created due to a low enrolment of learners and the subject is headed by an HOD from the Commerce stream”.*

Those teachers with added qualifications taught the subject for over twenty years and were still working as CS1 educators. Those teachers displayed a passion for the subject and a determination to work with learners despite their positions. Only two teachers in the study, were promoted and working as HODs for Consumer studies. In support of this view Mimbs (2002:54) also identifies lack of promotional posts for Consumer Studies teachers as a challenge in America.

Some of the respondents complained about their principals' negative attitudes towards the subject. They expounded that their principals complain about funds when Consumer Studies equipment and material were to be purchased. Some teachers made the following comments;

TC: *“I have realized that some school managers like my Principal are not well informed about this subject and its usefulness. She always complains when money is to be used to purchase ingredients and equipment for the subject”.*

TH: *“No support from the top management. Money is always a problem when needed”.*

Responses revealed that those schools were in the process of removing the subject out of their curriculum and there were no learners enrolled for the subject in Grade 10. Over half of the teacher respondents indicated that their principals were supportive and that these principals showed broad understanding of the subject.

Question 2

Is Consumer Studies an elective subject or is it in the main stream of services? How does it being in the main stream or an elective affect how you teach?

Responses from some respondents in the study reported that Consumer Studies is in the main stream of services at their schools. These teachers also highlighted the

difficulty of teaching learners in the services stream as it is generally regarded as a stream for low ability learners, underachievers and problem learners. They further indicated that learners themselves perceive the subject as having low status and that they label it as “Cooking and Sewing”. People who have not been kept informed often think of Consumer Studies laboratory as a place where girls cook and sew. Consumer Studies classes where cooking and sewing are taught by competent teachers, often offer more to learners than just the perfection of cooking and sewing (Pendergast, cited in Rauna, 2006:18). Pendergast maintains that Consumer Studies teachers are still seen in a traditional way and that the general public is not aware of the many roles of this subject. This perception of learners makes it more difficult to teach the difficult concepts of science behind food, nutrition and textiles in clothing. One teacher made the following comment;

TO: “Especially, it is challenging not because Consumer Studies has more lab work and hands- on- activities than other subjects, but because there are difficult concepts to be taught to low ability learners”.

Responses from many teachers in the study revealed that Consumer Studies was taken as an elective subject. Only a few number of teacher respondents indicated that, as an elective subject, Consumer Studies also attracted intelligent learners who will drop it later on as they are discouraged by other teachers. Ma and Pendergast (2011:593) report that the negative attitudes expressed by teachers, peers, parents, and the community are also identified as another contributing factor to the low enrollment of learners in Consumer Studies in some schools. Most teacher respondents in the study indicated that though the subject Consumer Studies stands as elective, only slow and problem learners are channeled to take it and therefore teaching becomes a problem. A large number of learners enrolled for Consumer Studies in the study were also reported.

Question 3

How is the enrolment of boys compared with that of girls in the subject Consumer Studies in Grade 10?

Surprisingly, over half of the teacher respondents in the study reported a large number of boys than girls in grade 10. They further indicated that boys are more active than girls during lessons. It was also mentioned that boys are discouraged by other learners and teachers for various offensive reasons. They even call them names, such as “Cooks or Dress Makers”. Ma and Pendergast (2011:590) confirm this view by mentioning that Consumer Studies is likely to be perceived as a subject about “Cooking and Sewing” since the public knows little of its philosophical base and complexities. Benn (2001:27) argues that gender issue within the subject is a theme offered for both boys and girls and conducted by both female and male teachers taking up gender themes in lessons concerning cooperation. There was no gender stereotyping evident for this subject in the study, though it appeared that boys sometimes experienced various difficulties. One teacher laments;

TC: “It is very difficult to teach Consumer Studies to boys. It is in fact no more difficult than in other subjects. Nevertheless, classes with both boys and girls are more active, they are more interested in the content of the classes, and the discussions are more interesting”.

Question 4

How do you encourage learners to choose Consumer Studies?

Almost all teacher respondents in the study reported that they did not have a say on how learners choose subjects. These teachers indicated that streaming was done in such a way that good learners were selected for science and commerce, while dull learners were channeled for services which included Consumer Studies. Those teachers also indicated that some learners joined the stream of services after they failed commerce and science in Grade 10 and 11. Only few teachers in the study, expressed their concern regarding the type of learners channeled to enroll for Consumer Studies, one of the teachers had this to say;

TB: “It is like we do not teach real stuff; we are a dumping ground for non-tertiary learners and those who do not care about school”.

Some teachers in the study indicated that they were given an opportunity to orientate learners towards Consumer Studies before they choose subjects. One teacher said this;

TO: *“I am happy because all learners in grade O9 are orientated towards the subject”.*

Question 5

What do you think is unique in the teaching approach of Consumer Studies as compared to other subjects?

All teacher respondents in the study reported that the teaching approach for Consumer Studies is unique as it was concerned about teaching issues relating to everyday living. According to those teachers, the main aim of the subject is to improve the quality of life of human beings. All of them indicated that the subject integrated well with the other subjects and also that teachers themselves may also benefit in developing new skills and acquiring knowledge as they teach the subject. This finding is supported by Benn (2000:27) who contends that Consumer Studies is a subject in a conflict between science (theory) and everyday experiences (practice). This issue should be explored and researched in order to be able to link theory and practice when teaching. McGregor (2008:139) also observes the uniqueness and importance of Consumer Studies. McGregor holds that Consumer Studies is unique and important as it is known for its ability to foster positive attitudes towards carrying out tasks and taking care of obligations in everyday life. One teacher had this to say:

TB: *“I believe that knowledge and skills one gains in Consumer Studies, is the key to bringing families back together and improving their ways of living”.*

Question 6

What is your understanding of the subject and what does this understanding mean for teaching concerning goal content, methods and materials?

Responses from all teacher respondents revealed that they understand the subject very well. Concerning goal content, teachers reported that in Consumer Studies learners develop or acquire skills and knowledge which can be used in everyday living, for example, mending clothes or working as a designer of clothes to earn a living, learners also know what to and not to eat from the knowledge they acquire during food and nutrition lessons. Some teachers in the study residing near the Kruger National Park indicated that matriculates with Consumer Studies, had more chances of being hired at restaurants of the park as well as big catering companies. One teacher said that;

TM: "I have realized that the course content of Consumer Studies consists of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills sufficient for learners to open businesses after matric (i.e, catering, dressmaking confectionaries and day care centers)".

All teacher respondents in the study reported that the methods applied for teaching the subject communicate effectively with the content. Only few of the participating teachers indicated that some methods were difficult to implement due to the nature of the content. This view was supported by Mimbs (2002:54) as she argues that method courses are not geared to reality and that they are not integrated with the content for the classroom application. The most important ideas within Consumer Studies must be identified so that learners gain a more organized and permanent understanding of the subject than that acquired by learning isolated facts and skills. One teacher complained;

TA: "The subject content is too westernized, out of context for our learners and that it is too broad to teach".

This response was also supported by Kiamba (2005:151) who also indicates that the content of this subject reflects a strong western influence and those critics have described Consumer Studies and its curricula as irrelevant and highly foreign not taking into account African developmental needs and problems. The teacher further complained about the methods used to teach the subject that they did not address the real life of a black child.

Question 7

Consumer Studies is a subject that requires the use of a number of equipment. How do you make up for those that you do not have?

All teachers in the study reported that they improvised for the equipment that they did not have at their school laboratories. Lack of laboratory equipment was identified by Mimbs (2002:54) as one of the challenges that affect the teaching of Consumer Studies at secondary schools in America. Mimbs view correlates with the findings of this study. All teachers indicated that they improvised either by bringing equipment from home, borrowing from neighboring schools, buying from own pocket, at times learners were requested to bring equipment from their homes. The following responses of some teachers illustrate this above;

TB: *“I bring the required equipment from home to improvise for those we do not have in our school Consumer Studies laboratory”.*

TE: *“Sometimes learners are requested to come with the required equipment from their respective homes”.*

TK: *“At times we borrow equipment such as measuring jugs, spoons and casserole dishes from our neighboring school”.*

Question 8

What do you regard as the relevancy of teaching Consumer Studies in the current curriculum?

All teachers in the study regarded the teaching of Consumer Studies as relevant in the current curriculum. They emphasized that the subject opens many doors for learners to obtain entry into various occupations. Occupations as identified by the teachers included catering, interior design, dietetics, lastly housing and consumer consultant. Majority of teachers revealed that a learner who has Consumer Studies in matric can be employed in big shops, restaurants and hotels without any further tertiary training. On a positive note all teacher respondents indicated that the subject

is relevant in the current curriculum as it contributes well to manpower development. They further indicated that a Grade 12 Consumer Studies learner, who studied various nutritional diseases in depth, can advise a sick person on how to eat healthy meals and also how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. All teachers believed that learners with Consumer Studies can become responsible citizens. In support of these views, Umalusi (2015:41) reveal that the skills category of the food production practical option, clearly support the subject pedagogy which requires that learnt knowledge and skills should be transferable to new concepts. One teacher made the following comment;

TH: “Consumer Studies is perceived as a fun, relaxing subject that teaches skills useful throughout one’s life. Learners enjoy talking about Consumer Studies related issues with parents at home and share their discoveries with teachers at school”.

5.3.2 The HODs Attitudes towards Consumer Studies Subject

Consumer Studies has been singled out for its declining popularity in senior secondary schools, coupled with its profound usefulness in future.

Question1

What is your understanding of the subject Consumer Studies and what does this understanding mean for teaching in regards to goal content, methods and material?

Responses from some of the HODs respondents revealed that they control the subject Consumer Studies with no qualification relating to it. These HODs claimed to have a little understanding of the subject; hence they refused to respond to the question relating to goal content, methods and material of teaching Consumer Studies. Those who responded to this question displayed little understanding regarding goal content, methods and material used in the teaching of Consumer Studies. One HOD without Consumer Studies qualification had this to say;

HODC: *“From what I know, Consumer Studies is a subject which was promoted as a requirement for girls only. The subject was geared to prepare girls how to maintain their future homes by learning the skills necessary to manage households. In other words the subject is essentially a training course for housewives”.*

This response showed a very shallow understanding of the subject. Ma and Pendergast (2011:590) support this view by mentioning that the public knows little about Consumer Studies philosophical base and its complexities. Only two HODs, with Consumer Studies qualifications gave an in-depth understanding regarding goal content, methods and material of the subject. They further explained that goal content in Consumer Studies could be reached by achieving short term and long-term goals. To illustrate how short-term goals could be achieved, they explained that Consumer Studies learners with the knowledge of fashion can be singled out as best dressed even in their school uniform. These HODs indicated that the methods used to teach Consumer Studies were well designed and communicated the content well. They also maintained that the material used in the teaching of Consumer Studies was selected appropriately. The two HODs also voiced their concern over the content of the subject. They indicated that it was too broad and therefore difficult to set bounds. According to the two HODs, it sometimes appeared that all information in the world is linked to household or family life. They also indicated that the integrative approach of the subject was unclear to some teachers. Pendergast (2010:30) concurs with the two HODs by indicating that there are problems with theories taken from other fields as they are sometimes unsupportive and might contribute to confusion of concepts to some teachers.

Question 2

What do you think is the future of the subject in schools and what action can you individually take to shape the future of the subject?

Almost all the HODs in the study indicated that the subject had no future in the school curriculum. They revealed that the subject was disappearing in most schools. These respondents believed that finance was the most challenging factor leading to the death of the subject. This finding is supported by Smith and de Zwart (2010:5)

who mentioned that the price of material and ingredients is increasingly climbing, but finances for the subject are somewhat rigid. These HODs also indicated that Consumer Studies learners produce poor quality results. They believed that the declining popularity of the subject may also be due to the fact that higher education was not producing Consumer Studies teachers and this created a problem for the subject's vacancies to be filled. Teacher shortages of Consumer Studies was reported in many countries in the world, for example, England, (Bull & Cumings 2002:47), Canada, (Grimmet & Elchols 2002:332), New Zealand, (Street 2006:16). According to Bull and Cumings, many Consumer Studies teachers are no longer teaching the subject and that many of them have a negative opinion of their own profession. This is what some HODs had to say;

HODA: *“No future at all for this subject. It is to be excluded from our school curriculum from next year. The qualified teacher for the subject has retired and it is difficult to find a replacement”.*

HODD: *“The subject does not have future in our school curriculum. It is very expensive to maintain. The laboratory is old fashioned and not well equipped. The underachievers who are expected to choose the subject are not interested”.*

HODM: *“There is no future for this subject in schools. The major problem is funding. This subject requires a big share of the schools finances”.*

HODI: *“There is no future for Consumer Studies in schools. The subject is removed from curriculum in most schools. The government promotes mathematics and science. Five years to come the subject will be dead and forgotten in most schools. There is little or nothing to be done to shape this subject”.*

HODL: *“I believe that Consumer Studies at the secondary level is of primary importance because, professionally, the subject could live or die depending on its strength at that level, and because with so many girls marrying without college education, this is their chance of getting any household education and basic skills for use in small businesses”.*

The two HODs with relevant qualifications revealed that the subject has future in the school curriculum due to its nature and usefulness. They argued that the reason for

the poor-quality result may be due to the fact that slow learners are channeled to take the subject by the SMT as they think it is easy to pass. They further indicated that these learners also perform poorly in other subjects. These HODs pointed out that awareness should be given to the people concerned in killing the subject. They indicated that the subject killers should be made aware that technical or vocational skills are as important as academic skills. Moreover, these HODs indicated that, the subject killers should also be reminded that not every child can do mathematics and science and also that even the other areas need to be filled with skilled people.

Question 3

What do you regard as the relevancy of teaching Consumer Studies in the current curriculum?

All HODs respondents in the study regard the teaching of Consumer Studies in the current curriculum as relevant. They all believed that the subject is capable in empowering learners to deal with everyday life. They also believed that learners with a matric certificate and no further training can venture into various career opportunities related to this subject. Careers may include catering, dress making, interior decorations or opening confectionaries. In support of this view, Pendergast (2010:26) believes that because of its relevancy in everyday life, Consumer Studies stimulates the interest of boys and girls, and justifies recognition as a key area of the curriculum. The HODs added that learners who get the opportunity to further their studies in Consumer Studies are likely to become professional chefs, fashion designers, interior decorators, dressmakers and nutritionists.

HODJ: "I think the subject is relevant in the current curriculum as it also addresses Consumer related issues which continue to happen in life. Consumers are constantly troubled by pyramid schemes, telephone sales and problems with products purchased over the internet. However, it is only in this subject that Consumer related issues are constantly taught".

Question 4

You are probably responsible for allocating the practical lessons on the school time table. How do you ensure that practical lessons are allocated according to specifications on the school time table?

All HODs indicated that the time table is done according to specifications guided by the subject policy. One HOD said this;

HODF: "The time table team is responsible for drawing the time table. Consumer Studies is allocated time according to specifications of the policy like any other subject".

They indicated that the subject is allocated four hours per week in the school time table. They also indicated that one hour is allocated for practical lessons and the remaining three hours for theory. Almost all the HODs revealed that the subject requires extra time. They indicated that they allocate the subject during the last periods so that lessons may be extended to after school hours. One HOD expressed that;

HODO: "Extra time is required to finish the syllabus especially the practical part".

5.3.3 The Principal's Attitude towards Consumer Studies

Question 1

Would you regard the subject Consumer Studies as viable for career options?

The results indicated that all principals in the study regard the subject Consumer Studies as viable for career option. They revealed their understanding of the subject by stating that after passing matric learners can follow several career paths. According to the principals, careers may include hospitality, nutritionists and food scientists, designers, interior decorators, dress making and dietetics. They also indicated that learners who fail to pursue for further training after matric, can be able

to venture into entrepreneurship because of the skills and knowledge that they acquired from Consumer Studies classes; The following response gives the perception of one principal;

PB: "I do regard Consumer Studies as viable for career option because after passing Grade 12, learners can follow different career paths such as a degree in Consumer Studies, Food Management Science, Dietetics, Chef, Catering, Apparel Designer and Seam Stressor".

This finding correlates with Arkhurst's (2005:33) view that Consumer Studies courses are capable of preparing the youths and adults for entry into the various Consumer Studies occupations. Umalusi (2015:24) concurs with Arkhurst by indicating that Consumer Studies potentially prepares learners for a wide range of occupations and careers without it feeding into a specific industry. Almost all principals in the study revealed that the subject contributed positively to their matric results as they believed that the subject was easy to pass. They believed that the practical mark should help learners to pass the subject and also that slow learners should benefit from the prospect. Poor matric quality results of Consumer Studies, was raised as one of the most challenging factors by some principals. This was supported by some principals who indicated that the subject was being removed out of their school curricular.

Question 2

What support do you give to promote the teaching and learning of the subject?

The subject was supported well in some of the schools in the study. Principals of those schools revealed their positive support towards the subject. One principal of school, who was a Consumer Studies teacher, indicated that she also assisted in teaching and motivating learners towards career choices related to the subject. The principal was also responsible for heading the subject which involved controlling and guiding the teachers. The results revealed that almost all principals in the study indicated that funding was the leading challenge as the subject requires a fat share of the school coffers. This challenge made some principals feel that the subject

should be removed from their school curricular. Majority of the principals indicated that they assisted in the acquisition of the learning material such as textbooks from the department. One principal indicated that she also supported the subject by organizing motivational talks. Speakers included professional chefs, caterers, designers, dress makers and nutritionists. Another principal in the study indicated that she encouraged teachers to engage in team teaching as Consumer Studies integrates well with other subjects. One male principal from another school, revealed a 100% support for this subject as he realized its usefulness in everyday living. The principal indicated that he encouraged the Consumer Studies teachers to organize educational visits to hotels, resorts and many other relevant places to motivate learners. The principal also indicated that he at times contributed his own money to assist in meeting the demands of the subject. The following views of some principals illustrate this above;

PB: “As a principal and a former Consumer Studies teacher, I motivate learners towards career choice regardless of gender. I believe that education for living concerns boys as well as girls. I am also responsible for pre and post moderation of the subject to determine quality assurance. It is a challenge to me to ensure that Consumer Studies is a major subject on equal terms with other subjects”.

PE: “The teaching and learning of Consumer Studies is supported in various ways in this school. For example, the laboratory is renovated though it is old fashioned. New equipment is provided while old and damaged once are replaced, and sometimes educational visits to hotels are organized for learners”.

Question 3

What do you think is the future of the subject?

The results also reveal that many principals of the sampled schools believed that the subject has a prosperous future in the school curriculum. They maintained that the subject is easy to pass and therefore assist learners who do not cope in mathematics; sciences and commerce obtain matric certificates. They also believed

that these learners can venture into small businesses related to the subject after matric. This view is supported by Umalusi (2015:24) by expressing that Consumer Studies equip learners with entrepreneurial skills for small and micro-enterprises, a sector that the government wishes to grow, to help boost job creations. Almost all principals indicated that the subject contribute positively to the matric results though not in quality. They also maintained that because of the vast career opportunities available to learners after matric, Consumer Studies will still be done at schools. On a positive note, these principals also believed that the subject has future in the school curriculum as it contributes positively towards self-reliant citizens of the country. Two principals made the following comments;

PC: *“The subject has a prosperous future at this school due to its relevancy to current living. The subject is well conversant with how to plan things which are directed in improving the quality of life of human beings. It is a subject that includes several elements for personal growth”.*

PF: *“Consumer Studies is geared to help learners who have severe learning problems to develop vocationally and socially”.*

Contrary to the view above, some principals in the study indicated that the subject has no future in the school curriculum. They were in the process of eliminating the subject from their schools curricular. Some of these principals claimed that learners do not choose the subject. Others indicated that learners pass the subject in low levels which contribute to the poor-quality results. These principals believed that the subject is easy to pass and that learners should pass in high levels though they perform poorly also in other subjects. They further mentioned that the government does not support the subject as it puts more emphasis on mathematics, sciences, technology and commerce. The following responses give the perceptions of some principals;

PG: *“No future for this subject due to the following reasons. The government puts more emphasis on mathematics, science and technology; the community lack information about the subject and also that learners, do not choose the subject”.*

PK: *“The subject seems to have a dim future if it stands alone as an elective. I see it relevant in the stream of commerce as it*

integrates well with Accounting, Business Studies and Economics”.

Question 4

What do you regard as the relevancy of teaching Consumer Studies in the current curriculum?

All principals from the study regarded the teaching of Consumer Studies as relevant. They all believed that the subject provides learners with the skills to approach the encounters of everyday living. They also believed that it is a curriculum with its own aims which contribute positively to the well-being of all people. One principal had this to say;

PC: “This subject is very relevant in the current curriculum. It is a curriculum with its own aims. Learners are trained to be innovative and creative. Working together during practical lessons helps learners develop team spirit.”

In support of this view, Umalusi (2015:24) believes that Consumer Studies lays foundation for Consumer Education to develop learners into responsible, informed Consumers who will be able to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life in their families and their communities, and to the development of the economy in South Africa. Those principals also indicated that the subject’s relevancy was also due to the fact that it integrates well with all other subjects. All principals also believed that vocational training should be part and parcel of the curriculum. They maintained that learners need to be exposed to different technological concepts and careers at an early age. Farah and Ridge (2009:6) regard the provision of an appropriate comprehensive curriculum in schools as essential for creating a generation of skilled citizens.

5.3.4 Observations

Observations revealed that there was no gender stereotyping evident for this study. Boys and girls enrolled for the subject in all the schools which participated in this study. Observations also revealed that teachers for Consumer Studies in all

participating schools were females. Mimbs (2002:12) cites that men penetrated Consumer Studies field for economic welfare in areas such as food processing, designing and tailoring but shy away from being teachers of this subject.

Observations also revealed that laboratories at some participating schools were not well-equipped and also old fashioned for the subject. Only few schools had modern well-equipped laboratories. Surprisingly, two schools with well-equipped laboratories were amongst those removing the subject from the curricular. Contrary to the finding above, schools with old fashioned, not so well-equipped laboratories are retaining the subject in their school curricular. The findings from observations also revealed that there was damaged equipment in most of the laboratories of schools in the study. This equipment included, measuring cups, spoons, jugs, saucepans, crockery, cutlery and many others. Observations also revealed that, Consumer Studies was a responsibility of one teacher in more than half of the schools in the study. It was also observed that two teachers were responsible for teaching the subject in some few schools.

5.3.5 Document Analysis

Selected documents which contained information about Consumer Studies at secondary schools were analysed in order to gather facts relating to the challenges that affect the teaching of Consumer Studies at secondary schools. The analysis of Consumer Studies Budget in all schools selected for the study revealed that, indeed, the subject requires a fat share from the school coffers (Smith & de Zwart, 2010:25). DoE (2011:54) agrees with Smith and de Zwart by confirming that equipment and apparatus should be purchased from the school budget and that they must be used for teaching purposes only. All Teachers in the study produced work schedules derived from the policy statement that addressed relevant topics in Consumer Studies. Those work schedules outlined the teaching content and methods which they used for teaching the subject. Most teachers in the study could not produce lesson plans for analysis. They seemed to rely mostly on textbooks and work schedule for teaching. This lack of preparedness by the teachers, sacrifice proper teaching and learning and might contribute to the poor performances of learners in the subject as revealed by the Principals during interviews. Centrally planned

assessment (by the Curriculum Advisors or panel of Teachers) was more standardized than those prepared by some individual subject teachers in the study. Teachers of some schools in the study produced practical assessment tasks and projects that could not relate to theory in any way. The tasks were focused more on skill development than the acquisition of knowledge. Contrary to this fact Benn (cited in Pendergast et al., 2012:69) avers that Consumer Studies is a subject in a conflict between theory and practice. In agreement with Benn, (DoE, 2004:34) affirms that Consumer Studies is aimed at educating learners by equipping them with the relevant skills (practice) and knowledge (theory). Lichteinstein and Ludwig (2010:1858) in their article “Bring back Home Economics” posit that practical lessons conducted in the Consumer Studies laboratory should equip learners with the skills essential to plan and prepare meals properly and also to provide them with the relevant knowledge essential to lead long healthy lives and reverse the trends of Obesity. Mimbs (2002:54) maintains that the diversity of Consumer Studies content is a big challenge due to the fact that some teachers lack the expertise required in teaching the subject. Control lists for textbooks produced by teachers in the study revealed the shortage of relevant textbooks in participating schools.

5.4 INTEGRATION OF THE FINDINGS

Multiple sources of information were used to provide good quality research. Data from all interviews, observations and document analysis represented data triangulation as identified by De Vos et al, (2005:362). From the interviews with teachers, heads of departments and principals, it is evident that funding is one of the major challenges which impede the teaching of Consumer Studies in secondary schools. This revelation corresponds with the findings from observations that laboratories were old fashioned, not well maintained and not so well equipped. The analysis of Consumer Studies budget in different schools which participated in the study revealed that the subject was not allocated sufficient funds. Some school managers of the participating schools complained about the subject’s demand for a large share of the schools’ budget. This finding contributed to the stressful working conditions experienced by teachers while teaching Consumer Studies in the secondary schools.

5.5 SUMMARY CHAPTER

Data generated from the research was analysed in this chapter. Interviews with teachers, heads of departments and principals revealed that Consumer Studies was relevant to the school curriculum. As a means of developing the subject into a viable career option, learners, were exposed to various job opportunities. Observations revealed the poor status of Consumer Studies laboratories in schools. Laboratories lacked equipment hence both teachers and learners operated under stressful conditions. All these challenges impeded the teaching of consumer studies in secondary schools. Document analysis revealed that the budgets for Consumer Studies in schools were not enough. Interviews with teachers exposed that they had to improvise equipment in the laboratories hence this added stress and disappointments of working with the subject.

The Department of Education policy (DoE 2011:54) indicates that all activities such as practical's and excursions were funded from the norms and standards allocations of a school. Considering the constraint whole budget allocated to each school, enterprise budgets were sacrificed that is budgets for different sections in a school were reduced. These created a major problem to the running of Consumer Studies because as a practical subject it required a major share of the budget. The next chapter deals with the summary, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides summary of the study, a discussion of the findings and the reflections of the research process. It opens with a summary of the findings in relation to the research questions and culminates in a set of recommendations to inform about the strategies that can be used to sustain the teaching of Consumer Studies at secondary schools.

6.2 SUMMARY

This section addresses how the study responded to the research questions, summary of the literature review and summary of the empirical findings.

6.2.1 How the Study Responds to Research Questions

The main research question is: “How is teaching Consumer Studies sustainable at secondary schools”?

The study revealed that Consumer Studies as a more diverse and integrated school subject with its practical approach to social needs can be easily sustainable. This subject is capable of building the people’s own capacity, knowledge, skills and networking and lastly, partnership to promote and support well-being among individuals, families and communities. The future of Consumer Studies at schools lies in its ability for reaching individuals of different ages, different life stages and different settings in order to help build stronger families, more responsible consumers and a more sustainable nation. Consumer Studies is capable of educating, delivering services, developing products and services and also for promoting well-being in the context of changing future and improving the quality of

life of people. Such capacity building is sufficient for the sustenance of this subject at secondary schools.

Research question 1:

“What are the challenges of teaching Consumer Studies at secondary schools”?

The study revealed that the subject is at a convergent moment, a time when several factors that affect the teaching of this subject are occurring simultaneously. The findings of the study also revealed that the Consumer Studies subject is being unfairly appraised on the basis of what it is not able to achieve for a variety of reasons, many lying outside the discipline per se, rather than as most development related projects are on what it could achieve if the proper focus and support were forthcoming. These challenges serve to provide a moment of alignment and to re-vision this subject.

Research Question 2:

“How can Consumer Studies be developed into a viable career option for learners”?

This research revealed that Consumer Studies is capable of providing young professionals with a modern future oriented occupational profile, especially in less regarded professions. Professions such as chefs, designers, interior decorators, bead making, day care centers and many others are not highly regarded by many young people. It is also evident in the study, that this subject can provide young professionals with entrepreneur skills and competencies. Young professionals are groomed to be good ambassadors of this field. Young people both (males and females) are encouraged to engage in Consumer Studies related careers. In order to achieve this, Consumer Studies need to be rebranded and given a new identity, different from “Cooking and Sewing” and be made more visible.

Research Question 3

“What are the strategies that can make Consumer Studies attractive to learners”?

The study revealed that in order to strengthen the subject in all levels of education, facilities and resources should be adequate so that learners regardless of gender do not feel handicapped when learning. Laboratories should be well equipped with modern devices such as convectional ovens, microwaves, food processors, advanced sewing machines and over lockers in order to attract learners. Learners in the clothing option of the subject need exposure to what happens in the international clothing market. This would allow them to use their creativity in designing, producing and marketing their needs to meet international clothing challenges. Computer and smart phone technology must also be used in teaching Consumer Studies to enable learners to search for and obtain legitimate important information. Media literacy on how to navigate an increasingly unhealthy global food environment can also be exciting to learners. The Consumer Studies curriculum should allow the youths to obtain all the necessary knowledge, skill and information needed to improve their competencies. It is therefore necessary to examine the subject at different points in time in order to determine its relevance.

6.2.2 Summary of the Literature Reviewed

The study was prompted by the declining popularity of Consumer Studies as a secondary school subject. Today a great deal of controversy, uncertainty and questions about the teaching of Consumer Studies at secondary schools, seems to stem from ways the subject is identified and evaluated. The value of a subject capable of transmitting knowledge needed for getting quality goods and services for meeting family needs with the most economic and wise use of resources is undisputed. Not only would it be of benefit to families, but also indispensable for the development of the society, by managing resources such as money, products time and energy. Teaching Consumer Studies has a history of delivering human services to individuals and families in many dissimilar settings. The focus of this subject is on

the interdependencies and inter-relationships among the phenomenon that impede on human development. Underlying the teaching of Consumer Studies, is a belief that everyday life of humans can be improved or enhanced through the practical application of sciences to the problems and opportunities which are encountered at the family level. The focus on the family involves developing research and education programs which demand analysis of everyday operations of a family and the development of alternative ways to improve living conditions and maintain viable environments. A review of literature on comparing the development of the subject in various countries was also explored. A brief comparison of curricular from the various countries was also reviewed. The comparison of curricular from various countries revealed that the situation of Consumer Studies teaching differs from federal state to federal state and from school type to school type within the education system. The comparison also revealed that the subject is taught under various names and with the accent on varying aspects in secondary schools as an optional subject or in the main stream of services curriculum.

6.2.3 Summary of the Empirical Studies

The findings of this qualitative study revealed that the school subject Consumer Studies is generally undervalued and that it receives little attention from school authorities as they view it as inferior. Some of the schools in the study are in the process of eliminating the subject out of their curricular. The findings from the interviews with the teachers revealed that, Consumer Studies is regarded as a multi-aspect subject, with three main areas of study and practice, the lives of the individuals, families and communities. Teachers confirmed that the subject is concerned with life-long learning and practice. Moreover, it is perhaps the one school subject which draws upon most other subjects in the curriculum.

Teachers also revealed that aims, contents and forms of teaching Consumer Studies can contribute to making boys and girls reflect on apparently quite indisputable concepts and to preparing them for styles of behavior which lead to an attitude favorable to the human co-existence in the household and to the society. Teachers also indicated that aims, content and positions of Consumer Studies in the teaching curriculum are influenced by concepts held as positions and functions of the private

household, the status of women in the family and society and the respective duties and roles of men and women. Teachers believe that Consumer Studies has a redefined scope as it has been developing as a subject in the past few years. The subject now goes beyond those questions of technical, business and labor economics so far covered, and attempts to include aspects such as social and economic problems of domestic life, the aspects of SD. Today the scope of Consumer Studies is much broader. It is no longer just limited to the home, but expands into a larger community, including the world of work. Teachers also believe that lessons should be aimed at enabling girls and boys to acquire knowledge, abilities and skills to deal with the problems which occur in the various areas of the home life and to make decisions regarding life. From the teacher's responses, it is evident that this subject can therefore in our present situation make an important contribution to the ability to cope with present and future problems. Teachers also revealed that inadequate provision of a stable and resource-rich educational environment is therefore a threat to the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies in the 21st century.

Although 33% of principals in the study revealed a negative attitude towards the subject, the remaining 67% of principals accept and support the subject. Principals and HODs in the study revealed that Consumer Studies Education has value as a tool for creating sustainable future for learners. They also revealed that this subject is not only concerned with the preparation of boys and girls for their daily routine in the household, but it also prepares them for various career opportunities related to the discipline.

6.3 CONCLUSION

The researcher set out to investigate the sustainability of teaching Consumer Studies at secondary schools. A review of literature of the study revealed that Consumer Studies has been a subject in schools and in education for more than 100 years. As part of the curriculum and a foundation to general education, Consumer Studies needed to be defined and positioned as a school subject. How and why the subject has changed through the 100 years period was essential to analyze in order to understand the present situation and to give proposals for the future. The literature

reviewed also revealed that there are substantial differences between countries in terms of the range and scope of the Consumer Studies viewed as a subject or as a profession, especially in view of cultural and educational matters. However, a constantly recurring theme throughout, is the crucial importance of the skill and knowledge imparted by the subject. The literature also revealed that Consumer Studies in African states including SA seems to be threatened and is losing its visibility and position in the curriculum. Ogwu (2010:87) observed that this decline reflects dwindling enrolments of learners opting to study the subject in schools. Such trends raise concerns about the future of the subject in the school curricula of the African states. Repositioning Consumer Studies as a school subject is an urgent action to be undertaken. The subject should be repositioned as a curriculum area that will facilitate learners to discover and develop their professional decisions and actions.

Qualitative data was collected, interpreted and analyzed. The findings of this research revealed that Consumer Studies is downgraded in the school system. The subject bears so many prejudices and it is often classified as a skill rather than as an academic subject. Currently Consumer Studies is pounded by policy changes at governmental level which is shaking any predetermined concepts about the permanency of its status as a school subject. At a time when public interest in Consumer Studies is burgeoning, we face declining enrolments of learners which leads to an erosion of the subject at some secondary schools in the study.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has implications for CST and a possible course of action that can be looked at in order to improve the teaching of the subject at secondary schools.

- The value of Consumer Studies should be promoted in order to avoid its erosion as a learning area when other learning areas are added on and given compulsory status at secondary school level.
- More should be done to dispel the incorrect perception of the subject and its level of difficulty, to show its full potential as a contributor to community

upliftment and consumer wellbeing. A marketing drive should also be considered involving the retail industry and developing of a catchy slogan to sell the subject. The SMTs should be targeted in this regard.

- The CAPS could be improved by including more content regarding career paths and opportunities, as well as the qualifications that are linked to the subject Consumer Studies which learners can enter into at FET and HET level. Content dealing with career paths related to the subject should be included in the curriculum. Clear reference to a complete business plan as a single concept should also be included in the curriculum for Consumer Studies. The inclusion of the textile content up to Grade 12 level would be useful so as to underline the importance of that field, as well as opening up career paths options, such as fashion designs, garment and textile technology, merchandising, interior decoration, fabric buying and many more. No other subject contains as many elements to provide employees for the clothing sector and industry a prominent employer in the South African labour market. It is also recommended that up-to-date global and local consumer product trends be included in the curriculum. The inclusion of consumer product trends could offer better opportunities to learners developing entrepreneurial products in order for them to be able to lead the market, rather than just follow existing trends. Pedagogical approaches for effective teaching of this subject should be suggested and included in the curriculum document as a priority.
- The place of Consumer Studies in the general curriculum must be ensured before embarking on a school program in order to promote education for sustainable living.
- The curriculum for Consumer Studies needs to connect and key into political, economic and technological conditions of the 21st century. It is a subject that impacts on family and community well-being and should continue to show concern over issues of SD that directly affect individuals and families.

- The curriculum for Consumer Studies must be developed to suit the higher standards of education wherever applicable. Curriculum development requires a constant review of the syllabus content to ensure that the changes made are relevant to the changing needs of the developing school situation.
- Policy Makers and Consumer Studies teachers should recognize that the subject is multi-disciplinary in nature and should avoid fragmenting it into compartments such as nutritionists, fashion designers and child psychologists, as division weakens the discipline instead of strengthening it in the academic world.
- The curriculum for Consumer Studies should be dedicated to helping individuals and families develop the skills and knowledge they need to experience an optimal quality of life. Consumer Studies teachers are in a unique position to educate individuals, families and communities about poverty, malnutrition, interrelationships among home, family and community life, and the interpretation of these applications to sustainable daily living.
- The curriculum should embrace and sustain the cultural uniqueness of African families for example, African hospitality, diets, shelter, parenting, childrearing practices and artifacts.
- Learners should be made aware at all times of the extent to which other subjects contribute to the practical and theoretical experience of Consumer Studies education. Ideally, the subject teachers at each level should work together when planning each subject syllabus so that related fields can be taught concurrently either on an individual subject basis or through a team teaching approach. This would enable the learners to inter-relate and make use of the knowledge acquired simultaneously in other subject areas in order to make the school experience meaningful.
- Working condition issues should be addressed in order to encourage and retain Consumer Studies teachers in the profession.

- Consumer Studies teachers should re-assess their philosophy about their subject and to re-define their values and goals.
- Consumer Studies teachers should be lifelong learners, people who are willing to continuously learn new things in view of the vast technological changes and other immense changes taking place on a daily basis. They need to be socialized to be expert novices and to be specialists at integrating divergent, complex ideas. They need to be critical of what is happening in their world and how these events impact family well-being and quality of life. More importantly they need to be taught to be creative and innovative in their problem solving and posing. This approach to SD should be possible if the teaching environment for Consumer Studies is to promote and improve the quality of life-long education for sustainable living.
- Teachers should be encouraged to attend workshops which will brighten up their ideas and enable them to know more about the recent developments in their subject. One can be confident in Consumer Studies teacher's ability in the study to identify the challenges that the subject has as an important resource base for their work. Consumer Studies teachers' capabilities to keep the subject vital and to work together with colleagues and other specialists towards a common goal ought to be encouraged and reinforced. Consumer Studies teachers are the individuals who link a variety of knowledge and redirect it for the needs of households, families and consumers. The field has a strong and valuable history but also carries several inconveniences that must be overcome. According to CST in the study, it is important to renew some parts of their image that have proved to be misleading. They must always remember that they are not only Consumer Studies teachers, but teachers with a defined qualification or specialization that allows them to work across a wide spectrum of areas. One may identify him/herself for example, in the area of Consumer education, citizenship education, family education, environment education or nutrition and health education. Consumer Studies

specialization is also based on areas such as communication, networking or caring.

- It is further recommended that targeted, subject-specific training support for teachers must be standardized nationally. This should include assessment practice and effective textbook-based teaching. The policy that the production option should be compatible with the facilities available at schools should also be enforced.
- Most importantly, the researcher recommends further research on a larger scale of other practicing Consumer Studies teachers on issues of job satisfaction, enthusiasm for and perceptions of the value of their work and strategies for the challenges with their teaching careers.

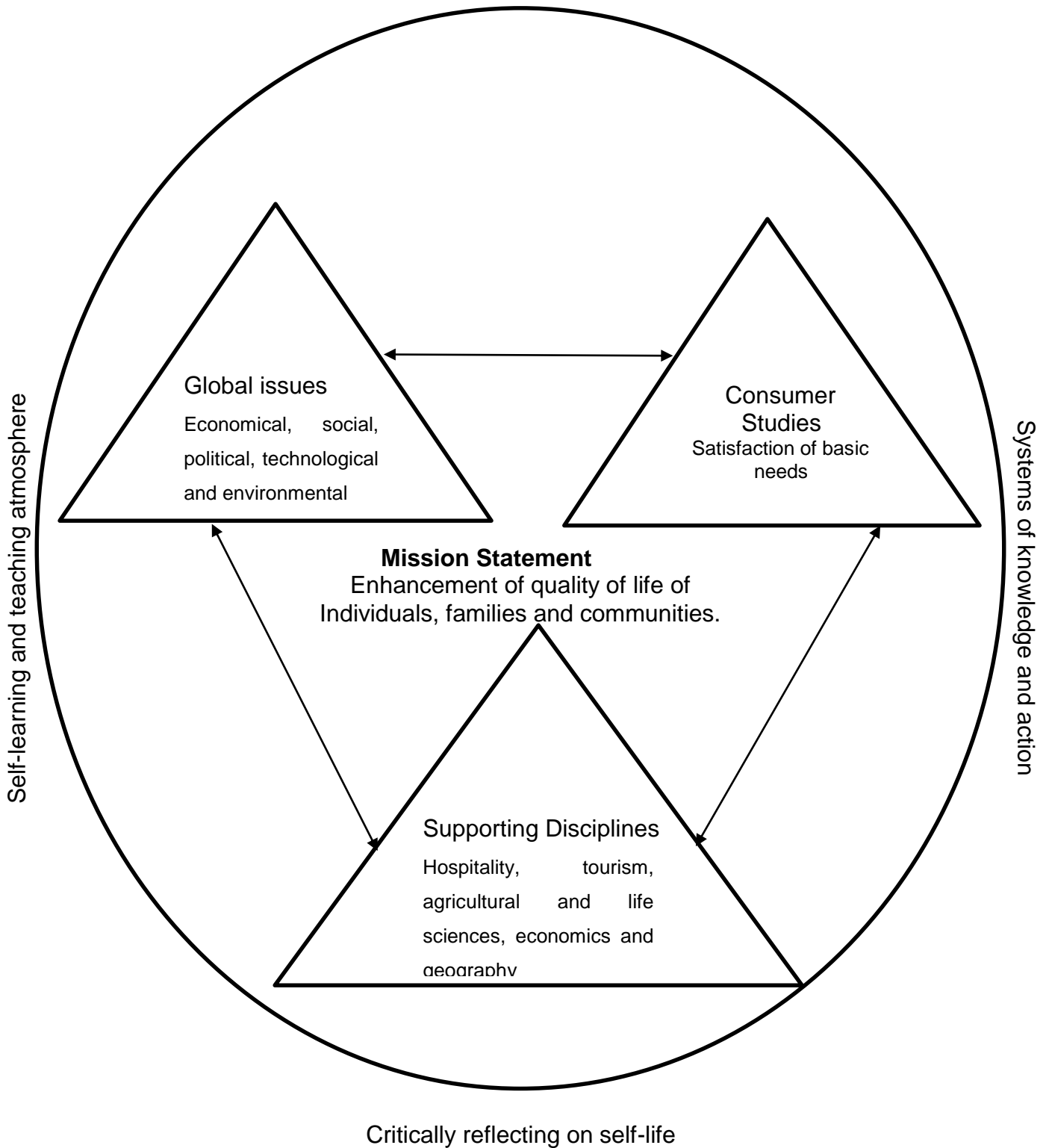


Figure 4: A Suggested Model for the Sustenance of Consumer Studies in the South African School

The model floats in a ring to express an extensive nature of the entire process. The mission of Consumer Studies which is the enhancement of quality of life of individuals, families and communities, is at the middle of the model and it represents the Centre of the curriculum. The position of the mission statement depicts how important the subject is in addressing economic, social, political, technological and environmental issues. These are the issues of SD, hence, Education for Sustainable Development.

The family's economic status, wealth and poverty are addressed in Consumer Studies. Consumers, individuals in families and in the society at large should be made aware about how to spend their money. Notably, learners are also educated on how to achieve SD economic well-being through efficiency exercised by individual family members in the management of SD issues, economic resources and household work. Social issues such as changes in geographical patterns, of individuals, their educational level, religious beliefs and lifestyle are also addressed in Consumer Studies. Political issues such as changes in laws and regulations which affect people, depicted in the model, should also be learned in Consumer Studies. Furthermore, technological issues such as the use of labor saving devices, washing machines, convectional and microwave ovens, dishwashers, advanced sewing machines and the use of internet in pattern development should also be expressed in Consumer Studies in order to improve the quality of education for sustainable living. The subject must develop and put emphasis on the use of technology that will compete with worldwide standards and ways of promoting products in the global market. Environmental issues such as water and sanitation should form part and parcel of Consumer Studies syllabus.

The multidisciplinary nature of the subject encourages entrepreneurship, which allows learners to get involved in various income generating activities for example designing and sewing apparel, baking wedding cakes, interior decorations for special occasions and many others. All these, will contribute towards the actualization of education for sustainable living.

The triangles in the model encompass the global issues of Consumer Studies and other supporting disciplines such as Tourism, Agricultural science, Economics, Life

sciences and many others which integrate well with the discipline. Even though the concepts of Consumer Studies are popular in nature, they will be taught, learnt and practiced within the limits of the dynamic culture. This implies that the skills and knowledge acquired in Consumer Studies at school could be practiced at home hence the quality of life of the people will be improved.

The arrows connecting the three triangles and those leading to and from the mission statement, depict the trans-disciplinary and interdependence nature of Consumer Studies. This shows how the subject relates and depends on other disciplines. The outer ring of the model embraces the approaches which could be applied in order to sustain the teaching and practice of Consumer Studies. These are firstly the systems of knowledge and action namely; instrumental-technical, interpretive knowledge and critical emancipatory knowledge.

Instrumental or technical refers to the knowledge derived from the use of machinery in the teaching of Consumer Studies. The use of advanced sewing machines and over lockers in clothing laboratories and the use of food processors, advanced grillers, convectional ovens and many others in foods laboratories. All this may contribute to making the subject live and attractive to learners.

In Consumer Studies, interpretive knowledge is applied when interpreting recipes, sewing patterns and housing plans. When recipes are interpreted, conventions of ingredients measurements are done, this may be from grams to milliliters or from milliliters to liters. Sewing patterns are also interpreted for adjustments and alterations. Housing plans are interpreted for proper furniture arrangement and interior decorations.

With critical emancipatory knowledge, learners are expected to put theory into practice. Learners are expected to apply what was acquired at school to real life situation. For example, the planning and the preparation of healthy meals at home are the skills acquired from the food and nutrition lessons at school. When these three systems of knowledge are used in teaching and learning, the knowledge gained leads to positive action and optimal living.

The second approach involves critically reflecting on the self and life. This action critically allows the individual learner to critically examine their values and assumptions which leads to self-transformation. This implies the actualization of the mission statement. Knowledge and skills acquired in Consumer Studies should be able to transform the lives of individuals from poor to better standards. Thus, improve the people's quality of life and education for sustainable living.

The last approach of the suggested model is that of a safe teaching and learning atmosphere. This will assist to facilitate the reduction of barriers between the teacher and the learner. Barriers as discussed in Chapter Three of this research were the challenges identified to make Consumer Studies unattractive to learners at schools.

6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The researcher recommends the following suggestions for further studies:

- An urgent need to carry out research on needs assessment in order to determine the relevance of what is currently being taught and what else needs to be included in the Consumer Studies curriculum. The existing curriculum should be scrutinized with a view to include only content which can be effectively covered within the specified time. This would make learning more meaningful.
- There is also a need to ensure that the Consumer Studies content should focus less on the domestic sphere and more on academic and public arena to compete more with other academic subjects.
- Constant research needs to be done in order to fill the existing information gaps in gender issues with a view to making an impact and influence policy formulation and strategies related to gender and Consumer Studies. The possibility of dealing with this situation is to undertake a critical gender balance within the discipline as suggested by Benn (2000:6). Gender issues have constantly hindered the development of the subject and men have avoided engaging in it as a discipline or as a school subject. The shying away

to be recognized as Consumer Studies teachers, makes males suspicious of the discipline and reinforces its connotation of the female gender.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PERCEPTIONS OF CONSUMER STUDIES TEACHERS REGARDING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CONSUMER STUDIES AS A SECONDARY SCHOOL SUBJECT

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Gender Male/Female
2. Age (in years)
3. Home Language
4. Highest Educational Qualification Diploma/Degree/Senior Degree
5. Experience in teaching the subject in years

SECTION B: CONSUMER STUDIES SUBJECT CHALLENGES.

1. Since you teach Consumer Studies what are the challenges that you encounter in the teaching of this subject?
.....
2. Is Consumer Studies an elective subject or is it in the main stream of services? How does it being in the main stream or an elective subject affect how you teach?
.....
3. How is the enrolment of boys compared with that of girls in Consumer Studies in grade 10?
.....
4. How do you encourage learners to choose Consumer Studies?

.....
.....

5. What do you think is unique in the teaching approach of Consumer Studies as compared to other subjects?

.....
.....

6. What is your understanding of the subject and what does this understanding mean for teaching concerning goal content, methods and materials?

.....
.....

7. Consumer Studies is a subject that requires the use of several equipment, How do you make up for those that you do not have?

.....
.....

8. What do you regard as the relevancy of teaching Consumer Studies in the current curriculum?

.....
.....

APPENDIX B: HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONSUMER STUDIES

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Gender | Male/Female |
| 2. Age (in years) | |
| 3. Home Language | |
| 4. Highest Educational Qualification | Diploma/ Degree/ Senior Degree |
| 5. Experience as HOD in years | |

SECTION B: CONSUMER STUDIES SUBJECT CHALLENGES

Consumer Studies has been singled out for its declining popularity in senior secondary schools, coupled with its profound usefulness in future.

1. What is your understanding of the subject Consumer Studies and what does this understanding mean for teaching with regards to goal content, methods and material?

.....

.....
2. What do you think is the future of the subject in schools and what action can you individually take to shape the future of the subject?

.....

.....
3. What do you regard as the relevancy of teaching consumer studies in the current curriculum?

.....

.....

4. You are probably responsible for allocating practical lessons on the school time table. How do you ensure that practical lessons are allocated according to specifications on the school time table?

.....
.....

APPENDIX C: PRINCIPALS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONSUMER STUDIES

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Gender | Male/Female |
| 2. Age (in years) | |
| 3. Home Language | |
| 4. Highest Educational Qualification | Diploma/ Degree/ Senior Degree |
| 5. Experience as Principal (in years) | |

SECTION B: CONSUMER STUDIES SUBJECT CHALLENGES

1. Would you regard the subject Consumer Studies as viable for career option?

.....
.....

2. What support do you give to promote the teaching and learning of the subject?

.....
.....

3. What do you think is the future of the subject?

.....
.....

4. What do you regard as the relevancy of teaching Consumer Studies in the current curriculum?

.....
.....

APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE OF TEACHING MATERIAL FOR CONSUMER STUDIES AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

	Criteria	Available	Not Available
1	Consumer Studies learners grade 10,		
2	Consumer Studies learners grade 11 and		
3	Consumer Studies learners grade 12		
4	Consumer Studies trained teacher		
5	Consumer Studies laboratory		
6	Suitable furniture for the subject		
6.1	Stoves		
6.2	tables and chairs		
6.3	sewing machines		
6.4	Storage		
6.5	Ironing boards		
6.6	Mirror		
6.7	Cooking equipment such as, measuring cups and spoons, jugs, sauce pans, crockery, cutlery, wooden spoons and others.		
7	Learning material for Consumer Studies		
7.1	text books		
7.2	Patterns		
7.3	Recipes		
7.4	Charts		

APPENDIX E: TEACHERS: CONCERT FORM

Concert Form for the Interview

I....., Consent to participate in the interview designed by Charlotte Misaveni Mbhenyane on: The Sustainability of Teaching Consumer Studies at Secondary Schools of Vhembe District, Limpopo, South Africa.

I understand that:

- Participation is voluntary.
- As an individual, I may withdraw from the interview at any time.
- No information containing my identity will be included in this research report and my responses will remain confidential.

Signed.....

Date.....

APPENDIX F: HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS: CONCERT FORM

Concert Form for the Interview

I....., Consent to participate in the interview designed by Charlotte Misaveni Mbhenyane on: The Sustainability of Teaching Consumer Studies at Secondary Schools of Vhembe District, Limpopo, South Africa.

I understand that:

- Participation is voluntary.
- As an individual, I may withdraw from the interview at any time.
- No information containing my identity will be included in this research report and my responses will remain confidential.

Signed.....

Date.....

APPENDIX G: PRINCIPALS: CONCERT FORM

Concert Form for the Interview

I....., Consent to participate in the interview designed by Charlotte Misaveni Mbhenyane on: The Sustainability of Teaching Consumer Studies at Secondary Schools of Vhembe District, Limpopo, South Africa.

I understand that:

- Participation is voluntary.
- As an individual, I may withdraw from the interview at any time.
- No information containing my identity will be included in this research report and my responses will remain confidential.

Signed.....

Date.....

APPENDIX H: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:

Ms CM Mbhenyane

Student No:

11629718

PROJECT TITLE: **Sustainability of teaching
consumer studies at secondary schools in
Vhembe District, Limpopo province, South
Africa.**

PROJECT NO: **SEDU/18/CSEM/03/0905**

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Prof MP Mulaudzi	University of Venda	Promoter
Ms CM Mbhenyane	University of Venda	Investigator – Student

ISSUED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Considered: May 2018

Decision by Ethical Clearance Committee Granted

Signature of Chairperson of the Committee:

Name of the Chairperson of the Committee: Senior Prof. G.E. Ekosse



University of Venda

PRIVATE BAG X5050, TLOKHWENG, 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA
TELEPHONE (015) 962 6501/6313 FAX (015) 962 3060

"A quality driven financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University"

APPENDIX I: LETTERS OF PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

University of Venda
School of Education
P/Bag X5050
THOHOYANDOU
0950
01 December 2014

The District Senior Manager
Department of Education
Vhembe District
THOHOYANDOU
0950

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT

I humbly request for a permission to collect data at some of the secondary schools in the Vhembe District.

The topic of the study is Sustainability of Teaching Consumer Studies at Secondary schools of the Vhembe District in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

The schools sampled for the study are:

CIRCUIT	SCHOOL
South-East	Rivubye Tshiawelo
Nzhelele-East	Dzaṭa
Sibasa	Raluswielo Mphaphuli R. Tshianamo
Dzindi	Shayandima
Dzondo	Tshiemuemu
Tshilamba	Thengwe
Malamulele-N-East	Ripambeta Nwanati Ntlhaveni
Malamulele-East	Shithlangoma
Malamulele-West	Photani Hlalukweni

I promise to follow all ethical requirements as outlined by the university.

Hoping that my request will be considered positively

Yours faithfully

.....

Mbhenyane Charlotte Misaveni



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
VHEMBE DISTRICT

CONFIDENTIALITY

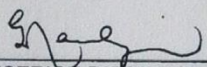
REF: 14/7/R
ENG: RAVELE N.P
TEL: 015 962 1029

MBHENYANE M.C
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA
P/BAG X5050
THOHYANDOU
0950

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
VHEMBE DISTRICT
2016-08-18
PRIVATE BAG X 2250 SIBASA 0970 TEL: 015 962 1313/4 FAX: 015 962 6039
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT.

1. The above matter refers.
2. You are hereby informed that your request for permission to conduct research titled, **"Sustainability of Teaching Consumer Studies at Secondary Schools in the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa"** has been granted.
3. We appreciate your commitment to ensure confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation by research subjects.
4. Kindly inform circuit managers and principals of selected schools prior to commencing your data collection.
5. Wishing you the best in your study.


DISTRICT DIRECTOR

18/08/2016
DATE

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN FOUR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT
SIBASA CIRCUIT

Page 1

Thohoyandou Government Building, Old Parliament, Block D, Private Bag X2250, SIBASA, 0970
Tel: (015) 962 1313 or (015) 962 1331, Fax: (015) 962 6039 or (015) 962 2288

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

University of Venda
School of Education
P/Bag X5050
Thohoyandou
0950

To: Circuit Managers
School Principals
Department of Education
Vhembe District

Dear Madam/Sir

REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT

1. Kindly take note of the attached letter.
2. I am hoping to start on data collection as from 14 September 2017 to 31 October 2017.
3. The program will be as outlined below.

	CIRCUIT	SCHOOL	DATE
1	South East	1.1 Rivubye 1.2 Tshiawelo	14 September 2017 15 September 2017
2	Ndzhelele East	2.1 Dzata	18 September 2017
3	Sibasa	3.1 Raluswielo 3.2 Mphaphuli 3.3 R. Tshiamo	19 September 2017 20 September 2017 21 September 2017
4	Dzindi	4.1 Shayandima	10 October 2017
5	Dzondo	5.1 Tshiemuemu	11 October 2017
6	Tshilamba	6.1 Thengwe	12 October 2017
7	Malamulele-N-East	7.1 Ripambeta	24 October 2017

		7.2 Nwanati	25 October 2017
		7.3 Ntlhaveni	26 October 2017
8	Malamulele- East	8.1 Shithlangoma	27 October 2017
9	Malamulele-West	9.1 Photani	30 October 2017
		9.2 Hlalukweni	31 October 2017

10 Hoping that you will find this arrangement to be in order.

Yours Faithfully

Mbhenyane (Hlonwane) C.M (PHD Student, Number 11629718).

APPENDIX J: EDITOR'S REPORT

Editing and Proof Reading Report

10 May 2018

This letter serves to confirm that I, Trenance Khoza of the English Department, University of Venda, have proofread and edited a PhD Thesis in Curriculum Studies titled: **Sustainability of Teaching Consumer Studies at Secondary Schools in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa-** by **Charlotte Misaveni Mbhenyane.**

I carefully read through the dissertation, focusing on proofreading and editorial issues. The recommended suggestions are clearly highlighted in red ink and can either be accepted or rejected using the Microsoft Word Track Changes System

Yours Sincerely

[Trenance Khoza

English Department

University of Venda

Private Bag X5050

Thohoyandou 0950

South Africa

Tel.: +27 786021892

E-mail: khozatrenance2017@gmail.com/ ndlovutrenance2012@gmail.com

APPENDIX J: Similarity Index Report

