AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PUPILS' POOR PERFORMANCE IN ADVANCED LEVEL GEOGRAPHY IN MHONDORO DISTRICT.

BY

PHINEAS JEKERA

REG NO: B1234687

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NAME OF AUTHOR : PHINEAS JEKERA
TITLE OF PROJECT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PUPILS’ POOR PERFORMANCE IN ADVANCED LEVEL GEOGRAPHY IN MHONDORO DISTRICT.

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PERMANENT ADDRESS: KAKORA SECONDARY SCHOOL
PRIVATE BAG 2041
GLENDALE

DATE: MAY 2014
BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Bindura University of Science Education for the acceptance a dissertation entitled “An investigation into the factors contributing to pupils’ poor performance in Advanced Level Geography in Mhondoro District”, submitted by Phineas Jekera in partial fulfilment for the Post Graduate Diploma in Science Education.

SUPERVISOR (S)

PROGRAMME/ SUBJECT CO-ORDINATOR

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

DATE
DEDICATIONS

To my lovely wife Ellen and our three boys, for their patience and support during the long march. Kudzai, Tinotenda and Rashworth, you kept me going, my little men.
ABSTRACT

The research set out to investigate the factors contributing to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced Level in Mhondoro District. The research was prompted by the recurrence of poor results in Advanced Level Geography for the past five years the researcher has been teaching in Mhondoro District. Pupils seemingly perform fairly well at ordinary level but their performance at advanced level is a real cause for concern. A descriptive survey research design was used. Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of the population. The sample comprised four high schools offering Advanced level Geography in Mhondoro district. Two of the schools were day/boarding schools and the other two were rural day schools. The sample was made up of one hundred pupils, four teachers of Geography and four school heads. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires and face to face interviews. Factors ranging from those which are school based to those which are home based were found to be contributing to the poor performance in advanced level Geography by pupils in Mhondoro district. Home based factors such as the home environment, employment status of the parents, parental educational background and school based factors such as teacher qualifications, availability of resources, learner attitudes and peer pressure were found to be contributing towards pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level. Recommendations were given such as; teachers of Geography should teach pupils for subject mastery rather than for examinations purposes only, schools should attempt to provide resources that stimulate pupils’ interest in the subject, parents should be proactive in their children’s education, teachers should source other materials other than textbooks, teachers should continually seek to improve themselves academically, teachers are also encouraged to make all efforts to complete the Advanced level syllabus before pupils sit for their examinations.
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CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The growth of Zimbabwe’s commerce and industry in the post-independence era saw a rise in the demand for employees with a firm geographical background. Geographical and environmental skills demand has not only been limited to industry and commerce, but also extends to non-governmental organisations. The geographical and environmental function has been and still is an important function of any organisation. The commerce and mining sector has, thus, proved to be very attractive in terms of job prospects as well as being very highly rewarding in terms of remuneration. These are some of the factors that have seen many students take up geography at advanced level. With many pupils taking up Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District, only a few pupils are managing to pass the subject with at least a grade E. Large numbers of students sitting for geography examinations in the district are performing dismally. This trend has been observed as not being limited to a single school. Pupils at most of the schools in the district have been observed to be performing badly in Geography at Advanced level. This research study, therefore, sought to identify factors that contribute to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The appeal of the Geographical and Environmental skills has seen more and more pupils opting to study Geography at Advanced level as a basis for further studies. The demand for Geographical skills and environmental management in commerce and industry
has seen more schools offering Geography at Advanced level in both rural and urban schools. This has also seen schools in Mhondoro District offering Geography at Advanced level. According to Remenyi, Williams, Money and Swartz (2002), most schools offer commercial subjects, Geography included, without having put in place adequate facilities and measures that would aid pupils’ performance. Failure by schools to put in place resources, facilities and providing an enabling environment has, thus, seen many pupils taking Geography at Advanced level performing badly with all schools covered in the research study failing to attain a fifty per cent pass rate. The problems associated with pupils’ poor performance have also been compounded by the changes that have been incorporated into Geographical practice. According to Botha, Jansen van Rensberg, Ncobo and Rehwinkel (2011), the inclusion of environmental topics into the Advanced level Geography syllabus, code 9056 of the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) has brought about changes. The notable changes is that of low pass rate experienced from 2010 up to 2013.

Compounded by other factors, these are some of the factors that have seriously affected pupils’ performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District. These factors and others identified in the study have been identified as some of the contributors to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District is a real cause for concern. Pupils generally perform very well in Geography at Ordinary level. The majority of those pupils who have gone on to take Geography at Advanced level have gone on to perform dismally. This bad scenario is not confined to a single school, it
is a worrying trend that has somehow developed into a pattern in the district. Pupils with a prior background in the subject are disturbingly failing to maintain consistency in the subject. According to the 2012 Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC), National Report, the national pass rate in Geography at Advanced level was a paltry 34 percent, with some schools in the District recording pass rates as low as 7 percent. This research study therefore, seeks to investigate the factors that contribute to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

What are factors that contribute to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District?

1.4 SUB-QUESTIONS

- What are the socio-economic factors that contribute to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District?
- To what extent have the changes in 9056 syllabus of the ZIMSEC contributed to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level?
- What teaching and learning materials are available for the teaching of Geography at Advanced level?
- What factors contribute to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level?
1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The research is important for the purposes of:

- Identifying the factors which are contributing to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District, findings which can also be inferred nationally.
- Finding possible solutions to the identified causes of pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level thereby improving their future performance.
- Identifying and filling a gap in knowledge with regards to causes of pupils’ poor performance in Advanced level Geography and other related factors.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There has been a great demand for subjects such as Geography in Zimbabwean high schools. Despite good passes being recorded in some schools, poor pupil performance in the subject has been a worrying factor for most schools in Mhondoro District. By undertaking a research study of the factors that contribute to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District, the researcher would like to identify the root causes of pupils’ poor performance in the subject. Having identified these factors, it is the researcher’s wish to see pupils doing well in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District in particular and Zimbabwe in general. The research is therefore aimed at diagnosing causes of pupils poor performance in Geography at Advanced level as well as recommending workable solutions to the factors identified in the research study. A meaningful contribution to the teaching and learning of Geography at Advanced level is the ultimate objective of this research study. Pupils and teachers are expected to benefit from the research study since it will identify some of the factors contributing to pupils’ poor
performance in Advanced level Geography in Mhondoro district and Zimbabwe at large. After the identification of factors contributing to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level, practical solutions are to be given thereby assisting in the teaching and learning of Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District in particular and Zimbabwe in general.

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS

- Both boys and girls take Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District.
- The research study will cover pupils of the same abilities.
- Students involved in the study will sit for the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) examinations.
- All schools covered in the research study use the same teaching and learning materials for Advanced level Geography.
- All schools allocate the same teaching and learning time for Advanced level Geography in Mhondoro District.
- Students covered in the research study include those who did Geography at Ordinary level and those who only took up the subject at Advanced level.

1.8 LIMITATIONS

Time

The study was conducted over one semester only, thereby limiting the amount of time devoted to the research study. The time frame was limited such that the depth of the research may be negatively affected by this factor. The research study would have been of greater depth and detail had it been conducted over a longer period of time. A lot of valuable time was lost during movements to and from the university for
consultations, further reducing the time available for the research study. This, therefore, called for the researcher to be highly organised and efficient in carrying out the research.

Cost

The research required a lot of money for stationery, transport to and from the university to consult the supervisor and visit the library as well as travelling to and from schools in Mhondoro District and the production of the actual research project document. In light of such a scenario, the researcher made the best use of the time he had to consult the mentor so as to do things, right thereby avoiding repetition of previously covered work which would have proven to be very costly in the long run. The researcher therefore, tried by all means to be economic and frugal to avoid wastage of resources and materials.

Respondent Based Biases

The reliability of the study may be affected by respondents based biases. Some respondents may not be truthful in their responses due to reasons such as the need to impress the researcher and need to conceal certain information from the researcher. Some respondents may also give responses which may be influenced by the group’s general responses.

Bureaucracy

The researcher’s freedom of probing for information may be hindered by bureaucracy in offices such as those of the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) and those falling under the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture. Some information may take too long to acquire due to the bureaucratic nature of the
concerned organisations. Failure to access certain information or delayed access to certain information may affect the validity of the research.

**Official Secrecy Act**

The respondents, as a civil servants, are bound by the Official Secrecy Act. The Act expressly prohibits one from divulging certain information acquired during the course of one’s official duties. The Act, therefore, gags some people who may have valuable information, effectively preventing them from sharing such information with the researcher. This may affect the validity and reliability of the research findings. The researcher, therefore, intends to be as professional as possible and conduct the research within the confines of the law and ensure that the research will be intended for the benefit of the teaching and learning of Geography at Advanced level. The research will be carried out without violating any law and compromising any individual respondent and the government of Zimbabwe.

1.9 DELIMITATION

The research only included high schools in Mhondoro District offering Geography at Advanced level. High schools in Mhondoro District were selected because they are accessible and it would have been impractical to include those from other districts as this would have been too costly to gather the relevant information and it would also have been difficult to make inferences using such information. Mhondoro District has day and boarding schools offering Geography at Advanced level. The research will therefore be focused on high schools in the district offering The ZIMSEC Geography syllabus 9056 at Advanced level. The research will not include schools offering the
Cambridge syllabus. The reason not to include schools offering the Cambridge syllabus is the need to focus on a common area of concern. Pupils individually sitting for the Cambridge examinations in Advanced level Geography were not covered by the research study.

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

GEOGRAPHY

Geography is the study of the earth and man and his relationship to his environment.

PERFORMANCE

It is the accomplishment of a given task measured against present known standards of accuracy and competencies.

1.11 SUMMARY

This chapter looked at the background of the study where the main focus was on factors that contribute to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District. The research question, significance of the study, the research problem, limitations and delimitations have been discussed. The chapter therefore, lays the foundation of the research study on factors that contribute to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an account of the related literature on the factors contributing to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro district, as researched locally, regionally and internationally. Numerous studies link the poor performance of pupils in Advanced level Geography to learners’ socio-economic problems, poverty, attitudes and other school based factors. The reviewed literature was mainly from primary sources, journals, secondary sources, educational reports and newspapers. The Zimbabwean perspective is not different from the international perspective since poor performance in Advanced level Geography has been experienced in many countries. According to Sugahara et al (2008) in a study conducted on students’ choice of subjects at Advanced level, students in Australia were observed to be highly creative hence they opted for subjects other than Geography. On the other hand it was observed that students of Chinese extraction in Australia possessed low creativity skills and most of such pupils opted for Geography. The following are different factors that have been identified as contributing to pupils poor performance in Geography at Advanced level

2: 1 HOME ENVIRONMENT

The educational environment attributed to the family needs no emphasis, as there is an ever increasing awareness of the parents’ role in the educational development of their children. According to Haralambos and Holborn (2002), the school should be an extension of the home. There should not be difficulties in pupils transition from the home to the school. Whatever learning activity that takes place in the school should be
reinforced by support from home. Themane (1989), is of the view that parental involvement in their children’s education has a direct bearing on their children’s performance. Children who failed to get assistance with their school work at home got frustrated and disillusioned with the subject as they perceived themselves to be no hopers. Lack of home support significantly contributed to pupils’ poor performance in Geography. In some instances the home environment was seen as unpredictable due to factors such as loss of a close family member through death, divorce, separation or substance abuse. In a research carried out in the United States of America on African-Americans, Saiddudin (2003), attributes domestic instability to pupils poor academic performance. Zimbabwean pupils are no exception to the social problems affecting contemporary societies. The exposure of young people to negative role models from an early stage in life contributes not only to poor academic performance, but, also to learners dropping out of school. It was also noted that pupils from intact families were much more likely to excel academically than their counterparts from broken homes. According to Adell (2002), learners from unstable homes are generally emotionally disturbed and therefore tend to underperform in school.

2.2 SELF CONCEPT AND SELF IDENTITY

According to Solo (1997), success in school often correlates with positive self-concept and self-identity. Solo further asserts that students from minority ethnic groups have difficulties in establishing an ethnic, tribal identity and pride in their heritage. Such pupils often feel disillusioned, alienated, frustrated, hopeless, powerless, rejected and estranged. Conditions at home are seen as an aid in fostering school success. Some of the conducive home conditions include close family relationships that help build positive self-concepts in children, helping children with their school work at home,
parental involvement in school activities, having high expectations for children’s schooling, clear rules and standards of behaviour, and encouraging children to perform at a level that earns them university entrance.

### 2.3 PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

According to Castejon and Perez (1998), the level of a parent’s educational attainment plays a major role in determining their contribution to their children’s education. Castejon and Perez (1998), indicated that family factors are among the greatest influences of academic performance among pupils. The learners’ perception of family support directly affects performance, while the mother’s level of education does so indirectly. The level of the parents’ educational attainment determines, to a large extent, the parents’ involvement in their children’s education. The high prevalence of low levels of educational attainment in the rural areas has resulted in most parents of pupils attending school in the rural areas getting very little, if any, help from home.

### 2.4 UNEMPLOYMENT OF PARENTS

Nutritional deficiencies in early childhood are associated with poor cognition in later years. According to Polite (1994), deficiencies in early childhood cause latent defects which only manifest themselves later in one’s adult life. In Zimbabwe to mitigate against such factors feeding schemes were introduced in the 1980s up to the 1990s primary schools such as Chirundazi in Mhondoro; However, such schemes were not introduced in secondary schools. According to Duncan and Rogers (1987), most parents in rural areas such as Mhondoro are single, not highly educated and unemployed. Such parents might not be able to provide adequately for their families. Unemployment rates in rural areas are much higher compared to urban and peri-urban settlements. This has led to many parents failing to adequately provide for their school going children.
2.5 MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS

The marital status of the parents that is, single, married, widowed or divorced, all have a bearing on the child’s self-concept and the process of learning. The marital status coupled with the parents’ social status have been identified as having a great impact on the learners academic achievement. According to Adell (2002), a stigma is often attached to divorce and separation and this stigma has, in most cases been transferred to the classroom. Pupils from broken families have often to contend with home and school demands. The emotional demands and stress on pupils coming from broken families have led to most of such pupils failing to perform well at school. Such social factors have thus largely contributed to pupils poor performance at school in general, and in Geography in particular.

2.6 COMMUNICATION STYLE AND RELATIONSHIP

According to June (2003), the influence of a family’s educational climate, to a large extent depends on the amount and type of help learners get from home. Children who have open relations with their parents were found to be able to seek help from home earlier than those who do not have open and intimate relations with their parents. Instead of pupils seeking help, some pupils were found to bottle up their concerns and proceed to sit for examinations without having sought help thereby compromising their success.
2.7 EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AT HOME

Sugahara et al (2008), are of the opinion that the learners’ backgrounds relating to the availability of educational resources such as books, educational television channels, computers, study desks and chairs as well as a tranquil study environment and general support from home are crucial to the success of the learners. Learners who have access to such resources are at an advantage compared to those from poor families. Pupils having access to teaching and learning materials are, thus, able to study on their own and are less reliant on the teacher and the few resources available in most schools.

2.8 THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Besides the home environment, the school environment also affects the performance of pupils in Advanced level Geography. According to Haralambos and Holborn (2002), the school is an extension of the home and pupils must feel equally at home when they are at school. Wide discrepancies have been observed between what the learners experience at home and at school. The home and school environments thus cause pupils to experience life in two different worlds thereby affecting their academic performance. The differences in the demands of the home and school environments thus lead to pupils having to greatly adjust when they go to school. That transition has been a cause for concern for the majority of the pupils.

2.9 MOTIVATION TO LEARN

Many factors contribute to the rate at which learners enjoy learning. According to Mullins (2005), stored memories of pleasurable experiences can be relived in the future if an opportune time arrives. The prevailing conditions will determine the learner’s attitude
towards learning. If conducive learning environments are presented it was observed that pupils thrive in such environments. The environment and other extrinsic factors have been identified as some of the major contributors to the pupils performance in class. However, negative experiences have been noted as having the opposite effect on learner performance. Pupils who are not motivated to learn are in the majority of those who go on to perform dismally in Advanced level Geography.

2.10 ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEARNING

According to Gilman and Anderson (2006), attitudes are learned throughout life and are held in the way children are socialised at home and at school. Children have been observed as good observers in many educational programmes. They assess and easily copy the attitudes of those people around them and easily become like those around them. Perception about the difficulties associated with numerate subjects has thus led some pupils having preconceived ideas about numerate subjects such as Geography. The negative attitude developed could thus result in pupils performing poorly thereby failing to obtain the required results for university entry.

2.11 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNERS AND TEACHERS

Marchesi and Martin (2002), are of the view that the relationship between the learners and the teacher greatly influences the academic performance of pupils. Characteristics of the teacher are considered as key elements for the learners’ personal and academic performance. According to Castejon and Perez (1998), the work ethics displayed by the teacher significantly influence the pupils’ attitude towards the teacher and his/her subject. Reciprocal appreciation between the teacher and the pupils creates an atmosphere of mutual trust and gives pupils confidence in whatever they are learning.
If the teacher fails to create a good working relationship with his/her pupils, then the environment may not be conducive for effective teaching and learning.

2.12 SENSITIVITY TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND DIFFERENCES

According to Motala and Pampalis (2001), if teachers want to achieve their objectives in the classroom, they should take into consideration learner individual differences and make an attempt to cater for the needs of all the pupils in the class. By realising the diverse backgrounds and abilities of the learners in the class, teachers are, thus, able to draw up a plan that caters for the diverse needs of the pupils in the class. Kriek and Grayson (2009), acknowledge that there are differences in pupils which needs to be treated as such. In most schools, teachers have the tendency of treating pupils as if they are the same, yet there are differences between and among pupils. Wholesale treatment of learners only benefits the fast learners who may be few in a class whilst the slow learners are left behind.

2.13 MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

In a research study carried out in France, Sayed et al (2007), observed that pupils who wrote examinations in their mother tongue performed better than those who wrote in a second language. It was observed that pupils who wrote examinations in their mother language understood the instructions and requirements better than those who wrote in a second language. Language is, thus, viewed as a serious barrier to effective teaching and learning. Burmster (2006), thus observed that some teachers teaching numerate subjects resorted to teaching in the pupils’ mother tongue for clarity and simplicity. The teaching and learning of Geography at Advanced level has been seriously affected by language barriers as the subject is taught in English and material
is presented in the same language which is only a second language for the majority of pupils in Mhondoro District.

2.14 FACILITIES

According to Ralenala (2003), thousands of schools in South Africa have poor infrastructure. The trend observed in South African schools is also highly prevalent in Zimbabwe with the majority of schools lacking basic infrastructure such as classrooms and libraries. Pupils have to make do with the inadequate infrastructure. According to Kriek Grayson (2009), there is a strong relationship between the learners’ performance and the quality of facilities available to the learners. The majority of schools in Zimbabwe do not have Internet facilities such that pupils solely depend on textbooks and teachers for their information needs. Some schools in urban areas have Internet and satellite television facilities whereas such facilities are beyond the reach of most of the rural schools. With the rapid changes taking place in Geography, pupils have a greater need for such facilities which give them access to current information. According to Stifel, Schwartz, Portas and Kim (2001) in a study carried out in the United states of America, Canada and Australia by the Centre for Education Governance, it was revealed that better funded and resourced schools were able to improve learner performance. Some schools especially in the rural areas charge very low fees such that very little funds are left for the purchase of teaching and learning materials.

2.15 PEER PRESSURE

Conger (1991) asserts that every individual has a ceiling above which he/she will not be able to profit from experience in a particular activity. Researchers contend that adolescents’ value judgements are often influenced by their fear of rejection by the
group. In order to fit in their chosen social circles, pupils often select advanced level subject combinations based on what is socially acceptable to the peer group. According to Handy (2003) some students select subject combinations including Geography at Advanced level just to conform to their social group. The consequence of such actions has been evidenced by the many pupils who fail Advanced level Geography.

2.16 SUMMARY

In summary, the study’s review of related literature highlighted several factors that contribute to pupils poor performance in Advanced level Geography as researched internationally, regionally and locally. The impact of these factors raised is applicable to all learners of Geography regardless of the socio-economic background of the learners. From the international researches, it can be deduced that pupils’ poor performance in Geography is not a problem confined to Mhondoro District in Zimbabwe, but the problem also exists globally, as highlighted by international and local literature.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION:

The chapter focuses on methodology, including a description of the research design. The methodology clearly outlines the methods the researcher use in gathering data on the factors contributing to pupils’ poor performance in Geography in Mhondoro District. The methods include questionnaires, interviews as well as observation. The main reason for triangulating the data collection methods being the need to obtain accurate data. The advantages and disadvantages of each method are discussed. Sampling methods used are also discussed. Methods of analysing data are also discussed including the description of how data is going to be managed. Justification of the research instruments is given, data collection procedures and data presentation are also explained.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Cohen and Manion (1994), assert that a research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation to obtain answers to research questions. This research study employs the descriptive design which describes what people see. A descriptive research design involves the study of a limited number of cases with a view of drawing up conclusions that cover the generality of the whole group. The descriptive survey method was used because of its ability to include a large number of respondents through its research instruments, the questionnaire and interview (Borg and Gall, (1989). Both qualitative (focus group interviews, structured interviews) and quantitative (questionnaire) research were used in this study. According to Cohen (2007), qualitative research refers to a systematic process of collecting data and logically analysing that data in the form of words. A qualitative
research is, therefore, any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 17).

Quantitative research on the other hand, presents statistical results represented by figures or numbers. However, Leedy (1980), discredits the descriptive survey saying that information gathered through it can be distorted, subjective or biased towards the researcher’s own objectives. The advantages of using a descriptive survey far outweighs its drawbacks if administered without preconceived researcher views hence the use of it in this research study.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Questionnaires

According to Chiromo (2002), a questionnaire is that form of enquiry, which contains a systematically compiled and organised series of questions that are sent to the population samples. Patton (2006), is of the view that questionnaires are useful instruments for conducting survey information, providing structural, often numerical data and being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher and often being comparatively straightforward, easy to construct and to analyse. Borg and Gall(1989), questionnaires give the respondent’s freedom to answer questions posed truthfully without the undue influence of the researcher. Questionnaires can be in various forms, for example, soft copy or hard copy. The use of semi-structured questionnaires helped in ensuring that the respondents were not only restricted to the structured questions, but they could also clarify certain issues. Data can be quantified and it can be used to compare and contrast each research. They Offer anonymity, that is names of the respondents are kept secret or the respondents do have to write full sentences. Questionnaires are likely to be answered honestly thereby helping to provide accurate and unbiased information.
Interviews

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) an interview is a two way conversation in which the interviewer (researcher) asks the participant (interviewee) questions to collect data and to learn about ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of participant. The interview is thus a purposeful conversation between two or more people with the intention of collecting information. Interviews can thus be structured or unstructured. Interviews were chosen in order to have first-hand information from the people who are involved in the day to day teaching and learning of Geography at Advanced level and to get their views on the factors contributing to pupils’ poor performance in Geography.

In order to conduct a meaningful interview, the following steps were observed:

- **Choose a setting with little disruption**: In this research the researcher asked for permission from the school head to use private offices for the interview.

- **Establish a good rapport with the respondents**: In this research the researcher used vernacular language in his introductions.

- **Obtain the interviewee’s informed consent**: In this research the researcher liaised with the interviewee’s days before the investigation was conducted to which they verbally consented to make contribution to this research.

Observations

According to De Vos (1997), an observation refers to a systematic enquiry made public. There are generally three types of observation; complete participant observer (total immersion), participant as observer and complete observer (visiting stranger).
Complete participant observer (total immersion)

The observer is part of the group being observed but the observed are not aware of the identity of the observer. The observer infiltrates the group. This type of observation is not suitable as the researcher may not be able to infiltrate the groups of pupils.

Participant as observer

The researcher participates in the activities of the group but the group is aware that they are being observed. The major drawback of this type of observation is that the findings are likely to suffer the “Hawthorne effect”. The observed are likely to behave in a manner expected of them and they may not exhibit their natural behaviours.

Complete Observer/ visiting stranger

The researcher observes the activities of the observed but does not participate in such activities. This type of observation has the least drawback effects hence suitable for the research study.

Observations were used in the research study to give the researcher first-hand information as to what exactly are the main reasons behind pupils’ poor performance in Geography. The researcher got to have a bird’s eye view of pupils and teachers attitudes and behaviour during the teaching and learning of Geography.

3.4 Population and sampling

According to McMillan (2006), a population is defined as a group of elements or individual objects or events that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalise the results of the research. A population is, therefore, a group of individuals having the same
characteristics which is to be researched on. According to Cohen (2007), a sample is a subset of the original group selected from the whole group, taken to represent the whole group. Chiromo (2002) is of the view that sampling can either be probability or non-probability. With probability sampling, the chances of each element being selected can be calculated and each element has equal chances of being selected.

Non-probability sampling, on the other hand, depends on the researcher and is generally subject to bias. The information obtained from the sample can thus be used to infer to the whole group or population.

Since it was not possible or practical to study the whole population of high schools in Mhondoro offering Geography at Advanced level, a sample of four schools was selected. The sample was made up of two mission high schools, and the other two from a rural setting. These schools constitute slightly more than one third of the high schools in Mhondoro. Subjects were selected using the stratified random sampling method. This method was selected to ensure that an equal number of boys and girls were selected. This was done also to enhance the validity of the research. According to McMillan (2006) validity refers to the degree of which a scientific explanation or phenomenon matches reality. It is the truthfulness of the findings and conclusions. Hoeff(1997) defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study.

### 3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES:

The data collection procedure entailed gaining access to the selected schools in Mhondoro District, presentation of one’s self and becoming acquainted with the research subjects.


**Gaining access**

Depending on the contingencies of the setting and the research problem, there are two kinds of research access that may be obtained. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) these are: 

“covert” access, which refers to access without subject knowledge of the researcher’s presents and “overt” access, which is based on informing participants and getting permission from all of them, often through gate keepers. The gate keepers in this case are the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture and the school heads. In this study, the researcher deliberately chose to use both covert and overt access.

An introductory letter was obtained from the university, introducing the student and seeking permission for him to be allowed to carry out an educational research project in the schools involved. To comply with the requirement of the ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, the researcher requested permission from the District Education Officer (DEO) for Mhondoro District and the heads of the concerned schools. Arrangements were made with the individual schools whereupon time schedules were drawn and agreed upon. These schedules were meant to ensure that there was minimal disruption to the learning taking place in those schools.

**3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Issues of ethical consideration, confidentiality and privacy of the research participants and respondents had to be taken into account. Research participants such as the teachers and school heads were at liberty to participate in the research without being coerced. Those who felt that they did not want to take part in the study were respectfully left alone and the researcher took every effort to protect the personal privacy of all respondents used in the
research project. The objective of the research was explained verbally and participants were assured that the information obtained during the research would be kept confidential.

3.7 SUMMARY

The chapter outlined the research methodology of the study. Each instrument used in the research project was analysed and its strengths and weaknesses identified. The instruments with least weaknesses were chosen and administered. The instruments selected were used to gather data on the possible causes of pupils’ poor performance in Geography at advanced level in Mhondoro District. The qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to access information that affects pupils’ performance at school as well as at home. Some of the issues were not related to the research question but were relevant to the problems of the pupils’ performing poorly in Geography at Advanced level. The researcher was satisfied that the necessary data was collected through questionnaires, individual interviews and observations. This chapter helped in the gathering of data relevant to the research study.
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents data and analyses it. The data are then discussed and linked to the research question. The research outlines the findings categorised in terms of home and school environments which directly address the researcher’s initial aim of the research. The categories may overlap to some extent but, taken together, they provide a comprehensive overview of the research study’s interpretations of the results based on qualitative research. Throughout the report the researcher was concerned with identifying factors contributing to pupil’s poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro District. The analysis was an on-going thing as the data were collected as an interim measure and early analysis and analysis continued after data collection has been completed as a final step before consolidating the data. The researcher used processes such as data reduction, data display, results, verification and collection, (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 428-430)

4.1 HOME ENVIRONMENT

Home environments of most of the respondents were not of much assistance to the learners. The learners were drawn from the mixed schools and two day schools. According to Adell (2002) the role actively played by parents determines the achievement and success of children at school. The family background is seen as the major factor in determining the academic performance of the learners. Unstable families were thus seen as a contributing factor towards pupils’ poor performance. The findings from the sample of one hundred pupils showed varying levels of parental involvement in their children’s day to day learning of
Geography at Advanced level. The pie chart below, summarises the level of parental involvement in pupils’ learning of the Advanced level Geography.

Figure 1: Parental Support

Fifty-one (51%) per cent of the respondents did not get any form of help in the learning of Geography at Advanced level from home. The major reason behind their failure of getting assistance from immediate family members was lack of knowledge of Geography at Advanced level. Such pupils heavily rely on their school teachers and peers who would have mastered the concepts troubling them. According to Hartell, Lightell and Maxwell (2005), lack of support from home strongly impedes the students’ performance as learning is restricted to the school only. Pupils encountering problems at home got stuck since they could not get any assistance from home. It was, thus, observed that such pupils tend to develop a negative attitude towards the subject, leading to them performing poorly in the subject. Pupil’s poor performance in turn demotivates the learners.
In the research study, it was observed that the majority of the day scholars from day schools and boarding schools did not receive much instructional support from home. Some boarders (10%) responded to the effect that their parents could not afford to buy their children textbooks required to augment the few that the schools have. Of the total number of boarders, only two percent (2%) of the whole group said their parents or guardians did not afford to buy them personal textbooks.

![Figure 02: boarder students’ parents’ ability to provide their children with personal textbooks.](image)

Figure 02: boarder students’ parents’ ability to provide their children with personal textbooks.

On the parent’s ability to provide their children with personal geography textbooks, it was observed that eighty-five percent (85%) of the parents of the day scholars did not afford to buy their children personal geography textbooks. Only ten percent (10%) of the day scholars were said to be able to buy their children personal geography textbooks. Five percent (5%) of the day scholars did not respond. From the results obtained, it was observed that the majority of the day scholars cannot buy themselves textbooks and most of the times, such pupils have to rely on the few books that the schools have.
Figure 3: Day scholars’ parent’s ability to provide pupils’ with personal text books.

It was also discovered that day scholars had limited study time due to lack of electricity in their homes. Pupils lamented the lack of adequate study time due to the unavailability of electricity. Other sources of power are not sustainable due to financial constraints. Day scholars who were involved in the study came from an almost similar background. Only seven percent (7%) of the day scholars involved in the study stay at shopping centres or growth points where electricity is available. Ninety-three percent (93%) of all the day scholars came from rural homes which do not have electricity. Pupils from a rural background had limited time devoted to personal study of Geography. Failure to devote sufficient time to the study of geography thus contributed to most pupils not having enough time to go over concepts and principles learnt at school.

4.2 GENDER ROLES
This study found out that there were issues regarding gender roles that cropped up. Nine female day scholars complained that all households’ chores are the responsibility of the girls except where there are no girls in the family or the girl is too young take over such a responsibility. According to Feyed (2007) gender factors affect female learners more than their male counterparts. Given the demanding nature of Geography at Advanced level female students have to contend with the demands of their school work and the demands of the homes they come from. In one instance, it was observed that the female learner had to take full responsibility of the household chores. Instead of focusing on her school work, the girl has to play the role of child and mother simultaneously. When others were busy working out geography problems, the poor girl was busy pondering where the next meal was going to come from.

4.3 Distance between home and school:

It was observed during the research that about twenty-three percent 23% of all day scholars walk for three kilometres to school every day. Some pupils whose homes are far away from the school have resorted to seek accommodation nearer to school. Such accommodation is offered at shopping centres and growth points. One such school is located at Mubaira growth point. Pupils who do not stay near the school have to seek lodgings at the growth point. It was noted that both girls and boys fell prey to the vices of such places. Some boys were seen to frequent night spots and some girls fell victim to older males who would entice them with money and other gifts.

According to survey results (May 2014) some of the pupils who opted to stay at home and travel to school on a daily basis have to reside at Buttercombe farm and have to walk for more than seven kilometres to get to school. The pupils complained of exhaustion and fatigue and attributed the long distances they walk to their poor performance in class.
4.4 The school environment

Prior knowledge of Geography

Of the total number of pupils involved in the research study, six percent (6%) had not done Geography at O’level. The pupils generally were average students, a factor which did not help their cause. The woes of such pupils were compounded by teachers who assumed too much prior knowledge. Some of those pupils did not know basic Geography concepts, let alone the application of those concepts. In an interview with Advanced level geography teachers, it was revealed that only one student at one of the day schools who had not done Geography at Ordinary level had managed to obtain a pass in Geography at Advanced level in the past three years. The generality of the pupils fall in the “F” and “O” category.

Students’ ordinary level symbols in Geography:

Ninety-four (94%) of the pupils involved in the research study had studied geography at Ordinary level. Below is the analysis of their ordinary level symbols in Geography:

![Studens' Ordinary Level Symbols in Geography](image-url)

**Figure 4: pupils’ ordinary level symbols**
Of the total number of pupils who had done Geography at Ordinary level, ten pupils attained an “A” grade, fifty-eight pupils attained the “B” grade and twenty-nine attained “C” grade. In the research study, it was observed that the performance of those students who had passed Geography at Ordinary level left a lot of questions than answers. According to Hove et al (2010) the nature of the Ordinary level examination allowed for pupils to cram and pass Geography without much understanding. It was observed that the Geography paper was highly structured such that spotting of possible examination areas was very easy. Pupils who passed such examinations faced serious challenges when they proceeded to Advanced level because their knowledge of the subject was very limited.

**Drill teaching method:**

In the study carried out by Hove et al (2010) it was noted that some of the teaching methods employed at ordinary level such as drilling pupils specifically for examinations only helped produce pupils who are test wise but lacking the basic knowledge of Geography. As pupils taught in that manner proceeded to advanced level, principles learnt at Ordinary level are built upon and such pupils often struggle because they learnt for examinations purposes, not for knowledge sake.

**Teacher’s presence in class**

Out of the one hundred pupils (figure 5), from the four schools offering Advanced level Geography in Mhondoro District who responded to an item “incidence of punctuality of the teacher”, forty-eight 48% of the pupils said that their teachers came to work early all the time. Forty percent(40%) said their teachers came to work early sometimes and twelve percent (12%) indicated that their teachers never came early.
Figure 5: Teacher presence in class

Besides coming early for the lessons, pupils were also asked to respond to the frequency with which their teachers attend to their lessons. Of the one hundred respondents, seventy-eight percent (78%) of the pupils said that their Advanced level Geography teachers came to work as timetabled and twenty-two percent (22%) said that their Geography teachers sometimes miss lessons.
It was, thus, observed that the majority of the teachers attended their lessons. However, twenty-two percent (22%) of the respondents who said that their teachers sometimes come to work are an indication of tax supervision of teachers by heads of schools.

**Make up/ additional lessons**

Of the total number of pupils who responded to the questionnaires given, forty-eight (48%) of the respondents said that their teachers conducted lessons during their spare time if they missed their normal lessons. Thirty-one percent (31%) of the respondents said that teachers sometimes conducted lessons during their spare time. Eighteen percent (18%) of the respondents indicated that their teachers did not compensate for the lost time. Three percent (3%) of the respondents did not respond at all.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher response</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not respond</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7: Teacher making up for lost lessons during spare time.**

Besides teachers offering compensatory lessons, the questionnaire also had a question on whether teachers taught their pupils during their spare time or not. It was noted that almost all pupils responded to the effect that their teachers gave them extra lessons for no charge.

**Teachers’ completion of the syllabus:**

Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents stated that their teachers completed the ZIMSEC Advanced level geography syllabus whilst twenty percent (20%) of the respondents stated that their teachers did not complete the Advanced level geography syllabus. Ten percent (10%) of the respondents did not know whether their teachers completed the syllabus or not.
Adequate syllabus coverage was seen as being key to pupil’s performance in Advanced level Geography. During the interviews with advanced level Geography teachers, it was noted that syllabus completion was of great importance to the pupils’ success in Advanced level geography. According to Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) Advanced level syllabus document, pupils will sit for two examination papers. Paper One and Two are highly structured and case study papers and questions are drawn from across the whole syllabus. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the examination items are drawn from the Physical and Human geography section whereas twenty-five percent (25%) of the items are drawn from Practical section of geography. Failure to complete the syllabus with, thus, leave pupils with gaps in knowledge which further manifested itself through poor pupils’ results.

**Availability of textbooks**

All schools that were involved in the research study use “Advanced Level Geography” by Mutodi and Waugh as their main textbook. However, only one school had a pupil textbook ratio of 1:1. In all the other schools involved, pupils were sharing text books. In the three schools that have pupils sharing textbooks, the pupils/textbook ratios were; 1:2, 1:4 and 1:6.
It was noted with concern that in the schools with pupil/textbook ratio, it took one pupil more than four days for him or her to have access to the textbook. The pupils spent a lot of time without having access to geography textbooks. Mostly, pupils relied on just one textbook for both physical geography and human geography.

For some pupils, it was observed that they have limited access to geography textbooks. To those who have access to the textbooks, the textbooks do not adequately address the syllabus requirements fully due to failure by the author to update the main textbook being used by schools. Pupils are exposed to information that does not fully comply with the advanced level syllabus requirements. As a result of this, questions on map work have been poorly done by pupils due to lack of current study materials which fully meet the Advanced level syllabus requirements

**Option to attend extra/ private lessons**

Forty percent (43%) of the respondents said that they attended private lessons whilst forty-two percent (42%) of the respondents said that they did not attend private lessons. Fifteen percent(15%) of the pupils did not respond to the question.
It was further ascertained that the majority of pupils who attend private lessons are boarders who attend private lessons during school holidays. Pupils from day schools mainly responded that they do not attend private lessons due to financial reasons as well as the unavailability of resource persons to help them with Geography.

**Geography workshops/ seminars**

Forty-three percent (43%) of the pupils indicated that they benefited from attending geography workshops and fifty-two (52%) said that they did not benefit from attending the workshops whilst Five percent (5%) of the pupils did not respond. The workshops are organised at district, cluster and school levels. An examiner/facilitator is invited and the pupils are assigned with presentation questions. After each presentation, answers are
discussed and tips are given by the facilitator. At district and cluster level, more than one school will be in attendance and pupils will be many.

**Figure 10: geography workshops**

One observation made during the seminars was that there too many pupils who will be in attendance and the idea of the pupils presenting their solutions to given questions was more of note learning.

**Teacher qualification**

During interviews with teachers of Advanced level Geography, it was noted from their responses that some of the Geography teachers also teach subjects other than Geography at Advanced and Ordinary level. Some of the teachers are teaching subjects such as Shona, Divinity and Mathematics at Advanced level. Some of the teacher are qualified to
teach subjects other than Geography but they are made to teach Advanced level Geography to balance their teaching loads.

![Subject combinations of teachers teaching advanced level Geography](image)

**Figure 11: subject combinations of teachers teaching advanced level geography**

Of the four teachers interviewed, only one teacher teaches Geography only. The teachers teach Advanced level and Ordinary level classes of Geography. Two of the respondents teach Geography and Shona at Advanced level and Geography and Commerce at Ordinary level. One teacher teaches three subjects at Advanced level; Geography, Shona and Economics. According to Advanced level geography teachers, teaching more than one subject at Advanced level does not give them the opportunity to specialise. The teachers need to divide their time between Geography and other subject(s). In the case of teachers teaching more than one subject, they need to devote their time to all the subjects which they teach. At times it is difficult to come across a teacher who is an expert in both subjects. There was general consensus amongst the teachers that each individual tended to have greater depth in one of the subjects and the other subject(s) suffered from lack of teacher content knowledge.
Teacher qualification.

Only one teacher teaching Advanced level Geography is a diploma holder who majored in Geography and shona. The other three teachers are degree holders but do not any teaching qualification. Of the three degree holders, none specialised in geography but they are teaching Geography at Advanced level. In their responses the teachers said that they had covered some geography modules in their degree courses but they had not done Geography in depth.

![Teacher Qualifications](image)

**Figure 12 Teacher qualification**

Content mastery

One of the questions on the teachers interview guide required them to answer a question relating to their areas of mastery. The Advanced level geography syllabus is divided into two sections, Physical and Human geography. Physical and Human Geography constitutes seventy-five (75%) of the whole syllabus whilst practical Geography constitutes twenty-five (25%) of the whole syllabus.
Only one respondent said he was comfortable with both Physical and Human Geography, two of the respondents said that they were comfortable with physical geography and practical whilst one respondent said that she was comfortable with human geography only. Teacher’s strength in one area therefore implies that pupils would be compromised in one of the two syllabus components. Pupils who are at most risk are those taught by the teacher whose strength is in practical geography which constitutes only 25% of the whole Advanced level Geography syllabus.

**Teacher motivation**

According to Maslow (1962), motivation is the ability to influence a person to behave in a certain manner and sustain that behaviour. Motivation can be from within (intrinsic) or influence by external factors (extrinsic). One of the most common sources of demotivation amongst Zimbabwean teachers has been poor remuneration. With the poverty datum line(PDL) pegged at close to $600 per month, Zimbabwean teachers earn an average salary of $250 per month excluding allowances. As a result of poor remuneration experienced
geography teachers have left the profession and those that remain are not motivated to give their best effort.

Poor remuneration of teachers has seen many teacher engaging in part time work at the expense of their pupils. Instead of devoting their spare time to their pupils’ teachers now use their spare time to give extra lessons to pupils who can pay for extra lessons

4.5 SUMMARY

This chapter was mainly on the presentation, analysis and discussing the data collected by the researcher. The data was analysed to answer the research questions. Data results were presented in the form of graphs and pie charts. The results were discussed with reference to the literature reviewed. Interpretation of the results were made and possible causes of pupils performing poorly in Advanced level Geography were identified. The last chapter will be a summary of the main findings of the research and recommendations from the researcher.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5:0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter seeks to present a summary of the whole research on an investigation of factors contributing to pupils poor performance in Advanced level Geography in Mhondoro District. Conclusions are drawn based on the findings, after which recommendations for remedial measures are made to all those involved in the teaching and learning of Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro district.

5:1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The aim of the study was to investigate the factors contributing to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro district. The study was carried out in four high schools. Two of the schools are exclusively day schools and the other two are mixed schools, that is, taking both boarders and day scholars. The study revealed that there are several factors both at home and at school contributing towards pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level. The factors range from the home environment to the school environment.

Chapter one dealt with the background to the research study, the research, the statement of the problem, research questions, definition of key terms, limitations and delimitations of the study. Related literature to the research problem was reviewed in chapter 2. Chapter three, Research methodology focused on methods through which data was collected. Sampling procedures, data analysis and management was also carried out. Some respondents failed to answer some of the questions on the questionnaire. Some of the teachers needed a lot of persuading. The data collected was presented, analysed and discussed in chapter 4. The data was presented in the form of bar graphs, pie charts and a
A variety of factors were seen as contributing to pupils’ poor performance in Advanced level Geography. These factors include lack of resources, failure by subject teachers to complete the syllabus, inadequate study time, long distances covered by pupils to school and teacher-based factors.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The main research question was “What are the factors contributing to pupils’ poor performance in Advanced level Geography in Mhondoro district?”

- The study found out that some pupils who progressed to do Advanced level Geography had not done the subject at Ordinary level. Although others had attained a pass in geography at Ordinary level, it was discovered that most of the pupils lacked knowledge of basic geography concepts. Pupils’ poor knowledge coupled with teachers’ assumed knowledge of what the pupils know left many pupils with serious problems in the subject.

- It was also discovered that most pupils, especially rural day scholars, were getting very little, if any, help at home. The majority of such pupils cannot afford to attend extra lessons due to financial constraints and that option is limited to their class teacher.

- The majority of parents of day scholars cannot afford to buy their children personal copies of Geography textbooks. Failure to access personal resources limits the amount of information available to such pupils.

- Pupils attending school from home are also disadvantaged by the lack of electricity. Pupils, thus, have limited study time.
The girl child was found to be disadvantaged both at home and at school. At home the girl child is expected to perform all household chores whilst the boy child has a lot of free time to engage in his studies. This mainly affects girl day scholars.

Boarder girls also face a lot of restrictions in the school compared to their male counterparts. Boys can go to their classrooms at any time of the day but girls can only do so at the appointed times such as class time and study time. This therefore means that the boys have more study time than the girls. Chances of meaningful interactive learning between boys and girls is severely curtailed.

Many day scholars walked long distances to school. This was seen as having negatively impacted on pupils’ performance due to fatigue.

Teaching methods such as drill teaching at ordinary level were noted to negatively contribute to pupils’ poor performance in advanced level Geography. Most pupils were drilled in examination techniques, not in the principles underlying Geography.

It was noted that some teachers failed to complete the advanced level geography syllabus. Failure to complete the syllabus meant that pupils sit for examinations with deficient knowledge.

Some textbooks by the schools were found to contain certain content which is no longer relevant to the requirements of the current Advanced level Geography syllabus.
It was also noted that some of the teachers teaching Advanced level Geography hold degrees with very little to offer in terms of Advanced level Geography.

The teaching fraternity was noted to be generally demotivated by their low salaries and poor working conditions.

5:3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

- Teachers of Geography be encouraged to teach for subject mastery rather than for examination purposes only. The change in the ordinary level syllabus which now includes a multiple choice paper is one step in the right direction.

- The Mhondoro District communities should work towards providing library facilities which cater for all students. This can be achieved through lobbying different stake-holders like Mhondoro-Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust for assistance. The resources available to the Trust can go a long way in assisting rural day scholars in accessing current information.

- Parents must be encouraged to be proactive in their children’s learning. Parents play an active role. Despite their lack of knowledge in Geography, parents should try by all means to provide their children with an enabling environment.

- Schools should strive to provide equal study opportunities for both boys and girls. If girls’ movement in the school is restricted, then, the school should put in place measures that will allow the girls to study at their hostels.

- Teachers should try by all means possible to ensure that they complete the Advanced level Geography syllabus before pupils write their final examinations.
Syllabus completion will minimise chances of pupils sitting for examination items on content they have not yet covered.

- Teachers are encouraged to source materials other than the textbooks currently in use in most schools. Teachers should source up to date materials which are in line with the requirements of the Advanced level Geography syllabus.

- Teachers are encouraged to continually seek to improve themselves professionally so that they keep abreast the changes that are taking place in the field of Geography.
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS

The researcher is a Post Graduate Diploma in Education student at Bindura University. This research is being carried out in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the programme as well as identifying the causes of pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level and finding possible solutions to such causes so as to try to improve the teaching and learning of Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro. You are therefore requested to answer the following questions as honestly and truthfully as possible.

1. Sex of respondent: Male Female (tick as appropriate)
2. School attendance status: Day scholar Boarder (tick as appropriate)
3. Did you study Geography at Ordinary level? Yes No (tick as appropriate)
4. What symbol did you attain at Ordinary level?
   A B C D E U (circle your symbol)
5. Do you get help in Geography from your family members?
   Yes No (tick as appropriate)
6. What form of help do you get from home?
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   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
7. How do you rate your performance in Geography?
   Good Average Below average Poor (tick as appropriate)
8. Do you have access to Geography textbooks at your school?
   Yes No (tick as appropriate)
9. Do you have individual copies of Geography textbooks?
   Yes No (tick as appropriate)
10. If you are sharing textbooks, how many pupils share one textbook?
    2 3 4 5 more than 5 (tick as appropriate)
11. How many different textbooks do you use for Physical Geography?
   1  2  3  4  5 more than 5 (tick as appropriate)

12. How many different textbooks do you use for Human Geography?
   1  2  3  4  5 more than 5 (tick as appropriate)

13. Which textbook do you use as your main Geography textbook?
   ........................................................................................................................................

14. Can your parents afford to buy you personal Geography textbooks?
   Yes  No  (tick as appropriate)

15. How many periods are dedicated to the teaching and learning of Geography at your school?
   ........................................................................................................................................

16. How long is each period?
   ........................................................................................................................................

17. Does your teacher inspire confidence in you?
   Yes  No  (tick as appropriate)

18. Does your teacher teach you during his/her spare time?
   Yes  No  (tick as appropriate)

19. Is your teacher punctual?
   Yes  No  (tick as appropriate)

20. Does your teacher attend his/her lessons?
   Yes  No  (tick as appropriate)

21. How would you describe your relationship with your teacher?
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   ........................................................................................................................................
22. Between Physical Geography and Human Geography, which is your teacher’s area of strength?

Physical Geography Human Geography (tick as appropriate)

End of questionnaire

Thank you for your time.
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

The researcher is a Post Graduate Diploma in Education student with Bindura University. The research study into the factors contributing to pupils’ poor performance in Geography at Advanced level is being carried out in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree programme as well as an attempt by the researcher to improve the teaching and learning of Geography at Advanced level in Mhondoro.

1. What are your highest academic and professional qualifications?
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2. Besides Geography, do you teach another subject at Advanced level?
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3. At the end of the Advanced level course, do you complete the Geography syllabus?
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4. What reasons would you give as preventing the completion of the syllabus coverage?
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5. What is your school’s Advanced level Geography textbook/pupil ratio?
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   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Besides textbooks, what other resources are at your disposal?
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   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

7. Do you teach pupils during your spare time?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
8. How many hours do you teach per day?

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………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. How many lesson do you conduct per week (workload in terms of periods)

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10. In your opinion, what are the possible causes of pupils’ poor performance in Advanced level Geography?

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11. What could be the possible solutions to the causes of pupils’ poor performance in Advanced level Geography?

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