

**THE DECLINE IN GEOGRAPHY LEARNER NUMBERS IN THE SECONDARY
PHASE: A NAMIBIAN, KHOMAS REGION: WINDHOEK CASE STUDY**

BY

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Statistics have shown that every year the number of learners in Namibia choosing Geography is declining in the secondary phase (Grades 10-11). This study investigated the possible reasons for the decline by means of a qualitative research approach. An interpretive paradigm to understand the perceptions, perspectives and actions of teachers and learners was used. Data were collected using qualitative methods from multiple case studies. Three schools in the Khomas region in Windhoek, Namibia, were selected for the study. The participants were three teachers teaching Geography and 11 learners who were either doing Geography or not doing it. The information obtained pertained to the decline in choosing Geography as a subject. The information was obtained by means of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and individual interviews. The constant comparative analysis method was used to analyse the data.

It was found that learners were not interested in studying Geography because of map work content which they found difficult challenging and confusing. In addition, the findings underscored that in the field of Geography was not that well grouped to attract learners to study Geography. The attitudes and pedagogies of teachers were demotivating for learners, which did not encourage them to study Geography. Lack of teaching resources, fieldwork disengagement, peer influence among learners, English as a barrier to learning, problems of teaching methods were some of the factors that teachers and learners highlighted as reasons for why Geography was not valued highly as a school subject.

OPSOMMING

Statistieke dui daarop dat die aantal leerders in Namibië, wat Aardrykskunde as vak in die Sekondêre Fase (Grade 10 en 11) kies, jaarliks afneem. Met hierdie ondersoek word moontlike redes vir die afname deur middel van 'n kwalitatiewe benadering onder die loep geneem. 'n Verklaringspatroon is gevolg ten einde die beskouinge, die uitgangspunte en die optredes van onderwysers en leerders te probeer verstaan. Drie skole in die streek Khomas in Windhoek, Namibië, is gekies om deel van die ondersoek te wees. Die deelnemers was drie Aardrykskunde-onderwysers en 11 leerlinge (sommige het Aardrykskunde geneem en sommige nie). Die gegewens sodoende verkry, het betrekking op die afname in die keuse van Aardrykskunde as vak. Die nodige inligting is ingewin deur middel van gedeeltelikgestruktureerde onderhoudvoering, hetsy met gefokusde groepe of individueel. 'n Proses van voortdurende, vergelykende ontleding is gevolg om data te ondersoek.

Daar is tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat leerders nie belangstel in Aardrykskunde as vak nie, omdat hulle die inhoudelike kaartwerk moeilik, uitdagend en verwarrend vind. 'n Verdere bevinding was dat die studieveld nie na behore aan die leerders bekendgestel word nie, wat grootliks bydra tot die gebrek aan belangstelling in die bestudering van Aardrykskunde. Voorts is daar vasgestel dat die onderrigmetodes van onderwysers so ontmoedigend is dat dit bydra tot gebrekkige belangstelling in die bestudering van Aardrykskunde. Onvoldoende onderwys hulpmiddele, vrystelling van veldwerk, portuurgroepsdruk, die aanwending van Engels as onderrigtaal en die gepaardgaande belemmering van leer wat plaasvind, asook problematiese onderrigmetodes is maar enkele van die faktore wat deur onderwysers en leerders aangedui is as redes vir die waardevermindering van Aardrykskunde as skoolvak.

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Wonders shall never end.

DEDICATION

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved family: my husband, my twins (Landula and Landuleni) and my last born Ilongeni, who have been my source of inspiration and gave me strength when I thought of giving up; they provided moral, spiritual and emotional support. My twins continually woke me up around 2 o'clock in the morning. Lastly, I dedicate this study to Almighty God: thank you for the guidance, strength, power of mind, protection, knowledge and for giving me a healthy life. All of this I offer to you, my Lord.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AZA	Arizona Geographic Alliance
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ELLS	English Language for Learners
GIS	Geographic Information System
GSCE	General Secondary Certificate Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOD	Head of Department
IGU	International Geography Union
JSC	Junior Secondary Certificate
KIE	Kenya International Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAMCOL	Namibia College of Open Learning
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NDPs	National Development Plans
NIED	National Institute of Educational Development
NRC	National Research Council
NSSC	National Secondary School Certificate
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PBL	Problem-Based Learning
SAGTA	South African Geography Teachers Association
UNAM	University of Namibia

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

US United States

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past years there has been a growing concern about the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography as a subject in Namibian secondary schools. This study investigated this decline of learners choosing Geography in the secondary phase (Grades 10-11) in three selected schools in the Khomas region in Windhoek. This chapter presents an overview of the study and its structure. The background, objectives, rationale, problem statement and research questions of the study are briefly discussed. This is followed by a description of the research design, methodology, sampling and data collection as well as an addressing on issues of validity, reliability and ethical considerations.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Prior to Namibia gaining independence in 1990, the country was subjected to the South African apartheid system of education, which focused more on memorising and teaching without understanding. After independence the Namibian government engaged in several restructuring attempts in various ministries, including education. According to Ndjambili (1995), the education reform was a response to address the lack of relevance of the school curriculum to Namibia. Therefore, education reform in Namibia aimed to achieve four major goals: *access, quality, equity and democracy*, so that school education would no longer be a privilege of the minority. As part of the reform initiative, a government programme *Towards education for all* was implemented and was intended as an impetus to accelerate and support changes in the curriculum and its assessment practices (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993). The Cape Education System (the old system) was changed to the Cambridge International System (Malestky, 2007). In the transitional process of education reform, the Ministry of Education (MoE) identified three phases: seven years of primary education in Grades 1 to 7; three years of junior secondary education in Grades 8 to 10; two years of secondary education in Grades 11 to 12. This was in line with the national curriculum policy (Ministry of Education, 2009). In Grades 5 to 7 Geography is integrated as a subject into the social sciences, whereas in Grades 8 to 12 it is a subject on its own. In Grades 11 and 12 learners have the option to choose between Geography and Development Studies or other subjects, for example, Physical Sciences and Mathematics or Biology and Mathematics.

Since the Education Reform Act of 1990, Geography, along with other subjects, has been compulsory for all learners from Grades 8 to 10 (Ministry of Education, 1990). In the revised education system, it became one of the subjects that allowed for learners to choose either advanced or ordinary level; Development Studies is offered at the core level. The number of class periods per seven-day cycle or five-day week cycle allocated to Geography was reduced. Currently only four class periods (lessons) in a seven-day cycle are allocated to Geography and three class periods (lessons) in a five-day week cycle. Fields of study and the number of periods are described in Chapter 2.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Aims

The main aim of this study is to investigate why there has been a decline in the number of learners choosing Geography as a subject, and to investigate whether teachers have an influence on this decline in learners choosing Geography from Grades 10 - 11.

1.3.2 Objectives of the study

There are two objectives:

- To determine the reasons why learners, choose or do not choose Geography as a subject after Grade 10;
- To identify the influence that teachers have on the number of learners taking or not taking Geography.

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The study was motivated by the researcher's personal observations as a Geography teacher for 18 years, and by attending professional development workshops for teachers of Grades 8 to 12. The researcher observed that some learners have negative attitudes towards certain sections of the Geography syllabus such as map work and are passive rather than active participants in the classroom. The decline of the number of learners choosing Geography as a subject is a serious concern among Namibian social science and humanities educators. Moreover, the MoE lists the lack of Geography teachers and their need to be trained as a concern. Therefore, this also motivated me as the researcher to undertake an investigation into the possible causes of the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography from Grades 10 and 11.

Tables 1 and 2 show the statistics of the national distribution for Grades 10 and 12 of the JSC (Junior Secondary Certificates) and NSSC (National Secondary School Certificate) for the

period 2010 to 2016. The statistics are the Geography results of the number of learners who passed per symbol and the total number of learners in the JSC and NSSC. No results are shown as X meaning there was a notification that the candidate was absent or withdrawn from one or more components of the exam and is therefore not eligible for the award of a grade in Table 1, and I represents the number of learners who missed and did not write the examination. The reason for selecting the statistics for these Grades over seven consecutive years is because Geography is an elective subject from Grade 11.

The figures in the columns under each symbol indicate the total number of learners who obtained that specific symbol in Tables 1 and 2. In Namibia, symbols A to D indicate a pass in Geography. Learners who obtain symbols E to U failed the subject.

Table 1.1: Grade 10 JSC (Junior Secondary Certificate) *

YEAR	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	I	X	TOTAL
2010	1 060	2 309	4 866	7 646	9 206	5 934	1 793	374	304	45	33 537
2011	1 030	2 194	5 047	7 972	10 051	6 407	2 135	508	275	0	35 619
2012	670	1 872	3 599	8 566	7 911	6 274	2 556	656	213	1	33 368
2013	1 090	2 280	4 670	7 782	9 836	5 600	2 004	561	209	0	34 032
2014	1 460	2 648	4 772	8 429	10 713	5 475	1 537	320	223	3	35 580
2015	1 276	2 550	5 261	9 039	10 646	5 977	1 879	514	283	2	37 427
2016	1 877	2 997	5 051	9 246	11 531	5 321	1 592	253	359	1	38 228

Note: A = 90-100%, B = 80-70%, C = 69-60%, D = 59-50%, E = 49-40%, F = 39-30%, G = 29-20% and U = 19-0.

Analysis results for Geography Grade 10 for 2010 - 2016

Table 1.2: Grade 12 NSSC (National Senior Secondary Certificate) *

YEAR AND SUBJECTS	A+	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	I	TOTAL
2010											
Development Studies	38	137	464	1 266	1 342	1 956	2 112	1 185	311	95	8 906
Geography	15	43	204	563	1 195	2 417	2 313	1 779	810	93	9 432
2011											
Development Studies	45	156	455	1 261	1 273	1 941	2 131	1 018	233	84	8 597
Geography	20	70	249	598	1 263	2 216	2 238	1 625	696	70	9 045
2012											
Development Studies	67	144	391	1 106	1 219	1 634	1 978	1 099	205	127	7 970
Geography	19	55	217	483	1 174	1 788	1 982	1 480	583	90	7 871
2013											
Development Studies	23	101	380	964	1 077	1 474	1 909	1 100	316	52	7 396
Geography	26	89	212	566	1 181	2 044	1 997	1 206	456	55	7 832
2014											
Development Studies	26	106	362	980	1 073	1 443	1 959	1 098	307	67	7 421
Geography	27	98	261	620	1 122	1 705	1 898	1 054	355	79	7 219
2015											
Development Studies	43	126	409	991	1 251	1 399	2 026	1 081	254	70	7 650
Geography	18	16	221	600	1 134	1 708	2 246	1 313	497	52	7 850
2016											
Development Studies	42	146	457	937	1 139	1 601	2 159	1 065	245	55	7 846
Geography	29	88	251	637	1 269	1 633	2 153	1 497	479	63	8 099

Note: A = 90-100%, B = 80-70%, C = 69-60%, D = 59-50%, E = 49-40%, F = 39-30%, G = 29-20% and U = 19-0%

Analysis results for Geography and Development Studies Grade 12 for 2010 - 2016

The last column in Table 1 shows the total number of learners in each year who took Geography from Grades 8 to 10. In 2010 there were 33 537 learners (72%) who took Geography in Grade 10 compared to Grade 12. Table 2 shows that only 9 432 learners continued with Geography

to Grade 11 (28%). In 2011 there were 35 618 learners who took Geography in Grade 10, while 9 045 (25%) learners took it in Grade 12. In 2012 there were 33 368 learners who took Geography in Grade 10 compared to 7 871 (23%) learners in Grade 12. In 2013 there were 34 032 learners who took Geography in Grade 10, compared to 7 832 (23%) learners in Grade 12. In 2014 there were 35 580 learners who took Geography in Grade 10, while only 7 219 (20%) did so in Grade 12. In 2015 there were 37 427 learners who took Geography in Grade 10, while only 7 850 (21%) did so in Grade 12. In 2016 there were 38 228 learners who took Geography in Grade 10, while 8 099 (21%) did so in Grade 12.

Table 2 shows the learners who took Development Studies and those who took Geography. If Development Studies was not part of the curriculum, the situation would have been different. For example, in 2016 7 846 learners did Development Studies and 8 099 did Geography. If development studies were not an option, then all 15 945 learners could have chosen Geography. Development Studies consists of topics which are similar to, and some are even the same as, topics in Geography. If the contents could be combined with Geography, then many learners could study Geography.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Significance is an important part of a study. It allows readers or an audience to be persuaded and convinced of the worth of the study or why it was conducted (Vidal, 2018:2). Millard and Richardson (2015:1) says the significance of a study should reveal its contribution towards improving a situation. In qualitative research it reveals people's understanding of a phenomenon, while in quantitative research it tests a hypothesis. The literature review shows that so far, no study of this nature has been conducted in Namibia regarding the decline of learners choosing Geography from Grades 10-11. The literature also shows that little has been done worldwide on this topic. The significance of this research can be summed up as follows:

- It provides in-depth information on what has contributed to the decline of learners choosing Geography;
- It provides an understanding of the phenomenon so that teachers may revisit their pedagogical decisions and implement more innovative methods and didactics on how to teach Geography;
- It provides a foundation of data collected that may be used for future research;
- It opens a conversation on the Grade 10-12 Geography teachers' lived experiences of the Geography curriculum.

1.6 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The decline in the numbers of learners choosing Geography in Grades 10 and 11 has been a concern in Namibia over the last seven years. The statistics indicate that there are many learners doing Geography in Grade 10. Between Grades 10 and 11 there is a decline in learners choosing Geography. An investigation of the reasons for this could provide useful insights for curriculum planners, teacher educators, geographers and other relevant stakeholders. In the analysis of the statistics for both Grades 10 and 12 one can see that there are a large number of learners doing Geography in Grade 10 each year, but the numbers decline considerably in Grade 12. The reasons for this decline are still unknown. This was therefore one of the main reasons why I wanted to conduct this study.

1.7 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There were two main research questions guiding the study. They were important in order to obtain data and make findings for the results:

- Why is there a decline in learners choosing Geography from Grade 10 to 11 in Namibian schools?
- What influence do teachers have on learners choosing Geography?

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Research design

A qualitative approach was used to investigate the reasons why learners choose or do not choose Geography as an elective subject in Grade 11. The study site was three Namibian schools in the Khomas region in Windhoek. According to Trochim (2005), the research design provides the glue that holds the research together to show how all the major parts work together. It enables the search for insight into a problem or helps to develop ideas. The research design in this study enabled the collection of descriptive data from the participants. It was a case study in which Grade 11 and 12 learners took part in focus groups, while individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with teachers. Rule and John (2011:15) explain that a case study is a systematic and in-depth investigation of a case in a specific context to generate information about it. The study was conducted at three secondary schools in the Khomas region. To protect the identities of the participants, the schools are referred to as W, X and Y.

1.8.2 Research methodology

According to Howell (2013), research methodology is the systematic, theoretical methods applied to a field of study. According to Wyse (2011), qualitative research is primarily used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations. The researcher applied a qualitative approach to produce data in the form of words framed within an interpretive paradigm, rather than numbers to validate a hypothesis. An interpretive paradigm attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and their actions (Connole, 2000:18). This study was aimed to gain a better understanding of why learners in Namibia choose or do not choose Geography as a school subject from Grade 10 to 11.

1.8.3 Sampling

The researcher identified schools from the academia cluster¹ in the Khomas Educational Region of Windhoek in Namibia. Schools were selected on the basis of high and low performance levels. Learners were drawn from class lists. There was a gender balance in terms of a similar number of females and males who had or had not chosen Geography. They were purposively selected. The purposive sampling was done for individual participants and focus groups. Individual group were as follows: (a) four learners per school (two from Grade 11 and two from Grade 12), and (b) three teachers (Grades 10 and 12). The two focus groups consisted of learners from Grades 11 and 12. One group had chosen Geography and the other group had not chosen Geography. There were between four to ten learners in each group. The schools were chosen because of their ease of access for the researcher, who lives in the vicinity. Convenience sampling was used to select the schools.

1.9 DATA-COLLECTION METHOD

1.9.1 Interviews

Interviews are systematic ways of talking and listening to one another or an alternative way to collect data from individuals through conversation. Kvale (2008:98) claims that an interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. Boyce and Neale (2006:5) state that there are different formats of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. In this study semi-structured interviews were used to allow open-ended questions for gathering data. Semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to define the areas to be explored and to answer questions in more detail. However, data can easily

¹ An academia cluster is a cluster of school or centres of excellence within certain schools that are grouped focusing on educational goals, e.g. to set the same exam.

become biased and misleading if the participants are aware of the perspective of the interviewer. To minimise this, open-ended interview questions were prepared.

Interviews for individuals and focus groups were successfully conducted. In the individual interview the researcher first talked to one participant at a time and the duration of the interview was between 15 to 30 minutes. The one-on-one interviews included four learners per school (two from Grade 11 and two from Grade 12), and three teachers (from Grades 10 to 12) were interviewed. In the focus group interview six to ten learners were interviewed; the participants were able to share their feelings or opinions. Open-ended responses allowed them to convey their thoughts or feelings (Powell, Single & Lloyd, 1996:499). In the focus group, two groups from Grade 11 and 12 were selected to provide information. Information was obtained from those learners who had chosen Geography as well as from the group who had not chosen Geography. Both groups consisted of six participants, a mixture of males and females.

The constant comparative but more on thematic data analysis method were then used to analyse the data. This is a process in which any newly composed data are compared with previous data collected in one or more prior studies (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001:39). It is a continuous ongoing procedure, because data are designed, improved, confirmed or discounted as new data emerge in a study. The data in this study were coded in different categories. This entailed data analysis methods involving coding data into themes, and then into broader categories to form conclusions. The researcher made notes from the analysis of the interview transcripts and these were then coded. The coding process was carried out by reading all of the notes and assigning a code to sentences, paragraphs or sections. Codes represented themes or associated ideas.

1.10 LIMITATION OF STUDY

The aim of this study was to investigate the decline in the number of Grade 10 to 11 learners in the Khomas region who chose Geography as a subject. Therefore, this study was limited and restricted to interview learners and teachers in the field of Geography in only three selected schools in the Windhoek vicinity. This was a limitation as not all schools in all 13 regions could be included because of a lack of time, funds, transport and resources. Since participation in the study was voluntary, the researcher had to reach an agreement with teachers to schedule their one-on-one interviews at times convenient to them. One participant became ill, and so the number of learners was reduced from 12 to 11. All interviews were conducted in English, because that is the medium of instruction in Namibian schools. This meant that some participants found it difficult to express themselves in the way they wanted to.

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Resnick (2015:1-5) defines ethics as a norm of conduct that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Researchers take ethical considerations into account for several reasons: to promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, truth and avoidance of error; and to prevent fabricating and falsifying or misrepresenting data, and to guide a researcher against this. Regarding the ethics of collecting data, the researcher adhered to the guidelines to produce, collect and publish data as they were elicited. Permission to visit schools and individual teachers was sought. The researcher prepared and sent applications to the relevant educational authorities beforehand (educational director and principals). The research process included obtaining informed consent and assent from the participants. This was done by writing letters to all the involved participants (including the parents of learners to be interviewed) and assent from learners to allow the research to be carried out in ways that avoided ethical risks. The researcher applied for ethics clearance to the Research Ethics Committee (Human Research) of Stellenbosch University. Permission and consent are central to research that involves human participants. Consent entails informing prospective participants about the research and allowing them to make decisions on their involvement and ensuring that there is no explicit or implicit coercion. In this study, ethical procedures were followed to protect the rights and identities of all participants. Bryman and Burgess (2002:15-31) states that in gaining access to collect data, “principles of informed consent, and concerning harm, deception, confidentiality and anonymity” are matters to consider when conducting ethical research.

1.12 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

For the research to be of value, it must be reliable and valid. Colin and Julie (2006) say that reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and constant results if the research were to be repeated. If the research yields the same results when done for a second time, it is considered reliable. The researcher should agree on what is being collected to claim reliable information. Validity refers to how well the research tool measures what it purports to measure. According to Bush (2002:65), validity is used to judge whether the investigation accurately describe the phenomenon which it plans to describe.

In this study the research was dependable and legitimate as it showed the following quality criteria: significance of the research topic; rigorous data collection; credibility, sincerity and coherence. The topic was significant because the researcher tried to reveal factors contributing to the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography in the secondary phase. It was also rigorous as an appropriate method for conducting the survey was used. In addition, the

collected data were sufficient as the number of participants was representative. Furthermore, the study was credible in that it gave enough details of and explanation of the topic; the findings were trustworthy. Lastly, the study was coherent as the methods used were suitable, making meaningful connections between the literature, the findings and the interpretations.

1.13 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1: This chapter presents an overview of the study. It includes the background, aims, objectives, rationale, significance, problem statement and main research questions. The research design and methodologies, sampling, limitations of the study, ethical considerations, and reliability and validity are discussed.

Chapter2: This chapter presents a literature review of topics related to the study.

Chapter 3: Presents and explains the research design and methodology, the research paradigms, the context of the study, sampling methods, trustworthiness: validity and reliability, triangulation, and data analysis.

Chapter 4: Analyses of the findings and results of the study are presented in this chapter. It indicates possible factors which may be causing the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography at a senior level.

Chapter 5: Concludes the research with the summary of the findings, and makes some recommendations.

1.14 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter 1 introduced to the reader the phenomenon under investigation in this study. It provides the aims and objectives, rationale and significance of the study. The chapter further highlights the background of the study and the problem statement. The research question guiding this study, research design, research methodology, appropriate research paradigm, and data collection methods were presented. The importance of validity and reliability of the study were presented as well as ethical considerations. The chapter concluded by explaining the limitations and organisation of the study. The next chapter provides a literature review relevant to the study.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework is defined as a network or a plane of interlinked concepts that provide a comprehensive understanding of a study (Jabareen, 2009:49). The conceptual framework for this phenomenon is linking multidisciplinary bodies of knowledge to assess the decline of Geography in the secondary phase. Conceptual frameworks pose ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions and each concept within the framework plays either an ontological or epistemological role. Ravitch and Riggan (2016:15) explains that ontological assumptions relate to the knowledge “of the way things are, nature of reality, real existence and real action”. They further emphasise that the epistemological assumptions relate to how things really are and how they really work. In this study, the conceptual framework was used to determine research questions and provide guidelines for interviews and discussions.

Geography is a popular optional subject in Namibia for Grades 11-12. However, between 2010 and 2016 the number of Geography enrolments at the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Examination declined. The literature on possible aspects and causes of this decline in the number of learners choosing Geography is reviewed in this study. The decline appears to be the result of complex reasons related to the administration of management and education in Namibia, interactions between teachers and learners in terms of the quality of teaching and learning strategies, group of field of studies, lack of understanding of the importance of Geography, English as a barrier, and lack of fieldwork. The developing interest literature provides the conceptual framework of this study for analysing the findings from various scholars who have used different ways of exploring pedagogical and focused on different aspects of learners’ and teachers’ perceptions of Geography. The response of learners to a particular phenomenon is based on how they perceive it or how it is presented to them.

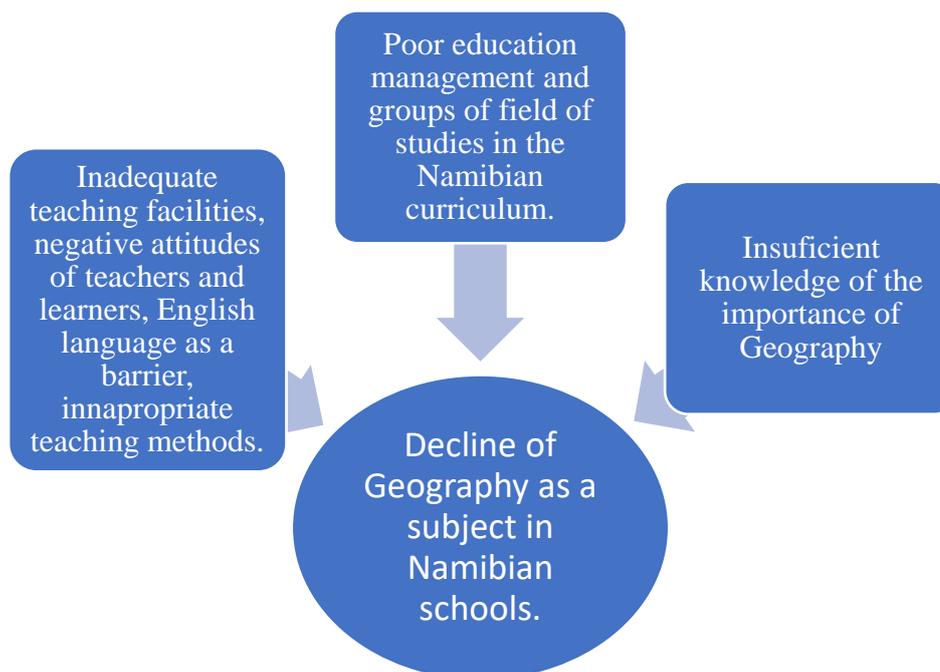


Figure 2.1. A proposed model for aspects which may contribute to the decline in number of learners choosing Geography in Namibia. Adapted from Parijat & Bagga (2014: 8).

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 presented an orientation to the study. This chapter reviews the current literature on the topic of factors contributing to the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography. O’Leary (2004:66) emphasises that it is very important to cover the literature in the research process because it gives direction, educates, motivates, advises and enlightens on the topic studied. Mouton (2001:5) asserts that a literature review assists a researcher to study phenomenon by indicating how other scholars have advanced an understanding of the topic studied. The literature reviewed in this chapter investigates the numerous theories of other scholars who have examined possible causes for the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography at the senior level.

The chapter is divided into various sub-themes such as Geography and its importance, the Namibian Geography curriculum, and other relevant themes related to the study. Uncertainties about the decline in number of learners choosing Geography as a major subject have been discussed in many studies. Research conducted by Mills and Ballantyne (2010 :447)

investigated the factors affecting student choice of Geography as a senior secondary school subject in Queensland University in Australia. Akessa and Dhufera (2015) investigated the factors that influenced students' academic performance at the Rift Valley University in Ethiopia. Akahomen, Rilwani and Ghabakeji (2014) undertook a study to investigate factors that influenced student attrition in Geography in secondary schools in Esan West local government area in Edo state in Nigeria. Willmott and Dube (2016) undertook a study in the Eastern Cape province in South Africa opening windows onto school Geography in selected public secondary schools. The findings of the studies identified a number of systemic and professional factors militating against quality teaching and learning in Geography.

2.2 ADMINISTRATION OF MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA

When considering the burning issue of the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography in Namibia, the researcher looked at how education is generally managed in the country, so that this can be related to the teaching of Geography as a subject in schools. The National Institute for Educational Development NIED, (Ministry of Education, Art and Culture 1990) is responsible for administering and managing education in Namibian schools. The NIED faces the mammoth task of intervening by introducing changes that can give value to the subject of Geography in the curriculum. It was established in 1990 with the aim of changing, developing and improving education in Namibia. The United Nation Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) stated that the NIED is in the right position to design and evaluate the Geography curriculum in such a way that it can keep and attract more learners to continue studying the subject at a senior level (MEC, 2010:5). In Namibia's National Development Plan (NDP) of 1995, education, science and technology are key areas for realising the objective towards achieving vision 2030. Education is one of the highly regarded goals to be achieved. Thus, the NIED is striving to conduct educational research on distributing teaching and learning materials, and conducting the development of pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes (MEC, 2010:5). The researcher believes that capturing secondary data from the literature pertaining to the decline in interest among the learners in Geography would contribute to the achievement of NIED's vision to improve the future of education as well as the quality of school subjects. This study focuses on different scholars' work that emphasised the need for the teachers to be trained and equipped with a concrete understanding of Geography, as well as on the equal distribution of teaching and learning facilities. The degree of emphasis on the importance of Geography and motivation by the bodies managing education in Namibia can influence the number of learners choosing

Geography. Thus, the administration and management of education in Namibia takes us back to the organisation of the curriculum in Namibia as discussed below.

2.3 CURRICULUM IN NAMIBIA

A curriculum is defined as an official document guiding what should be taught/learned in a school. It outlines the teaching, learning and assessment components, and gives proper direction to planning, organising and implementing of teaching and learning (MEC, 2010:10). After independence Namibia had to change the old curriculum of the colonial era. The curriculum was revised and changed to shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred method (MEC, 2010:9). During the apartheid era teachers were not trained to encourage and motivate learners to study some of the subjects (Chaka, 1997:34). In 2001 problems and gaps were identified in the revised curriculum. Problems identified were, for example, the fact that the curriculum developers were not well-informed or equipped with proper skills in their subject areas, and lacked the required expertise and attitudes necessary for fruitful curriculum development (MEC, 2010:10). In other words, if lessons allocated to Geography are insufficient for a teacher to do all arrangements necessary to assist learners to develop an interest in majoring in Geography (MEC, 2017).

There are 56 lessons per year allocated to teachers in a 7-day cycle with a duration of 45 minutes per lesson. In a week each teacher has to present 52 lessons in total. By looking at the number of lessons allocated to Geography in comparison to other subjects, as shown in Table 2.1, one could conclude that the division is not equal (MEC, 2010). One might ask why there is such a difference if all subjects are supposed to be treated the same. In some cases, the content might be extensive and may require more time to cover. As result, teachers might be forced to rush through the work because of the time constraints. One might think that time allocation to subjects is done without taking into consideration the amount of content for the subjects. Table 2.1 shows the periods allocated to each subject in comparison with Geography from Grades 8 to 12 (MoE, 2017:1). The table also combined the field of study for Grades 11-12 to give a picture of how many fields of study Geography appears in and how many periods are allocated to Geography per cycle compared to other subjects (MEC, 2010).

Table 2.1: Namibia senior secondary education timetable of lessons per subject in a 7-day cycle, field of study and subject choices for both ordinary and advanced level (except Geography) Grade 11 and 12*

		Grd 8	Grd 9	Grd 10	Grd 11	Grd 12
	Subjects	Periods	Periods	Periods	Periods	Periods
	Natural Sc.	4	4	4		
	Life Sc.	4	4	4		
	Entrepreneurship	4	4	4		
	English	5	5	5	9	9
	Other Languages	4	4	4	9	9
Field of study						
Natural S.	NSM1					
	- Biology				8	8
	- Physical Sc.	4	4	4		
	- Math	5	5	5	8	8
	NSM2					
	- Biology					
	- Math					
	- Geography	3	3	3	8	8
	NSM3					
	- Physical Sc.				8	8
	- Math					
	- Computer Study	3	3	3	8	8
	NSM4					
	- Agriculture					
	- Biology					
	- Math					
	NSM5					
	- Physical Sc.					
	- Math					
	- Geography					
Social Science	SS1					
	- Development Studies				8	8
	- Geography				8	8
	- History					
	SS2					
	- Economics				8	8
	- Geography					
	- History					
Technology	T1					
	- Design and Technology				8	8
	- Math					
	- Physical Sc.					

	T2 - Home Economics - Biology - Development Studies T3 - Fashion and Fabric - Business Studies - Development Studies T4 - Math - Computer Studies - Design and Technology				8 8 8 8 8 8	8 8 8 8 8
Commerce	C1 - Accounting - Business Studies - Math C2 - Accounting - Math - Computer Studies C3 - Accounting - Economics - Math	5 4	5 4	5 4	8 4	8 4

*Adapted from the Ministry of Education - MoE, (2017:1).

Learners are given the opportunity to choose fields they want to study as depicted in the above table. MoE (2017) lists the field of study and it is evident that Computers, Physical Science Commerce and Biology features in many of them (field of studies). The world of technology encourages learners to study computers. It seems, then, that possible candidates for Geography tend to rather opt for commerce and technology careers.

Scholars highlight that curriculum developers might produce curriculum changes without any contribution from or consultation with teachers (Evans, 2010:17 & Ortlieb, 2010:241). Geography could be more stable as a subject choice, if curriculum developers were able to make long-term plans which can be executed (Catling, 2013:33). According to Carl (2005:223),

teachers tend to be consulted only when they are required to participate in implementing or receiving training for the new curriculum; not everyone participates. He further mentions that teachers tend not to have been involved in any designing or development of the curriculum. Questions may arise as to what would happen if curriculum designers implement a curriculum which does not suit and motivate teachers and learners to achieve their educational goals. These are pertinent concerns, so there is a need to conduct research of this nature. Catling (2013:33) explains that teachers should have time to decide on resources and events to engage with their learners; educational officers should also consider in-service training appropriate for teachers. The South African Geography Teachers' Association (SAGTA) (Fisher & Binns, 2016:3) maintained that to cope with different curriculum orientations requires developers to involve teachers to ensure the relevance of Geography in schools in order to respond to the global environmental crisis in the 21st century. It appears that the Namibian curriculum does not consider the scope of Geography in its time allocation. This might affect learners' choice to specialise in this subject at school. This discussion of the curriculum is further elaborated on in section 2.4.2.

2.4 GEOGRAPHY

2.4.1 Defining Geography

There are various definitions of the discipline in the literature. Bonnett (2012:39) posits that Geography is a discipline which cannot be narrowly defined, because of its ancient and modern applications; furthermore, it is also combining different types of knowledge. Geography is a science subject that seeks to describe the features of places, the distribution of people, and the events that develop on the surface of the earth (Hurry, 1994:4). Petts, Owens and Bulkeley (2008:600) argue that Geography brings humans and environment together. Geography is a deeply rooted, advanced field of study depicting climate change and the interactions of people with places and the environment. Ahamer (2012:314) refer to Geography as a subject that is showing maps and names of places that people need to be familiar with. Ahamer (2012:312) further describes Geography as addressing notions of space and the chronological database distribution of wonders, processes and features as well as the interaction of humans with their environment. It has a highly discipline-specific content in which space and place affect various phenomena economics, health, climate, fauna and flora, for example (Ahamer, 2012: 312). Agnew (2011:1) also defines Geography as pertaining to place as the distinct space where people reside. It cannot be explained by grid references, but instead by anthropological knowledge. Van Eden and Warnich (2018:267) state that Geography is known in the area of

teaching and developing learners' spatial knowledge, skills and values. Geography teaches learners about the interaction of people with the world, and about natural hazards because they affect people and the environment worldwide, and about land degradation (erosion) (Hopwood, 2004:356-357).

Bonnett (2008:80) divides Geography into four actions: to explore, to connect, to map, and to engage; this makes it possible for geographers to have a background in and understanding of Geography. Zimmerer (1994:118) understands Geography as an umbrella discipline covering the social and natural sciences. Skole (2004:739) states that Geography can provide the answers to a great number of environmental challenges that are being experienced around the world. Hartshorne (1992:21) believes Geography is a discipline which provides a correct order and description of the variable character of the earth's surface. In Gilbert (2002) views of the different definitions cited, it is apparent that Geography is regarded as an important subject in people's lives by offering theoretical skills, and connecting people to their environment. It is against this background that the researcher defines Geography to indicate the value of Geography in society so that learners may think of choosing it. A review of the curriculum of school Geography worldwide is presented below. This is important in order to relate the literature to the current Namibian situation.

2.4.2 Geography in the school curriculum

Although the concept of the curriculum was highlighted above, it will be further considered to show the position of Geography in the curriculum and what a curriculum should entail to make Geography more enjoyable to learners in Namibia. The above discussion of the Namibian curriculum and Geography in the school curriculum in general might imply why learners do not choose Geography and what influence teachers could possibly have on the teaching and learning process.

MoE (2017:1) defines the term 'curriculum' as an official document that outlines education and its academic content to be taught in schools. It is a guiding document that directs teachers and learners on what teachers should teach and what learners should learn. It is made up of a precise course or package, or a document that shows how learners can be assessed and demonstrates learning outcomes. A curriculum is also defined as a regular course of study or training leading to a qualification (Hornby, 2010:1359).

Catling (2013:2) states that Geography does not have a stable place in the primary curriculum and is not secured, in the sense that the majority of primary school teachers are not trained to

teach Geography; they are not Geography specialists and this may lead to learners not developing the requisite Geography skills and knowledge. If teachers are given proper training to work and interact with different categories of learners, e.g. slow learners, and appropriately trained in strategies for teaching these categories, they are more likely to generate greater confidence and positive attitudes towards Geography. Van Eden and Warnich (2018:269) concur, as they argue that teachers teach Geography but have difficulty explaining its nature as defined in the curriculum documents. This makes Geography more vulnerable and subject to variations in its accorded status (Fritz & Alexander, 2003:41). Catling, Bowles, Halocha, Martin and Rawlinson (2007:118) think that if Geography were to be taught together with all other subjects in primary schools, it would have a better position in the school curriculum and positively influence learners towards choosing it. He adds that the lack of foundation of Geography from the lower phase might be the root cause of lack of interest in learners to continue with Geography later in their academic journey.

Wilmot (2016:10) describes the unevenness in the subject of Geography in relation to the standard at which teaching and learning methods are applied in classrooms, teachers' knowledge, learners' performance and learning support materials. Wilmot (2016:13) maintains that lack of sources of information and not enough evidence in the teaching of map work are among the aspects that give Geography an insecure status. In the Namibian curriculum, Geography is not an independent subject at the primary phase. The curriculum compiled by the MoE (2009) states that from Grades 5-7 Geography is integrated into the social sciences as a school subject. Curriculum planners of the NIED consequently did not take into account the specific pedagogical approaches to Geography at a lower level of education (Catling, 2013:118). Lack of a strong geographical foundation in the lower grades may have an impact on whether Geography is chosen at the secondary level. According to Jones and Lambert (2013:18), primary school teachers are not specialist Geography teachers and could have difficulty interpreting geographical information. Oates (2010:70) made a distinction between content, concepts and context, and emphasises that when content dominates the National Curriculum, much in the pedagogy and experience is imposed on learners in ways that are not motivating or meaningful. Alexander (2010:254) proposed a curriculum capacity whereby a teacher can move with ease around the conceptual and organisational territory that each subject represents without needing a level of specialist subject experts. He further argued that curriculum capacity may enable teachers to be more flexible, confident and create the connections between content and context in the best interests of their learners.

Although some scholars emphasise that Geography's place in some curricula is not secure, the South African curriculum seems to be secure in a sense that whenever changes are made in the curriculum, then Geography is included (Le Grange & Beets, 2005). Catling (2013:33) made it clear that stability is not possible if curriculum planners do not consider implementing long-term plans at both national and school level. Furthermore, Van Eeden and Warnich (2018:269) indicate that there are not adequate opportunities given to Geography teachers in terms of time to decide on teaching, learning materials and activities that they want learners to engage in. According to the report for the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED,1990), Geography teaching is occurring in almost every school; it is satisfactory in some schools in view of the good foundation laid early in primary schools. Geography did decline in the past, but in some parts of the world its popularity as a subject has increased (Brysch, 2014; Gardner, 2015; Wilmot & Dube, 2015b). In some states in the United States of America, Geography is a prerequisite for high school graduation (Brysch, 2014:10). This is not the case in the Namibian curriculum, because there has been no advocacy to strengthen the place of Geography in the school curriculum (Van Eeden & Warnich, 2018:268). According to Van Eeden and Warnich (2018:268), stakeholders should make a case for Geography to be valued in schools and present this to the government for consideration instead of waiting for the government to act. Catling (2007:118), and McKendree, Small, Stenning and Conlon (2002:67) emphasise that Geography should be introduced from the early stage of schooling; this may then produce a better achievement in both primary and secondary phases. McKendree et al. (2002:67) underscore the fact that educators are not preparing learners well to get into a mood of liking Geography. In a White Paper report, namely *Better Schools*, Lawton (2012) explains that there is a need to clarify the objectives of the Geography curriculum throughout the compulsory years of school life, as this may help stakeholders in education (e.g. teachers, parents, and employers) to have a clearer sense of what has to be accomplished and what learners need to understand.

The recent OFSTED report (2011:124) gives evidence on the care that needs to be taken in offering quality Geography education in schools. Lambert (2003:75) contends that teachers are seriously challenged by not having sufficient geographical knowledge. Teachers not knowing what to teach may have a negative impact on learners and so contribute to the decline in the number of students taking Geography at the secondary level. The issue of Geography declining as a subject does not only lie with teachers, but also with learners as reflected by their performance in Papers 1 and 2, (Department of Basic Education, South Africa, DBE, 2016b:87-98). The same problems occur every year; learners lack content skills and are unable to define

geographical terms. They do not understand the meaning of instructions, therefore, it is difficult for them to know what they are expected to answer. The report further highlights that learners cannot answer middle- and higher-order thinking questions; they do not have the necessary skills and lack the knowledge to undertake map interpretations and calculations. The Diagnostic Report of the 2013 NSC (DBE, South Africa, 2014:15) emphasises that learners perform well in questions that require them to give short answers, but they perform dismally in questions that requires them to write paragraphs and essays, or in questions where answers have to be substantiated.

Geography as a subject is under pressure in the curriculum also because of the wealth of choices offered to learners in schools (Best, 2011:5). Best (ibid.) further explains that learners tend to opt for other subjects such as Physical Sciences and Biology, to mention a few, instead of Geography, resulting in a decline in learners pursuing Geography at senior level. The DBE, South Africa (2014:89) identifies three problems encountered in the Geography curriculum:

- The problem of English as a language of instruction: learners are unable to express themselves;
- Learners' lack of Geography content knowledge and their inability to explain geographical concepts; and
- Learners' lack of map work skills and understanding.

Spaull (2013:25) emphasises that the poor quality of Geography teaching is the biggest problem contributing to the poor quality of the Geography being offered in schools. Teachers are critical factor contributing to the problem of poor-quality Geography education in most schools. This might be a contributory factor as to why learners are not interested in choosing Geography as a school subject at the secondary level in Namibia.

According to Wilmot and Dube (2016:342), there is a problem in schools, especially in rural areas where the poverty line index is high; this may also have a direct impact on the teaching and learning process of Geography. They also mention poor management in schools as a factor which leads to problems in Geography education because of the poor service delivery to cater for the needs related to the subject. This is assumed to be a result of lack of knowledge and understanding of the subject by those in management. If schools are not adequately controlled by monitoring teaching, this affects education in general. They add that poor management may lead to poor discipline and view this as one of the challenges affecting the quality of Geography education. Wilmot and Dube (2016:343) also identify the challenge of poor learning habits of

learners, high absenteeism, unpunctuality for classes, and poor budgeting by the Ministry of Education and schools to purchase school education-related equipment and resources. This includes a lack of Geography textbooks in many schools.

Wilmot (2016: 1-2) identifies the absenteeism of teachers were compiled as one of the key phenomena preventing learners from effectively learning Geography in schools. Best (2011:11) calls for passion, inspiration and love for Geography in order to reinstate this subject; it is and should be an important part of the 21st-century curriculum. Best's (2011:6) mission to promote a rich education, innovative teaching and effective learning mechanisms should be adopted and implemented. Adopting Best's mission might encourage learners to see the world through various systems and how the systems interact.

SAGTA provides a much-needed formalised professional structure. According to Bardos (2008:381), in order to strengthen Geography in South Africa, as part of the developing world, many role-players need to be involved. This required the collaboration of classroom-based practitioners in the public independent school sectors, university-based Geography educators and researchers, retired teachers and academics, government officials, teachers in-service training, and non-governmental organisations (Bardos, 2008:381). Their efforts on combating the decline resulting in an environment that was conducive to sustain Geography as a subject in the school curriculum for Southern Africa and the world at large.

To reduce the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography as a school subject, Namibia also needs to initiate research among Geography educators that allows reflective and critical engagement with customary practices and professional minds, International Geography Union IGU, (Pearson & Heffernan, 2015:4). In engaging educators in active research could give them a holistic perspective, up-to-date comprehension of both local and international discourse and publishing in Geography, which is essential for educators to promote learners' interest in the subject and guide them appropriately. Geography educators need to adapt curricula so as to emphasise that Geography in schools is important and that it contributes to combating the global environmental crisis. Lambert and Morgan (2010:49) identify the main components of curriculum resources, namely subject, pedagogy and learning, and they advise that teachers should balance competing demands. Figure 2.1 shows teacher resources in Geography curriculum that Lambert and Morgan (2010) identify.

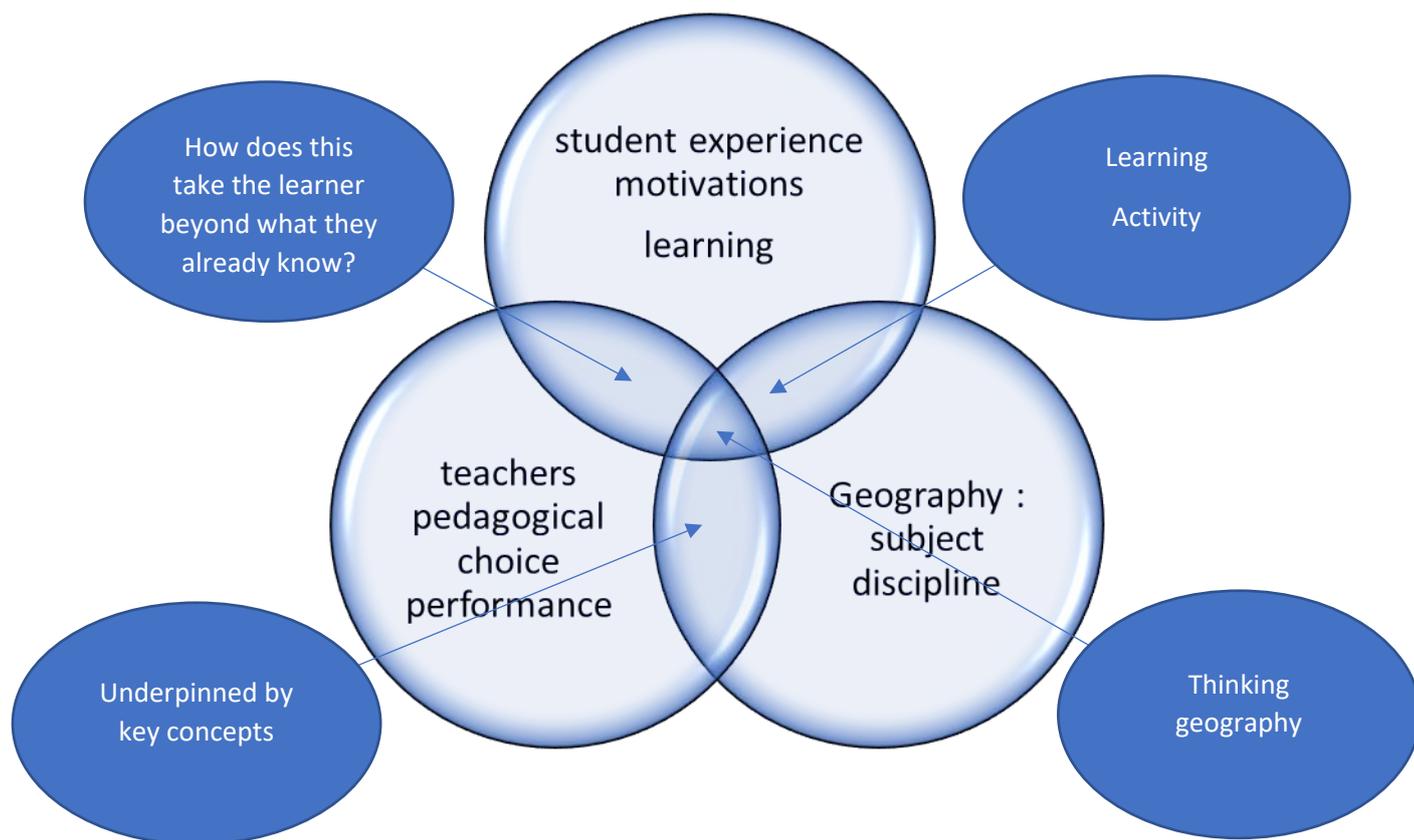


Figure 2.2: Resources for teachers' curriculum making in Geography (Adapted from Lambert and Morgan (2010:49))

The significance of Geography as a subject is twofold: learning and teaching, reasons for learning Geography and the role of Geography (Lambert & Morgan, 2010:49). It is crucial to have a theoretical background on what learning is and why learning of Geography is needed in order for educators to guide learners in decision-making and to stimulate a love of Geography.

2.4.3 Significance of Geography

- **Learning and teaching**

The concept of learning is one of the crucial parts of education, which should also be linked to Geography like any other subject, and should be taken into consideration by teachers, curriculum designers and other educational stakeholders. To identify the influence that teachers have on the number of learners taking or not taking Geography and to avoid the decline of the subject in schools, one has to think of what/when/how learning and teaching should be applied in Geography lessons. It is important to evaluate how teaching and learning may both be contributing to the decline in Geography as a subject. Mouton (2001:5) explains that learners

should not just be taught how to learn, but how to also gain insight and to acquire new knowledge, which applies to Geography as well. This knowledge may attract learners and create an interest in choosing Geography. In the same vein, DuFour (2012:8) concludes that the core mission of formal education is therefore not simply for learners to be taught, but also to ensure that they learn. In professional learning, teachers and curriculum designers should engage with crucial parts of the learning process, asking themselves the following questions:

- What do they want learners to learn in Geography?
- How will they know when each learner has learned?
- How will they respond when learners experience challenges in learning Geography?

DuFour (2012:8) further asserts that in traditional schools, teachers teach to finish the syllabi irrespective of whether learners have mastered the content or not. If this is true for Geography, then it could influence learner's decision as to whether to study Geography further. However, learning is a process that requires learners to gain knowledge and be motivated in doing so (Boekaerts, 2011:208-425). Boekaerts (2011:408-425) and Zimmerman (2011:49-64) argue that when learners try to learn Geography without enough motivation, they may not develop an interest in the subject. Efklides (2011:6-25) elaborates on the notion of self-regulation in the following way: "learners are self-directed to an assignment, then they plan how to do it, handle challenges, are able to control feelings, evaluate performance, and decide on the cause of results." Boyle (2007:299) compares deep and surface learning; in deep learning learners tend to enjoy the subject because they are motivated. Motivation comes from 'within' and it is treasured. It generates thinking and a feeling of ownership (Boyle, 2007). Surface learning differs as it is driven by an external motivation (just to get the subject done); it feels like an imposition and tends to be uncritical and lacking in understanding (Moon, 2004). Boyle (2007:317) stresses that these kinds of learning take place differently – surface learning occurs when learners are worried about failure, while deep learning occurs when learners are more relaxed and enjoy their learning.

Innes (2012:93) expresses the view that teaching and learning in secondary schools lays the foundation for furthering the study of Geography at the level of higher education. Teaching should not just happen. Van Eeden and Warnich (2018:273) argue that teachers should always think about Geography in terms of the needs of learners and the resources that are needed. Most teachers find it extremely challenging to present individual tasks. According to them, if a Geography teacher does not know the subject content and does not have Geography skills, then

it is difficult for such a teacher to decide on and identify the required resources needed in the classroom. As a result, learners may be demotivated and not interested in learning Geography. Butt, Weeden, Chubb and Srokoz (2006:140) noted that some Geography teachers do not have time to complete the syllabus, which then makes them choose only certain topics to teach. In turn, learners may be influenced by the teacher. All of the above-mentioned insights into the importance of quality learning can, if positively applied to Geography, contribute towards reducing the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography as a subject at the secondary level in Namibian schools. In short, learners need to understand why they should study Geography.

- **Reasons why learners study Geography**

Rosenberg (2017:1) explains why there is a need for learners to study Geography. Learners are likely to benefit from getting a broader knowledge and understanding of the earth and everything that exists upon it. Teaching Geography in Grades 8-12 lays a foundation for learners to continue studying the subject at tertiary institutions (Van Eden & Warnich, 2018:269). Adey and Biddulph (2001:50-439) emphasise the importance of studying Geography at school; it is very useful and directive for career-related aspirations. Lord and Harland (2000) are of the opinion that learning Geography at school has future-related significance. According to Verdi and Kulhavy (2002:27), learning Geography is important and depends on how teachers demonstrate the lesson or a topic to learners. For instance, Geography teachers can use maps during lessons to show places which are far from each other as well as landmarks and related topics. Such demonstrations may enhance learners' knowledge on map skills. Verdi and Kulhavy (2002:27) state that when maps are presented correctly, they serve as real educational instruments that encourage learning among learners. Verdi and Kulhavy (2002:30) emphasise that learning about geographical maps enriches learners' information and knowledge about the world.

A survey report compiled by the National Research Council (2006) of South Africa emphasises that Geography teaches learners to think spatially, which can be described as the building up of concepts of space, tools of representation, and process of reasoning. Spatiality embraces acting and understanding, that require thinking about objects or processes or phenomena in space (Schultz, Kerski & Patterson, 2008:27-34). Through spatial learning, learners could learn to know how to commit to sustainable development (Black, 2005; Mathewson, 1999; Wai, Lubinsky & Benbow, 2009). Biddulph and Adey (2003:295) propose that spatial literacy

should be introduced into the school Geography curriculum. They state that when studying Geography, learners tend to appreciate some topics like population and regions, which enhance and provide a wider perspective on cultural issues. They add that this may also give opportunities for learners to appreciate different individual and cultural viewpoints.

The International Geography Union (ICGU) charter (2016) highlights the importance of Geography by enabling people to answer questions on how to live sustainably and interdependently with the environment. The ICGU charter (2016) further reports that learners get to understand present-day dilemmas such as food security, climate change, misusing of natural resources and the impact of migration.

Hopwood (2004: 356) explains that Geography is a subject that teaches about the planet and how the world works and people's interactions with it. Harrison and Norman (2004: 256-265) and Adey and Biddulph (2001: 439-450) add that the subject is not exclusively about true-life (factual) knowledge, but it motivates students to have different viewpoints and to express their own opinions; at some points it challenges students because it requires thinking like in any other subjects. However, the subject was not regarded as one of the traditional liberal arts subjects in the 19th and 20th centuries. Instead, it remains a small component of the liberal arts and school curriculum, and sometimes it is not offered at all. In general, geographers are very rare in the national academic circles, which is why learners need to understand why there is a need to study Geography. A review of the school Geography curriculum revealed a lot of things e.g. lack teacher's knowledge, lack pedagogically sound ways of presenting material, poor performance by learners, and poor-quality learning support materials may be some of the things that do not contribute to the favourable promotion of Geography. They may be the root causes of low learner interest in studying Geography at senior (secondary) level. The next section that deals with the role of Geography is discussed below.

- **The role of Geography**

This section reviews the role of Geography in order to understand what can stimulate the interest of learners to study Geography. Knowledge of Geography plays a vital role in day-to-day activities and is significant in the lives of humans; for example, municipalities and service providers require expert workers in GIS (Geographic Information System) (Innes, 2012:93). Ahamer (2012:316) claims that a knowledge of geography is crucial for understanding the following phenomena: globalisation, cultural diversity, technology and the internet, business,

industry and social services, climate change, energy, natural and technological hazards, transportation, and employment. He adds that knowledge of the subject Geography helps people to travel around the world in an informed way and to interact with each other, including operating business with different companies and governments. Hurry (1994:4) points out that there are different absolute of latitude, longitude of a specific place and relative locations for directions (south-south-east) on earth, which are linked together by a knowledge of geography.

According to Ahamer (2012:315), a knowledge of geography plays a role in the expansion of information, Businesses recruit geographers to help identify suitable and attractive places to locate economic activities or for establishing businesses (Ahamer, 2012:315). He further emphasises that the world is challenged with natural hazards occurring all the time, including an erratic climate and harsh weather conditions, but with a knowledge and understanding of geography, people can forecast and ameliorate such challenges. Knowledgeable and educated people in the subject may discover solutions to reduce environmental damage and avoid future danger (Hurry, 1994:9). When geographical knowledge is acquired, a society tends to understand its world better, and its members become responsible citizens who can make decisions on sustainable development and climate change (Hurry, 1994:9).

According to Basha (2004:16), Geography in schools gives a clear picture of the connection between human beings and the environment. It provides skills of different types in dealing with microclimates, natural conditions and reserves of different countries in the world – it makes it possible for people to understand the planet. Geography as a subject also assists people to know and understand their economic needs; it informs agriculturalists, industrialists, marketers and politicians on what exactly is required from them to effectively perform their tasks (Basha, 2004). According to Basha (2004:18), the importance of Geography may be summed up as follows:

- It equips people with abundant information to organise themselves and be able to overcome daily life challenges such as climate change and natural hazards. A society may learn how to use its natural resources and turn them into products so as to contribute to the economy and plan for the future to set up industries or markets;
- A knowledge of Geography is helpful for officials and politicians. It provides guideline to show ways and means to govern a country in managing sustainable development.

- Vital in attaining the knowledge of various social science fields such as history, sociology, politics and theology. This implies that the subject of Geography is a combination of different fields;
- Traditional and knowledgeable importance of Geography – through the subject, people tend to know different philosophies around them, within their own countries and of the world at large.

All of this depends on the role of fieldwork. To stimulate the minds of learners to explore Geography, learners should not be bound to the classroom, but should go beyond the classroom to get an overview of the subject (Basha, 2004:19). It is against this background that the next section discusses the application of fieldwork for skills acquisition.

2.5 APPLYING FIELDWORK FOR SKILLS ACQUISITION

Fieldwork is regarded as a vital part of Geography as it complements teaching and learning. If fieldwork is put into practice effectively, it may motivate and consequently involve learners in specific learning activities and stimulate them to study Geography (Dalton, 2001:397-393). Gitau (2008) defines fieldwork as a method of teaching that can be described as implementing the science of observing, evaluating and giving feedback on information from a specific area being observed. The report of the DBE, South Africa (2011a) emphasises that fieldwork involves investigation, analysis and synthesis of topics that can be investigated by learners such as climatology, marine life, geomorphology, rivers, the geological folding and faulting and weathering of the landscape. Hope (2009:179) and the syllabus of Kenya Institute Education, KIE (2012) are in accord that fieldwork helps learners to develop specific subject knowledge and transferable skills that promote active learning that links theory to the real world. Hope (2009:178) encourages fieldwork because through its application learners can explore and see things on their own and this then makes them enjoy and understand Geography better, instead of being confined only to a classroom and textbook content. KIE (2012) explains that it assists learners to attain relevant competency; by the end of the course learners should be able to apply fieldwork techniques in learning Geography. She believes that fieldwork is effective for application in themes such as coastal features, for example.

Fuller (2006:93) states that fieldwork delivers pedagogical benefits and enhances the link between a learner's affective response reply (emotion, feelings and value) and deep learning. From an educational and psychological point of view, fieldwork enhances cognitive and affective gains (Foskett, 1999:159-163). Boyle (2007:318) sees fieldwork that involves deeper

learning as valuable and important, because it contributes positively to learning and enhances a learner's affective responses. Fieldwork is mostly appropriate, but secondary teachers have a misconception that it is not effective when studies are conducted in areas far from schools (Benjamin & Nato, 2014:224). As a result, most schoolteachers do not apply fieldwork in their lessons. Benjamin and Nato (2014:225) further point out that due to factors such as costs, transport, far places, travelling risks, time consumed and a lot of administration work, teachers are often unable to apply fieldwork effectively. As a result, Benjamin's theory fieldwork has become unpopular in many schools in the Khomas region of Namibia. Kent (2006:66) is also of the opinion that fieldwork has declined internationally due to cost, shortage of time, risk and a packed curriculum. The Namibian secondary school Geography syllabus seems not to provide directive guidelines on how teachers should implement fieldwork in their daily work activities (Ministry of Education, 2010:50). The document does suggest opportunities for the use of fieldwork methods including basic skills of understanding, judgement, decision-making and application of geographical skills (MoE, 2010:51). Simasiku (2012:15) argues that Geography teachers in Namibian secondary schools tend to lack the required skills for using fieldwork teaching methods. Lack of fieldwork applications in the secondary school phase might therefore be among the factors leading to a decline in learners choosing Geography in Namibia. Wilmot and Dube (2015:346) argue that enquiry-based learning tends not to be taken into consideration by Geography teachers, although it is regarded as contributing positively to the learning and cognitive growth of learners. According to them, this is mainly due to the following reasons:

- Some teachers claim that they do not like fieldwork because they were not equipped with such training at university, thus they would not know how to put it into practice;
- Fieldwork is often not integrated into school timetables; therefore, it is neglected;
- Teachers are likely to sacrifice their own time and incur transport costs to take learners on fieldtrips, taking responsibility for the learners' safety when they are out of the school premises (Benjamin & Nato, 2014:224);
- Teachers tend to seek additional funds to cover expenses for fieldtrips.
- Fieldwork does not usually take place on the school premises and this may require teachers and learners to travel far distances. This may limit taking a number of classes at a time. The duration of the period is only 40 to 45 minutes, which is not sufficient for effective fieldwork.

Treby (2006:63) describes the pedagogical benefits of fieldwork in which students might get involved and have opportunities to develop varieties of subject-specific skills in areas such as mapping, data collection, analysis and transferable knowledge such as independent learning and problem-solving. The possible causes of the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography are the core of this study and are discussed briefly in the next section.

2.6 THE DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF LEARNERS CHOOSING GEOGRAPHY

Geography is considered as an important subject that connects the natural and social world. However, the number of learners interested in studying Geography at school level has tended to decline despite its significance (Spence & Owens, 2011:1). They add that this has resulted in the subject being devalued in some countries. They further explain that it is necessary to keep up the position and value of Geography just like any other subject; geographers or Geography teachers engage in both the natural and social sciences component of the subject. The OFSTED report (2011:4) emphasises that the decline may be related to a lack of expertise and awareness of what constitutes good Geography. The report further indicates that the decline of learners studying GSCE Geography may be caused by uninspiring teaching and this may discourage many learners from choosing Geography at GCSE. According to the report, the quality of the subject content delivery and time allocated to it might be limited and this might not allow the kind of effective teaching which is necessary for learners to grasp the lessons.

In South Africa Chisholm (2000:6), Taylor (2013:27-53) and Spaul (2013:21) are of the opinion that the current education system might be ineffective and needs to be revised as it could result in a low quality of teaching and learning. They further state that teachers' knowledge, in terms of the foundational curriculum and pedagogy, could be a matter of concern. In the past many scholars concentrated on investigating issues related to teaching and learning in Mathematics and English, with less attention paid to Geography (Weeden, 2005:41-62). This means other subjects are considered more important than Geography despite the strengths and benefits of the latter. As a matter of fact, very little research has been done on the reasons for the decline in learners' interest in Geography. Weeden highlights some of the findings that have been obtained thus far on the decline in the number of learners taking Geography as a subject. These include learners' perceptions of the subject and the way it is taught. Wilmot (2005:337) argues that Geography teachers tend to be challenged (often without enough support) through a national curriculum.

Rawlinson Essex-Cater, Bolden and Constable (2003:39-56) address the phenomenon of the number of applicants wishing to teach Geography declining schools in England mainly because of a language problem. On the other hand, Rawlinson et al. (2003:39) detected many issues related to the introduction of the national curriculum in schools in England and Wales, for instance a decrease in the number of learners choosing Geography, as well as a reduction of in-service training courses for teachers, and noted that not much has been done to remedy the situation or to find solutions. They further state that Geography might fail to attract learners in schools because there might be a lack of teaching experts and few inspirational teachers, therefore learners might no longer be inspired and motivated to carry on with studying Geography. This may then lead to a fall in the number of learners choosing Geography in the GCSE phase.

A report compiled by Mills, McNeil and Attoh-Okine (2013:4) highlights different views by learners who expressed their concerns by emphasising that the subject needs to be substituted with more three-dimensional aspects dealing with current issues, namely: climate change, sustainable resource management, urban growth, transport or environment. The authors indicate that the number of learners choosing Geography might continue to decline since many learners and parents tend to evaluate the opportunities yielded by the subject in terms of 'utility value' and fear that one might not get a well-compensated job. As a result, they do not find it necessary to continue studying the subject.

The decline of the subject might be linked to stakeholders' observations, and ignorance among students and teachers that also occurs on some occasions (Mills, McNeil & Attoh-Okine, 2013:5). Mills, McNeil and Attoh-Okine add that they feel it is a pity that Geography is losing its value; more changes need to be made to the syllabus as early as reasonable such as when children are between the ages of 9 to 10 years of age. This is mainly because at these ages' children might not really have much of career choice compared to when they are old enough to make their own decisions. Okunrotifa (2008:16) explains that students act more from familiarity than self-appraisal shortcomings without knowing the role of education in their lives. Therefore, the attitudes of learners towards their schoolwork influence their choice and performances in the long run, apart from the inadequate academic contextual issues related to learners and limited resources for Geography teaching in general (Okunrotifa, 2008:16).

In a study carried out on Geography education in Australia, Mills and Ballantyne (2010 :447) touches on the factors affecting students' choice of Geography as a senior secondary subject in

Queensland. Mills and Ballantyne (2010 :447) collected different views and responses from different learners who chose and did not choose Geography. Learners emphasised that the decline in Geography tended to be the result of personal interests together with the perceived relevance of Geography for their future careers. The study found that learners tend not to choose Geography because of other external influences such as the increasing exclusion of Geography from the junior level curriculum. Rawling (2001) and Weeden (2005) are in accord on the factors of the subject choices at junior level. They also add other factors such as the local financial state of schools as well as family and public expectations. Lord and Harland (2000), Payne (2003) and Adnett and Davies (2005) share the same view on subject choice (field of studies) and how the subject is perceived.

Mills and Ballantyne (2010 :447) argues that the decline might be attributed to the introduction of many subjects into the secondary school curriculum and integrating social science subjects such as the study of society and legal studies, who are taken by the number of learners who might otherwise have chosen Geography at Grade 11 and 12 level. Van Eeden and Warnich (2018:270) state that from Grade 10-12 learners choose subjects and this might happen unknowingly in terms of the relationship in subjects which are in line with their careers. This might have a negative impact on Geography in school in the 21st century. This could also be the case in Namibia where learners have the option to choose subjects. In Namibian schools, Geography is taught as an integrated subject up to Grade 7 rather than a specific subject on its own (MoE, 2010). Although much has been done to address the issue of the decline, other aspects such as time allocated to lessons still need to be addressed; not much can be covered with the time usually allocated for these lessons (Gerber,2001). In the Namibian curriculum the maximum number of lessons allocated per 7-day cycle is four (MoE, 2010).

Williams and Lew (2014:1) express the fear that Geography might disappear in the school context, although the subject deals with human and physical aspects to address the needs of the 21st century. The geographic subject contents and the way teachers are expected to render the service are indicative of the subject's problem (Williams & Lew, 2014:2). Geography is weakened by being divided into two disciplines: physical and human, instead of playing to its strength as the only subject that can offer a complete study of pressing environmental concerns (Williams & Lew, 2014:2).

Wilmot and Dube (2015:345) identified several problems experienced among teachers and learners regarding the selection of Geography as a senior subject; these might also apply to

Namibia. They make comparisons between schools that adopted a no-school-fees system and those that require school fees. Their results show that schools where fees are paid were well equipped with resources, and the performance of learners was very good. In non-fee-paying schools there is a shortage of learning support materials: two or three learners share one textbook, and teachers struggle with making copies to support learners with a summary (Wilmot & Dube, 2016:347). The situation is difficult. The lack of textbooks means learners cannot be exposed directly to texts, graphics and decoding by retrieving different kinds of information on their own in their own time without relying on what the teacher provides.

According to a diagnostic report by Graven (2014:15), there are several issues associated with schools that have adopted a no-fee-paying system. Some of these issues are that learners are challenged in answering questions that require long answers as they tend not to explain and give details of their answers in paragraphs; learners experience language barriers, thus they tend not to express themselves clearly in the official language, and this may apply to teachers as well. The report further states that teachers tend to find it difficult to explain geographical terms and they lack map work skills for calculations, use of legends, and being able to identify the types of slopes and landforms (Graven, 2014:4). Adey and Biddulph (2001:449) note that learners are likely to be associated with being submissive beneficiaries of skills, without putting in their part because they depend more on writing summaries, copying bookwork and learning terms and definitions through copying. Wilmot's (2005b) study discusses thoroughly with the hope of keeping the subject alive and valued. She further reveals that lack of textbooks may hinder the effective learning the subject (Wilmot, 2005b).

Rilwani, Akahomen and Gbakeji, (2014:28-36) argue that the interest of learners in choosing Geography seems to be high. They state that there are concerns such as lack of sufficient qualified teachers to teach Geography as well as lack of teaching resources. They feel these may be some of a few factors contributing to poor performance. Nevertheless, Rilwani et al. (2014:28) suggest there is a need to reduce the content of the syllabi, which would allow more time for learners to master the subject and in so doing to retain them in the field. Teachers should be trained through induction programmes or workshops, quality building programmes (team building), equal distribution of teaching facilities, revising of the subject curriculum, as well as being given proper direction and analysis of Geography-related job opportunities (Rilwani, Akahomen & Gbakeji, 2014:38.). Weeden (2007:67) highlights that learners are more likely to choose a subject when they like the content and pedagogical methods of teaching, as well as understanding its usefulness and importance. Since Geography is not often

considered a priority, the result may be a lack of Geography skills among learners. It is crucial to look at what could be the impact of a lack of geographical knowledge on the country. This is discussed in the next section.

2.7 IMPACT OF THE LACK OF GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE IN SOCIETY

If the decline in the number of students taking Geography continues, then Namibia might experience a lot of challenges by not having experts in geography who can contribute to geographical knowledge and understanding. MoE (2010:5) in the JSC Geography syllabus highlights some challenges that future generations might encounter, and is a lack of understanding of the subject a challenge in itself and therefore would not be able to overcome problems faced by Namibian society. It further states that the absence of Geography content in society might have a negative impact of not being able to manage and conserve natural resources, which may lead to, or aggravate, an economic crisis. The challenges and risks of health caused by, for example, HIV and AIDS, pollution, and poor sanitation and waste management would continue to undermine the environment and consequently the people. Thus, it is very important for learners to be motivated and to be made aware of the impact of not taking Geography as a subject in their secondary phase of schooling.

Lambert (2011:243) states that fieldwork could address learners' possible limited knowledge, it could teach learners the importance of learning directly in specific areas and environments. Lacking geographical skills of teachers may result in unprepared learners who do not have a sound understanding of the aspects impacting on the earth, for example, climate change (global warming), desertification, El Niño and scarcity of water.

Although Geography has been regarded as a subject with a high failure rate in schools, this could be a bad reflection on the overall educational system (Rosenberg, 2017:2). The subject is also likely to be referred to as a part of the curriculum to satisfy learners' interest in people and places. At a senior level Geography could provide opportunities for learners to develop a broader and up-to-date skilled mind set. Furthermore, the subject could assist by putting learners in a position to keep their career options open rather than having a narrow range of options. This is highly likely, because the reason for the lack of geographical knowledge in the first place could be that there is disregard for the discipline in the society. The researcher believes that learners will excel in everything that they are willing to do and interested in doing. It is against this background that the next section sheds light on the interest of teachers and

learners in Geography. This is relevant to this study because if learners are not interested in the subject Geography, then they will not choose it.

2.8 INTEREST IN GEOGRAPHY

Possible areas of interest in Geography may be established to slow down the decline in the number of learners choosing the subject. Teachers and curriculum developers may need to identify interesting topics that they would like to teach, and which may interest learners as well. Kidman (2017:1) defines the term “interest” as a state of curiosity or concern about or attention to something. This could be related to Geography as a subject. Kidman states that there could be a configuration of what learners find interesting and motivational to learn as well as what teachers find interesting to teach. Kidman notes that it is the level of interest of teachers and learners that may contribute positively and effectively to achieving geographical learning outcomes as well raising the number of learners interested in enrolling in Geography. Most of the contributing factors have been investigated and reviewed by different scholars, but the aspect of interest involving teachers and students in decision-making of designing and implementing the curriculum has hardly been explored (Kidman, 2017:1).

Ozdemir (2012:340) describe interest and attitudes as features within people’s personal characters that could be changed by their peer groups. There may be positive or negative attitudes towards a condition, while interest points toward involvement of some kind (Kidman, 2017:2). Learners and teachers could also be encouraged to develop an interest in the subject as this plays a vital role in choosing the subject at a secondary phase. Krapp (2002:405) argues that interest is the development from childhood to early adulthood, models to describe and theoretically reconstruct structural changes in an individual's pattern of personal interests over a longer period of time, ideas of how to conceptualize the transition from situational to individual interest, and theoretical considerations about the structure and function of the psychological regulation-system that is assumed to be responsible for establishing and stabilizing motivational preferences”. Interest is likely to encourage and create a force that inspires an individual to take part in activities. Palmer (2009:147) describes interest as a personal phenomenon, which could play a role in the learning of Geography, as it links students with the geographical content and allows them to maintain their concentration long enough for learning to occur. Baram-Tsabari and Yalden (2009:999) and Clark (2008:258), share similar views in terms of linking interest to the pedagogical methods in conducting lessons. Interest might allow learners to listen tentatively and maintain concentration to engender learning in classrooms.

Interest could be established to maintain Geography in the curriculum if, for example, GIS was integrated into the Geography curriculum to support the educational goals of teaching and learning (Sinton 2009:7). According to the National Research Council (2006:4), GIS has a potential to enhance the spatial thinking of learners and teachers. Agnew's (2001:104) article provides an overview of the nature and development of problem-based learning (PBL) as well as its applied potential for the teaching of Geography. PBL is not a teaching and learning method to be adopted lightly, but if the chances of successful implementation are to be maximized, then careful attention to teaching, learning preparation and scenario design is important (Pawson, Fournier, Haigh, Muniz, Trafford & Vajoczki, 2006:103-116). Clear direction should be given to direct learners about what is expected of them, and assessment methods that align with objectives and intended results have to be in place (Macdonald & Savin-Baden, 2004). Perhaps reading Geography materials in English is a problem for teachers and learners, which is the focus of the next section.

2.9 GEOGRAPHY AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE BARRIER

According to Hinde, Popp, Jimenez-Silva and Dorn (2011:47), the International Research in Geography and Environmental Education Report notes that the teaching of Geography is connected to reading and the English language. The report explains that this connection may enhance pronunciation and the writing of geographical terms and content correctly. Lindstone and Stolman (2009:153) found that students in low-moderate income schools were likely to be language disadvantaged when it comes to most subjects – and Geography is no exception. Proficiency in the English language may be below par for Namibian learners and teachers, because English is the second language and most Namibian ethnic groups communicate in their vernacular languages. The context in which most Namibians grew up has had a negative effect on their English proficiency (MoE, 2010:13). Another concern might be the limitations of the curriculum in terms of, for example, excluding literacy in all subject content. Such an exclusion may have a negative effect particularly on learners' use of the English language. English language learners (ELLs) Many learners do not understand the content of subjects if they have not been taught English from a young age (Haynes, 2005; Szpara & Ahmad, 2007:189-195).

Some countries such as the United States of America, have developed an integrated programme that aims at addressing the decline of learners choosing Geography and by adding value to the subject known as geo-literacy Arizona Geographic Alliance (AZA) which was established 2009 (Van der Schee, 2003:49-53). According to Van der Schee (2003:49-53), the Geography curriculum could be reduced by linking it to social science content and including reading and

writing directions. Several teachers contributed to the development of the geo-literacy programme; this was observed to have resulted in a significant improvement in reading (Hinde et.al., 2011).

Graphicacy develops learners' visual and spatial aspects of intelligence and communication (Haugen, 2011:243). They further add that graphicacy plays a role as a fundamental in education along with literacy, numeracy and articulacy. It helps learners to understand visual information, for example, in map work. This may be a positive step in that geo-literacy in the Geography curriculum improves student achievements, which might further stimulate their interest in Geography (D'Agostino, Borman, Hedges & Wong, 1998:401-420). The programme could improve knowledge content through reading and writing (McKenna & Robinson, 2005:168). It further shows that when educators link new and old knowledge for students, topics become enjoyable and interesting, which in turn stimulates student interest in reading. However, there are challenges that hinder the successful implementation of the curriculum (D'Agostino et al., 1998:402). This is mostly the fear that teachers have an inadequate knowledge of Geography to be able to combine it with literacy throughout the curriculum. This would assist teachers to be able to exchange geographical knowledge and skills to help learners to think three-dimensionally (Hinde, Jimenez-Silva & Dorn, 2011:47). Geo-literacy could therefore create lessons that enable teachers to teach geographical terms while simultaneously enhancing reading and writing skills. Poor English proficiency on the sides of teachers and learners might contribute to the low level of interest of learners in Geography. The last theme in this chapter, before the concluding summary, deliberates on the pedagogical approach to Geography lessons.

2.10 INAPPROPRIATE TEACHING METHODS

The use of inappropriate teaching methods in Geography lessons may be considered as hampering and devaluing Geography, especially in Namibia, and this may result in learners not choosing Geography. Teaching Geography is viewed as a vital factor that assists in developing human beings (Ombok, 2007). The effectiveness of teaching Geography can be measured by studying the pedagogical approach in Geography that is applied by teachers and the performance of learners in examinations (Benjamin & Nato, 2014:221). One could assume that a decline in the number of students taking Geography might be a consequence of the wrong approach to teaching geographical content. Applying the correct teaching methods in Geography by, for instance, adopting the learner-centred approach, is regarded as a

fundamental way of enhancing the cognitive development of students (Abagi & Olweya, 1999). The quality of an education in Geography depends on the level of teachers' subject matter competence, as well as on the academic performance of learners (Mullen, 2003; Yambo, 2012). When teaching without adequate planning, learners may do nothing other than to write notes and become passive (Yambo, 2012).

The challenge is how to attract learners and make Geography real, alive and more manageable for learners. Therefore, it is essential to study the way Geography teaching and learning are conducted (Benjamin & Nato, 2014:221). Malusu and Wachira (2008) lists different types of methods that can be used to present lessons, such as the lecture method (teacher-centred), discussion (learner-centred), demonstrations, projects and field trips, to mention a few. According to Benjamin and Nato (2014:222), the lecture method is one of the oldest methods of conducting a lesson. A lecture method may be formal or informal (Malusu & Wachira 2008). They further differentiate between the forms of lecturing: a formal lecture is a one-way method of communication; an informal one involves two-way communication, from a teacher to learners, and from learners to teachers. Gitau (2008: 222) argues that the formal lecture method is appropriate for teaching Geography some of the time as it offers teachers feedback from learners actively involved in the lesson. This method is mainly applied whenever a teacher demonstrates realistic information or teaches a huge class.

Thungu (2008) argues that teacher-centred approaches limit learners' participation, because they are not motivated to develop their reasoning powers. He further adds that teachers have a mammoth task in developing a child's education and mind. Alcorn (2010) justifies the use of a teacher-centred approach to teaching as it can be applied when teaching materials are not available or learners do not have access to such resources. He further elaborates that if a teacher uses a different textbook from that of the learners, then the teacher-centred is appropriate. The latter approach is also appropriate when a teacher is trying to develop an interest among learners, especially when summarising content for a specific basic competence to be achieved.

A study by Benjamin and Nato (2014:220) highlights that a Geography teacher's personality also influences the success of the teacher-centred method. Learners may also be influenced, for example, by a teacher's dress code. Teachers should therefore dress in a professional way, speak loudly and clearly enough, use the correct pronunciation of the words as well as proper verbal diction, use appropriate facial expressions and gestures as these may positively influence developing a learner's enthusiasm (Benjamin & Nato (2014:222)).

Maftoon and Shakouri (2012:237-241) emphasise that the teacher-centred method might be appropriate and supplemental, but the learner-centred method might be the most effective and suitable of all the teaching methods. Gitau (2008) defines the learner-centred method of teaching as involving two-way communication between a teacher and learner, sharing ideas, asking each other questions, and giving each other feedback. Discussion involves the active participation of learners responding to a teacher. Gitau states that learners could get involved in the discussion when they feel part of the learning process and have a sense of ownership. According to Quist (2000), the learner-centred method is suitable when the objectives of teaching is to achieve the goals of Geography because it enhances and develops a learner's knowledge to be able to think critically and to apply facts to reasoning. Quist claims that learners would then be able to evaluate and judge facts, which could lead to a broader understanding and in turn make learning more meaningful.

As discussed above, there are some reported findings that need to be considered to support and add value to Geography like any other subject, which means that learners would then be interested in reflecting on lessons that may lead to their choosing to carry on with Geography. As matter of fact, the researcher believes that more learners would choose Geography, if teachers apply the correct and suitable methods of teaching Geography at the secondary level. According to Awiti (2010:10), the learner-centred approach is suitable and effective only when applied correctly. Thus, discussions could be suitable and effective if learners have enough time to explore and find information on the topic. Teachers should make teaching facilities available and direct learners where to find information and allow them to participate in group work. Awiti (2010:10) emphasises that teachers should play a role to facilitate and encourage learner participation, especially in groups and award points during discussions. In Namibia the current situation tends to blame learners for bad teaching. According to MEC (2010:18), the learner-centred approach to teaching is the recommended method for use in secondary schools.

2.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter reviewed the literature related to factors that addresses the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography at a senior (secondary) level. The discussion was based on different themes in the literature, which found that a decline in the number of learners studying Geography may be due to uninspiring teaching, insufficient time allocated to lessons to complete the syllabi, foundational curriculum of not taking workshops into consideration as was as allocation of subjects into field of studies and poor pedagogy. Teachers might not be equipped with proper training, including proficiency in the English language, and this appears

to be a problem among teachers and learners. There was an unequal distribution of Geography in the fields of study to attract learners to choose Geography. Inappropriate teaching methods may also be a factor in learners' decision not to select Geography. All this indicates that the Namibian educational administration and curriculum implementation may need to be reviewed. The possible causes for a decline in the number of learners choosing Geography are a matter of concern and need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. This review of the literature serves as a background against which the findings of the empirical study can be mapped. Chapter 3 will discuss the research methodology of the study

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature relevant to this empirical study was reviewed in the previous chapter. Arguments were highlighted on the devaluing of school Geography in the curriculum and other aspects that could have contributed to the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography as school subject. This chapter gives an overview of the research methodology and decisions made and used to guide the study. To get more insight into the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography, the study was conducted within the interpretive paradigm, which served as the methodological framework. In this chapter the choice of the research design, research methods, rationale of qualitative research, research paradigm, context of the study and the trustworthiness of the research will be discussed. The discussion will highlight the reasons for choosing the methodology used in the study that is most applicable to respond to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The ethical considerations that were considered in the study are also outlined in this chapter. The research takes on the design of an interpretive case study, which made use of the thematic and constant comparative method of data analysis. In addition, face-to-face (one-on-one) semi-structured interviews were conducted as well as focus group interviews to gather information from participants.

3.2 THE RESEACH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by two main research questions.

- Why is there a decline in learners choosing Geography from Grade 10 to 11 in Namibian schools?
- What influence do teachers have on learners' choice of not to take Geography as a subject in Grade 11?

3.3 RESEARCH AIMS NDA OBJECTIVES

The study had two objectives:

- To determine the reasons why learners, choose or do not choose Geography after Grade 10;
- To identify the influence that teachers have on the number of learners taking or not taking Geography.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Kothari (2004:8) a research methodology is a systematic way of solving a research problem. It thus directs a researcher to make a meaningful understanding of the topic studied. Research methodology covers methods and techniques that are used in the process of implementing a research plan (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:74). Schwandt (2007:95) explains research methodology as a theory of how an inquiry should proceed to collect relevant information. In other words, methodology is a strategic inquiry, which moves from an original assumption to research design and data collection (Schwandt, 2007:95). Research methodology is the process in which data are gathered, analysed and represented (Schwandt, 2007:95). Babbie and Mouton (2001:74) also state that research methodology refers to a set of all plans and precise methods that could be chosen to work with precise issues in research.

Domegan and Fleming (2007:24) state that the aim of qualitative research is to explore and address issues related to a particular problem. Interpretive and naturalistic qualitative research attempts to make sense of a phenomenon as understood through the lived experiences of people (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This study explored the factors and causes for why learners do not choose Geography at a secondary level by engaging with the participants, who were Grade 11 learners and Grade 8-12 Geography teachers.

Connole (2000:19) defines the interpretive paradigm as a lens through which the perceptions and actions of people could be understood. This study was aligned to this paradigm in order to gain a better understanding of why Namibian learners choose or do not choose Geography as a school subject from Grade 10 to 11. The study used the interpretive paradigm because the researcher did not want to oversimplify the findings, but instead wanted to explore the meanings which participants gave to the social situation under investigation. This paradigm served as a framework to help the researcher during the process of gathering data on the significant factors that contributed to the problem. The methodology was shaped by the methods, which were applied in this study for data to be collected through interviews and a focus group. A brief discussion on the research design employed in this study is presented below.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Figure 3.1 is a diagram that served as a guide for the researcher to get relevant information on the decline in the number of learners who choose school Geography as the secondary level in Namibia.

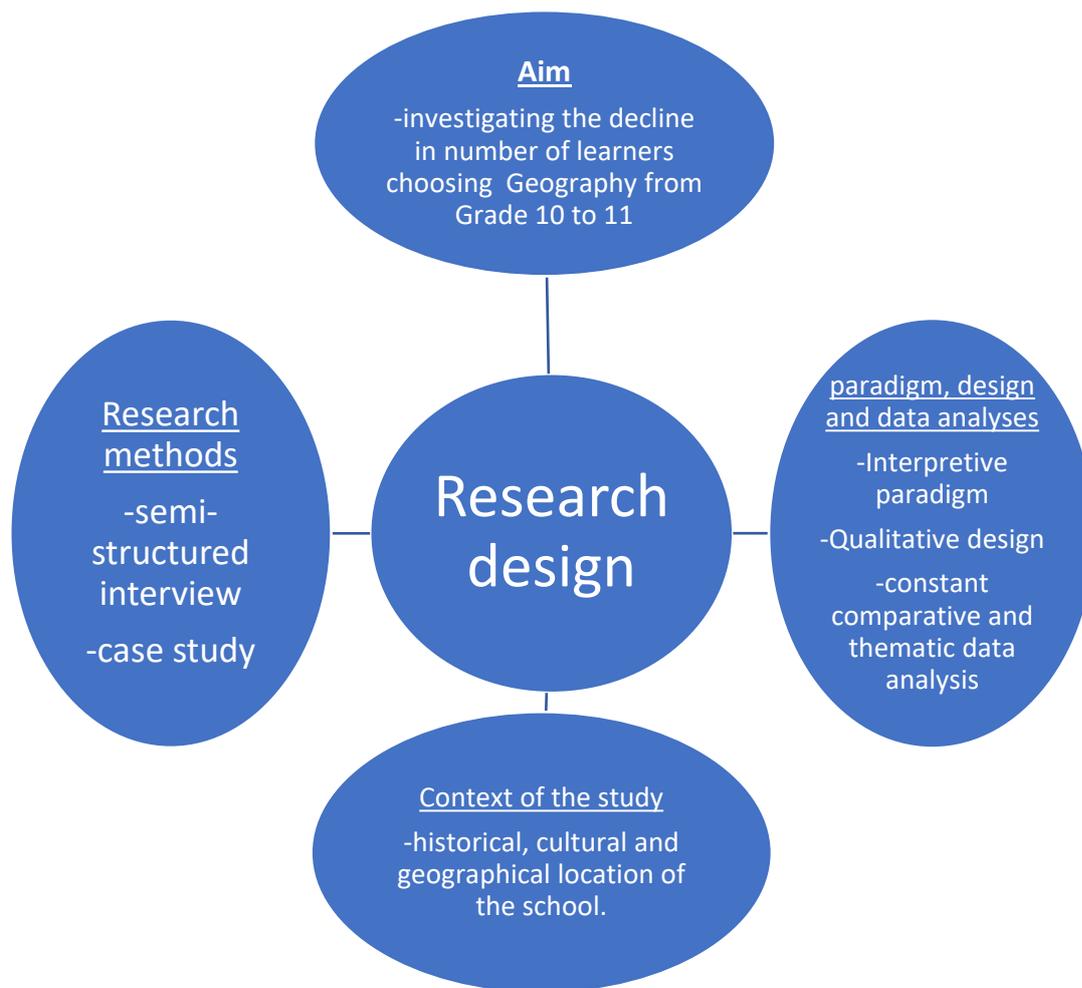


Figure 3.1: Important aspects of research design (Adapted from Awases, 2015:55)

Kothari (2004:31) defines research design as a situational procedure for collecting and analysing data in line with the aim of a study. Research design is the theoretical framework that provides clear guidance to steer the research. It is a strategic action plan that provides precise methods for implementing the theoretical assumptions to be used to conduct a study (Cresswell & Clark, 2007:4).

Leedy (1997:195) describes the research design as a plan of a study that gives an overall framework for gathering information. According to Durkheim (2004:29), it is a tactical framework of action that serves as a bond between research questions and the implementation or application of a research plan. Burns and Grove (2001:195) explain that the research design is an outline for conducting a study that controls factors which may undermine the legitimacy of the findings. Macmillan and Schumacher (2001:166) define it as a plan for choosing subjects, research positions and data collection techniques to answer research questions or

testing a hypothesis. In this study research was designed to answer questions around a decline in the number of learners choosing Geography. Research design plays an important role in investigative research, because it provides an outline of the path followed to conduct the research (Cresswell & Clark, 2007:4).

Cresswell and Clark (2007:4) propose guidelines that a researcher should follow when doing research, and what to do to get the relevant answers to the question of a study. Questions may arise such as: What is to be done? Where is it to be done? When is it to be done? How much will it cost? (De Vaus, 2001:9). In other words, a certain set of questions should be considered by a researcher when gathering data. Research design ensures getting proof that supports a study to respond to questions as accurately as possible (De Vaus, 2001:9). The research design of this study was used to construct research proof to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of Grades 8-12 Geography teachers and Grade 11 learners on the decline of the number of learners choosing or not choosing Geography as senior subject at three selected schools in the Khomas region of Namibia.

3.5.1. Qualitative research

Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:423) emphasise that a qualitative study gets to understand what the participants are thinking and why they understand the study in the way that they do. A qualitative study is designed to investigate participants' lived experiences. In this study the focus was on learners not choosing Geography as a senior subject. Barbour (2008:11) further explains that qualitative research provides answers from inquiries addressed by quantitative research. Applying a qualitative approach in this study enabled the researcher to study, and understand, how teachers and learners experienced the decline in Geography as a subject of choice. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010:3) define qualitative research as a unique way of conducting a study that nurtures specific ways of asking questions and specific ways of thinking through a problem. This helps to understand illogical behaviours, which may result in a researcher dealing with unintended and intended consequences. Behaviours may create unexpected positive or negative consequences. Such research may prompt favourable and unfavourable reactions from participants (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010:218). It is research that may change a situation for the better and control beliefs that may affect future meanings and arrangements.

A qualitative approach was used to study a small group of Geography teachers and learners: it was an in-depth guide and supported the study. This allowed the researcher to investigate the

meaning that Geography teachers and learners ascribed to their performance, actions and interactions with others. A qualitative design was preferred, since the research was in the social science field. This field mainly concentrates on non-numerical data (descriptive data) as opposed to numeric/quantitative data.

Awases (2015:55) emphasises that one of the crucial points of qualitative research is its productivity and the depth of investigation and images it may harvest. This may partly happen due to the insider importance of a researcher's role in terms of becoming the tool itself in terms of what information is gathered and examined. Qualitative research is not grounded on impartial truth, but rather on the truth from the participants' perspective that is obtained as primary data. It is therefore against this background that the qualitative approach was utilised by the researcher, who tried to understand why there was a decline in the number of learners choosing Geography as one of their senior subjects in three Namibian schools. A case study was used as a research design type and is discussed below.

3.5.2 Case study design

This study used a multiple case study design applied to three selected schools in the Khomas region in Windhoek. A multiple case study explores a real-life contemporary bounded system over time through detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2013:97). The researcher studied three cases to understand the differences and similarities between them (Baxter & Jack, 2008:554) According to Yin (2013) another part of multiple case studies might enable the researcher to analyse the data within each case and across cases. The schools were selected on the basis of their performance ranging from the highest performing to the lowest based on their Grade 12 results. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012:443) refer to a case study as a component of qualitative research in which a researcher can focus on one unit of a study known as a bounded system. Baxter and Jack (2008:550) are of the opinion that a case study is an investigation of a phenomenon that occurs within its real-life context. The researcher employed a case study because the study aimed at exploring and understanding the specific lived experiences of teachers and learners with regard to the decline in learners choosing Geography between Grade 10 and 11 in three selected schools in the Khomas region of Namibia.

Denscombe (2003:38) affirms that using a case study can assist research to focus on one or more examples. This enables a researcher to deal with the particulars of a compound situation. According to Tight (2010:329), the use of a case study to conduct research typically detects the

features of a certain area. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:255) argue that a case study consists of specific individuals but can also be studies of single families or units. A case study strongly supports and enables a researcher to study a phenomenon within a real or natural situation. Focusing on a small unit may enable a researcher to undertake an in-depth study. Case studies are useful because they concentrate on one case rather than many. The researcher may get an in-depth insight that may not easily be realised when dealing with a larger unit.

A case study was appropriate for this research because it related to the participants' knowledge and understanding that they could compare the case of their own real-life experiences. In this context a case study assisted in collecting data within the real-life situation of learning and teaching Geography. A case study can be classified as particularistic, descriptive or heuristic (Patton,2014:66). In this study a particularistic approach was appropriate because the study focused on a phenomenon in a particular context, namely the decline of learners choosing Geography in Grade 11 at selected schools in the Khomas region of Namibia. The theoretical framework of a research paradigm that was applied in the study is discussed below.

3.6 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

As shown in Tables 1 and 2 of Chapter 1, there was a decline in the number of learners who chose Geography from 2010 to 2016 in Namibian schools. According to Morgan (2007:48) a paradigm is a set of scientific and philosophical theories that form a theoretical framework in which scientific theories can be verified, assessed and studied. Rocco, Bliss, Callagher and Perez-Prado (2003:19) define a paradigm as a global view that is a straightforward set of assumptions and beliefs which direct a researcher's investigation. Babbie (2017:31) refers to paradigm as a model of understanding that shapes people's perceptions. Le Grange (2014:2) explains that a paradigm is a framework which guides and directs scientific/empirical communities to determine the problem issues for the members to address and to use suitable theories and methods accordingly and find appropriate solutions. This means a paradigm is important as a framework for implementing the methods that will be used.

Creswell (2007, 2009) identifies four paradigms: positivist, critical, postmodernist and interpretive. Le Grange (2014:2) also identifies four paradigms which are suitable to be used in social science: positivist, post-structural, interpretivist and critical. According to TerreBlanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006), these paradigms have three major dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology is about the nature of reality.

Epistemology is about the nature of knowledge. Patel (2015:1) describes methodology as a useful research procedure to acquire knowledge. Figure 3.2 depicts the paradigm order.

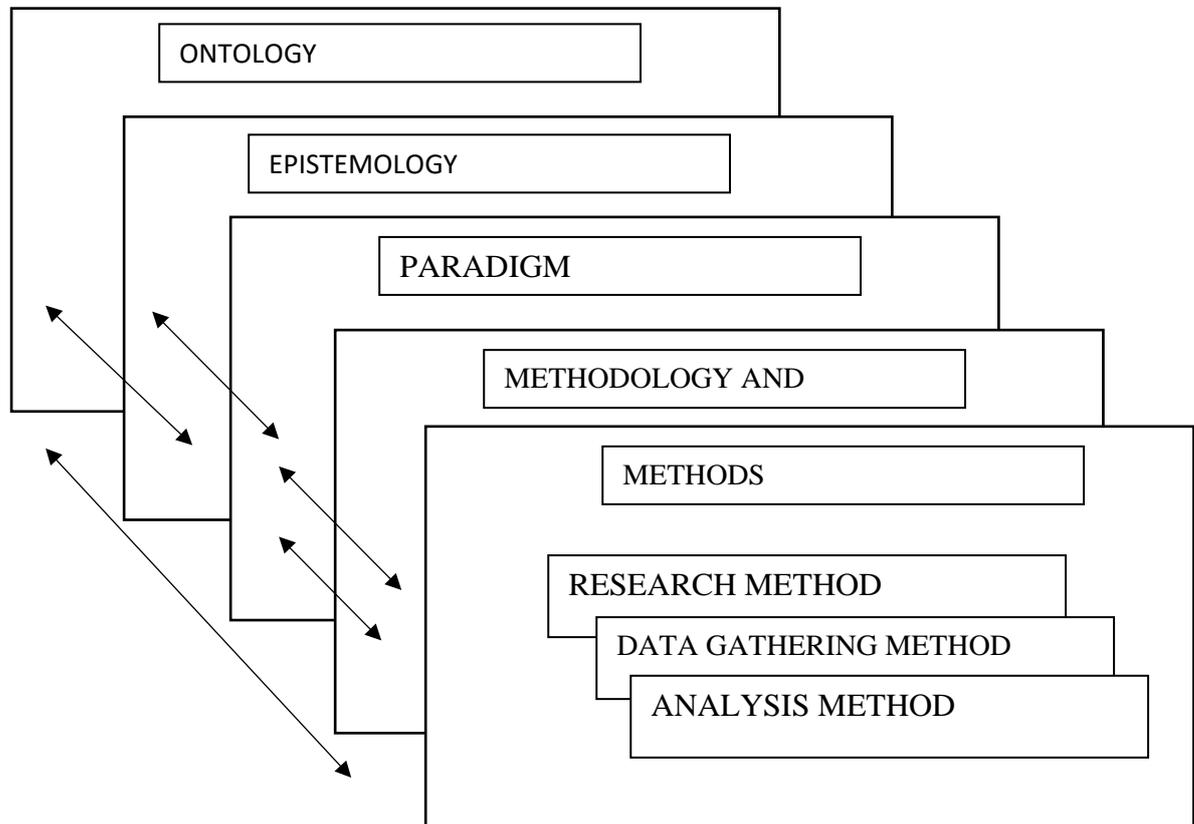


Figure 3.2: Paradigm order adapted from Fayolle et al. (2005:137).

Fayolle, Kyro and Ulijn (2005:137) unpacked the paradigm order by demonstrating that ontology is the widest level, followed by epistemology, which may be derived from ontology. Ontology is a set of concepts and categories in a subject area that shows their properties and the relations between them. Individually methodological assumptions entail numerous detailed methods and in these research methods there are several alternatives for data gathering and analysis. Every paradigm is proposed to respond to the questions: What is the nature of reality? What is there to know about reality (ontology)? What is the nature of knowledge and the relationship between a researcher and participants (epistemology)? And finally, how can a researcher obtain the knowledge and skills and implement the methodology? Maxwell (2004:47) emphasised that it is important to choose a research paradigm that addresses the

methodological and research questions of a study. In this study the researcher selected the interpretive paradigm as a framework of the study, which is discussed below.

3.6.1 Interpretive paradigm

Scotland (2012:9) defines paradigm that is consists of certain components which are: ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. Ontological assumptions are concerned about what constitutes reality. Epistemology is the nature and forms of knowledge, assumptions about how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated. The researcher asked questions of the relationship between the would-be knower and what can be known. Whereas, methodology concerned about why, what, from, where, when and how the data obtained and analysed. The qualitative method was used in this research study to collect data. Mackenzie and Knipe (2006: 3) define an interpretive paradigm as a theoretical perspective which considers sociological considerations of actions, including those that social scientists give to what they and others do. This means when people interact, they interpret what is happening and this gives social life its patterned quality.

In this study the interpretive paradigm was adopted and as the research orientation, as it offered more flexibility for seeing and understanding the reality of research subjects. This is because the study sought to understand the reality of the decline in numbers of learners choosing Geography in Namibian schools. By means of this paradigm the researcher collected data from the primary sources: learners and teachers. Le Grange, (2014:2) states that through an interpretive paradigm a researcher can understand the environment and make sense of the phenomenon within its social and cultural context. Creswell and Clark (2007) refer to an interpretive paradigm as a constructive approach to empirical research in a sense that it enables an individual to construct meanings regarding the fundamental nature of the social world.

They further agree that it is an approach which relies heavily on naturalistic methods, for example, interviews. This can ensure an adequate conversation between a researcher and participants to collaborate and construct a meaningful reality. This created an opportunity for learners and teachers to share with the researcher what they experienced regarding teaching methods, language problems, curriculum support in Geography, fieldwork and themes of interest. Their shared experiences addressed the decline in the number of learners who choose Geography in Grades 10 to 11. The information was constructed by the researcher, with the help of learners studying Geography, teachers teaching Geography, individual learners and

focus groups of learners who did not choose Geography as one of their subjects at the senior (secondary) phase of schooling. The context of the study is presented below.

3.7 THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY AND SAMPLING

3.7.1 Description of the context of the study

This study was conducted at three secondary schools located in the central part of Namibia, namely, the Khomas educational region, which is shown in Figure 3.3. The participants were teachers who taught Geography, learners who chose Geography as one of their senior phase subjects, and learners who did not choose this subject as one of their senior phase subjects. The key participants were learners and teachers. Learners were chosen to be part of the study as they possess abundant personal information about the challenges experienced in the subject and its decline. The teachers also have plenty of knowledge on the challenges they experience when teaching Geography. Although the findings were from the three purposively selected schools from the Khomas region; findings were compared to the statistics from all regions countrywide shown in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 in chapter 1.

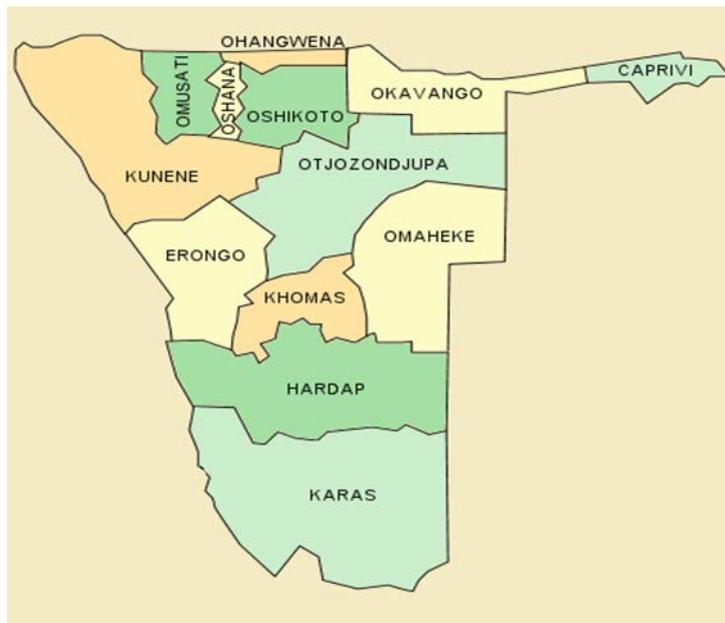


Figure 3.3: Thirteen educational regions in Namibia and location of the Khomas region (Source: Ministry of Education Namibia 2010)

3.7.2 Background of the Khomas region

Figure 3.3 is a map of Namibia showing 13 educational regions. In the Khomas region three schools were selected. Khomas is one of the fourteen regions in Namibia and is the most populated area. The name Khomas refers to the Khomas highland and is situated at the heart

of the capital city of Windhoek. To its west is the Erongo region; to the north is the Otjozondjupa region; to the east is the Omaheke region; and to the south is the Hardap region. The Khomas region is mountainous with many valleys (Nendongo, 2011).

Geographically Khomas is 1,700 meters above sea level, and almost exactly located at the country's topographical centre. It was established soon after Jan Jonker Afrikaner, captain of the Orlam, settled there in 1840 and built a stone church for his community. In this period, after several battles and clashes, the Windhoek settlement was abandoned, and this led to its destruction. It was founded for a second time in 1890 by imperial Germany Army Major Curt Von Francois when the land was colonised by Germany.

Khomas is the social, economic, political and cultural centre of the country. The headquarters of all the Namibian enterprises, governmental bodies, educational and cultural institutions are found in the Khomas region. It has 100 schools with a total of 73,302 learners (Becker, Elbe, Gert, Venter, Karien Labuschagne, Greling & Van Humburg, 2013). It is where many secondary and primary schools are located. Many of them have the necessary resources in terms of buildings, teaching facilities and qualified teachers. In comparison to other regions in the country, learners in the Khomas region have not been performing satisfactorily for the past few years. Most who do perform well are in private schools. It is therefore against this background that the Khomas region was chosen for this study. Three out of 100 hundred schools were selected as the study sites.

3.7.3 Participants

The participants for this study were selected using purposive sampling. The unit of analysis in this study focused on Grade 11 learners and three teachers teaching Geography from Grade 8 to 12. The three secondary schools from which eleven learners and three teachers were selected are old schools that were established during the colonial era and were dominated by Afrikaans-speaking people. They were selected according to the type of school the participants were learning and teaching in. The researcher deliberately and non-purposefully selected these schools based on their performance ranked respectively low, middle and high. Also, the teachers and learners were from different backgrounds, different locations and different ethnic groups in Namibia. Since the study aims to yield rich data, a small sample was used. The sample of learners was comprised of those who had selected Geography and those who had not. Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4 shows those who participated in the individual interviews and the focus groups. Group A consisted of learners who had selected Geography. Learners who had not chosen

Geography in Grade 11 were in focus group B. The selection of the learners was done with thoughtful consideration to avoid potential bias of the information collected. According to Groenewald (2004:11), between two to ten participants is enough to obtain information to reach saturation point. The researcher adhered to this guideline in harvesting rich information.

3.8. SAMPLING

Oliver (2009:37) defines a sample as a small unit selected for a study to represent the population from which a researcher obtains information and is divided into two parts which are non-probability and probability sampling. Non-probability random sampling is a sampling procedure that provides a basis for any opinion of probability that may be chosen to be selected in the study sample. Different sampling methods in the non-random designs are: quota sampling, accidental sampling, judgemental or purposive, expert, snowball and modal instant sampling (Etikan & Bala 2017:215). This is a process of selecting people or participants from a population of interest for information to be used to represent the entire population. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:249) explain that sampling involves a process of choosing research participants from an entire population that has been identified. Sampling is the process of selecting part of a group to be studied (Uys & Puttergill, 2003:107). They add that choosing a sample is considered as a way of optimising the use of resources in a research design. It is necessary for a researcher to choose an appropriate and feasible sampling method. In this study the schools, teachers and learners were purposively selected. Sample size depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will be trustworthy, and what can be done with the available time and resources (Patton, 2002:244). If a sample is not carefully selected, this may have a negative impact on a study and the results obtained.

According to Creswell (2014:158), sampling is the process whereby a researcher must choose an appropriate sample for the study, which involves several steps.

- A researcher must identify a population of interest, which is the group that a researcher wants to make assumptions about. In this study the researcher identified the population as Grade 11 and 12 Geography teachers and learners in the Khomas region.
- A sampling frame is a group or number of people from which a researcher draws a sample. The sampling frame of this study was individual learners studying Geography and those not studying it. It was a focus group of learners who had chosen and those

who had not chosen Geography as a senior phase subject. It was also teachers teaching Geography.

- Specifying a sampling method requires deciding on a suitable method, for example, stratified, systematic, random and non-random sampling. Bernauer, Lichtman, Jacobs and Robinson (2013:2) listed the qualitative sampling methods which are: intensive, homogeneous, criterion, snowball, convenience and purposive sampling. Random purposive sampling was selected in this study because it is designed based on the judgement of the researcher as to who can provide the necessary and the best information to succeed for the objective of the study. That is the reason why the specific group of Geography teachers and learners were selected to provide information for the study.

The participants were learners and Geography teachers. The latter were considered to be knowledgeable and to be in a better position to know what was influencing learners to not choose Geography in Grade 11. Christensen, Jonson and Turner (2014:177) defines purposive sampling as part of the non-random sampling method where a researcher must specify the distinctive features of the population of interest. The researcher purposefully selected learners from the class list. The selection criteria included being able to obtain data from male and female participants. Flick (2014:80) maintains that in qualitative research sampling is a crucial phase; with sampling, a researcher can construct a case to study in the research. Therefore, in this study the researcher purposively selected some defining features which suggested that those participants were knowledgeable about the phenomenon to provide the data required for the study. The decision to conduct the research in three schools was influenced by several factors. The schools were chosen because they are in the same region and within easy access to the researcher who lives in the vicinity. In other words, convenience sampling was also used. The teachers were from different backgrounds, different locations, different ethnic Namibian groups, with relevant qualifications and many years of teaching experience. The researcher used purposive sampling to select participants who were able to describe their perceptions of the reasons for the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography as a senior subject. In short, a combination of convenient and purposive sampling was used in the study.

3.8.1 Selected schools and participants for interviews

Creswell and Clark (2007) state that in a qualitative study a small number of ten participants is sufficient for rich and in-depth results. The sample size for a study means that, for example, a large sample gives a lot of information. It is demanding as it takes time to research; the attempt to control a large sample may also lead to biased data. Three schools were selected on the basis of their accessibility for data collection as well as on the basis of their academic performance (low, middle, high) and availability of teaching and learning facilities as well as Geography teachers at a secondary phase. This made it possible for the researcher to collect findings within a short period of time. Chapter 1 provided evidence that the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography at the senior phase has been occurring over several years. This was also one of the facts that made the researcher carefully select a small sample size to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The sample size in this study consisted of a total of 15 participants: learners (n=12) and teachers (n=3). Interviews were conducted with the following participants.

- Three Grade 11 learners for individual interviews (i.e. one learner per school) who had chosen Geography, and two who had not chosen Geography. There should have been three in the latter category, but due to illness only two were interviewed.
- Three teachers teaching Grade 8 to 12 per school (i.e. one per school).
- Six learners doing Geography for the focus group A: the three who had individual interviews were included in this group.
- Five learners not doing Geography for focus group B: the two who had individual interviews were included in this group.

The study focused on a small sample size to save time and to avoid biased information. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:321) explain that sampling represents a group of participants from whom data are collected. Selecting learners and teachers doing Geography was influenced by the extent of their exposure to learning and teaching the subject. Therefore, teachers and learners doing school Geography were required to contribute to the study in terms of their experience to respond to the questions during individual and focus group interviews. Below is a brief description of the interview process used in the study.

3.8.2 Interviews

An interview may be defined as a situation in which a researcher asks the participants a series of questions face-to-face (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2014:72). Patton (2002:278) states

that the aim of using an interview is to find out what is on the participants' mind or what ideas they have or what they think about the phenomenon. Structured or unstructured interviews allow the researcher to get into the minds of participants in order to understand and interpret their views on different scenarios. (Le Grange & Beets 2005:5). Participants usually answer when confronted in person which may allow the researcher to pick up certain reactions and eliminate misunderstanding. In this study semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and learners as participants. Different groups of questions were set and used to ask participants in their categories. There were questions for Geography teachers, for individual learners doing and those not doing Geography and for focus groups. Some questions appeared the same in each group. The questioning technique allowed the participants to freely express their views on a phenomenon studied. Good relationships with participants were created to respond without hesitation.

The researcher showed empathy and interest in the participants answers. All interviews were conducted in the conducive environment in which participants felt welcome and comfortable. The interview sessions were recorded to allow the researcher to get all the necessary information and keep them safe for future references. Participants were given ample time to respond and the researcher replayed the audio-tape for them to confirm what they said is what they meant. The researcher asked questions without showing feelings, opinions, thoughts and comments during the data construction process to avoid misunderstanding. Primary research questions were designed as well as the secondary follow up questions were also used during the process to probe for further clarifications regarding the decline. Structured interview questions were prepared to allow the researcher to ask questions accordingly and not omitting some questions. Other relevant information was contained in the consent and assent forms which were reviewed, read and signed by the interviewer and interviewees before the commencement of the interview. Common themes emerged from the interviews were identified, discussed and analysed. The next section discusses negotiating access to the research site.

3.8.3 Negotiating access to the research site

The process of gaining access to the research sites took about three months before positive responses were received from the principals. The subsequent process of inviting teachers and learners to participate in the study did not take long. The researcher needed 12 learners, but one had to withdraw due to being ill. This happened on the day of the scheduled interview.

3.8.4 The role of the researcher

Flick (cited in Kvale, 2008) provides an explanation of a research process which adopts a qualitative research design. The role of a qualitative researcher differs from that of a quantitative researcher: the process of qualitative research has a number of stages: thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and reporting (Kvale, 2008:9).

- Thematising: Answering the question of what is going to be researched, why this is going to be researched how it is going to be researched.
- Designing: Researcher should plan and prepare the methodological procedures.
- Interviewing: Researcher should outline the topics to be covered in the interview and decide what type of interview to use.
- Transcribing: Incorporating different sound recorded in a transcript restricted to sentences of relevance to specific research questions.
- Analysing: Naming and categorising of phenomena through close examination of data.
- Verifying: Verification of data analysis taking into account generalisability, reliability and validity of findings.
- Reporting: Writing a report to present findings.

The researcher attempted to make this research as transparent as possible. Teachers and learners were made aware of the research purpose. Participants were told that they were under no compulsion to participate in the study. The researcher was eager to learn from the participants; therefore, they were told that any contribution or critical comments relating to the topic under study would be welcomed. The researcher made it clear to the participants that permission had first been obtained from relevant authorities to conduct the study. The dissertation will be made public, but the anonymity of the participants will be assured. In this study the researcher assumed a dual role of a participant and a researcher by means of interviewing.

Denscombe (2003:273) states that a researcher in a qualitative study is regarded as an information-gathering tool. Being a participant and a researcher at the same time is a typical role of a researcher in a qualitative inquiry (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2001:435). The researcher adopted a neutral posture so that participants' perceptions, actions, thoughts and ideas were not influenced. The researcher considered the participants as having rich information regarding the topic to be investigated. The National Research Council (2003:81) indicates principles that must guide researchers; they have an obligation to treat participants as

autonomous agents whose decisions on whether to act as participants in the research are to be respected. In this study some information was collected from minors, therefore assent letters were made available to parents to decide on behalf of their children whether they could participate in the study or not. The school principals, teachers and parents were made aware that it was the minors' decision whether to participate or not. Consent was required from the parents because minors were unlikely to possess the maturity necessary to decline participating in the study. The data-collection method used in the study is discussed below.

3.9 DATA – COLLECTION METHOD

In qualitative research data-collection methods are used to provide a reasonable representation of the phenomenon and the meaning it has for the individuals being studied. Christensen et, al (2014:70) explains that a data-collection method is a practice for obtaining the data to be analysed in a qualitative research study. This refers to the way a researcher obtains the empirical research information to answer the question studied. Christensen identified the different major methods of data collection: tests, questionnaires, interviews, focus group interviews, observations, and existing or secondary data. A combination of the above-mentioned methods of data collection may improve the validity of the findings. In this study the researcher decided to use a semi-structured interview as one of the research tools to collect data. This tool was used for the individual and the focus group interviews. Data collection in qualitative research includes gathering data from different sources (Holloway ,1997:45).

In this study collecting data took approximately three months. This time was used to conduct individual and focus group interviews. Two learners who were doing Geography were selected from each school to be part of a focus group of six learners. In addition, two learners who were not doing Geography were selected from each school to form another focus group. One learner from each school was selected for an individual interview. Kvale (2008:5) defines a qualitative research interview as one whose purpose is to obtain descriptions of the life world of an interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena. Qualitative research focuses on exploring, examining and describing participants in their natural situation, but the input of participants depends upon their willingness to share their experiences (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2000:93-96). The study also took into account the importance of involving teachers to share their experiences. Therefore, the study selected one Geography teacher at each school for an individual semi-structured interview. They were required to discuss their teaching experience of how teaching and learning contributed to the decline of Geography.

Each participant was briefed about the aims and objectives of the study. This was done as described below.

3.9.1 Rationale for selecting the interview for the research

The rationale for selecting an interview instead of a questionnaire or observation was because of its unique feature. When conducting an interview, a researcher is able to measure attitudes, gestures and most other facets of interest. Through an interview a researcher is able to judge the participants' attitudes and feelings, for example, anger, happiness, voice tone and facial expressions. If a questionnaire were to be used, it would be difficult to obtain and identify such attitudes (Bryman & Bell, 2011:91). The researcher deemed it necessary to use an interview in which participants answer the researcher's open-ended questions, which allows probing to obtain further in-depth information and clarification of the participants' experiences of Geography as a subject. There are many types of interviews, namely structured, semi-structured, unstructured and non-directive. This research made use of a semi-structured interview with both individual and a focus group interviews.

3.9.2 Individual semi-structured interview

Three Geography teachers and five learners from Grade 11 participated in individual interviews to shed light on the decline of the number of learners choosing Geography. The one-on-one interview was regarded as a good platform as the learners were not hesitant to speak; they articulated and gave data comfortably and freely. The interviews were scheduled for the dates and times that suited each teacher. A semi-structured interview is regarded as a non-standardised type of interview. It is frequently used in qualitative research. The researcher may have certain key themes, issues and questions to be considered. The order of the questions can be altered depending on the direction of the participants' answers to them. Corbetta (2003:270) states that a semi-structured interview means that the wording of questions and number themes are a researcher's decision. In each topic a researcher is free to conduct a conversation in terms of the aim and objectives of a study. A researcher uses appropriate words that are considered best and simple to understand by the participants. Participants are also given opportunities to respond openly to the questions that the researcher poses. Next is the description of the focus group interview used in this study.

3.9.3 Focus group interviews

According to Barbour (2008:18), some researchers incorrectly think that a focus group interview takes place when a researcher asks a question to each participant in turn. Barbour corrects this misconception by explaining that focus group discussions involve interactions

between participants; there is limited participation by a researcher in the discussions. Bloor, Flankland, Thomas and Robson (2001) refer to a focus group as a method that helps a researcher to study group norms, group meaning-making and group processes. Focus group interviews are used to gather information from a small population that has a mutual interest linked to a study theme. This is the reason why the researcher in this study selected Geography learners and Geography teachers who were knowledgeable about Geography content.

Creswell (2014:218) defines a focus group interview as a process of collecting data through verbal communication with a group of people, usually four to six. In this study there were groups of six participants who provided information for the study. The focus group discussions motivated and encouraged learners to collectively address topics that individuals were unable to explain or had not paid attention to. This helped the researcher to access information through the process of collecting collectively agreed upon answers as well as those with more elaboration (Wilkinson, 1999). Morgan (2012:121) says a focus group interview is one in which participants share their knowledge and compare their inputs within a group.

The researcher used a focus group as one of the methods that allowed for gathering data in this study. Groups were organised in advance to share and discuss what they knew and felt about the teaching and learning of Geography. In this study the focus group was formed by combining learners from each selected school to get in-depth data for the study. There were two focus groups: one that comprised learners doing Geography and the other of learners who elected not to do the subject. The following section discusses trustworthiness and associated features.

3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The researcher clarified the aim of the study to participants before commencing with the interviews. This was done so that each interviewee could have a better understanding of and background to the study. Each interview was conducted in the official language of English as it is the medium of instruction. No translations were made to avoid filtering the participants' information.

The researcher used certain mechanisms to ensure trustworthiness. Verbatim responses and inputs of the participants were transcribed without making changes or corrections: their exact words and everything they said were used as collected data. At the end of each interview each participant was given feedback as the researcher allowed them to listen to the recorded audio clips in order for them to verify the accuracy of their comments and also to allow the researcher

to justify the use of the recordings. Participation in the study was voluntarily, and the researcher tried to treat all participants equally.

3.10.1 Triangulation

To make the findings trustworthy in this study, triangulation was used to validate the data. Triangulation helps a researcher to have a better understanding of the phenomenon being investigated because multiple methods are used (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:5). When data are collected, there are always strengths and weaknesses; the use of triangulation helps a study to develop more strengths and to minimise weaknesses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:5).

Christensen et al. (2014:14) explain that triangulation entails the use of comparing information sources, research methods, investigators and theories to cross-check and validate research data and conclusions. This means triangulation is a strategy adopted to ensure the data collected and findings are legitimate. It allows a researcher to collect information from more than one source (Holloway,1997:45). McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (2003:116) claim that triangulation can be used to support proof of a specific explanation or to reveal data from different sources that support the explanation. Therefore, in this study the researcher compared and triangulated information from one individual with other individuals as well as with data from the focus group interview.

This study used the three forms of triangulation suggested by Freeman (1998:87). The first form was data triangulation in which the researcher drew data from the focus group interviews, and secondary data such as publications in journals and books that were mostly obtained in the review of literature (Chapter 2). The second form was methodological triangulation. This entailed interview data that was the main part of this study. The method involved one individual learner per school from Grade 11, three teachers teaching Geography Grades 8-12, and two learners from each school to form a focus group interview. So, in this instance two different methods of data collection were used. The third method of triangulation was using different data sources, teachers and learners.

The researcher validated data obtained through participant feedback, namely member checking. Findings were discussed with participants to determine whether they agreed with the researcher's interpretation and their respective viewpoints.

3.10.2 Reliability and validity of data

For research to be of value, it should be reliable and valid. Colin and Julie (2006) explain reliability as the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results if

the research is repeated. If the research yields the same results when done for a second time, it is then considered reliable. The observer should agree on what is being collected to claim reliability of data. Validity refers to how well a research tool measures what it is purported to measure. According to Bush (2002:65), validity is used to judge the findings to describe the correct phenomenology, research design, research methodology and conclusion.

To ensure validity and reliability in this study, the researcher triangulated the data to collect the same data and rigorously validated the data. A semi-structured interview was employed to collect data from Geography teachers and learners. During each interview the same kind of questions were asked of all the participants; individual learners were asked the same questions as the teachers were. Their respective responses were recorded via voice recorder as well as a mobile audio-recorder. The researcher used these two tools to capture data. The collected data were checked by an expert (academic supervisors) to determine the effectiveness of the measurement of tools and whether they measured what they were supposed to measure. Data confidentiality was adhered to by the academic supervisor (expert) and the researcher. The recorded interviews were regarded as one of the methods of gathering data that ensured the validity of findings.

3.10.3 Ethical consideration and confidentiality

It is very important for the identities of research participants to be protected in a qualitative study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008:433). This means there must be a mechanism in place to protect research participants from being harmed or embarrassed because of their contribution in a study. The participants in the study were highly respected and valued. Collected data were kept confidential. Participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw anytime from the study if they so wished. To ensure that the rights of participants were fully respected, the researcher provided them with a consent form or letters to exercise their rights to engage in the study.

Consent letters were given in advance to the potential participants, so that they could make informed decisions before agreeing to being interviewed. Cresswell (2014:96) states that a consent form is used to show that the rights of participants are protected during the process of gathering data. According to Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest and Namey (2005:9), consent letters are strategies for ensuring that participants understand what is vital and what it means to take part in a study before deciding whether or not to participate. The researcher made it known to participants that their names would not be used when data were

analysed. To ensure anonymity, the researcher used fictitious names instead of the names of the participants. Information provided by the participants was not revealed to others. The data were captured on the researcher's password-protected personal laptop. Confidentiality played a role in this research from start to finish. It will be also be adhered in the future when the collected data are used to write articles for submission to journals. Participants were given the right to access or review their respective voice-recorded interviews.

The following stages were involved in requesting and obtaining permission to conduct the study.

- Part A, Stage 1. A letter was sent to the director of the Khomas regional office (Appendix, A1).
- Stage 2. another letter was written to the principals of three selected schools requesting them to give permission to the researcher to collect data from their schools (Appendix, B1).
- Stage 3. An informed consent letter was given to teachers, learners and the parents. They were required to assent to participate in the study. Parents had to assent to their children participating in the study (Appendix, C1, a, b and c).
- Stage 4. The researcher applied for ethics clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (Human Research) at Stellenbosch University in April 2018 (Appendix D). The researcher attached letters from stages 1 to 3 to the application for ethics clearance. Also included were the proposal of this study, interview questions and the abstract. This stage involved requesting permission to proceed with data collection. Approval had to be granted before the commencement of data collection.
- Part B: Permission was granted to the researcher in writing from the Director of Khomas education region (Appendix A2), as well as in letters from the principals of the selected schools in October 2017 (Appendix B2, a, b and c). Teachers, learners and parents granted permission for their children to take part in the study (Appendix C1, (i, ii and iii)). On 22 August 2018 ethical clearance was approved (Appendix E2). After this approval was received the researcher commenced with collection of data. The researcher ensured that the study adhered to the ethical consideration procedures of Stellenbosch University.

The data analysis process is discussed below.

3.11 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of organising data from the information generated. In this study the constant comparative method was employed to analyse data. The constant comparative method is a process in which any newly composed data are compared with previous data that were collected in one or more prior studies (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001). Data analysis entails procedures that a researcher takes into consideration to analyse information (De Vaus, 2001:100; Maykutt & Morehouse, 1994:127). Bogdan and Biklein (2003) define qualitative analysis as “working with data, organising them, breaking them and manageable units, coding them, synthesising them and searching for patterns”. Analysing is purposefully done to detect patterns, ideas, themes and meaning.

Before data analysis the researcher repeatedly listened to all the voice-recorded interviews to get a sense of the all collected data. Whilst listening, the researcher checked recurring pieces of information and started organising and categorising data. This involved searching for patterns, critical themes and meanings that emerged from the data. This is referred to as a process of coding data in groups. Yin (2003:105) stresses the need to analyse data in a case study; it entails searching the data for ‘patterns’ which may clarify or classify casual links in the data. The researcher conducted individual interviews with teachers and learners as well as the focus group interview with learners to collect data. All interviews were conducted in the same manner of audio recorded. Although focus groups and individual interviews are independent data-collection methods, combining them was an advantage for the researcher as they generated complementary perspectives on the phenomenon. The combination also revealed logical reason, needed to compare and contrast participant perspectives in a parallel use and strived toward data completeness. (Taylor,2005). A logical approach was adopted for individual interviews, which were offered to participants who were unable or unwilling to attend a focus group interview. Individual interviews were used to explore personal experiences, while a focus group examined opinions and beliefs about the phenomenon in general. In this study the researcher concentrated on all the data first then broke the data into sections and then finally re-constructed the data into more meaningful patterns.

Categorising assisted the researcher to relate and differentiate between patterns, to check certain patterns and complex threads of the data deeply, and to make sense of the categorised data. According to Holton (2007:89), a coding process allows a researcher to recognise and tag theoretical categories in a phenomenon and then to group them in a meaningful way. In this study the researcher grouped the recorded and transcribed interviews for both individuals and

the focus group. The responses of the individual interviews were analysed, compared and categorised along with the results of the transcription of the focus group. Interviews were recorded and the researcher transcribed the recording into writing. Similar responses were merged to form themes. The data were then triangulated to verify the findings and draw a conclusion.

3.12 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

To gain some insight into why there has been a decline in the number of learners choosing Geography, this chapter focused on the methodological research that was utilised. The interpretive paradigm framework used in the study was explained. The justification of the research design, the rationale for the qualitative research, and the selection of the study sites were also presented. Data collection as well as the ethical considerations for collecting data from participants was explained. Reliability and validity were discussed in terms of their role in contributing to the trustworthiness of the study. The next chapter 4 will cover the collection and analysis of data of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine factors contributing to the low enrolment of learners in the subject of Geography at the secondary level. It sought to achieve this by understanding the perspectives of both learners and teachers from three schools in Windhoek. Data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews from the teachers and the learners. This chapter presents an analysis and the discussion of the findings of this empirical study.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the study were learners in Grade 11 from three schools in the Khomas Region. This number included both learners doing Geography and those who decided not to do the subject. In addition, three teachers of Geography from Grade 8-12 were interviewed. They were from old, established schools in Windhoek. For confidentiality purposes, all participants as well as their schools were given fictitious names in this study.

A total number of 12 learners was targeted for the interviews, but unfortunately only 11 learners could participate. One of them, who was not doing Geography, did not take part due to illness. Five learners were interviewed individually. At the same time, there were two focus groups, one comprising learners pursuing Geography and another consisting of learners who had not chosen Geography. Learners who participated in the individual interviews also took part of the focus groups.

4.2.1 Teachers

The profiles of the three teachers who participated in the study are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Teachers' profiles

Name of teachers	Ethnicity and gender	Qualifications	Institutions	Years of teaching experience	Age groups
Debbie	Coloured female	Higher education diploma	University of Cape Town	29 years	55-60

Antoinette	Coloured female	Bachelor's degree in education	University of Namibia	13 years	35-40
Haulofu	Black male	Bachelor's degree in Education and Master's degree in Geography	University of Namibia	4 years	25-30

- **Debbie**

She is a Geography teacher at school X. She speaks Afrikaans as her mother tongue. She is in her 50s and has taught for 29 years. Her highest-level qualification is a Higher Education Diploma (Secondary), specialising in Geography. She obtained her qualification in 1989 at the University of Cape Town. During her training she completed Geography I, II, III; the curriculum did not allow specialization of the grade(s) to teach at school. Her teacher training took four years. Immediately after graduating she taught Grades 8 and 9. After many years she was thrown in the deep end to teach Grades 11 and 12 Geography. She was initially anxious but managed to overcome this by focusing on what had to be taught. She is currently teaching Grades 10 and 11. Every second year she moves on with her learners to teach them in the next Grade. She teaches on average 40 learners per class. She teaches seven classes, of which five are Grade 10 and two and half Grade 11. The other half class is for commerce.

- **Antoinette**

She is a Geography teacher at school W and her mother tongue is Afrikaans. She is in her 30s and has taught for 13 years. Her highest qualification is a BED honours degree in education and she majored in Geography. Her training took four years after she graduated in 2005 at the University of Namibia. She started teaching Grades 9 to 12 Geography immediately after she graduated. She has seven classes of which four are Grade 10, one Grade 9, one Grade 11 and one Grade 12. There are more than 1,000 learners in the school where she is employed.

- **Haulofu**

He is a History and Geography teacher at school Z. His mother tongue is Oshiwambo. He is in his 30s and has taught for 5 years. He has an Honours degree in education and a Master's degree in Geography. He graduated in 2011 at the University of Namibia. He has taught Geography for four years. He was recently employed at school Z and teaches Grades 8 to 12. There are on average 27 learners per class. He has eight classes; two Geography classes respectively for Grades 10 to 12, two Grade 8 and two History classes. He claims that there is insufficient time for him to undertake daily preparations, provide activities and mark learners' work.

4.2.2 Learners

There were seven females and four males in the study. They were from the three schools. They comprised of those who were doing Geography and those who did not choose the subject. The researcher's venue (school where she is teaching) was used for the two focus groups: one group for those doing Geography, and the other for those not doing Geography. The learners were given money for refreshments and transport as they had to travel from their schools to the venue. This was not done to compensate them for contributing to the study.

Their ages ranged from 18 to 20 years. Figure 4.1 is a diagram showing their pseudonyms.

Individual learners Who chose and who did not choose Geography in grade 11

- **School X** - Fabiola (female)
- **School W** - Natasha (female)
- **School Z** - Georgin (female)

• DID NOT CHOOSE GEOGRAPHY

- **School X** - Sophie (female)
- **School Z** - Alex (male)

Focus group A

6 learners who chose Geography

- **School X** - Fabiola (male)
- Heltha (female)
- **School W** - Natasha (female)
- Van Tonder (male)
- **School Z** - Georgin (female)
- Jovita (female)

Focus group B

5 learners who did not choose Geography

- **School X** - Sofie (female)
- **School W** - Bettie (female)
- - Xavier (male)
- **School Z** - Alex (male)
- - Marex (female)

Figure 4.1: Details of the five learners who participated in the individual interviews and the eleven who participated in the two focus groups.



Figure 4.2: Refreshments provided to the 11 learners.

Source: Kaniita (2018)



Figure 4.3: Photograph showing the seating arrangement in the venue for each focus group according to schools. The venue was also used for the learner interviews. Source: Kaniita (2018)

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE BACKGROUND AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF THE STUDY

There are fourteen educational regions in Namibia as indicated on the map in Figure 3.3 in Chapter 3. The Khomas region was selected for the study. It is located in the central part of the country, where the capital city Windhoek is located. The reason for selecting this region was because the researcher resides in this region and thus it was easy to gain access to the participants. Three high schools were non-randomly selected, and detailed descriptions are provided below; they are referred to as X, W and Z to adhere to research ethics of

confidentiality and privacy. The photograph in Figure 4.4 is representative of the building structure of all three schools. They are high-order buildings of many floors. They offer education from Grade 8 to Grade 12.



Figure 4.4: This is a photograph of a building that is similar to that of the selected schools.

Source: Kaniita (2018)

- **School X**

This school, according to the principal, was established in 1991. The school started with 1,200 learners and currently enrolls 860 learners. It offers education from the secondary school phase (Grade 8 to 12). It has a teacher complement of 39 teachers, including the principal. It used to offer hostel accommodation for learners, but is now a day - school. The hostel buildings were converted into another school, and other buildings are used by a ministry. The school buildings are in a good condition, although some maintenance is required. Technical subjects were initially offered, but they were phased out in 2004 and replaced with academic subjects. Overall the learners are well disciplined with only minor problems were experienced. School X's academic performance is ranked as the highest out of the three selected schools. The principal emphasised that their academic performance is good compared to many schools in Windhoek due to the high professional standards among teachers and the good relationship between the principal, teachers and parents regarding school activities. Teacher A, who is employed at the school, argues that although the academic performance of learners is satisfactory their performance in Geography is very low compared to other subjects.

- **School W**

School W was established in 1964. It started with 52 learners and currently has 1,050 learners enrolled. It offers education from a secondary phase (Grade 8 to 12) and has 37 teachers. Most learners are accommodated in the hostel, but the school does not have accommodation for teachers. The hostel is used to accommodate learners from nearby schools as well. The buildings look old as the school was built over 50 years ago. The buildings are well maintained. It was ranked second out of the three schools in terms of academic performance. Discipline among learners seems to be a challenge.

- **School Z**

School Z was established in 1866; it is oldest school in Namibia and is a public school, consisting of 4 faculties. The school offers education from Grade 8 to 12. It has an enrolment of 1,000 learners of different ethnic groups. The school buildings are in a sorry state of dilapidation. Old facilities are on the verge of collapsing and there is no accommodation for teachers. In 2013 it was ranked the worst performing school in the country. The school has nevertheless produced notable professionals over the years.



Figure 4.5: A Geography classroom in one of the three school where interviews were conducted. Source: Kaniita (2018)

4.4 ACQUAINTANCE AND FAMILIARISATION WITH THE STUDY

Before commencing with the data construction process, the researcher visited all three schools where the study was to be conducted. The reason for doing this was threefold: to acquaint herself with the study sites; to personally meet the participants; and to discuss the interview programme with the participants. These visits provided the researcher with an opportunity to emphasise the potential benefits of the study to the participants, the schools, the region and the Ministry of Education.

The researcher initially met with the Geography teachers and school principals. The researcher explained the whole process of the semi-structured interviews to the respective school principals. They in turn provided details of the schools described in 4.3 above. They introduced the researcher to the Geography teachers, who in turn identified Geography and non-Geography learners as potential participants for the study.

The researcher managed to have a preliminary meeting with the participants to explain the rationale for the study. The school buildings were also viewed. Participants were also fully informed about the principles of research ethics that were to be applied in the study. For example, they were assured that the principles of anonymity and confidentiality would be adhered to in order to allow them to openly provide comments during the interviews. During this process they expressed their enthusiasm and eagerness to participate in the study.

4.4.1 Permission to gain access to the schools

The researcher's first task was to obtain permission to access schools X, W and Z to conduct this research. Smit (2010:2) lists the basic steps that a researcher should take into consideration to obtain permission when conducting a study: determine if permission is needed; identify the owner; identify the privileges needed; plan for permission; contact the owner and negotiate; and get a permission agreement in writing. These steps might be a challenge, but certain procedures should be put in place and followed until permission is granted. The researcher did not experience any obstacles at all in terms of gaining access to the schools. The various steps that were applied in this study are outlined below.

- The researcher applied in writing to the Director of Education in the Khomas region to request permission to conduct a research in his jurisdiction or the Education Directorate Region (Appendix A1). The director granted permission (Appendix A2).
- The researcher then wrote a letter to the principals of schools where the study was conducted (Appendix B1). The letter was accompanied by the letter from the Director, and the principals granted permission (Appendix B2 a, b and c).
- The researcher sent consent and assent letters to teachers, parents and learners so that they could indicate their willingness to participate (Appendix D).
- The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the University of Stellenbosch through the Ethics Committee in Department of Curriculum Studies. Ethical clearance was also granted (Appendix E).

- The researcher commenced collecting data after the notice of approval.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION

4.5.1 Introduction

After the Director and principals granted permission, the researcher undertook an informal visit to the selected schools in June 2018. This was done in order for the principals to inform teachers, and teachers to inform learners in advance about the research and interviews that they would be participating in. The researcher also explained the rationale and purpose of the research to the participants. Appointments and arrangements were put in place with the participants. The researcher met with the participants in the last week of August 2018 after receiving permission and ethical approval to conduct the study. Schedules were prepared for the teacher interviews, individual learner interviews, and the two focus group interviews. All the participants received and signed the consent letter. They assented to participating in the interviews that would be used for data collection and analysis in this study.

4.5.2 Interview process

The use of a semi-structured interview was discussed in Chapter 3. The three teachers were interviewed as per the arranged dates and times mentioned in 4.5.1. The researcher ensured that she was punctual so that all necessary items (e.g. voice recorder and cell phone) could be checked and were operational before each interview. The venues were also checked in terms of noise, because the quality of the audio-recordings had to be optimal. Cognisance was taken of Groenewald's (2004:15) guidelines on the use of technology for data collection as malfunctioning of technology can impact badly on the research process. To record the interviews, the researcher used a voice recorder. As a back-up plan the researcher had two cell phones that were fully charged. She also had charged power banks in case they were needed. The reason for recording each interview was because it would have taken too much time for replies/responses to be written down. The use of the voice recorder meant all verbatim responses were captured. Problems were encountered with the voice recorder; thus, the back-up cell phones were used for recording. The recording process assisted the researcher in not omitting some of the information, and in the data coding and theme identification.

During the interview the researcher listened attentively to everything that was said so that the participants were able to recount their experiences as fully as possible without interruption.

The participants were thanked at the end of their respective interviews. They were invited to raise questions if they needed more information about the study. This was done to provide them with an opportunity to mention important issues which might not have been raised by the researcher. They also listened to the recordings of their interviews. This was done to enhance the validity, verification, justification and elaboration of the data constructed. They were assured that they would be provided with a copy of the study.

Individual interviews for learners were conducted at the researcher's school. The focus group interviews were called A and B. Group A was comprised of six learners (Grade 11) from the three selected schools who were doing Geography. Group B was comprised of five learners (Grade 11) from the selected schools who had not chosen to continue with Geography.

The semi-structured interview method was used for both teachers and learners. Follow-up questions were asked directly when participants' responses needed to be clarified. English is used as it is the medium of instruction in the Namibian curriculum. There was no need for translations as the researcher and participants understood English.

4.5.3 The environment /venue for interviews

Teachers were given the option to select the venue of their choice for their interviews. The interview for learners did not take place at their respective schools because the focus groups consisted of learners from different schools, meaning each focus group included learners from all three schools. Since teacher Debbie at school X was the HOD (Head of Department), she was interviewed during her free periods in her office. This provided a private environment conducive to detailed discussion. The interviews with teachers Antoinette and Haulofu at schools W and Z were conducted after school in their respective classrooms. This allowed for privacy and a quiet environment. There were no interruptions from learners and other people.

The individual interviews for learners were conducted in an isolated small room in the Science laboratory. Focus groups A and B interviews took place in the Science laboratory at different times. The learner interviews and focus groups were conducted after school between 14:00 to 16:00 to ensure that school activities were not disrupted as per the stipulations of the Director (Appendix A2). All interviews lasted between 30 to 40 minutes. No interviews were postponed, and all were conducted at agreed times and dates. This takes us to the next point of the interviews with the participants.

4.5.4 Interviews with participants

One-on-one open-ended questions were put to three Geography teachers and eleven learners by means of a semi-structured interview schedule in order to collect data. It was not necessary to ask learners biographical questions as the data would not have contributed to the study. The teachers were asked these questions to elicit their insight into their teaching experiences, years of experience as well as information on their professional development. As explained above, the interviews were voice recorded. This helped with the transcribing process by ensuring nothing was omitted and that filtering of data did not occur. For further clarifications and to obtain more in-depth data, follow - up questions were used.

4.5.4.1 Interview questions used for learners and teachers

The following questions were formulated for learners and teachers in order to gather information related to the study.

- **Interview questions for focus group learners who chose Geography in Grade 11**

1. Why did you choose Geography as one of your major subjects?
2. How do you find Geography as a school subject up until now (Grade 11)?
3. What are the geographical topics in the curriculum that you enjoy the most and why?
4. What are the geographical topics in the curriculum that you enjoy the least and why?
5. How often do you do fieldwork?
 - (i) What does the fieldwork entail?
 - (ii) Do you enjoy it?
6. Tell me about how geographical topics are presented to you by the teacher.
7. What would you propose to Geography teachers to consider making Geography a more interesting subject?

- **Interview questions for individual learners who chose Geography in Grade 11**

1. Why did you choose Geography as one of your major subjects?
2. How do you find Geography as a school subject up until now (Grade 11)?

3. What topics do you find most interesting in Geography?
4. What topics do you find least interesting?
5. What are the topics that you find most challenging?
6. Are there any topics that you would like to be excluded from the Geography curriculum and why?
7. Do you have any suggestions that you would like Geography teachers to take into consideration to make Geography a more interesting subject.

- **Interview questions for focus group and individual learners who did not choose Geography**

1. Why did you not choose Geography?
2. What topics do you enjoy the most in Geography and why?
3. What topics do you enjoy the least in Geography and why?
4. Tell me about how geographical themes were presented to you by the teacher in Grade 10
5. Which topics would you not prefer to be in the Geography curriculum and why?

- **Interview questions for teachers teaching Geography Grade 8-12**

(a) Teacher details

Biographical questions

- a) How long have you been a teacher?
 - b) What is your highest level of education?
 - c) When did you graduate?
 - d) In which field did you attain your degree/diploma?
 - e) From which tertiary institution did you graduate?
-
- (i) How long have you been teaching Geography?
 - (ii) How long have you been trained to become a Geography teacher?
 - (iii) How long have you been trained in the Geography curriculum?

- (iv) What Grades do you teach Geography to?
- (v) How many learners do you teach per Grade?
- (vi) How many classes are allocated to you?

(b) Subject details

1. How has your experience as a Geography teacher been so far?
2. Why did you choose to specialise in Geography?
3. What are the themes that you find most interesting to teach and why?
4. What are the themes that you find least interesting to teach and why?
5. What would you suggest can be done from the teacher's side to attract more learners to choose Geography?
6. Have you experienced a decline or incline in learners choosing Geography at your school? Why do you think that was the case?

(c) Curriculum

1. Are there any topics that you would like to be included in the Geography curriculum?
2. What is your experience of teaching map work?
3. How often do you do fieldwork with the learners?
4. During which topics do you take your learners on excursions? Why / why not?
5. How often do you attend workshops as part of your professional development?

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Patton (2002:432) points out that data analysis changes data into findings for the transformation; however, data analyses are only guide and not a recipe. In other words, a researcher has to analyse and interpret the transcriptions of the interviews in terms of the aims and objectives of a study. Data analysis is a process of examining, categorising, tabulating, testing and recommending evidence to draw a study-based conclusion (Yin, 2009:126). Mouton (2001:108) claims that it is a process of dividing data into manageable themes, patterns, relationships and trends in order to generate a meaningful understanding of the phenomenon. In order to determine whether data are explicitly or implicitly implied, means that a researcher is involved in interpretation of the data. This is a core activity of qualitative

data analysis that assists a researcher to understand what data is constructed (Flick, 2014:375) Without interpretation, we cannot make sense of our data. In this study the aim was to investigate possible reasons for the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography, and also the influence, if any, that teachers have on learners not choosing Geography at a senior level. Through the use of a range of questions, the researcher attempted to achieve this aim. The range of questions allowed the participants to provide information on their experience of the reasons for the decline in Geography as a subject of choice at high school in the Khomas region. The data analysis in the study aimed to transfer and provide answers to the following research questions:

- Why is there a decline in learners choosing Geography from Grade 10 to 11 in Namibian schools?
- What influence do teachers have on learners choosing Geography or not?

The analysis of data entailed the use of six steps recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). The thematic method of analysing data was applied. The researcher first read and reread the transcribed data in order to identify manageable units of analysis. The manageable units of data were then coded. This was followed by sorting the different codes into potential themes. The themes were then reviewed and refined, and this was followed by defining and naming of the themes. This enabled the researcher to report on the data themes generated in terms of the aim and objectives of the study.

4.7 DATA REPRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Data constructed after in-depth semi-structured interviews are presented and discussed in this section. The main findings are discussed under the following themes that emerged from the data:

- Teachers' and learners' experience of Geography;
- Biased field of studies, teacher's attitudes and possibly inappropriate methods of presenting lessons;
- Subject choice for career purposes;
- Extensive content that is composed of unenjoyable topics;
- Lack of professional development and motivation of teachers;
- Challenges regarding fieldwork;
- Language as a barrier to teaching and learning.

These themes and sub-themes will be discussed in more detail below.

4.7.1 Teachers' and learners' experience of Geography

Interviews conducted with teachers and learners revealed that their experience of teaching and learning Geography contributed to a decline in the number of learners choosing Geography at senior level. Teachers indicated that they knew the content and were committed to their routines; however, learners showed little or no commitment to learning Geography. Also, teachers thought that the curriculum had devalued Geography as a subject in schools. According to them, at the level of the JSC,² the curriculum consists of nine subjects per learner, of which a learner is only required to pass six to obtain 23 points, including Mathematics and English. The teachers observed that this leads learners to focus more on subjects such as Mathematics and English instead of other subjects. The NSSC³ consists of six subjects, including two languages. A learner needs to obtain 25 points in five subjects to be admitted to local universities. Against this backdrop, according to the teachers, learners are usually tempted to choose easy subjects to obtain the required points. Teachers reported that Geography is usually among those subject learners generally regard as challenging subjects.

On the other hand, the opposite was revealed by learners. They felt that teachers were a contributing factor in their lack of interest to learn Geography. The verbatim responses of the learners and teachers are presented in the boxes.

Below are the responses of some individually interviewed learners to the question: How do you find Geography as a school subject up until now (Grade 11)?

“Geography is a very interesting subject; one gets to learn a lot.” (Fabiola from school X)
“From Grade 8-10 Geography was easy but now it is getting tough. My experience is improving now and then. Geography is a good subject where one can learn good experience; however, it is challenging.” (Natasha from school W) *“Well, Geography is quite easier than Physical Science, it’s just that the curriculum is consisting of many subjects which makes it impossible for learners to cope.” (Georgin from school Z)*

Furthermore, the learners in focus group A doing Geography were asked the same question and responded as follows:

² JSC - Junior Secondary Certificate (examination) for Grade 10.

³NSSC - Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate (examination) for Grade 11-12.

Old establishment schools -schools which established for a long time.? is this a footnote?

Heltha and Fabiola from school X were in Group A. They had a similar response. Fabiola said *“My level of understanding from the low grade was not that good, although I struggled and never gave up. I think maybe the content is too much and teachers are also likely not to understand the subject content. For the learners, this might be confusing since they are supposed to guide us.”* **(Fabiola from school X)** *“So far the teaching and learning experience is good, however learning Geography in Grade 10 is challenging and may cause one to think of not studying Geography further.”* **(Heltha from school X)**

Van Tonder and Natasha from school W, who are also doing Geography, expressed the following views;

“The teaching style in Grade 8 almost made me to hate Geography because our teacher used to read instead of explaining.” The teaching had a bad impact on learners. *“In Grade 9, I got a different teacher who came with a different way of teaching and explaining, which made me to choose Geography after Grade 10.”* **(Van Tonder)** *“Our teacher is the best; one could see that the teacher knows the subject very good. It is because of the way our teacher is conducting the lesson which made me to love Geography.”* **(Natasha)**

However, Georgin from school Z had a different experience:

“I had a violent and abusive teacher who expected us to know everything from primary; as a result, some learners dropped Geography from Grade 10.”

The teachers were asked: How have your experiences as a Geography teacher been so far? Their responses during their interviews were as follows:

“Ja, what can I say, it is like part of my daily task as a Geography teacher. Yes, I love and enjoy the subject and learning every day but we are teaching with a lot of challenges and learners are passive to learn. I indicated earlier, Geography was my favourite subject at school, but I experienced difficulties in teaching map work and gaining skills in marking external examination. In turn learners might experience it because they seem not to be interested in map work.” **(Debbie of school X)**

“Learners struggled in map work and geomorphology, but so far, I do not really have a problem with teaching. What else can we say, we are trying our best from our side but somehow, I feel we are supposed also to be part of the curriculum development, to decide what to be included.” **Antoinette of school W)**

“Good. I experienced teaching Geography with a lack of resources which is hindering the teaching and learning process. Resources like textbooks, photocopy machines just to mention some are crucial.” (Haulofu of school W)

Furthermore, teacher Debbie expressed that marking external examinations empower teachers to teach with confidence. She said that happens because the external marking experience helps teachers to know what is expected from them and the learners. Teacher Debbie believes that external marking opportunities enable teachers to improve and enhance their own teaching skills.

The above personal views of teachers and learners show that they had different opinions on the subject. Teachers seemed to enjoy teaching and tried their best to teach. However, learners apparently were not willing to absorb the content to master it. Teacher Debbie reported that she finds it hard to master everything, as she learns new things every day. This is in line with Catling (2013:2), who states that teachers do not get adequate training and as a result they learn daily by themselves.

Teacher Haulofu experienced that learners were taught unfamiliar things; this made it difficult for learners to understand the whole scenario of Geography. He pointed out that this might be a reason of the decline in learners choosing Geography. Haulofu was of the opinion that if learners were taught familiar features which were close to them and could be seen around, then Geography could be an interesting subject. He stated that this could result in Geography being selected by learners. Haulofu communicated his disappointment on the lack of resources for teaching Geography in schools. He believes that this hinders optimal teaching and learning of the subject, even though teachers are willing to do their best. He highlighted the need for subject advisors to undergo training in order to assist teachers and provide them with teaching materials so that teaching and learning may be improved. His thoughts are similar to those of Best (2011:11), who invites teachers who are passionate, inspired and love Geography to join his mission to reinstate Geography because it is important and part of the 21st-century curriculum.

Haulofu further explained that there was often a lack of textbooks so some learners had to share textbooks with others. He observed that some do not bring textbooks to school, because they are afraid that they might get lost. This made teaching difficult as teachers had to resort to making copies all the time. He complained that making copies was not always a solution for the lack of textbooks, though, because the photocopy machines were frequently out of order.

Moreover, Haulofu expressed the view that the recent introduction of free education resulted in schools not getting funds that were usually obtained from school fees. He reported that even back then textbooks were hardly enough; however, there was a control mechanism in place. According to him, such a control mechanism worked well to trace the books that were not returned by learners. Apparently, this was achieved by holding back the reports of learners who lost textbooks. He said that alternatively, the school budget was adjusted to include purchasing more book and textbooks. Now that education is free, the government has cautioned schools not to hold results of learners for whatever reason. Haulofu said this resulted in schools not having enough textbooks and with no choice but to let the predicament of the lack of textbooks continue.

Teacher Antoinette experienced the exclusion of teachers' views in curriculum development. She said that teachers are often only approached when a new curriculum has to be implemented.

This statement aligns with Carl's (2005:223), who claims that teachers tend to be considered only when they are required to participate in implementing or receiving training for the new curriculum implementation and are hardly ever involved in any designing of the curriculum improvement for daily teaching and learning experiences to be included. The situation can be compared with sport players who are likely feel the pinch, but the coach and other sport organisers hardly feel any pain and tend to just blame players if they lose a game.

In addition, Antoinette expressed the view that learners struggle to understand map work and complain that Grade 11 Geography is tough. This signifies a consideration by Akintade (2011:131) that Geography needs to be promoted by all geographers so that the community will not suffer from the absence of Geography in schools.

Haulofu and Antoinette also condemned the exclusion of teachers in matters pertaining to curriculum compilation. She believes that if teachers participate in the curriculum design process, they would choose topics that are suitable to improve learners' understanding. In the curriculum, subjects are allocated to different fields of studies. The teachers and learners indicated that the existing fields of study were contributing to the decline of learners interested in studying Geography. Thus, Antoinette believes that teacher-involvement in curriculum development could have a sound outcome for both parties. She thought that this may also improve the quality of teaching and learning.

It is indeed necessary for curriculum designers to work closely with teachers to choose suitable topics in order to enhance the level of learners' understanding. The comments of teacher

Antoinette are in accord with those of Akintade (2011:131), who claims that for learners to select Geography as a discipline, requires that teachers are well trained, encouraged and motivated and have proper guidance, and that the curriculum is given a proper review. From the researcher's point of view, if training is maintained, the number of learners choosing Geography may not be so negatively impacted.

4.7.2 Biased field of studies, teacher's attitudes and methods of presenting lessons

Teachers and learners commented on the complicated field of study, which they thought could be a contributing factor to decline in Geography specialization in schools.

This theme and findings correspond with the view of Catling (2013:118), who found that if Geography were to be taught together with all other subjects in primary schools, it would stand a better position in the school curriculum. Teachers and learners claimed that the field of studies (combination of knowledge of different subjects) tend not to be in favour of Geography. As a result, learners choose other fields of studies rather than a field where there is Geography. The complicated clustering of subject disadvantages learners as some intended to choose Geography but cannot. When they were asked during their respective interviews what they thought contributed to the decline in choosing Geography, the participants indicated that the fields of studies might have played a role. These findings are similar to those of a study by Akintade (2011:132) based in Nigeria, which found that learners opted to choose religious studies instead of Geography, because parents wanted education to be more focused on Christianity and this led to a sharp decline in the number of learners choosing Geography.

The learners were asked to comment on the following questions: Have you experienced a decline or increase in learners choosing Geography at your school? Why do you think that was the case? The three learners who were doing Geography provided the following input during their respective individual interviews.

"I feel the decline might be related to the teacher in the sense that some teachers tend to be very strict, while others have attitudes of not willing to be fully involved. Some teachers seem to be not cared, if a learner does not understand then they are hesitant to explain. Teachers tend to read, and not to explain, tend not to write notes on the chalkboard, handing handouts and a bunch of papers to do activities without guidance, or some learners tend not to find the subject interesting in the fact that if he/she wants to study medicine he/she might find Geography not necessary. This resulted in them not really paying a lot of attention in

Geography but mainly focusing in Mathematics, Physical Science and Biology.” (Fabiola from school X)

“Learners to participate and fully engaged in learning activities good relationship with teachers is needed.” (Natasha from school W)

“Well I think learners are not well informed about the importance of the subject. They just feel that the study load might increase and have a fear that they might not understand, thus they do not choose Geography.” (Georgin from school Z)

Focus group participants felt that if the foundation laid from Grade 8 is not strong and this may discourage learners from choosing Geography. Those in group A who were doing Geography and said the following:

“Grade 8 was just a bit challenging because everything to me was new. Grade 10 was easy because I had basics from Grade 8 and 9 thus understood better. Loving or hating the subjects depends because, sometimes we blame teachers, but it also depends on us as individual learners how we perceive the teachers and the subject in general.” (Heltha from school X)

“Geography is not difficult currently, the experience is great, Grade 8 everything was new. Grade 9 was the best for me, Grade 10 was a bit challenging and complicated but I could manage.” (Fabiola from school)

“Grade 8 Geography content was not so well because I was not used to the teaching style of the teacher as she never explained or used relevant examples just reading.” (Van Tonder from school W)

“In Grade 8 my teacher was a bit demanding, he expected us to know most content about Geography. I did not have foundation from Grade 7, is not offering Geography. I found it a bit tense whenever I am in a Geography class.” (Georgin from school Z)

“Since Grade 8 I had a bad experience with Geography, Absenteeism among teachers and changing of teachers discouraged continuing learning Geography in schools. Two teachers left in the same year and management hired a new teacher in the third term. It was really a bad experience and I have even lost interest in the subject.” (Jovita from school Z)

Learners said that teachers prefer distributing copies of handouts without offering any explanations and this demoralised learners. It is important that teachers teach subjects they

know and understand very well. These findings relate to those of Adeyemi (2009;101), who observes that the decline in interest in the subject may be caused by teachers' attitudes and relationships with learners. According to the author, these have a huge influence on learners' attitudes towards Geography.

The three teacher participants were asked what they thought may have caused a decline in Geography in schools.

Teacher Debbie from school X said the following:

“At my school because we only have 3 fields of study which are Science, Social science and Commerce, all our learners prefer Social science which is always full.”

The interview with Debbie revealed that school X had not experienced a decline in Geography, since there are only three fields of study that are compulsory for learners to choose from. Two fields of study have a combination with Geography and learners have no option but to choose Geography whether they want to or not.

The findings of this study were in accord with some of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. As shown in Table 2.1 (NIED, 2017) Geography does not appear in many senior secondary fields of study that learners want to pursue, which results in many learners not doing Geography. The subject is under pressure in the curriculum because of the wealth of choices offered to learners in schools (Best, 2011:5). Best further explains that learners tend to opt for other subjects, for example, Physical Sciences and Biology rather than Geography, which results in a decline in the number of learners doing Geography.

Debbie provided more comments on the decline:

“Geography is one of the sciences subjects, thus a decline could be experienced because Geography could be a challenge for many learners. Some topics might be easy while others may be challenging. In that view learners are tempted to choose between other subjects.”

Antoinette of school W said:

“I cannot comment on the decline because at our school Geography is compulsory.”

School Z also has the same fields of study as school X, but the science field is pure science and does not include Geography. It seems that the absence of Geography in some fields of study may lower the number of learners willing to study Geography.

Haulofu from school Z expressed the following opinion on the decline in Geography:

“The field of study many learners prefer to choose is science. Social science is regarded as a field of learners who obtained low marks (not doing good). Learners with high marks from Grade 10 prefer pure science. When schools admit learners, the science field tend to get filled first with hard-working learners and those that join late from NAMCOL [Namibia College of Learning] are referred to the social science field.”

During the semi-structured interviews learners expressed four views:

- not choosing Geography was because of the choice of the study field;
- they perceived Geography as being a difficult subject;
- the pedagogical approaches of teachers were unhelpful;
- they were not willing and ready to face geographical challenges.

Fabiola said her negative feelings were a response to some of the teachers’ attitudes. Teachers tended to have bad attitudes towards learners and seems that teachers do not know the content very well because mere reading is an indication of poor mastery of Geography.

Fabiola of school X expressed the view:

“Sometimes they tend to just read and not really explain. In some cases, they do not to write notes on the chalkboard, just handouts and bunch of papers to do activities without guidance.”

The learners in their individual interviews and those in the focus groups thought that the decline might have been caused by the attitudes and pedagogical approach of teachers. Fabiola mentioned that teachers were seen not to be friendly. She felt that this could demotivate learners and prevent them from mastering the subject content as required. She expressed her dissatisfaction that teachers tended to be too strict on controlling insignificant things, for instance, they hardly gave chances for jokes with learners.

The research revealed that at times learners felt that they were not being guided enough by their teachers and that they were expected to do too many things on their own. Fabiola also thought that some teachers seemed to come to class unprepared, because when learners ask questions, teachers respond in an unsatisfactory manner. Sometimes, they hardly gave answers, or they redirected questions back to other learners to give the answer. Similar sentiments were expressed by Natasha, who felt that teachers appeared to be lazy and showed a negative attitude towards the subject.

Among the aims of this study was to find out what influence the teachers have on learners' decision to take Geography as a subject in Grade 11. It can be inferred from the comments of the learners that the attitudes of teachers and their teaching methods could be among the factors that reduce learners' inclination to choose Geography.

The literature emphasises some of the areas that teachers should take into consideration when teaching Geography. This include the tone of voice, facial expressions and dress code. A study by Benjamin and Nato (2014:222) highlights that a Geography teacher's personality also affects the success of the teacher-centred method. Learners may be influenced by teachers' dress code. Teachers should dress in a decent way, speak loudly enough, pronounce words correctly, use proper verbal diction, and use appropriate facial expressions and gestures; these may effectively influence learners' enthusiasm (Benjamin & Nato, 2014:222).

At the same time, Natasha claimed that teachers only concentrated on subject content delivery and never thought of creating a good relationship with learners. Teachers are role-models for learners and therefore representing admirable examples to their learners is highly significant. Akintade (2011:132) found that learners were not willing to choose Geography because they did not like the methods teachers used. Teachers failed to make use of teaching aids and this discouraged learners from continuing to study Geography at junior level.

During the individual interviews Jovita from school Z emphasised that teaching time was never used effectively by teachers and absenteeism among teachers had contributed towards the decline of Geography. Participants stated that the habit of teachers looking for greener pastures elsewhere by leaving schools in the middle of the term/year and applying to go to other institutions could negatively affect the learners' performance in Geography. When teachers leave, their replacement might not occur quickly enough due to the bureaucracy in the recruitment process.

The findings of the focus groups show that most learners were challenged by Geography because of a poor foundation in Grade 8-10. This seems to make learners become hesitant to choose Geography from Grade 11.

According to teacher Debbie, learners choose easy subjects; Geography is regarded as a challenging subject. This finding is in line with Akintade (2011:132), who argued that Geography is a very wide and difficult subject, but also an interesting subject. However, it requires a lot of effort and hard work to master it, as well as positive attitudes and approaches.

The learner participants in this study were therefore asked to share their views on the presentation of lessons by the teachers. The researcher put the following point to the Grade 11 learners in group A: Tell me about how geographical themes are presented to you by the teacher in Grade 11. The views expressed during the focus groups were as follow:

Hertha from school X was in group B said:

“From Grade 8-10 lessons were presented marvellous, although the teacher was fast but currently in Grade 11 the teacher tends to be very slow. I tried to cope but I got tired and my attention got driven away. She tries to explain but slow and smooth. I expect jokes sometimes to make lessons alive.”

Learners expressed that the teaching style plays a huge role in ensuring effective teaching as they were eager to follow and very interested in lively teaching. The effectiveness of teaching Geography can be measured by studying the pedagogical approach in Geography that is applied by teachers and the performance of learners in examinations (Benjamin & Nato, 2014:221).

The learners also highlighted the following challenges. **Natasha** from school W:

“Unprepared lessons may cause teachers to read during lessons. A lack of self-esteem and confidence depicted by teachers are also among the challenges. The teacher does not do all the explanations out of his experience. Learners argue that the teacher never give a real-life example.”

The researcher did not plan to observe a lesson being presented; however, an invitation was issued to sit in the classroom whilst waiting to interview a teacher. While in the classroom, poor behaviour among learners such as chatting during the lesson presentation and doing anything they felt like were observed. These disruptive behaviours could be challenging to young and less strict teachers. Namibia is a democratic country, meaning that learners also have rights such as e.g. rude. Consequently, teachers’ power to thoroughly discipline learners is somewhat limited. Learners have the right to free education and punishment is abolished in schools. If learners are misbehaving teachers do not have the right to beat or punish them. If they lost textbooks, teachers and the management team do not have the right to confiscate their reports.

Georgin from school Z and in group A concurred with Fabiola and stated:

“My current teacher tends to just read. I do not know whether he comes unprepared. My former teachers used to show us things and presented lessons with the overhead projector and showed us videos. Changing teachers is also not good.”

According to Alcorn (2010), the teacher-centred approach of teaching can be applied when teaching materials are not available or when learners do not have access to such resources. Awiti (2010: 10) says the learner-centred approach might only be suitable and effective when applied correctly.

Jovita from school Z and in group A stated:

“I feel like my Geography teacher is good to teach history because all the time he brings in something related to History. He made me to hate Geography. Even he himself used to tell us that he is just teaching Geography because of the career he finds himself in.”

From these comments one can infer that teachers and learners may be contributing to the decline in Geography as a subject choice at high school. They seem to both be driving this problem and are undermining each other's motivation by making adverse comments about the subject. Furthermore, learner participants were of the opinion that experienced teachers were those who wanted to achieve their goals and tried to revive teaching and learning. Learners indicated that they preferred teachers who teach by explaining, and use relevant examples and ask possible examination questions. They also expressed the view that presenting lessons should not be too slow nor should it be rushed. Learners felt empowered and were more active when possible examination questions were discussed, since that may contribute to their performance in their final examinations. The use of teaching resources may also encourage and retain the attention of learners.

The learner participants highlighted that it was challenging when teachers changed from one grade to the next grade. Teachers were often transferred when learners were just starting to get used to them and getting to know them better. Teachers who teach subjects that they are not happy with or not familiar with could cause learners to lose interest in the subject. A teacher should be conversant with the subject content, otherwise a negative perception about the subject may develop among learners.

The following were the views of learners in group B in response to the question about their opinion on the presentation of Geography lessons.

“In Grade 10 it was not good because the teacher used to give us a lot of activities on our own without explaining and hardly had time to give us feedback.” (Sofie from school X)

“We had a very good and fresh teacher from UNAM (University of Namibia), but the problem teaching resources were not there.” (Bettie from school W)

“My teacher seems to be lazy. If you are not that type of person who can cope on your own and have self-confidence, you would not pass. You should work on your own since there are always a lot of activities. I do my own summary.” (Alex from school Z)

Learners in group B expressed the view that teachers give them a lot of activities without giving feedback and they always complain about time. It seems that teachers only teach until the syllabus is completed and do not worry whether the objectives have been achieved or not. Learners need to get feedback to correct where they went wrong and how to improve when they make mistakes. Checking activities is also a way of knowing whether learners understood the lesson or not. Learners do more than one subject, so teachers should keep in mind that they get exhausted. This raised the question as to what drove learners to choose or not choose Geography. This is discussed below.

4.7.3 Influence by the choice for careers

Learners had different reasons for choosing Geography. They indicated that they love the subject because of the career paths they want to pursue, for example, becoming an aviator. On the other hand, some learners reported that they registered for Geography only because it was part of the field of study in which they enrolled. This is in line with Akintade (2011:55), who reported that many learners opted to choose Geography from different available optional subjects because of the careers they want to follow. A question was asked to determine whether learners had ever been taken to career fairs. The response was that they had not and so the researcher was puzzled after **Georgin of school Z** stated:

“It was either I chose Geography, Physical Sciences and Biology, or Physical Sciences and Agriculture to study which I never had in the past. If Geography was not part of the package, I could not have chosen it.”

One would expect that learners in Grade 11 would have some knowledge of their career choices. It is reasonable to assume that learners should have an idea of what careers they want to pursue to avoid confusion and the wrong choice of careers. Moreover, learners were required to comment on reasons why they chose or did not choose Geography to address the aim of the study, namely, to understand the reasons for the decline in learners doing Geography. They were asked the following question: Why did you choose (learners doing Geography) or not choose Geography (learners not doing Geography) as one of your major subjects?

Alex from school Z, who was doing Geography as an extra subject, answered;

“I am doing Geography as an extra subject. When I registered one of my teachers advised me to choose Agriculture, because I obtained a good symbol, although I wanted Geography. I thought of my future without Geography is impossible then I decided to take it as a 7th subject, which I am studying it on my own without attending classes and I am coping.”

Fabiola from school X was doing Geography and said the following in her individual interview:

“I chose Geography because it was one of the subjects in the field of study I took, although I needed only Physical Sciences and Biology for my pursued career.”

It should be of a concern to teachers that some of the Grade 11 learners emphasised that they did not know what they wanted to do after school. Their not knowing what they wanted to do could be because they were perhaps not afforded opportunities to be taken to places that disseminated career information. There seems to be a need for learners to be exposed to different career fairs. This exercise could open learners’ mindsets in terms of making the right choices of subjects which could be Geography for their careers

The following sentiments emerged from Group A in terms of why they chose Geography:

“I would not really opt to choose Geography, but I took it because it is compulsory in my field.”

(Georgin from school Z)

“I took Geography because it was the only subject at a high level that I could take compared to Agriculture.” **(Van Tonder from school W)**

“I had to do Geography because of the career I am planning to pursue.” **(Jovita from school Z)**

A probing question was posed in terms of what Jovita wanted to become and she replied that

“I want to become an aviator, if Geography was not part of the career, I would have chosen easy subjects.”

From the above verbatim comments of the learners who were studying Geography, it seems they did not make an informed choice in terms of their aspirations. They were doing Geography simply because of the field of study offered at their schools where Geography is compulsory. They had no choice but to study it, as indicated by both Fabiola and Georgin. Some learners wanted to take Biology and Physical Sciences, but they also had to take a subject that was not part of their career. The opinions of the individual learners indicate that there was no correlation between careers and the subjects in the field of study they wanted to pursue.

The sentiments of the participants in Group A were similar to those expressed by the individual participants. However, Van Tonder wanted some of his subjects on High Level,⁴ but had to take Geography as it was the only subject on this level. He believed that with subjects on High Level, one stood a good chance to apply at any university of his choice, especially abroad. He made it clear that he wishes to study abroad.

Jovita chose Geography because of the career she wants to pursue, although she is not good at it. She could not compromise her career aspirations and acknowledged the challenges of doing Geography. Jovita stressed that, irrespective of her not being good at the subject or perhaps the pedagogical presentation of Geography was not good, she forced herself to study the subject.

Group B had only learners who did not choose Geography. Their views on why they did not choose Geography were important for this study. Their input is presented below.

“I would have chosen science, but Geography was also there. I could hardly get my Geography teacher when explaining, she was reluctant and taught us to finish the syllabi. My option was not to choose Geography because teachers were problematic.” (Sofie from school X)

“I was wrongly directed by my friends to choose Science or Commerce, then I took Commerce. Field of study made it complicated.” (Bettie from school W)

“I did not choose Geography because I always wanted to become a Chartered Accountant and one does not need to have Geography, although I was good at Geography. I am good at

⁴ High level is an A level or advanced level that allows learners to choose any university they want to study at.

numbers since numbers does not require one to master a large amount of content.” (Xavier from school W)

“I did not choose Geography because of the career I am planning to pursue. I always wanted to become a Physiologist. I did not get use to quite understand my previous teacher in Grade 10 and this discouraged me to choose Geography.” (Marex from school Z)

From the comments it seems that some learners blamed teachers as they were apparently reluctant and did not teach properly from the lower grade. This demoralised learners, and so they did not take Geography in Grade 11. Sofie stated that her first option to study was Science, but Geography was one of the combination subjects in the field. She did not select this option, because of her experience of a lack of support from Geography teachers over the years. She explained that teachers partly contribute to the decline of learners’ interest in the subject, because they were not always present to motivate, support and stimulate an interest in learners to study Geography.

Bettie did not have any problems with Geography. She loves and enjoys the subject, but her choice to study Commerce was because of the influence of her friends. She regretted her submission to peer pressure and felt that if Geography had been part of the commerce field, she would have chosen it. She thought that this might have a negative impact in the long run, because it was not her choice.

This is an indication that sometimes learners do not choose what they like and want to do themselves. Instead, they follow what their friends advise them to do irrespective of their interest and potential. This is confirmed by Akintade (2011:132), who found that learners’ personal attitudes to learning and the influence of their peer groups have a negative or positive impact on the subjects they want to choose. He emphasises that attitudes and peers affect the performance and interest of learners. Akintade (2011:132) explains that educated parents tend to influence and dictate which subjects their children should choose, regardless of their potential.

Sofie chose Chartered Accounting, although she was good at Geography. When choosing subjects, some learners considered subjects that could impact on their employment options. Bettie always wanted to become a Chartered Accountant. She complained that theory subjects were not easy to study, since they required a lot of time to succeed. That is why she preferred studying subjects that deal with numbers.

The participants were asked to identify topics that they enjoyed most and least in the curriculum. This is discussed in the next section.

4.7.4 Geography is composed of extensive unenjoyable content

The researcher noted that Geography teachers and learners seemed to not be motivated by the Geography content as it consisted of a number of unenjoyable themes. Van Eden and Warnich (2018:269) state that teachers may teach Geography, but they have difficulty explaining its nature as defined in the curriculum documents. Three questions were posed to determine whether there were interesting and/or unenjoyable themes in the Geography curriculum:

- What are the themes that you find most interesting to teach or learn and why?
- What are the themes that you find least interesting to teach or learn and why?
- Are there any topics that you would like to be included or excluded in the Geography curriculum?

The participants said that there were difficult topics in Geography that affected the interest of both teachers and learners negatively. Learners tend to not want to choose Geography because of a number of unenjoyable themes in its curriculum. Learners assert that they generally try to do the best in what they enjoy the most. The findings of the study are in accordance with those of Oates (2010:70), who makes a distinction between content, concepts and context; he emphasised that when content dominates the National Curriculum, much of the pedagogy and experience is imposed on learners in ways that are not motivating or meaningful. Learners were also asked to recommend topics that they wanted to be included in or excluded from the Geography curriculum. The number of topics that are not enjoyed may be a reason why learners are not keen to study Geography.

Learners doing Geography expressed their views during their individual interviews on themes that did not motivate them.

“I do not enjoy population density, regional Geography and population pyramids. The challenging theme to me is map work.” (Fabiola from school X)

“I find Regional Geography difficult compared to Geomorphology, I find map work more challenging because I must listen, calculate and if one makes a mistake with numbers everything will be wrong.” (Natasha from school W)

The responses of the two focus groups are presented below. Firstly, group B:

“I did not understand geomorphology because it contains a lot of theory. It does not discuss issues we can explain ourselves. Teachers did not make it practical by for instance showing videos for learners to make understanding easier.” (**Marex from school Z**)

“I least enjoy part of field techniques; I find it difficult to answer the alterative to coursework such as shopping habits. It is difficult so to say the whole research paper.” (**Van Tonder from school W**)

“I do not enjoy Paper 3 (Research Component), I find it more challenging in all topics.” (**Jovita from school Z**)

Respondents from group A said:

“Map work is not enjoyable because, it requires a person to be in class committed and dedicated. Geomorphology is also not interesting because lengthy questions tend to be asked that requires one to explain a lot (half a page).” (**Natasha from school X**)

“The one we are currently doing is river process which is something new to me.” (**Fabiola from school X**)

“Unlike the rest I do not like population density. This is probably because I do not get the concept clear. It is common that when one is starting a new topic, a bit of time is required to grasp.” (**Hertha from school X**)

The following sentiments emerged from focus group B discussions about the topics they enjoyed and those that they did not enjoy.

“I would say I enjoy the topic that deals with population because it does not contain a lot of science contents, since I am not a science person.” (**Sofie from school X**)

“I like population because it is more general and is all about what we experience on our daily basis.” (**Bettie from school W**)

“I like Climatology because there are a lot of numbers, working with numbers is interesting. I also like population since it deals with all things around us.” (**Xavier from school W**)

“I enjoy the topic on industry because it contributes to the understanding of physics better. Geomorphology is not my interesting because requires critical thinking and imagination of underground.” (Marex from school Z)

The teachers provided comments on what they found interesting and topics that were not interesting.

“I find Physical Geography interesting and enjoyable compared to other themes. Although learners find it difficult, the topic is very significant in learners’ everyday lives. In Grade 10 learners tend not to like map work and I am also not keen of map work because it could get tricky and challenging. I also do not enjoy industry and Agriculture because of farming activities.” (Teacher Debbie of school X)

“I do not like population that much, it is too much work and consist of a lot of explanation.” (Teacher Antoinette of school W)

“I basically do not enjoy earthquake and volcano probably because our country is not likely to experience them and seem to be less interest. I also find population, economic and geomorphology less enjoyable. Geomorphology could be boring because one seems not to find those things that are taught, for example, stones may not be available, therefore learners might not have an idea compared to Physical Geography, where you can observe. I also find time not enjoyable very much; this is not because I do not understand myself, but learners do not tend to connect to that topic well. Therefore, when teaching learners tend to be less interested. I enjoy HIV and Aids.” (Teacher Haulofu of school Z)

Teacher Debbie and teacher Haulofu concurred that Physical Geography was a most enjoyable topic. Debbie further reasoned that Physical Geography does not require learners to give lengthy explanations as it requires just one answer for a question.

Teacher Antoinette enjoyed more map work and alternatives to coursework:

“Topics such as map work, research inquiry, Geography inquiry studies and geomorphology are interesting, since most of the things surrounding us namely rocks, volcanoes, plates just to mention but a few are discussed in these topics.”

Teachers and learners mentioned that map work requires someone who is good in thinking to get to the right conclusion.

Teacher Haulofu preferred teaching the topic on HIV and AIDS because the disease is prevalent and can be identified in the community; thus, it is easy to understand. However, it is just a small part of the curriculum. He felt that those were the types of topics learners need to learn, because they could understand the such topics without much of a teacher's effort. This could lead to robust classroom discussions and could attract more learners to be interested to learn Geography. As a result, learners can obtain good marks and encourage others to select Geography. Haulofu further argued that many topics in Geography tend to be about things which most of the learners are not familiar with. He said this may be among the factors contributing to the decline of interest in Geography.

Teacher Antoinette was in favour of map work and alternatives to coursework (e.g. geomorphology) as they are practical and only require a single answer without explanations. She said that when learners are taught about things around them, they seem to understand them better compared to learning things which they never see, touch or feel. Georjin also indicated that the topic of research in Geography was her favourite. She explained that this is because all a learner needs to do is plan, organise and conduct the research. Learner Van Tonder and teacher Antoinette were the only participants who enjoyed map work out of the 3 teachers and 11 learners.

Alexander (2010:254) proposed a curriculum size whereby a teacher can move with ease around the conceptual and organisational territory that each subject represents without needing a level of subject specialist knowledge. He further argued that curriculum capacity may enable teachers to be more flexible and confident, and to create the connections between content and context in the best interest of their learners. It is reasonable to conclude from the above views that the content of Geography may be a contributing factor for learners not choosing this subject. By looking at all topics, it seems that focus group B did not enjoy any of them. Participants stated that the problem could be too much theory and that they were likely to be taught unknown content. The teachers tended to have the same opinion as the learners in this regard. However, some learners did not support the pedagogical approach to lessons as they found it not appealing and motivating, especially in Grade 8. One might assume that if teachers do not enjoy some topics, then this might also be a problem for them to teach, motivate and attract learners. Teacher Debbie was of the opinion that one constantly learns as it is a process; this means that they can learn every day from both colleagues and learners.

Alex made it clear that although he was advised to choose Agriculture, where a good mark could be obtained, he felt he could not leave Geography out. So, he took it as an extra subject. This is an indication that non-Geography teachers tend to advise learners not to select Geography because some teachers apparently regard Geography as an unimportant subject. This may be a discouragement for learners, especially when they are advised by teachers not teaching the subjects they are planning to choose.

4.7.5 Lack of professional development and motivation of teachers

The findings of the study are in line with the literature which stated that learning is a process that requires learners to gain knowledge and be motivated in doing so (Boekaerts, 2011:208-425). In addition, Boekaerts (2011:408-425) and Zimmerman (2011:49-64) contend that when learners try to learn Geography without enough motivation, they may not take an interest in the subject. Learners believe that teachers are the backbone of teaching and the main contributors towards almost every outcome that may occur. The emphasis here is to reveal the impact of demotivated teacher on learners.

The learners were asked the following question: What would you propose to Geography teachers to consider making Geography a easier and more interesting subject? It was hoped that this question would elicit positive proposals, but instead learners' comments focused on the negative issues. The sentiments from the focus groups concentrated on how they felt teachers were not motivational.

“Well I would suggest that teachers start on a positive pace and take it slow because not all the learners are faster. In most cases teachers try to rush and put more pressure on us and this generally result in less understanding, thus decreasing the interest of learners in the subject. Teachers should not only teach throughout the period but take breaks as well as refresh by revising constantly.” **(Fabiola from school X, group A)**

“I feel like Geography educators should take an interest in the subject as they tend to be lazy, we expected to have teachers who are into the subject and really instil the same into us.” **(Jovita from school Z, group A)**

“Time is not used optimally; teachers are being absent from school, when learners are about to approach the exam, they then tend to dump the whole work on us, thus a lot of pressure on learners to handle. Negativity, sometimes teacher is telling learners to quit, I can see already that you will not make it, you will not pass.” **(Hertha from school X, group B)**

“There are those teachers teaching Geography for the sake of getting their income. Learning is not all about teaching, but at least they should also try to create a bond between their learners because teacher-learner relationship is more important.” (**Natasha from school W, group A**)

The teachers were asked the following question: What would you suggest can be done from the teacher’s side to attract more learners to choose Geography?

“I think teachers are not motivating learners since they are not taking learners for fieldwork.” (**Debbie of school X**)

“We are not making Geography interesting by forming up clubs or social science clubs, excursions competition, learners would enjoy it” (**Antoinette of school W**)

Teacher Antoinette argued competitions should be introduced whereby participating learners win prizes that may encourage other learners to study harder and take an interest in the subject. Some learners in the focus groups had different views from those who participated in individual interviews. **Fabiola from school X** in a focus group said:

“I would say to make Geography an interesting subject the teacher should ask and prepare learners according to how they prefer to be taught. Sometimes teachers come with anger to school and tend to take it out on learners which make learning hard.”

The learners suggested workshops for teachers to enrich their knowledge, because they felt that it might revive teachers’ knowledge which could be transferred to them to reach their goals.

During the study Natasha and Jovita had the same thoughts and noted that some Geography teachers were not there for the learners; they seemed to be there just for their salaries. Against this background, they emphasized that Namibian teachers need to change and put our country on the map by developing good attitudes and sound teaching practices. They cautioned that teaching should not only be a matter of rendering service to learners or to complete the syllabus, but also to create a good relationship between learners and other educational stakeholders.

Jovita from school Z stated:

“Teachers should develop the love of loving Geography and us learners will be able to follow; learners tend to perform better on something they are interested and love the most.”

Motivation can take many forms: teaching, workshops and team building, to mention a few. If teachers are not motivated, the principals should try to motivate them and the teachers should motivate learners. During the interviews the learners stated that some teachers did not have sufficient knowledge to teach and respond to Geography-related questions. Therefore, they suggested the need for teachers to develop knowledge and love the subject, which may stimulate learners to do more better.

The teachers were asked how often they attended workshops as part of motivation and their professional development. All three teachers indicated that professional development was very rare.

According to teacher **Debbie from school X:**

“In the last few years there has not been a lot of workshops, but luckily, I have been a marker for external examination for many years. I do not attend workshops at all since no workshops are provided. Only this year that I will attend a workshop for the new curriculum implementation. In the past couple of years, I only attended one workshop on how to deal with alternative to coursework (research paper, paper 3) where we were trained on how learners should answer this paper.”

Teacher Antoinette from school W stated the following.

“Workshops are very rare, like this year we had one just because of the new curriculum recently introduced. Still only few teachers were trained at NIED (Namibia Institute of Education) and in turn train us but they tend to not really pass on all the information. Subject advisors are there only to check CASS (Continuous Assessment) marks, but not really helping on the subject content or create teamwork among Geography teachers.”

Teacher Haulofu from school Z reported:

“I never attended any workshop since I started teaching Geography.”

Sadly, all teachers indicated that opportunities to attend workshops are hardly ever available. As discussed in the previous section, the lack of fieldwork could be because the training received by teachers was inadequate. Seemingly, teacher training in some institutions does not properly train teachers to teach and deal with challenges in Geography.

According to teacher Debbie, the workshop she attended was a component of an alternative to course work; she has been lucky over the years to be appointed as a marker as she felt this

assisted in improving her marking skills. She said that in this way she has obtained abundant knowledge on how questions should be answered.

It appears that subject advisors assume that teachers do not need to be trained to gain in-depth knowledge and that teachers are expected to know the content. In terms of subject advisors providing professional development, teachers indicated that they expected this to be done frequently, perhaps three times in the year or at the beginning of each term. They said that during this exercise teachers would be able to meet their subject advisors to focus on the critical matters that they encounter in their subjects and during classes. Therefore, the idea of teacher Debbie for all teachers to be trained could work and prepare those who have never been trained to teach Geography. Teacher Antoinette expressed the view that subject advisors came to her school, but they rarely conducted workshops. It seems that curriculum development training is only given when a new curriculum is about to be implemented. It is therefore the responsibility of subject advisors within the Ministry of Education to ensure that teachers are provided with workshops in their respective regions. Apparently due to financial constraints, the country managed to train only a few teachers in a short time, with the idea of them training their fellow teachers with the little knowledge and understanding they acquired. This caused confusion, since trained teachers from NIED did not seem to understand very well what was happening in the new curriculum implementation.

4.7.6 Disregard of fieldwork

The Namibian secondary Geography syllabus seems not to provide directive guidelines on how teachers should implement fieldwork in their daily work activities (MoE, 2010:50). These disregards the point highlighted by (Dalton, 2001:397-393) that if fieldwork is put into practice, it may motivate and consequently involve learners in specific learning activities and stimulate them to study Geography.

The interviews with the teachers and learners included this question: How often do you do fieldwork with the learners? The participants were asked what such fieldwork entails, if there was any fieldwork done. Both teachers and learners indicated that fieldwork does not exist in schools at all. However, participants felt that fieldwork was necessary as it as could contribute positively towards achieving the goals of learners and enhance the teaching process of Geography. The researcher probed further to find out about the challenges learners and teachers experienced that made fieldwork impossible. The participants were asked: Why is fieldwork not applied? Their respective views on fieldwork are presented below.

Teacher Debbie from school X said:

“It is very challenging to take learners for fieldwork. Challenges I encountered: discipline problems among learners, overcrowded classes, lack of transport need to hire buses to take learners. The only part of field work I am engaged in at my school is the NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] group which is taking measurement on cloud observation.”

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was established in 1958 as a part of the government of the United States of America. NASA deals with airplanes or space and makes satellites, which help scientists to learn more about the earth. NASA sends probes into space to study things in the solar system. It is a programme which explores asteroids, Mars and beyond. NASA shares things they learn with the world at large. The administration is working tirelessly to see to it that information is disseminated worldwide. NASA’s mission is to learn about earth and space with teachers, so that teachers can work with learners to get them ready (Noyes & Bruneau, 2007:514).

They all felt that if fieldwork could be taken into consideration, performance in Geography could improve and attract many learners. Debbie expressed a concern in terms of the size of classes. A large class of learners would be difficult for one teacher to handle. According to teacher **Debbie**:

“By doing that it comes with a lot of extra responsibility in a sense that currently our learners are not that well-disciplined, and the class group are so big. If one goes out with a certain class, for instance, Grade 10 one needs to do it with all the other learners. If there are about 40 learners in a class for example, it could be difficult.”

Teachers might be putting themselves at risk. For example, if something unpleasant happens to a learner, the teacher would be held accountable. Debbie explained that she had experienced poor discipline among learners; their behaviour outside the classroom was unacceptable. Other challenges might be lack of transport because buses have to be hired. Schools nowadays and the government are faced with financial constraints. Traveling miles to get to practical sites requires funds and parents were hesitant to give money to their children. Taking learners on a fieldtrip to a river could be pointless, because there might not be all the necessary features to be studied.

Teacher Antoinette from school W concurred with teacher Debbie in terms of the transport problem and accommodation, and added:

“The school does not have a weather station, but I bought myself some weather instruments, for example, a rain gauge to explain to my learners. It seems as even subject advisors do not really understand fieldwork as when they visit schools, they hardly comment or say anything related to fieldwork. All they ask is just lesson preparation, but there are other crucial issues beside lesson preparation.”

Teacher Haulofu from school Z also agreed with Debbie and Antoinette:

“Oh my gosh, fieldwork is news at our school, I do not incorporate that into my teaching at all due to the reason that there is a lack of resources since fieldwork require many things to be supplied such as transport, money and accommodation. Our school does not have transport and the government seems not to make any provision to assist teachers in this regard. It is not even included in the time-table; teachers should therefore find ways and means to incorporate fieldwork in their lessons. Teachers normally risk themselves by taking learners out in the field. We also experience lack of parental involvement, whenever we communicate something to them, they tend to respond poorly.”

The teachers and the learners individually and in focus groups in all three schools had a similar view that they do not do fieldwork because of a lack of transport, accommodation and money. Teacher Antoinette said that because of a transport problem, doing fieldwork with Antoinette learners on the school premises was worthwhile. This allowed them to obtain some information. Antoinette further pointed out that subject advisors do not take fieldwork into consideration at all. She claimed that subject advisors just demand lesson preparations when they visit schools.

This is not the only important activity in teaching, since it only focuses on preparing tests and everyday teaching on top of other activities. Subject advisors want to see the long format of lesson preparation, which is seldom used by teachers in their lessons. They claim to compile it only because they are scared of being accused of misconduct. Schools are in an awkward financial situation and cannot even afford to buy weather instruments. Teachers use their own financial resources to buy some equipment. Teacher Haulofu was surprised to be asked a question about fieldwork, and he could not recall whether fieldwork was still part of the curriculum. Apart from the transport difficulty, the education authorities do not seem to make

provision to accommodate fieldwork periods in the timetable. Consequently, teachers sacrifice their leisure time or holidays to take learners for fieldwork projects, while holiday time should be resting time to rejuvenate teachers for the next semester. Participants who incorporate fieldwork into their lessons felt demoralised by parents, who were hesitant to get involved by giving learners money and other necessary items. Some of the topics they highlighted for fieldwork were river process, climatology, map work and coastal. The responses of teachers and learners demonstrate how the lack of fieldwork and the challenges of fieldwork might be a contributing to the decline of Geography in the curriculum.

According to the teachers, although fieldwork was disregarded, there were topics where excursions were required. They felt that this practice would assist learners in understanding the content and enable learners to be able to use their own knowledge when answering questions. The next section covers English as language of instruction as a barrier to teaching and learning.

4.8.7 Language as a barrier to teaching and learning

The findings of the study corresponded with those of Hinde, Popp, Jimenez-Silva and Dorn (2011:47), who indicate that the International Research in Geography and Environmental Education Report outlines that the importance of Geography could be connected to proficiency in reading and the English language. The report clarifies that this connection enhances intonation and the writing of geographical terms and content correctly. Teachers could not exactly identify why learners were not interested to choose Geography in Grade 11, so they were asked whether there could be a problem with English as a language of communication.

English is Namibia's official language and has been the medium of instruction since the country's independence 28 years ago. Surprisingly, the use of English was reported to be a barrier to effective communication between teachers and learners in Windhoek.

Teacher Debbie from school X stated in her interview that she had difficulties in using English.

"I was taught in Afrikaans, now that every subject content is changed into English, I find it hard and struggle to express myself in English. At home we do not speak English."

From the group of learners **Fabiola of school X** said:

"Ash, my English is not that good to explain and answer questions that good, because of my bad English I always stay quiet in the class without participating."

The home language of the majority of Namibian learners is Afrikaans, Oshiwambo, Khoekhoegwab or Herero. One might assume that most learners only use English during lessons. Difficulties in understanding the subject content due to a lack of English proficiency may result in fewer learners choosing Geography at a more advanced level.

4.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter data analysis of the research findings was presented in terms of the problem statement stated in Chapter 1 and the reviewed in Chapter 2. Teachers and learners participated in the study. Data were gathered through semi-structured individual interviews and focus groups. The findings indicated that the three teachers who participated in the study specialised in Geography and were well trained to teach Geography. Despite their teaching expertise, the performance of their learners is worrisome. The participants emphasised there were many challenges hindering the teaching of Geography from Grade 11 such as lack of teaching facilities, unenjoyable topics, teachers' attitudes, lack of English proficiency, lack of professional development of teachers, field of studies, inappropriate teaching methods, to mention just a few. The teachers felt that they were not motivated themselves to encourage learners. This led to learners not being interested in choosing Geography from Grade 11.

The causes identified for the decline in the number of learners studying Geography included: a lack of teaching materials; imposed fields of study; lack of fieldwork support; teachers' limited understanding of map work; the passivity and lack of participation of learners; uninteresting topics; negative attitudes among teachers. Furthermore, learners did not want to choose Geography because of the careers they wanted to follow. Learners blamed teachers and teachers blamed learners and subject advisors. No one wanted to be held accountable for the problem. Significant findings and recommendations for future studies will be discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the findings, presents the conclusions of this empirical study, and makes some recommendations.

5.2 REFLECTION OF THE STUDY PROCESS

The study investigated the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography in the secondary phase, focusing in Khomas Region, Windhoek. The findings investigated the pedagogical decisions, innovative teaching and learning methods, and the didactics of teaching Geography in Grades 10 to 12 with respect to the decline of learners choosing Geography. The study was considered necessary on the basis of the researcher's experience as a Geography teacher. The research attempted to determine the challenges in the teaching and learning of Geography in order to link the results to the decline of learners' interest in Geography when they reach the senior level. Furthermore, the study examined the perceptions of both teachers and learners on the various themes outlined in the curriculum of Geography. This allowed the participants to discuss their experiences pertaining to the decline in the selection of Geography as a subject in high schools. Inferences based on the findings on whether the purpose of the study was successfully addressed or not were made. The summary of the outcomes of the study is presented below.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

There seven main factors contributing to a low enrolment in Geography were:

- Teachers' and learners' experience of Geography;
- Biased field of studies, teacher's attitudes and methods of presenting lessons;
- Influenced by the choice of future careers;
- Extensive contents composed of unenjoyable topics;
- Lack of professional development and motivation of teachers;
- Disregard of fieldwork;
- English as language of instruction as a barrier to teaching and learning.

5.3.1 Teachers' and learners' experience of Geography

It was found that teachers had sufficient teaching experience and that they enjoyed teaching Geography. However, teachers expressed the view that learners were passive and not willing to learn. Teachers also indicated that the Geography curriculum was divided into too many topics. It was suggested that the curriculum needed to address the challenges faced by teachers and learners instead of offering many subjects, as this could be a contributing factor to Geography being a less popular subject in learners' choices. As can be imagined, learners indicated that it was impossible to cope as there were too many items to cover in the Geography curriculum. The learners also indicated that their level of understanding geographic aspects was poor in the lower grades which made them struggle to learn Geography at a more advanced level. In addition, the teaching style of teachers, e.g. reading instead of explaining content, impacted negatively on learners' potential to understand Geography.

Moreover, some teachers reported to have found it difficult to teach map work. Coincidentally, learners were apparently not eager to follow and learn map work. The data further revealed there were inadequate teaching resources for use by the teachers. Learners shared textbooks, which made it difficult for them to learn. It was found that the recent introduction of free education did not allow management of schools to withhold reports for unreturned textbooks. This minimised the effectiveness for both the teaching and learning processes in schools. Additionally, the findings revealed that teachers were hardly involved in the process of curriculum compilation. Top officials in the education sector tend to develop the curriculum without getting the necessary contributions of all the parties involved. Participants perceived that there was a lack of co-operation within the educational management team.

5.3.2 Biased field of studies, teacher's attitudes and methods of presenting lessons

The study revealed that Geography does not appear in many fields of studies. Also, apparently, social sciences are regarded as a field for more incompetent learners. Consequently, most academically competent learners tend to choose pure science fields of study instead of social sciences. On the other hand, teachers were seen by learners as not displaying good conduct, not rendering services properly as anticipated, being too strict, having unhelpful attitudes and not being fully involved in helping learners to master the subject's content.

Teachers were reported to have often handed out a lot of work and copies without guiding learners on how to deal with the material. The learner participants stated that if all of this could be changed, this would result in an increase in the number of learners choosing Geography.

The findings showed that there was a high rate of absenteeism among teachers, while changing teachers almost every term caused them not to complete the syllabus. This negatively affected learners as they were not equipped with sufficient knowledge to build on in the next grade. From the learners' point of view, teachers were not lively enough; they were boring and very slow. It was found that some teachers lacked self-esteem and did not believe they were capable of teaching Geography. Learners complained that some teachers were wrongly placed to teach Geography in schools. For example, it does not necessarily mean that a History teacher will be good at teaching Geography. The learner participants revealed that some teachers were good in presenting Geography; however, the lack of teaching facilities made it difficult for them to present lessons effectively. The use of an inappropriate teaching method in Geography could discourage learners from studying Geography further.

5.3.3 Influenced by the choice of future career

In terms of the data collected up to Grade 11, there were learners who did not know what their future careers would be. The findings indicated that most learners do not seem to be well informed about possible careers, which may not encourage doing Geography in case it would be required. Only one learner among 11 participants showed an interest in studying Geography because she wanted to become an aviator, which requires a knowledge of geography.

5.3.4 Extensive content that is composed of unenjoyable topics

Both teachers and learners considered Geography to be an unattractive and unenjoyable school subject, because it has too many uninteresting topics compared to other subjects in the curriculum. Topics such as agriculture, map work, geomorphology, time and physical geography are some of the themes that made Geography a less interesting subject. Learners revealed that they did not enjoy some of the geographical themes, therefore they opted not to study Geography. It was evident in the findings that the teachers and the learners did not enjoy map work, because it requires critical thinking. It is thus reasonable to deduce from the findings that the content of Geography and unenjoyable themes might be among the contributing factors for learners not choosing this subject.

5.4.5 Lack of professional development and motivation of teachers

The findings revealed that in Namibia developing teachers professionally is not a priority. From the teacher participants, only one mentioned that she was once an external examiner. The data show that not all teachers get opportunities for professional development. According to the teachers, the workshops that occasionally take place only give an overview of the implementation of the new curriculum. Consistent exposure of teachers to various professional development activities is considered necessary, as this may provide them with the skills to instil knowledge in learners and attract them to study Geography.

The findings indicated that learners were eager to learn, but a lack of motivation of teaching lesson on negative mode from teachers influenced them not to choose Geography. Learners were less motivated because there were no visual aids such as videos during lessons to stimulate their minds and imaginations.

5.3.6 Disregard of fieldwork

The interviewed teachers indicated that fieldwork has never been incorporated into the Geography curriculum.

The findings show that teachers were willing to take learners on excursions; however, challenges such as very large classes, and lack of funds, transport and accommodation made it difficult for fieldwork to be taken into consideration. The government and parents never made any contribution towards making fieldwork a possibility. Participants also added that massive amounts of content has to be covered in Geography within the limited or prescribed time of 45 minutes per period. This means that teachers would not have enough time to do fieldwork activities. Also, the teachers revealed that they were demoralised by subject advisors who were just there to visit schools and ask about lesson preparation and CASS (continuous assessments) marks rather than concentrating on what needs to be done to shape the Geography curriculum. They perceived the subject advisors as only checking to criticise and focus on weaknesses and imperfections rather than recommending how to make improvements. It was dismaying to discover that fieldwork does not take place in schools, as it is thought that fieldwork by itself could be a feature that would attract the majority of learners to do Geography.

5.3.7 English as a barrier

English has been used in Namibia for the past 28 years as a medium of instruction. However, teachers and learners find it difficult to communicate properly in English. In the Namibian

curriculum it is compulsory that all the subjects are taught in English. The findings identified that teachers and learners have difficulty in understanding the Geography content because of their lack of proficiency in English. Both teachers and learners speak other languages at home and communicate in English only at school.

It is thought that learners' poor language proficiency also leads to a decline in interest in Geography. Hence, teachers need to undergo in-service training to improve their level of proficiency in English and this may in turn lead to more effective teaching. Also, teachers should also use simple language and vocabulary that can be understood easily by learners.

5.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study have provided information on issues pertaining to curriculum development and implementation in Namibia. Also, the study highlighted the challenges of many options of fields of study. Curriculum designers and developers should consider the inclusion of teachers in order to obtain their inputs to address the factors that may be hindering learners in selecting Geography as a subject. The importance of teachers should go beyond just implementing a curriculum. They know what is best for inclusion in the curriculum. Teachers are in direct contact with learners. If teachers were included in curriculum design, their input would benefit learners in terms of curriculum quality. The curriculum consists of many fields of study; thus, it provides many options for learners to choose from different subjects. This range of field of studies seems to demotivate learners in terms of choosing Geography at a more advanced level. The findings of this study could be useful in terms of the curriculum designers revisiting the allocation of subjects in the field of studies. Time allocated for teaching and lack of fieldwork were also identified as some factors that contributed negatively to the phenomenon studied. Therefore, it is important that teaching time is allocated in terms of the content to be covered. This would allow teachers to use the allocated time optimally. Fieldwork is important and may encourage learners to take an interest in Geography. The findings indicated that fieldwork is never put into practice and is also not part of the timetable. Teachers thus use their own time to incorporate fieldwork into their teaching. The curriculum developers should ensure that fieldwork is included in the curriculum.

According to the findings, there seems to be a lack of provision of textbooks because of a lack of financial resources; this impact negatively on the effective teaching and learning of Geography. Another issue that needs attention is that of the attitude of teachers. It could be

argued that they should be evaluated termly so that they behave in such a way that their attitudes motivate learners to achieve their objectives rather than put them off the subject. The study showed that professional development is rare. Thus, the findings could be used to provide professional development workshops on a regular basis.

5.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL STAKEHOLDER

Based on the findings of the study and data analysis, a number of recommendations can be made. The findings show that most Geography teachers complained about the curriculum implementation of Geography as they have not been given support. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education should ensure that curriculum implementation in each region should include supporting teachers and creating an environment conducive to constructive teaching.

Also, it was revealed that subject advisors only visit schools to focus on assessment marks and daily lesson preparations instead of asking what difficulties teachers and learners experienced and what the way forward could be to curb the challenges. It is thus recommended that subject advisors should move out of their comfort zone and assist teachers and learners to reach their goals. This goes hand in hand with ensuring that teaching facilities are provided to all learners and teachers to ensure that quality teaching and learning can take place in Geography.

The abolishment of school fees has led to budget deficits in schools. This means that not all school expenses can be met. It is recommended that in order to alleviate these financial constraints, the government should allow schools to initiate finance-generating strategies. The government should encourage parents to contribute a small amount of money to enable the schools to operate smoothly.

Based on the findings obtained from the learners, there seems to be a need for in-service skills training in Geography. Thus, the researcher recommends consistent intensive teacher-training to ensure effective implementation of the Geography curriculum in schools. This may help learners to develop a love of Geography and to then choose it as an important subject at the senior level.

5.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study was confined to one out of 13 educational regions in Namibia. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised. Findings obtained in this study have created opportunities for further research studies. Geography education generally in Namibia is going through a

challenging time. Geographers need to come together and discuss issues relating to the devaluing of Geography as a school subject and remedy the situation.

Future research is recommended in the following areas:

- An investigation on teacher skills and pedagogical methods should be undertaken in terms of how to improve learners' competencies in order to develop basic skills and knowledge in Geography in secondary schools;
- An investigation should be done on teaching methods that teachers use to reshape and develop learners' attitudes to achieve their competencies in the senior secondary school Geography curriculum.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The main research question has been addressed by the findings. The study revealed the challenges that were obstructing the recognition of the value of Geography in the curriculum. The study has the potential to contribute towards the improvement of Geography teaching and learning in schools. Implementation of the recommendations to address these challenges could help to increase the number of learners choosing Geography at the senior level.

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APPENDIX A1

Letter of Consent

P.O. Box 4209
Windhoek
Rep of Namibia
04 Auguste 2017

The Director of Education
Khomas Region
Private Bag 13236
Windhoek

Dear Mr Vries

Re: Request for permission to carry out my M. ED study in your region.

I am Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita, a student at the University of Stellenbosch studying MED Curriculum Studies in Geography. I am required to complete a thesis in Geography education as part of my studies. My topic is titled: **Investigating the decline in number of learners choosing or not choosing Geography from Grade 10-11, a case study of Khomas region.**

I need Several schools to collect data from learners and teachers, randomly three schools will be selected. It is then against this background that I am humbly requesting the director 's permission to grant me access to the schools to conduct the research. The planned visit will take place between January and February 2018, normal classes will not be interfered.

The findings might help Geography educators and curriculum designers to look at numerous challenges facing Geography and implement effectively measures related to Geography which may be used to enhance the ability of learners choosing Geography. I have been teaching Geography for couple of years and have seen that Geography is one of the subjects in which number of learners are declining every year. Therefore, the study is the reaction to the existing concern about the decline in number of learners choosing Geography. The study will among other things investigating why learners don't choose Geography and what problems teachers experience which perhaps might be a cause of the problem.

If permission is granted, please notify me at the above address or email: lanleni@gmail.com or call me to come collect my response.

I thank you in anticipation

Your Sincerely

Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita (Mrs) **0855601940 / 0812692267 or 061271328**

Signature _____

APPENDIX A2



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: [09 264 61] 293 9411
Fax: [09 264 61] 231 367/248251

Private Bag 13236
WINDHOEK

09 October 2017

P.O. Box 4209
Windhoek
Email: lanleni@gmail.com
Contact: 081 269 2267

For Attention: Ms Paulina N. Kaniita

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KHOMAS REGION

Your letter dated 04 August 2017 on the above subject refers.

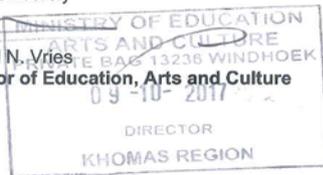
Permission is hereby granted to you to carry out your research titled "An investigation in the declining number of learners choosing or not choosing Geography from grade 10 -11" at three secondary schools of your choice in Khomas Region under the following conditions:

- ❖ The Principal of the school to be visited must be contacted before the visit and agreement should be reached between you and the Principal.
- ❖ The school programme should not be interrupted.
- ❖ Teachers and learners who will take part in this research/interview will do so voluntarily.
- ❖ The Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture should be provided with a copy of your findings.

We wish you all the best with your studies.

Yours sincerely


Gerard N. Vries
Director of Education, Arts and Culture



APPENDIX A1 received

Letter of Consent



P.O. Box 4209
Windhoek
Rep of Namibia
04 August 2017

The Director of Education
Khomas Region
Private Bag 13236
Windhoek

Dear Mr Vries

Re: Request for permission to carry out my M. ED study in your region.

I am Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita, a student at the University of Stellenbosch studying MED Curriculum Studies in Geography. I am required to complete a thesis in Geography education as part of my studies. My topic is titled: **Investigating the decline in number of learners choosing or not choosing Geography from grade 10-11, a case study of Khomas region.**

I need Several schools to collect data from learners and teachers, randomly three schools will be selected. It is then against this background that I am humbly requesting the director 's permission to grant me access to the schools to conduct the research. The planned visit will take place between January and February 2018, normal classes will not be interfered.

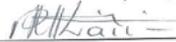
The findings might help geography educators and curriculum designers to look at numerous challenges facing geography and implement effectively measures related to geography which may be used to enhance the ability of learners choosing geography. I have been teaching geography for couple of years and have seen that geography is one of the subject in which number of learners are declining every year. Therefore, the study is the reaction to the existing concern about the decline in number of learners choosing geography. The study will among other things investigating why learners don't choose geography and also what problems teachers experience which perhaps might be a cause of the problem.

If permission is granted please notify me at the above address or email: lanleni@gmail.com or call me to come collect my response.

I thank you in anticipation

Your Sincerely

Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita (Mrs) 0855601940 / 0812692267 or 061271328

Signature 

APPENDIX B1(a, b and c)

P.O. Box 4209
Windhoek
Republic of Namibia
17 September 2017

The Principal
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX (School)
P.O. Box XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Windhoek

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to carry out my M. ED study at your school.

I am Paulina. N. Kaniita, a student at the University of Stellenbosch studying MED Curriculum Studies in Geography. I am required to complete a thesis in Geography education as part of my studies. My topic is titled "Investigating the decline in number of learners choosing or not choosing Geography from Grade 10-11, a case study of Khomas region". I need several schools to collect data from learners as well as teachers and xxxxxxxxxx (school) is among those schools. It is then against this background that I am humbly requesting the principal's permission to grant me access to the school for me to conduct my research. The planned visit will take place from January to February 2018 and the exact date will be communicated in due course.

The findings might help Geography educators and curriculum designers to look at numerous challenges facing Geography and implement effectively measures related to Geography which may be used to enhance the ability of learners choosing Geography. I have been teaching Geography for couple of years and have seen that Geography is one of the subjects in which number of students are declining every year. Therefore, the study is the reaction to the existing concern about the decline in number of learners choosing Geography. The study will among other things investigate why learners don't choose Geography and also what problems teachers experience which perhaps might be a cause of the problem.

If permission is granted, please notify me at the above address or email to: **lanleni@gmail.com or call me to come collect the response.**

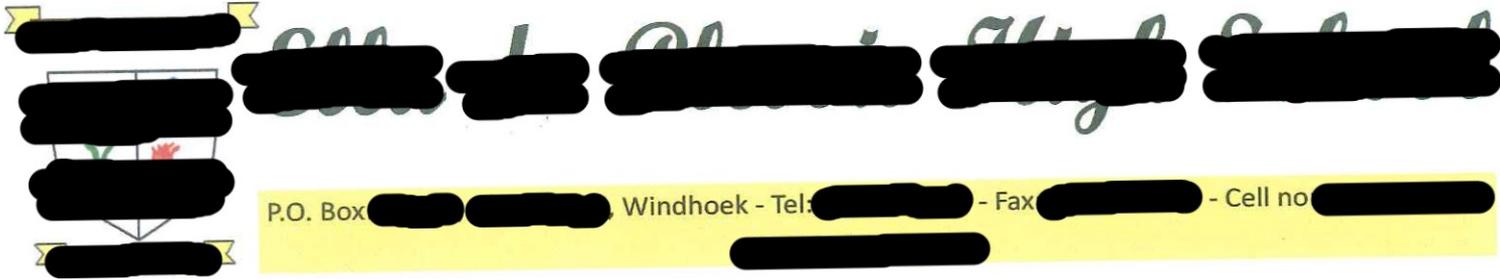
I thank you in anticipation,

Yours sincerely

Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita (Mrs) **0855601940/0812692267 or 061 271328.**

Signature _____

APPENDIX B2(a) SCHOOL W



25 October 2017

Ms [redacted]
Windhoek

Dear Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at Secondary Schools in [redacted] Region

Your letter dated on the above subject matter refers.

I would like to inform you that your request to conduct research at our school has been positively considered. Please feel free to collect data for your M.ED. studies.

The school will appreciate it if we can be provided with a copy of the findings.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature and name]
Principal

[Redacted stamp]
PRINCIPAL [redacted] SCHOOL
25 OCT 2017
P.O. BOX [redacted]
TEL [redacted] FAX [redacted]
E-mail [redacted].com
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION

APPENDIX B2(b) SCHOOL X



[Redacted]
[Redacted]
Tel: [Redacted]
Fax: [Redacted]

Private Bag [Redacted]
Windhoek
Namibia

25 October 2017

Mrs. [Redacted]
[Redacted]

Windhoek

Re: Application to conduct research study at [Redacted]

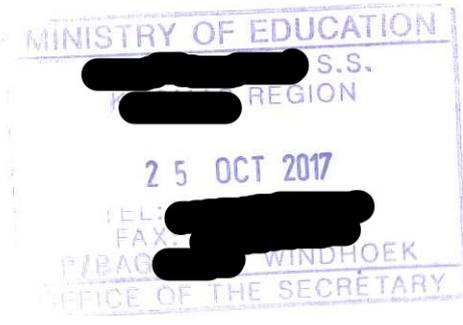
Dear Ms

It is with great pleasure to inform you that your application to do research at [Redacted] is successfully accepted. We will be expecting you to conduct your research during the months of January to February 2018.

We therefore, wish you all the best with your studies (MED in Curriculum Study in Geography at University of Stellenbosch).

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted]
.....
MR [Redacted]
PRINCIPAL



#

APPENDIX B2 (c) SCHOOL Z



02 October 2017

To: [Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

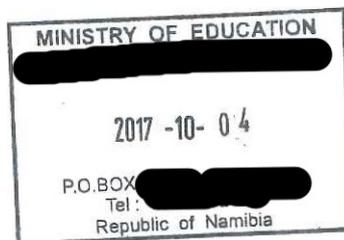
Dear Madam,

This is communiqué is to inform you that your request for data collection of your M. ED has been granted.

The school will appreciate if we can receive a copy of the result once the investigation is completed.

[Handwritten signature]

Yours in Education



Mrs [Redacted]

Principal

APPENDIX C1 (a)



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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM FOR LEARNERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH

Investigating of the decline in number of learners choosing Geography in the Secondary phase: A case study of three secondary schools in the Khomas Region-Windhoek.

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita, MED Geography education student in the Department of Curriculum Studies at Stellenbosch University. The findings will be contributed to the complete of a thesis. You are selected to participate in the study because you are doing or not Geography at a senior level.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate the decline in number of learners choosing Geography in the secondary phase. Findings might help increase the number of learners selecting Geography.

2. PROCEDURE

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following: Participate in an individual interview or in a focus group which will be recorded and transcribed. The session will take place at your school in the afternoon at a time that suits you and within 30 minutes.

Willingness to participate

If you, as a selected learner, willingly to participate in this study, you are requested to take part in an interview. The interview will take no longer than an hour. The session will be recorded, with your permission, in order for me to capture all data suitable for analysis. The aim of the interview is to gain insight into the challenges that learners encounter in the teaching and learning of Geography as well as to identify possible causes of learners 'losing hope on choosing Geography as one of their career subjects.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There is nothing I will do that will hurt or cause pain, discomforts you now and in future. There are no foreseeable risk discomforts or inconvenience associated with participation in this study.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECT AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. The benefits of your participation may lead to a high number of learners taking Geography in our country. This may boost up our economy as the country might have geologist to discover new minerals underground. Literature review revealed no study of this nature has been conducted yet in Namibia. It also showed little has been done to maintain the value of Geography. Therefore, this might arise interest within learners to select Geography as one of their senior subjects.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntarily. There is thus no remuneration or payment associated with your participation in this research.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information which will be obtained identifying your name will be kept confidential and will only be disclosed with your permissions as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of storing the data safely on the research 's personal laptop and it will be encoded with a password. The supervisor and the researcher are the only people who will have access to the data. The data obtained

will be recorded on the digital voice recorder and then transcribed precisely by the researcher. The recorded data will be destroyed once the study is completed after a period of 5 years. Since this study is of an educational nature, there is a process that will be followed relating to the writing of the thesis and journal articles based on the information gathered. In this case, confidentiality will continue to be maintained.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You have a choice to participate and free to withdraw. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any question you do not wish to answer without any penalty and remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warranting doing so.

8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher will ensure that the research is carried out with due consideration to ethical protocols of Stellenbosch University. This implies that the rights and identity of all participants in the study will be protected. Confidentiality will be maintained by using codes or pseudonyms when the researcher refers to respondents or to their schools in this research. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me: Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita by e-mail lanleni@gmail.com or cell no +27 848150144/+264 855601940/ +264 812692267

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS/PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject/participant, contact Maléne Fouché (mfouche@sun.ac.za; +27 21 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development, Stellenbosch University.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/PARTICIPANT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita in English. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby provide voluntarily consent to participate in this study for interview. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject/Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This

APPENDIX C1(b)



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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project title: An investigation of the decline in number of learners choosing Geography in the secondary phase: a case study of three schools in the Khomas region in Windhoek-Namibia.

You are invited to participate in a research conducted by Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita (maiden name Nehale). Bachelor's degree in human resource management from Polytechnic of Namibia (current name NUST -Namibia University Science and Technology), Baccalaureus Education Honoris general management in Education) from UNISA (University of South Africa) and High Education diploma in secondary from UNAM (University of Namibia). Your school is randomly selected to participate in my study in which you are one of the participants as a Geography teacher. I am counting on you, value your knowledge and experience in teaching Geography. Your experience will help me to get relevant information to fulfil and achieve the goal of my study.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Firstly, I want to understand the phenomenon for teachers to revisit the pedagogies decision and think about better innovative methods and didactics on how to teach Geography. Secondly for police makers and curriculum developers to make better decisions on what content to include in the curriculum.

2. PROCEDURE

Three schools have been purposeful selected in the Khomas region based on the performance and the environment in which schools are located. This is done for economic reason to have easy access to the schools and teachers. Selected schools are in the region where the researcher is also currently living, this will make the study economical sustainable. Teachers teaching Geography, learners selected Geography as one of their senior subjects and learners who did not select Geography as one of their senior subjects identified to participate in the study based on their knowledge and experience of Geography. Therefore, their valuable contribution will help to achieve and fulfill my study. I got access through writing letters to both the director of Khomas region and the principals of schools requesting to collect data. The permission was granted from both parts.

Willingness to participate

As a selected teacher willingly to assist in this study. You are requested to give your contribution in an interview. Meaning data are to be collected using an interview method. The interview will not take longer than an hour. With your permission the interview will be a voice recorder as there will be no enough time to write everything. The interview is aiming to find out what learners and teachers encountered might be a cause of learners not interesting to select Geography as one of their senior subjects.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There is nothing I will do that will hurt or cause pain, discomforts you now and in future. There is no risk associated with participation in this study.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECT AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Although there are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. Your participation will allow me to expand my knowledge on what may discourage learners not to take any interest on selecting Geography. The benefit of your participation may lead to a high number of learners selecting Geography and teachers to find good methods of pedagogical for future.

5. COST OR COMPENSATION FOR PARTIPATION

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. There is no cost or compensation associated with your participation in this study. I am unable to offer any compensation.

6.STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Your participation in this study will be kept completely confidential. I will not be collecting your name or any other identifying information in this study, thus your response will be anonymous and there will be no way for anyone to identify your response. Confidentiality will be maintained using codes when I refer to you or your school in this research (pseudonyms). Furthermore, the data will be transferred and kept strictly on my private laptop and on a flash driver, which I am the only accessible person with a password. The information will be deleted and destroyed after a period of 5 years. During the process of thesis-writing, some direct quotations may be used, but anonymity will be preserved to protect the identity of participants. Since this study is of an educational nature, there is a process that will be followed relating to the writing of the thesis and journal articles based on the information gathered. In this case, confidentiality will continue to be maintained.

You have a right to access or review your voice-record interview in case you wish to edit the information you provided in the initial interview.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this study is voluntarily. You have a choice to participate and free to withdraw. You are not and will not be forced to participate in this study. If I start, you may quit or refuse to answer some questions you do not wish to answer without any penalty. Your decision whether to participate will have no influence on anyone.

8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I will ensure that the study is conducted and carried out with due respect to ethical procedures of Stellenbosch University. The rights and identity of participants in the study will be protected. Confidentiality will be controlled by using codes to participants or school.

CONTACTS

If you have any questions related to the study, feel free to contact Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita at email: lanleni@gmail.com or cell # 264 855601940 /+27848150144

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS/PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject/participant, contact Maléne Fouche (mfouche@sun.ac.za; +27 21 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development, Stellenbosch University.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/PARTICIPANT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE
--

The above information was described by Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita in the medium of instruction (English). I utilized the opportunity to ask questions and the questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby provide voluntarily consent for teachers to participate in this study for the interview. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject/Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*Afrikaans/*English/*Xhosa/*other*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into _____ by _____*].

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX D Approval of ethical clearance**NOTICE OF APPROVAL**

REC Humanities New Application Form

21 August 2018

Project number: 1902

Project Title: An investigation of the decline in the number of learners choosing Geography in the secondary phase: a case study of three schools in the Khomas region in Windhoek -Namibia.

Dear Mrs Paulina Kaniita

Your REC Humanities New Application Form submitted on 3 August 2018 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
21 August 2018	20 August 2021

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (1902) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
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Research Protocol/Proposal	proposal	28/04/2018	
Parental consent form	SU HUMANITIES Consent form template Parent-Legal guardian	01/08/2018	
Assent form	SU HUMANITIES child assent template	01/08/2018	
Informed Consent Form	informed consent form for teachers	02/08/2018	6.2
Informed Consent Form	informed consent for learners	02/08/2018	6.2
Data collection tool	interview guide for teachers	02/08/2018	6.2
Data collection tool	interview guide for learners	02/08/2018	6.2
Data collection tool	individual learners' interview	02/08/2018	6.2
Data collection tool	Focus group without geo interview	02/08/2018	6.2
Data collection tool	interview guide for teachers	02/08/2018	6.2
Proof of permission	201710261132	02/08/2018	6.2
Proof of permission	201711252004	02/08/2018	6.2
Default	Request permission from teachers	02/08/2018	6.2
Data collection tool	Interview questions for focus group	02/08/2018	6.2

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

*National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.
The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.*

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities' investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1. Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2. Participant Enrolment. You may not recruit or enrol participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

3. Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4. Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period**. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur**. If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrolment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5. Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6. Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Maléne Fouche within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7. Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC

8. Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by

law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

9.Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions or interventions) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

10.On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

APPENDIX E1 (a)**Interview Guide for learners**

The following is an example of an interview guide that I will use in this study: informed consent and a set of interview questions.

Introduction key components:	
1.Introduction	<p>I want to thank you for taking time to meet with me today.</p> <p>My name is Paulina Kaniita and I would like to talk to interview you about your experience in Geography specifically on the decline in number of learners choosing Geography at a senior phase.</p>
3. Purpose	This information is for my studies. However, it can be used by our fellow teachers, researchers and educational advisory in future.
4.Confidentiality	All responses will be kept confidential.
5.Duration	The interview will take less than an hour. I will be recording the session because I do not want to miss any of your responses. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I cannot possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Due to the fact that I will be voice recording, please try to speak up so that I do not miss your responses.
6.Opportunity for questions	Are there any questions about what I have just explained?
Clarification:	<p>All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with my supervisor and we will ensure that any information we include in my report does not identify your school and you as the respondent. Remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time.</p> <p>Are there any questions about what I have just explained?</p> <p>Are you willing to participate in this interview?</p>
Closing Key components:	Is there anything more you would like to add?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional comments • Next steps • Thank you 	<p>I will be analysing the information you and others gave me and submit a draft report to my supervisor. I will be pleased to send you a copy to review at that time, if you are interested.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and generosity.</p>
<p>Questions for interviews</p>	<p>1. Interview questions for individual learners (who chose geography in grade 11)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why did you choose geography as one of your major subjects? 2. How have you experienced geography as a school subject up until now, (grade 11)? 3. What topics do you find most interesting in geography? 4. What topics do you find least interesting? 5. What are the topics that you find most challenging? 6. Are there any topics that you would like to be excluded from the geography curriculum? and why? 7. Do you have any suggestions that you would like geography teachers to take into consideration to make geography a more interesting subject? <p>1. Interview questions for focus group (learners who chose geography in grade 11)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why did you choose geography as one of your major subjects? 2. How do you find geography as a school subject up until now, (grade 11)? 3. What are the geographical themes that you enjoy the most and why? 4. What are the geographical themes that you enjoy the least and Why? 5. How often do you do fieldwork? What does the fieldwork entail? Do you enjoy it? 6. Tell me about how geographical themes are presented to you by the teacher? 7. What would you propose to geography teachers to consider making geography a more interesting subject?

	<p>3. Interview questions for focus group (learners who did not choose geography in grade 11)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why did you not choose geography?2. What topics do you enjoy the most in geography and why?3. What topics do you enjoy the least in geography and why?4. Tell me about how geographical themes were presented to you by the teacher in grade 10?5. Which topics you do not want to be in the curriculum of geography and why?
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APPENDIX E1 (b)**Interview guide for teachers**

The following format will be used as a guide to obtain data for my study: Informed consent for (learners and teachers) and a set of interview questions.

Interview key components	
1.Pre -Arrangement	First before I start with the interview, I will go to schools, (although the school is aware about the research to be conducted). I will ask the principal to direct me to the geography teachers to make up arrangement and help to select the learners. I will inform teachers a specific date when to come talk to the learners once they complete with the selection. I will tell them that I need two learners who chose geography and two who did not choose geography. In the same day will ask a geography teacher that they are also part of the interview. If accepted will give teachers consent letters. The date to conduct the interview with teachers will be a different day from learner participants. I will set a date that suits them for me to go conduct an interview. The interview with learners will be conducted in two namely a focus group and individual. Teachers will be interviewed individual.
2.Introduction	Thank you for allowing me to communicate with you. I am Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita. I am sincerely requesting you as a geography teacher to answer the questions I am going to ask you about the decline in number of learners choosing geography between grades 10-11. Please answer the questions as honest as possible. Truthful response will provide relevant information and strong base to find solution to the problem.
3.Purpose	The information to be collected is meant for my study in order to complete as per University requirements. However, the information can be used by fellow teachers, researchers and curriculum designers for future references.
4.Confidentiality	I am assuring you that all the response will be held strictly confidential.
5.Duration	The duration of the interview will not take long, only less than an hour. Since the process will be oral participation and one might be fast in talking, I will be voice recording to avoid missing, omitting and filtering some of your contributions. I will also try to write down some of your contribution. I will be glad if you speak

	<p>louder as possible for me to be able to hear all the information.</p>
6.Chance for asking	<p>Feel free to ask, if there is something you are not clear about in everything I have highlighted.</p>
7. Clarification	<p>All the response will be held strictly confidential. Information that will be obtained will only be shared with my supervisor. The researcher would like to inform teachers that they must not have any fear. Reports of the study will not include any identification of schools neither names of participants. There will be no any form of enforcement. You can all say what you want to say related to the study. You may end the interview at any time of your choice. Consent signed by the teachers is a sign of willingness to participate.</p>
<p>Closure, key components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional comments • Next steps • Thank you <p>Questions</p>	<p>If there are additional comments, you are willing to give feel free to do so. Finally, information obtained for different participants (teachers, learners and a focus group will be combined and gathered and analysed and submitting a draft report to my supervisor. I'll be happy to send you a copy to review at that time, if you are interested. It will be a pressure to replay the voice record if you want to hear the findings. I appreciate your time and generosity. Is there anything more you would like to add?</p> <p>Interview questions for teachers teaching geography grade 8-12</p> <p>(a) Teacher details Biographical questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been a teacher? • What is your highest level of education? • When did you graduate? • In which field did you attain your degree/diploma? • From which tertiary institution did you graduate? <p>(i)How long have you been teaching geography? How long have you been trained to become a Geography teacher? (ii)How long have you been trained in the geography curriculum? (iii)What grades do you teach geography? (iv)How many learners do you teach per grade? (v)How many classes are allocated to you?</p> <p>(b) Subject details</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How has your experience as a geography teacher been so far?2. Why did you choose to specialise in geography?3. What are the themes that you find most interesting to teach and why?4. What are the themes that you find least interesting to teach and why?5. What would you suggest can be done from the teacher's side to attract more learners to choose geography?6. Have you experienced a decline or incline in learners choosing geography at your school? Why do you think that was the case? <p>(c) Curriculum</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Are there any topics that you would like to be included in the geography curriculum?2. What is your experience on teaching map work?3. How often do you do fieldwork with the learners?4. During which topics do you take your learners on excursions? Why / why not?5. How often do you attend workshops as part of your professional development?
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APPENDIX F1 (a)

P.O. Box 4209
Windhoek
Namibia
15 March 2018

Enquiries: Paulina. N. Kaniita
Cell: 0855601940/+27 848150144
E-mail: lanleni@gmail.com

Dear Parent

Learner's name: _____

RE: REQUESTING YOUR PERMISSION FOR YOUR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY.

I am Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita, student number 21203466, I am currently pursuing my studies in MED Curriculum Studies in Geography at the University of Stellenbosch.

This letter serves to request your permission for your child to participate in this research study I am currently conducting as part of my Master requirements. The research has been granted Ethical clearance by the Stellenbosch University ethics committee. Director of the Ministry of Khomas region) and the principals of schools involved in the study.

The study will seek to investigate the decline in number of learners choosing Geography from 10-11 in Khomas Region of Namibia. You reserve the right to withdraw your child from the study at any time after its commencement. I would like to assure you that in the final report (thesis), Your child 's identity will not be revealed, and pseudonyms will be used. Your child's participation in this research is entirely for Educational purposes and all the information will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Informed consent

In terms and conditions of the ethical requirements of the University of Stellenbosch and Ministry of Education, Arts and culture, you are now requested to sign this form to declare yourself.

I understand the content of this letter and I am granting my child a permission to take part in this study. I understand that my child may withdraw from the study at any time and that anonymity will be guaranteed.

Parent's signature _____ **date** _____

Researcher's signature _____ **date** _____

APPENDIX F1 (b)

P.O. Box 4209
Windhoek
Namibia
15 March 2018

Enquiries: Paulina. N. Kaniita

Cell: +264 855601940/ +27 848150144

E-mail: lanleni@gmail.com

Dear Teacher

RE: REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

You have been invited to participate in the research study about investigating the decline in number of learners choosing Geography from Grade 10-11 Khomas region. If you volunteer to take part in this study, I will interview you using a voice record. The interview will take less than 30 minutes.

The information collected will be used by the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture and teachers to improve teaching and learning in Geography. If you volunteer, you may stop or withdraw from the study at any time and you will not be penalised for it. There is no risk from participating in this study. All the information you will provide will be treated confidential and will be used only for research purposes. The recording of your voice will be erased, and your name and any other identifying information will not be revealed.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact The Ethical clearance committee of the Stellenbosch University.

Agreement to participate in Research

I have read or had read to me, the above study and had an opportunity to ask questions which have been answered to my satisfaction I agree voluntary to participate in the study as described.

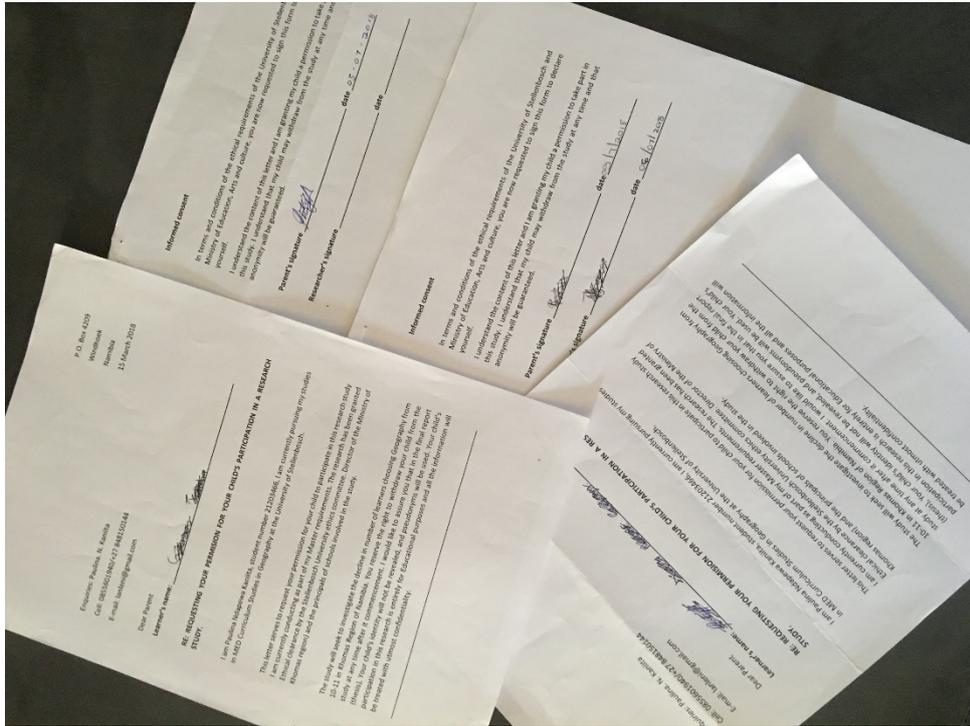
Name of Participants _____ date _____

Signature of participants _____ date _____

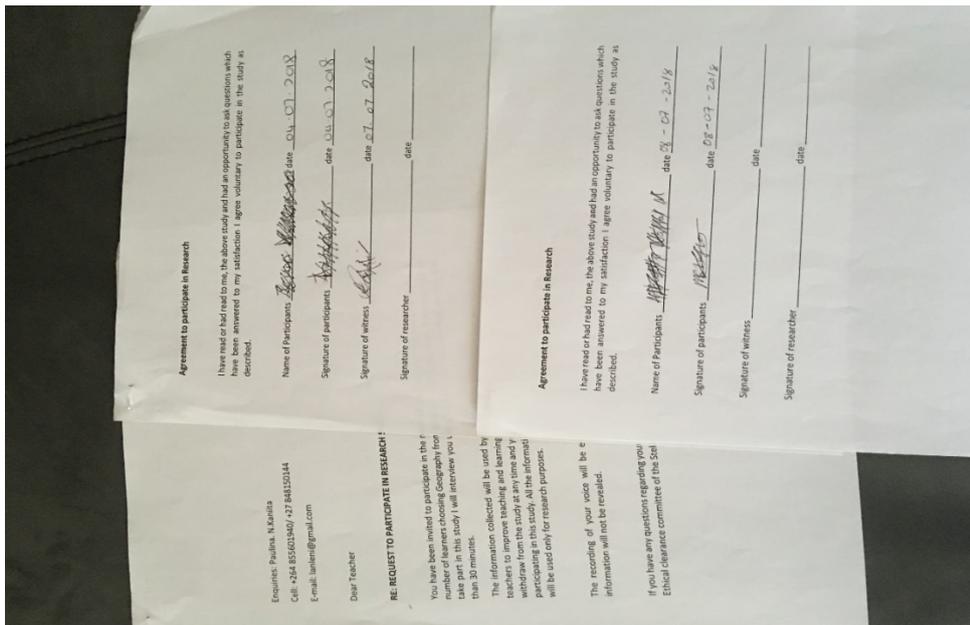
Signature of witness _____ date _____

Signature of researcher _____ date _____

APPENDIX F2 (a)



APPENDIX F2 (b)



APPENDIX G



ASSENT FORM FOR MINORS

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: *Investigating of the decline in number of learners choosing Geography in the Secondary phase: A case study of three Secondary schools in the Khomas Region Windhoek of Namibia.*

RESEARCHERS' NAME(S): Mrs Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita

RESEARCHER'S CONTACT NUMBER: +27848150144/+264855601940/
+2642692267

What is RESEARCH?

Research is a study performed do find **NEW KNOWLEDGE** about the way things (and people) work. This is done to assist in getting information about for instance children and teenagers and the circumstances that affect their lives, schools, families and health. This is done to attempt and make the world a better place!

What is this research project all about?

In Namibia for the past years, there has been a decline in learners choosing Geography between Grade 10 and 11. In this study, the researcher wants to find out or understand the causes of this decline. This will be done by collecting information from learners with and without Geography as well as Geography teachers.

Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?

You have been invited because of your knowledge and experience in Geography. That makes you a suitable participant to be invited.

Who is doing the research?

The study is conducted by Mrs Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita (maiden name Nehale) student for completion of MED curriculum studies in Geography at Stellenbosch University.

What will happen to me in this study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following:

Participate in an individual interview or in a focus group interview which will be voice recorded and transcribed. The session will take place at your school in the time suits you and within 30 minutes.

Can anything bad happen to me?

There is nothing I will do that will hurt or cause pain, discomforts you now and in future. There is no foreseeable risk, discomforts or inconvenience associated with participation in this study.

Can anything good happen to me?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. The benefits of your participation might lead to a high number of learners choosing Geography in Namibia. This might boost up the economy as the country might have geologist that can discover new minerals from underground.

Will anyone know I am in the study?

Your participation in this study will be kept confidential, but information about will be used for study purposes or given to the supervisor. Any information which will be obtained identifying your name will be kept confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission as required by law. Names will not be identified I will use pseudonyms, using codes instead of names. There will be nobody to know who participated in this study.

Who can I talk to about the study?

If you have questions regarding your rights about participating in this study you can contact Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita email: lanleni@gmail.com cell: +27848150144/+264855601940/+264269226 OR Maléne Fouché email: mfouche@sun.ac.za +27218084622 Division for Research Development, Stellenbosch University.

What if I do not want to do this?

You can refuse to take part even if your parents have agreed to your participation. You can stop being in the study at any time without getting in trouble. You have a choice to participate and free to withdraw. Your participation is voluntarily therefore you can withdraw any time without consequences of any kind.

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?

YES	NO
-----	----

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

YES	NO
-----	----

Do you understand that you can STOP being in the study at any time?

YES	NO
-----	----

Signature of Child

Date

APPENDIX H

UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN CONSENT FOR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I would like to invite your child to take part in a study conducted by Mrs. Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita, MED Geography education student in the Department of Curriculum Studies at Stellenbosch University. The findings will contribute to the completion of my thesis. Your child has a wide knowledge in Geography therefore his/her idea will significantly contribute to this study.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

For the past 7 years in Namibia the number of learners who are choosing Geography in Grade 11 is decreasing. Being an educator and love of the subject and its contribution to our daily life, I want to find out what are the possible causes of learners not having an interest in choosing Geography. The information that will be collected might be used by the Ministry of Education to improve teaching and learning in Geography. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to investigate the decline in number of learners choosing Geography in the secondary phase. Findings might help increase number of learners selecting Geography in future.

2. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF MY CHILD?

If you consent to your child taking part in this study, the researcher will then approach the child for their assent to take part in the study. If the child agrees to take part in the study, he/she will be asked to participate in an individual interview or in a focus group which will be voice recorded. The session will take place at my school in the afternoon where there will be nobody moving around the school except the guard, guarding the school, the researcher and the participants. The interview will be conducted at a time that suits everyone and will not take more than an hour.

3. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There will be nothing I will do that will hurt or cause pain, discomforts your child in future. There are no foreseeable risk discomforts or inconvenience associated with participation in this study.

4. POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO THE CHILD OR TO THE SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits to your child for participating in this study. The benefits of participation may lead to a high number of learners taking Geography in our country. This will boost our economy as we are going to have geologist who will discover new minerals underground. Literature review revealed that no study of this nature has been conducted yet in Namibia. It also showed little has been done to maintain the value of Geography. Therefore, this may arise interest within learners to select Geography as one of their senior subjects.

5 PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Your child's participation in this study is voluntarily. There is thus no remuneration associated with participation in this research. However, the researcher will folk in her pocket to give little amount of money valued R60-00 to each participant for transport refund upon the completion of the interview. Another token of appreciation will be refreshment to give to the participants before commencing with the interview since they will departure directly from their school to my school thus, they will be hungry.

6 PROTECTION OF YOUR AND YOUR CHILD'S INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND IDENTITY

Any information you or your child will share with me during this study and that could possibly identify you or your child will be protected. This will be done by using pseudonym. Any information which will be obtained identifying your name or your child's name will be kept confidential and will only be disclosed with your permissions as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of storing the data safely on the research 's personal laptop and it will be encoded with a password. The supervisor and the researcher are the only people who will have access to the data. The data obtained will be recorded on the digital voice recorder and then transcribed precisely by the researcher. The recorded data will be destroyed once the study is completed after a period of 5 years. Since this study is of an educational nature, there is a process that will be followed relating to the writing of the thesis and journal articles based on the information gathered. In this case, confidentiality will continue to be maintained

7 PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You and your child can choose whether to be part of this study or not. If you consent to your child taking part in the study, please note that your child may choose to withdraw or decline participation at any time without any consequence. Your child may also refuse to answer any questions they do not want to answer and remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw your child from this study. Your child has a choice to participate and free to withdraw. If your child volunteer to take part in this study, he/she may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Your child may also refuse to answer any question he/she does not wish to answer without any penalty and remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw your child from this research if circumstances arise which warranting doing so.

8 RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Mrs. Paulina Ndapewa Kaniita at e-mail lanleni@gmail.com or cell +27 848150144/+264 855601940/ +264 812692267' and/or the supervisor Dr Krystle Ontong at +278082645 e-mail krystle@sun.ac.za

9 RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Your child may withdraw their consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. Neither you nor your child are waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your or your child's rights as a research participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARENT/ LEGAL GUARDIAN OF THE CHILD-PARTICIPANT

As the parent/legal guardian of the child I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.
- All issues related to privacy, and the confidentiality and use of the information have been explained.

By signing below, I _____ (*name of parent*) agree that the researcher may approach my child to take part in this research study, as conducted by _____ (*name of principal investigator*).

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
--

As the **principal investigator**, I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the parent/legal guardian. I also declare that the parent/legal guardian was encouraged and given ample time to ask any questions.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date