FACTORS INFLUENCING GEOGRAPHY GRADE 12 RESULTS: A CASE STUDY OF REHOBOTH HIGH SCHOOL.

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By
Christiaan Titus
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Supervisor: Dr. F.A. Phiri

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been examined and is approved as meeting the required standards for partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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	Dean of the Faculty of Education	Date
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	External Examiner	Date

ABSTRACT

This study introduces factors influencing Geography Grade 12 results at Rehoboth High School. The study concentrates on six factors, namely:

- Structure of the examination papers with special emphasis on the August 2000 Geography mock examination;
- Social-cultural factors;
- Resources;
- Teaching methods;
- Attitude towards Geography as a subject;
- School environment.

Sixty-six learners responded to a questionnaire and interviews were conducted with 96 learners, two Geography teachers, library teacher, principal, advisory teacher and the inspector and it addressed cooperation and communication within the school. The responses from the interview and questionnaires indicated that the school environment is conducive to teaching and learning of Geography. The teaching approaches used by the teacher are also viewed to be contributing positively to the results.

The resources and social-cultural factors are not very supportive of the teaching and learning of Geography at the school. The education levels of the parents are relatively low and resources scarce and this seems to have a

negative influence on the performance of the learners. Analysis of the August 2000 mock examination answer sheets reveals that learners on average performed better in the skill area analysis but that no significant difference is recorded between male and female learners. It is only in Paper 2 that females performed significantly better than males in the skill judgement and decision-making sections.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The study would not have been possible without the cooperation of Rehoboth High School. The principal, teachers, learners, inspector and advisory teacher who spoke to the researcher have added a wider understanding of the factors and practices operating in the school that affect Geography performance. I do not thank these respondents by name in order to protect their anonymity.

The enthusiastic support from Dr. F.A. Phiri, my thesis supervisor and the late Dr. K. Legesse has been of tremendous value by providing advice and motivational support.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Linde and daughter Stianlee who provided a happy and supportive environment in which to work.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that **FACTORS INFLUENCING GEOGRAPHY GRADE 12 RESULTS: A CASE STUDY OF REHOBOTH HIGH SCHOOL** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and neither has it been, nor will it be, submitted for the award of any other degree.

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Signature of Student

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Problem

The educational system put in place by the colonial authority in Namibia, has been described as inequitable and discriminatory (Statement by Hon. Nahas Angula, Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, at the General Conference of UNESCO 27th Session, Paris, November 1993). Because of the differential provision of resources, some schools inefficient and ineffective by the ministry. Because of the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of schools, most schools experienced high drop out rates as well as high failure rates. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (1993) a few children went to school before independence while most of those who attended did not go far.

As a result of the above situation, the Government of the Republic of Namibia has been engaged in major educational reform and development programmes since independence. The new Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport had to bring a certain measure of efficiency into the system at Independence. According to Snyder and Voigts (1998) one of the biggest challenges which faced the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport in its first years of existence was to centralise the eleven ethnically based

educational administrations into one. The Ministry also wanted to democratise the system. It did so by establishing seven new education regions (Ondangwa East, Ondangwa West, Rundu, Katima Mulilo, Windhoek, Khorixas and Keetmanshoop Education Regions). The delimitation of the regions was based on geographical as opposed to racial or ethnic considerations. Another reform effort included the shift from the curriculum offered by the Cape Education Department (CED) to a curriculum more widely recognised across Namibian borders. The pedagogy of the CED mainly consisted of rote learning of knowledge and facts while the progress of learners was measured by their ability to recite what was heard or read.

Through consultation with the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), a new Senior Secondary Curriculum was developed for the Senior Secondary School Phase. The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE) were introduced in 1994 to replace the Cape Education Department (CED) system, as a response to the latter's apparent deficiency. The benefit of introducing the IGCSE and HIGCSE included the provision of greater opportunity for flexibility in the curriculum and the possibility of some certification even if educational progress was uneven. (MEC & UCLES, 1993). The new (H)IGCSE system, in its design, was geared at assessing a wide range of abilities. This system emphasised another form of learning which was different from the CED paradigm in that instruction had to be inquiry-oriented in which learners were

encouraged to be actively engaged in thinking about new ideas and applying them in novel situations. According to Verspoor and associates (1991), mere regurgitation, without a deep rooting in the reasoning behind such information, is not sufficient for in-depth understanding. Furthermore, (H)IGCSE allows the Ministry of Education and Culture to adapt the system to Namibia's own needs within the curriculum framework (MEC & UCLES, 1993).

The assessment objectives that are proposed in the new (H)IGCSE system create problems for teachers in carrying out assessment under the new system (MEC & UCLES, 1993). In the new assessment thinking, it is evident that in order to record the learner's achievement accurately, the performance has to be standardised against agreed upon performance criteria. According to Riding and Butterfield (1990), it is important that candidates be able to show the clear relationships between the assessment objectives, the content and the context of the learning experiences, the performance criteria, and any marking scheme used to confirm the recorded achievement of the learners. The IGCSE syllabus therefore enables learners to demonstrate their actual achievements in subjects. The recording of positive achievement of the learners in the IGCSE gives a totally different perspective from what the Cape Education Department required. In the Cape Education Department system there was a cut-off point, below which learners were regarded as failures. It thus required the possession of a certain set of knowledge and

skills before the learner could pass the examination. The learners that could not demonstrate the possession of these skills failed.

The (H)IGCSE curriculum is offered over a period of two years, starting in Grade 11 and the evaluation of the learners' achievement is only measured at the end of the second year or Grade 12 of the curriculum. In August of the second year (Grade 12) the learners take a mock examination. The format of the mock examination papers is presumably based on the format of the final examinations of October/November of the second year (Grade 12).

The philosophy of the (H)IGCSE is based on differentiation. Learners are provided with the curriculum and examination that correspond to the levels of their ability. To cope with the wide range of ability there are three levels of difficulty: IGCSE core, IGCSE extended and the HIGCSE. In Geography for example, questions are targeted at different ability groups in different papers. The Geography IGCSE core requires candidates to answer Paper 1, 3 and 5 while candidates taking the extended curriculum answer Paper 2, 3 and 5. A detailed explanation of the papers is given on page 45 of this document. Consequently, differentiation of the papers means that if a candidate attempts a more difficult route and succeeds he or she will be awarded higher grades (A* to E) than a candidate who enters for an easier set of papers and succeeds. Grading (C to G) is awarded to those candidates that succeed through the core level. At the IGCSE extended level a candidate may receive grades A* (highest), A, B, C, D or E (lowest) while at the IGCSE

core level a candidate may receive grades C (highest), D, E, F or G (lowest). At the HIGCSE level, the grades available are 1 (highest), 2, 3 and 4, (lowest). (MEC & UCLES, 1993).

Positive achievement is thus a key feature of assessment in the (H)IGCSE paradigm in that it provides learners with the opportunity to achieve a grade in a subject from A to G, provided that they are entered at the appropriate level. A candidate who does not succeed in obtaining at least a G grading at core level, or an E grading at extended level, or grade 4 at HIGCSE level is ungraded in the subject (MEC & UCLES, 1993).

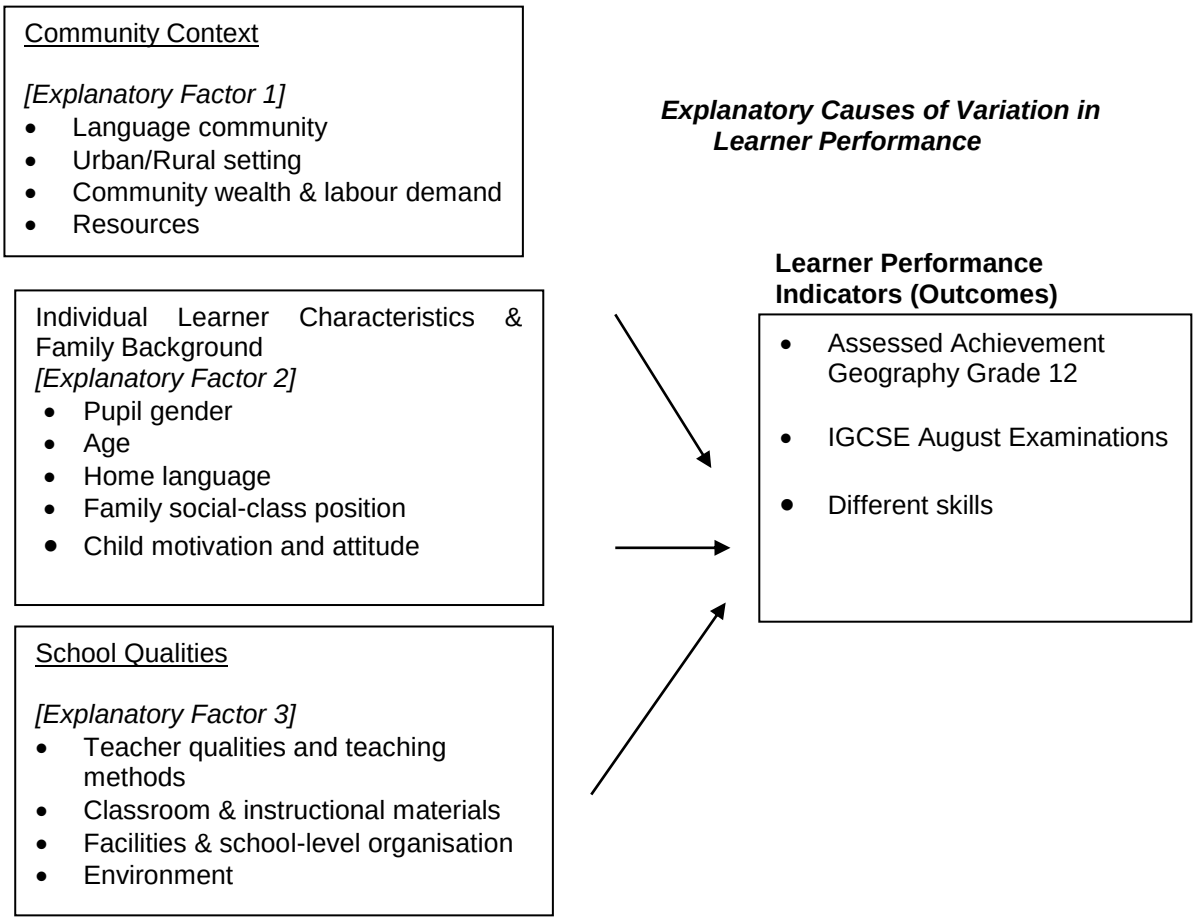
According to a statement by the Minister of Education and Culture (MEC) (Mr. N. Angula) on July 27, 1993 to parliament, a task force which was set up used two criteria in evaluating schools that could offer the new (H)IGCSE curriculum. The first criteria was to identify which schools can successfully present the (H)IGCSE course in 1994 and included adequacy of physical facilities. The second criteria was to look at the competence of teachers and school management. According to the statement, particular attention was paid to the presence of laboratories and other specialist rooms and suitably stocked school libraries. According to these criteria, in 1994 there was only provision of about 12000 places in Grade 11. Eligibility for admission was based on the performance of the learners at the grade 10 level in the Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) examinations.

The results of the first cohort of candidates that wrote the examinations in 1995 were very poor. To this end, a ministerial task force was established to identify and analyse factors affecting learners' performance in the 1995 IGCSE/HIGCSE examinations (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, 1996). Some of the problems related to Geography that the task force identified included language difficulties, problems with geographical terminology and rubric errors. The selection of learners to undertake the core or extended curriculum also created some problems (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, 1996).

There are many factors that effect how well a learner performs and whether that performance will deteriorate or improve. Some of these may be more important than others. In the researcher’s view, effective learning and teaching depend on many factors which include what happens in the classroom.

The learner achievement model (figure 1) provides a summary of the factors that might be either favourable or unfavourable for effective learning to occur.

Figure 1: Learner Achievement Model



Source: MEC, 1994: How much do Namibia's children learn in school? Findings from the 1992 National Learner Baseline Assessment [Modified].

Looking at the learner achievement model (figure 1) it seems that for effective learning and teaching to occur, the following are conditions to be met:

- Learners should be motivated to learn;
- Learners should acquire good study skills;
- Learners should be well fed and healthy;

- Learners should understand the purpose and relevance of their work;
- Learners are given learning tasks in an orderly way;
- Learners have textbooks and reference books to use;
- Learners know where and when to ask for help;
- Learners show consideration for one another and for the teachers;
- Learners rise to the challenge of working and showing commitment to their studies;
- Learners revise and practise exercises to improve performance;
- Learners work co-operatively in groups;
- Learners present good work for others to see;
- Learners are encouraged and receive feedback about their work from teachers and parents; and
- Learners read, write, listen and discuss the content of the Geography syllabus in a variety of contexts.

In addition to the above, the model also implies the following:

- Good attitudes of the learners and teachers are required towards their work;
- The teachers have to put the time at their disposal to optimum use so that the time spent by learners on learning is high; and
- Teacher experience, training and commitment to help learners learn are also important ingredients in the teaching and learning process.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to the education statistics (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture/Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), 1996) Geography got the highest number of candidates that did not receive any grading in the subject in the final examination in 1995.

In fact, 36.2% of the candidates in 1995 were ungraded in Geography which represents even a higher figure than Mathematics, 34.2%. Geography ranked last of the 43 subjects offered at the IGCSE level in 1995. In 1998, Geography retained the last position of ungraded candidates with 25.4% and Mathematics. 24.2% (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture/EMIS, 1998). Geography still ranked last of the 45 subjects offered in 1998.

Likewise, although the number of ungraded Geography learners in 1998 final examination at the IGCSE level at Rehoboth High School is relatively higher than the national figure, the majority of the learners at the school received low grades in the subject. The results of Rehoboth High School for three years are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Learner performance in Geography at Rehoboth High School from 1997-1999.

Year	No of Candidates	Distribution of symbols *(% in italics)*									
		A*	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**U**	**X**
1999	83			3	6	9	27	25	13		
%				*3.6*	*7.2*	*10.8*	*32.5*	*30.1*	*15.7*		
1998	59				1	4	9	20	18	5	2
%					*1.7*	*6.8*	*15.3*	*33.9*	*30.5*	*8.5*	*3.4*
1997	87				2	6	13	33	31	3	
%					*2.3*	*6.9*	*14.9*	*37.9*	*35.6*	*2.3*	

Results obtained from UCLES (Centre NA 021 Rehoboth SS)

In 1997, 84 of the 87 candidates were graded, representing 96.6% of the total candidates. The candidates that achieved grading from A*-D represented 9.2% and those achieving a grading of E-G represented 88.4%. Considering the fact that at least a C average is required for entry to the University of Namibia or Polytechnic of Namibia, the results are relatively poor. In 1998, 52 of the 59 candidates were graded, representing 88.1% of the candidates. Of these candidates, 8.5% obtained grades A*-D and 79.7% of the candidates obtained grades E-G. This shows a lower achievement in 1998 in comparison to 1997. In 1999 all candidates were graded of which 21.6% of the candidates got grades A*-D and 78.3% of the candidates received grades E-G. It was only in 1999 that nine candidates were offered the extended curriculum in Geography for the first time unlike previous years when only the core curriculum was offered. Using the University or Polytechnic of Namibia requirement as a measure, the results have not been

satisfactory for the three years shown above. Furthermore, of the 10 subjects offered at the school in 1998 at the IGCSE level Geography assumed the 7th place in the ranking from the top. In 1997, 11 subjects were offered at the school and Geography was ranked the fourth (4th) (Information obtained from the achievement records of the school for 1997-1999).

In view of the above, in the last three years, the performance of Geography learners at Rehoboth High School has been poor. Because of this, the study sets out to find out the factors which have contributed to the poor performance of the learners in Geography at Rehoboth High School. More specifically the study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does the structure of the examination papers at IGCSE level influence the learners' performance?
2. What social-cultural (community and family) factors affect the performance of learners in Geography?
3. Are there adequate material resources intended to enhance the teaching and learning processes of Geography at the school?
4. To what extent do the teaching methods used in Geography affect learner's performance?
5. What are the attitudes of learners at Rehoboth High School towards Geography?
6. To what extent does the school environment affect the learner's performance in Geography?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to;

1. Find out the differences of learners' performance in the mock examination in different skill areas in Geography;
2. Find out the social-cultural (community and family) factors that influence the performance of learners at Rehoboth High School;
3. Assess whether there are adequate material resources for teaching Geography at the school;
4. Identify the teaching methods used by teachers and assess whether they have an influence on learner's performance;
5. Examine the attitudes of the learners towards Geography; and
6. Assess the extent to which the learner performance is influenced by the school environment.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The (H)IGCSE paradigm has been in place since 1995 as a mode of national examination. The teachers and the community members will benefit from the results of the study in that critical areas of problems and opportunities can be identified for example they can become aware of the level of parental and community support and can through this develop interest in their children's schooling. The identified problems and opportunities can form the basis for group dialogue and can assist the teachers to lose gender tags and

prejudices and biases towards certain learners. The study can also encourage, support and create the communication that will help learners and teachers from different backgrounds to interact with each other. Because of this the study attempts to emphasise the importance of considering different approaches to teaching and learning and the diverse viewpoints of people from the different social backgrounds. It will also help learners and teachers to appreciate the number of situations that can be understood by people of different social backgrounds.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

The study is confined to the 2000 IGCSE Grade 12 Geography learners and teachers of Rehoboth High School.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

This study deals with six different factors. There may be other factors left out in this study. However, the researcher felt that these ones most likely influence learners' performance in Geography at the specific school and at the same time are the ones that could be measured more readily. Another limitation concerns the information given by the respondents in response to the questions and the number of learners present on the day when the researcher administered the instruments. The learners had completed their formal lesson periods and a number of the learners stayed at home to

prepare themselves for the final examinations. The interviews were conducted on the day that the learners wrote their final Geography examinations and this could have influenced their responses. The examination stress could have influenced them emotionally. Not all the respondents answered all the questions of the questionnaire. The study had to be completed within a certain time limit that shortened the extent of the study. The study was limited to one research site and inclusion of other sites would have provided comparative advantages.

1.7 Definition of terms

The reader of this research work is likely to come across some terms used in the study which may have different meanings in different contexts. The researcher provides operational definitions of all terms used in the study.

The Structure of the examination papers: Refers to the different papers in Geography and consist of different basic skill areas. The level of difficulty or challenges of each question contained in the papers are examined.

Social-Cultural Factors: Connotes the existence of mutual understanding between the teachers, learners, parents and other members of the community and between school and home communities and between the culture of the classroom and the cultures that the learners bring into the classroom (Goodwin, 1997).

Resources: Schools vary considerably in the availability of resources. Well resourced schools are able to transform their given inputs into learning. In schools where material inputs are readily available, it enhances learning. The learning materials that enhance learner achievement include textbooks and other learning aids.

Teaching Methods: Refers to the method that the teacher uses to present the subject matter to the learners. Learning is not the simple act of accumulating new facts and skills (Goodwin, 1997). Teaching entails assisting the learners to build bridges between what is already familiar to them and the new content and skills to be learned. A salient characteristic of an effective teacher, therefore, is the ability to help learners connect learning in school to their everyday life experiences both within and outside the school. Teachers must therefore be skilled in selecting from a repertoire those instructional procedures that are appropriate to the learners and the situation rather than rigidly following fixed methods.

Attitude towards Geography as a subject: Ford-Martin (2001) describes attitude as a feeling, belief, or opinion of approval or disapproval towards something. Behaviour is an action or reaction that occurs in response to an event or internal stimuli (i.e. thought). Positive attitudes, according Ford-Martin (2001) manifest well-adjusted behaviours. Behaviour towards Geography can however be influenced by a number of factors beyond attitude, including preconceptions about self and others, resources, teaching

and learning methods, social and cultural influences and the school environment. Positive attitude towards Geography may influence performance of learners in that it affords opportunities for learning.

School Environment: In order to help learners learn, one of the main tasks of the teachers and the community is to create a good school environment. Improving the school-learning environment requires more than the implementation of get-tough disciplinary measures. It also means creating an atmosphere of respect for students and sharing with them the responsibilities of maintaining a high-quality learning environment. Staff and teachers need to work to get to know their students and form caring relationships of mutual respect. Good school environment therefore influences better performance of learners.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several factors that may influence the academic performance of learners. Amongst these are the structure of the examination papers, social-cultural factors, resources, teaching methods, attitude and behaviour towards Geography as a subject, and the school environment.

2.1 The Structure of the Examination Papers

As one of the subjects offered in the (H)IGCSE curriculum, the Geography syllabus reveals a strong influence of some form of objective approach. In this regard, every section in the Geography syllabus contains a section called assessment objectives. The assessment objectives include skills such as:

A: Knowledge with Understanding.

B: Analysis.

C: Judgement and decision-making.

D: Investigation (enquiry skills, practical skills and presentation skills).

A total of 13 skills are listed in the Geography syllabus. A comprehensive breakdown of the skills is given in Annex A. According to the syllabus the following schemes of assessment should be incorporated in the papers:

Table 2: Assessment Objectives.

Paper	Assessment Objectives			
	A Knowledge with understanding	**B** Analysis	**C** Judgement and decision making	**D** Investigation
1 or 2	40 %	30 %	30 %	-
3	10 %	80 %	10 %	-
5	20 %	20 %	20 %	40 %

Adopted from Geography syllabus code: 0460:2000

The syllabus (Geography syllabus Code: 0460:2000) is also structured in such a way that the following aims are supposed to be achieved:

- To develop a sense of place and an understanding of relative location on a local, regional and global scale;
- To develop an awareness of the characteristics and distribution of a selection of contrasting physical and human environments;
- To develop an understanding of some of the processes affecting the development of such environments;
- To develop an understanding of the spatial effects of the ways in which people interact with each other and with their environments;
- To develop an understanding of different communities and cultures throughout the world and an awareness of the contrasting opportunities and constraints presented by different environments.

The performance of learners is also influenced during examination times. All kinds of other pressures are also building up at the time of the examinations.

These include the requirements of Geography knowledge, memory, time, writing skills, understanding the questions, etc. According to Phiri (1998), learners usually experience seven problems when writing an examination: These are:

1. Rubric errors. Phiri (1998) quoted Pickering et al (1993) that rubrics are defined as sets of criteria that describe levels of performance or understanding. The levels are indicated as the ability to understand basic instructions contained in the examination papers and the ability to recognise the demands of the IGCSE examination.
2. Failure to follow basic instructions stipulated in the papers.
3. Failure to recognise the demands of the examinations.
4. Difficulties in the interpretation of resources provided in a question.
5. Language and communication skills.
6. Limited knowledge of subject matter.
7. Difficulties associated with investigative and or research skills.

Some learners are faced with the difficulty of understanding what the examiner requires. This includes lack of following basic instructions such as the number of questions that should be attempted. According to Phiri (1998), some learners simply answer all the questions. Some learners are not acquainted with a comprehensive glossary of terms usually used in the examination papers such as "discuss", ”describe”, “explain”, etc., some

learners also find it difficult to interpret sources that accompany examination questions.

Namibian learners also present a special challenge to the teachers, namely to find effective means of educating learners who do not speak English fluently. The problem of educating learners that are not native speakers of English has proved to be very demanding and challenging. In the Namibian society with a population composed of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the education system has a special role to play in the process. The vast majority of learners and teachers in Namibia do not speak English as their first language, or even as their second language. Coupled with this critical situation is the scarcity of teaching materials in Geography. Equating English with democracy, equality and national identity are the reasons for using English only in teaching at the Upper Primary, Junior and Senior Secondary Phases. Mother tongues, except Afrikaans, are generally underdeveloped, particularly with regards to literature. Afrikaans however is associated with oppression and colonialism and the Namibian ministry might have considered it worthwhile to change to a neutral language of instruction. Mother tongues are not useful for further studies and the people cannot go beyond the borders of Namibia with the indigenous languages.

The Namibian Ministry of Basic Education and Culture was fully aware of the importance of language in the affairs of men and women. Against this background a language policy was designed. The *Language Policy for*

Schools 1992 - 1996 and beyond (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1991) attempted to achieve the following goals:

- The learners should be able to have a reasonable acquisition and command of English during the seven years of Primary education to prepare them for Secondary education.
- Education should furthermore promote language and cultural identity of children.
- The entire population should be English competent so as to be able to compete economically in an English dependent world.
- To unite the various races and speech communities in Namibia into one national entity (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1991).

2.2 Social-Cultural Factors

The fact that learners are from diverse cultural and social backgrounds leads to learners having fewer shared experiences. It, therefore, requires the teachers to explore different ways of how classrooms can be structured so that there are many different situations that appeal to all learners in the classroom. To be responsive to learners requires that the teacher must be favourably predisposed towards diversity. This entails respecting individual and cultural differences and believing that all learners are capable of learning. Learners under achieve in school in general and in the Geography classroom in particular as a result of problems beyond the school walls. According to Bowman (1994) the explanation for the differences in school

performance lays in the difference in life experiences between groups. The worlds in which children of different cultural and socio-economic groups live do not encourage the same beliefs and attitudes nor do they emphasise the same skills. The Geography classroom therefore should offer opportunities for equitable participation. Unfortunately, however, performance of the learners is, to a large extent, affected by conditions in society. Namibia's vast areas with the low population density and the uneven provision of resources in the past has resulted in a great number of children not having a school within walking distance from their parents' and/or guardians' homes. The problem is further compounded by the fact that only a limited number of schools in Namibia offer the IGCSE curriculum.

Many learners are subjected to the ills of poverty, and the low expectations from the teachers, parents, other learners and themselves. These also influence their chances for success. Living in poverty and sometimes alone, has several educational implications. Children who are poor and living by themselves may be malnourished and may not have adequate health care and may live in a hostile environment and are unlikely to have access to educational opportunities in the community (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1994).

Favourable social-economic factors enhance academic performance which may result in better grades. Poorer backgrounds and lifestyles on the other hand lessen the children's chances for academic success (Ministry of

Education and Culture, 1994). In today's society the education attainment of an individual contributes, to a large extent, to the type of job that a person can get. The educational levels of the parents of the learners can also contribute to the academic success or failure because it will be easier for a better-educated (cultural capital) person to assist the learner in academic endeavours. Many parents may wish to provide a better home life for their children, but may not have the skills or support to be effective parents. Having a nurturing home is an essential resource for learners. Thus, having a nurturing network of parents, teachers, peers and community members that are supportive of the learners can go a long way in improving performance in the Geography classroom.

Poor academic achievement is also experienced among learners whose cultures differ significantly from the main culture prevalent in the school environment. Learners from different cultural backgrounds may learn to communicate differently. According to Campbell, Campbell and Dickinson (1996) teachers can be of great help to the Geography learner by:

a) Examining and recognising their perceptions and behaviour toward learners from different cultural backgrounds. Teachers should therefore see themselves as agents and transmitters of culture. This requires that teachers observe themselves and the learners in the classroom. Furthermore teachers should reflect on the ways in which they interact with Geography learners from different linguistic and cultural groupings. According to Campbell, Campbell and Dickinson (1996) educators who

model a distinction, who maintain high expectations for all the learners, while appreciating and celebrating the diversity of ways the learners learn, will teach more through their behaviour than through strategies.

b) Teaching should be organised in a way that promotes a conversational tone between the teacher and the learner instead of the conventional question-answer interchanges.

c) Teachers should also realise that not all the Geography learners are alike. Learners come from different academic experiences and cultural backgrounds and also have different expectations about the nature and purpose of Geography as a subject (Campbell, Campbell and Dickinson, 1996).

The impact of socialisation has also an influence on the way boys and girls perform in Geography. As children grow, they are often unconsciously encouraged to adopt sex-stereotyped roles. According to Wadsworth and Mennen (1997), boys are encouraged to play with action toys, learning about Geographical concepts while girls are encouraged to express themselves verbally. Girls are also encouraged to be passive, caring, to take no risks, and to defer to male voices in the public discussion (Wadsworth and Mennen 1997). Such an orientation obviously has an impact on how males and females learn and behave in school.

2.3 Resources

The provision of educational materials to schools, and particularly the Geography classroom, is an issue of much interest to the researcher. The lack of facilities and equipment has often been cited as a major reason for low educational quality (Snyder and Voigts, 1998). Due to the fact that school resources are related to learners' outcomes, parents attempt to place their children in resource-rich schools. Parents from low-income backgrounds value the educational opportunities provided to higher income backgrounds more as the educational opportunities provided by the schools in their local area. According to Snyder and Voigts (1998) there are sometimes sufficient provisions of materials to schools and in some schools there are commercially produced materials available but the materials are rarely appropriate for the Namibian educational context. There is also the contention of the actual availability of materials as opposed to having it stored away at the school. At times, these materials demand a level well beyond the learners. Teachers have therefore to decide whether to adapt these materials to fit the background of the learners or develop their own teaching materials.

2.4 Teaching Methods

Everyone has a learning style (Griggs, 1991). According to Griggs our style of learning, if accommodated, can result in improved attitudes toward

learning and an increase in productivity, academic achievement, and creativity. Many times the teacher will concentrate on presenting the lessons in line with his or her preferred learning style. This practice can put learners with a different preferred learning style at a real disadvantage. Learners that grasp the instruction style of the teacher may be successful in Geography and will be motivated to get good grades by competing with other learners. The only way to ensure that learners with diverse learning styles are successful in school is to offer a variety of teaching styles. McLeod (1994), shows how this may be obtained through:

i. Co-operative learning. Teachers can make the learners realise that it is to their advantage for other learners to do well. It is required that they learn together and they receive a grade from a group activity.
ii. Mastery learning, i.e. learners learn at their own pace rather than being bored by too slow or too fast a pace.
iii. Heterogeneous ability grouping can be used to give learners a chance to learn from multiple “teachers”, In other words they teach each other.

The learning style of the learners, according to Riding and Butterfield (1990), is related to the way in which the individual represents information in memory. The authors found that learners whose memories relied highly on imagery performed well on tasks that can be visualised and performed less on those presented verbally. It is important that the teacher is aware of these situations and models an appreciation for individual differences. Although the

basic understanding of the geographical concepts is required, the teacher must be responsive to the fact that not all the learners learn and develop competencies in the same way (Campbell, Campbell and Dickinson, 1996). Learners need to be taught in the way that corresponds to the way in which they preferred to learn. The teaching method of the teacher should be appropriate to the task and fit the topic of the lesson as well as the varied preferred learning styles of the learners.

The methods, according to Mobley (1986), should match the:

a) Subject material;
b) Learner's level of competence;
c) Skills developed by the learners;
d) Ability range of the learners; and
e) Type of assessment that will be administered.

Specific strategies can be used by the teacher and include acknowledging the perceptions of the learners, understanding diverse points of view, and reflecting on current views from several perspectives. Therefore, the teacher also has to consider the relationship between lessons during preparation. Learners must do more than just listen. They must read, discuss or be engaged in problem solving. To be actively involved, learners must be engaged in analysis, synthesis and evaluation activities. It thus calls for the application of diverse methods which include group work, discussion in class,

peer-group learning, and practical activity. Use of these techniques in the classroom is vital because of their powerful impact upon the learners' learning. According to Bonwell and Eison (1991) several studies have shown that learners prefer strategies promoting active learning to traditional lectures.

2.5 Attitude towards Geography as a subject

Shinn (1981) is convinced that nothing can stop a person with the right attitude toward achieving his or her personal goals in life. The right attitude can direct a person to use abilities to gain the maximum for the person. A positive attitude towards Geography then does make a difference in performance. It makes the difference between success and failure in the subject. A positive attitude towards the subject will help the learner to learn from the teacher and can generate cooperation between the teacher and the learner and will also inspire the other learners. The role of attitude to achieve success in Geography cannot be underestimated. Shinn (1981) notes that success without a positive attitude is unthinkable. Without a positive attitude there is no way to overcome problems. Positive attitudes also create enthusiasm in learners towards the subject. According to Shinn (1981) a positive attitude opens the mind and expands it to search for new opportunities and to grow to achieve success.

2.6 School Environment

An environment is considered to be a living and changing system. It is more than the physical space since it includes the way time is structured and the roles we are expected to play. It also conditions how we feel, think and behave and dramatically affects the quality of our lives. The environment either works for us or against us as we conduct our lives (Greenman, 1988).

Schools and classrooms are complex social environments. They consist of different individuals with own identities, perceptions and values. The school environment and the Geography classroom are interpreted and identified by the learners in different ways. The classroom is very important. Lumsden (1994), observes that if the learners experience the classroom as a caring and supportive place, where there is a sense of belonging and everybody is valued and respected, they will tend to participate more fully in the learning process. The school environment will therefore, affect the learners' perception of what is right or wrong and of an acceptable and an unacceptable conduct. Many times the teachers assume that all learners bring a similar socialisation to the classroom, one that corresponds closely to the experiences of the dominant group in the society. The spatial organisation of the school and the Geography classroom provides conditions for learning in that the school buildings and the classroom themselves express conceptions of teaching and learning. The learners and the teacher have to cope and manage the physical arrangement of the school and the

classroom. The way in which the classroom is organised and arranged reflects the kind of environment in which learning has to take place. The organisation and layout also tells about the character and orientations of the learners and the teacher. According to Hopkins and Antes (1979) some learners have a difficult time becoming accustomed to a new climate or different environment. They might therefore have a difficult time to adapt to the new environment and might lose out on the material presented to the rest of the learners. Different wall colours or materials on the walls might distract some learners.

According to Hopkins and Antes (1979) the classroom and the school environment should develop and create appropriate environments for learning. An important fact should be considered in the atmosphere of the Geography class. The classroom and the school environment are not only about academic subject matter. The classroom experience also involves learning to become self-reliant and self-evaluative as well as learning how to work co-operatively and productively with others.

According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), the organisation of space in schools and classrooms reflects the underlying pedagogic practice. The Geography classroom should also be a place to help learners to sharpen their sense of identity, understanding of culture and to explore and internalise general issues of fairness and morality. For the Geography class to be conducive to learning and teaching it should be clean, comfortable and make

learners feel welcome and at ease. Purkey and Novak (1984) quoted that Berger and Luckman (1966) who indicated that people both create and are created by their environments.

Classrooms and social environments are located in organised social worlds where meanings are shared and values held. Classrooms also constitute small communities with cumulative histories, shared beliefs and rights and responsibilities of membership (Good and Brophy, 1997). Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) quoted Sommer (1967) who studied the influence of the seating arrangement, classroom arrangement and spatial organisation on the levels of learners' participation. In a study of an introductory psychology class, Sommer (1967) observed that the students directly opposite the instructor participated more than those on the sides. In classrooms where desks were arranged in straight rows students in front were found to participate more than those in the rear, and students in the centre of each row participated more than those on the sides.

Another aspect is that if teachers, educators and learners demonstrate that they have low expectations of a certain school there will be a decrease in motivation and interest in school activities. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), noted that the whole issue of teachers' expectations stems from research by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). According to Hitchcock and Hughes these authors designed an artificial situation in order to test the hypothesis that individual learners' performances were significantly influenced by their

teachers' expectations of them. The behaviour of the Geography teacher is critical since it reinforces both negative and positive attitudes or creates hopes for a better and more satisfying school life for the learners.

Good and Brophy (1997), hold the view that teachers tend to call more frequently on learners they believe to be most capable. The authors quoted their study in 1970 and reported only minor differences in the frequency of teacher contact with learners of different achievement levels but found important variations in the quality of these contacts. The teachers were more likely to praise high-achieving learners even when differences in correctness of learners' answers were taken into account. The study further found that high achievers were praised 12 percent of the time when they gave the right answer, while low achievers were only praised 6 percent of the time. On the other hand, low achievers were criticised more (18 percent of the time as opposed to 6 percent for high achievers). Furthermore, teachers were twice as likely to stay with high achievers than with low achievers (i.e. repeat the question, provide a clue or ask a new question). Good and Brophy (1997) also indicated that gender also affects the quantity and quality of learner communication with teachers. They also claim that studies consistently show that boys have more interactions with the teachers than girls do.

Another factor is that learners leave their different homes with different situations and environmental circumstances. The task of the teacher is to cater for the basic needs of the learners or at least try to let them feel at

home and safe. In order to succeed in Geography, parents and teachers alike need to create a stable climate that will enable the child to develop fully. There is a great need for the Geography teacher to create this secure classroom environment emotionally and socially in which learners can feel safe to express their feelings of fear and insecurity. In an environment where learners feel anxious or insecure, there are likely to be psychological barriers to learning. Learners are often asked to perform in a state of ignorance and dependence which will ultimately instil feelings of helplessness. Learners may want to talk with parents and other adults but are reluctant to do so, fearing that no one will understand or care. In many households, the children compete for the time and attention of the adults. Bey (1996) suggests that the school can implement activities for the adults to learn to communicate effectively with the children in order to provide them with a supportive environment that is conducive to learning and to get them involved in the learning process.

Bey (1996) identifies five qualities that are important and essential to a positive classroom environment. These are;

a) Co-operation: Learners learn to work together and trust, help and share with each other.
b) Communication: Learners learn to observe carefully, communicate accurately and listen sensitively.

c) Tolerance: Learners learn to respect and appreciate people's differences and understand prejudice and how it works.
d) Positive Emotional Expression: Learners learn to express feelings, particularly anger and frustration in ways that are not aggressive or destructive and they learn self-control.
e) Conflict Resolution: Learners learn those skills of responding creatively to conflict in the context of a supportive environment.

Bey (1996) notes that, it is only when learners enjoy the cognitive experiences provided in the classroom that they have a good chance to thrive in their subjects. Many learners do poorly in Geography because what is done in the Geography classes seems irrelevant to them and their world. It is believed that in schools where the parents or other adults are involved in the learners' education, learners achieve more than those whose parents do not become involved and stay involved in the education of their children. The school and the family thus ultimately share a major responsibility, in their children's education because both influence the educational success and failure of the learners.

Bey (1996) indicates that much of the school environment is dependent on the quality of the principal's leadership. The principal has to motivate and set the tone and atmosphere for a purposeful climate. In such purposeful climate, creativity is generated and teachers are encouraged to share their uniqueness with each other and with the learners. The principal and the

teachers should be supportive, accessible, open to ideas and non-judgemental in listening to the concerns of the other teachers and learners (Bey, 1996). The principal should endeavour to learn the names of the learners and teachers and workers and display a sense of humour. Creemers (1989) indicated that the principal shapes the learning climate by:

a) maintaining high visibility in order to communicate priorities and model expectations;
b) creating a reward system that reinforces academic achievement and productive effort;
c) establishing clear, explicit standards for learners and staff that embody the school's expectations of learners;
d) protecting instructional time from interruptions and promoting the effective use of instructional time in the classrooms;
e) selecting, supporting and participating in high-quality staff development programmes consistent with the school's annual programme goals.

Similarly, Renchler (1992) noted that the principal could influence positive learning environment by:

a) stressing goal setting and self-regulation management,
b) offering learners choices in instructional settings,
c) rewarding learners for attaining "personal best" goals,

d) fostering teamwork through group learning and problem-solving experiences,
e) replacing social comparisons of achievement with self-assessment and evaluation techniques, and
f) teaching time management skills and offer self-paced instruction when possible.

As our world becomes a global village rather than isolated schools, communities and countries, we envisage that the classroom and the school environment have to be modified. The researcher believes that the ideal school and classroom should be one where:

a) learners can access and analyse information instantly;
b) learners can work together co-operatively with others and are receptive to new ideas;
c) teachers guide and facilitate learning;
d) teachers team up with other colleagues in order to utilise talents fully;
e) teachers target learning experiences at the varied preferred learning style of all the learners;
f) schools are provided with sufficient time and monetary resources to plan programmes;
g) parents are consistently involved in school activities and the education of their children; and,
h) schools provide on-line research opportunities.

Currently initiatives (SchoolNet and LearnLink initiatives) are under way to link up most rural schools in Namibia with technologies which will bring them closer to information. Computer centres are also provided in different constituencies throughout the country and can assist the rural schools to take advantage of the innovations.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study made use of qualitative and quantitative measures. The quantitative measures included the analysis of the results of the August 2000 mock examination in Geography and the qualitative analysis was achieved through analysis of questionnaires, face-to-face interviews and observations. The case study approach was adopted in the execution of this study. The case study is considered to be a way of organising data for the purpose of reviewing social reality (Best and Kahn, 1993). It examines a social unit as a whole and in this case the Rehoboth High School is looked at. The performance of a sample of learners is considered, with specific emphasis on Grade 12 learners and Geography as a subject. The purpose is to understand the factors that lead to the performance of the learners at the school with particular reference to Geography. The advantage of the case study is that it probes deeply into issues concerning the study and enables us to understand the factors that lead to the performance of the learners in Geography. As part of the case study method, interviewing of the stakeholders was conducted in order to help explain the thinking of the teachers, learners and the principal at the school.

3.2 Population

The population included all the Grade 12 Geography learners, the teachers, the school inspector and the Geography advisory teacher in Rehoboth High School.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

All 96 Geography learners were included in the in-depth interviews. The in-depth interviews were also conducted with the advisory teacher (one), inspector, Geography teachers (two) and the school principal. Sixty-six learners responded to the questionnaire. Only 66 Geography learners were present the day when the questionnaire was administered. This is alluded to in the limitation of the study. The researcher believes that this does not compromise the quality of the study in any way and that the views expressed can be regarded as representative of the whole group. The in-depth interviews were however conducted with the whole population on another occasion and can therefore be said to compensate for the absent questionnaire responses. The interviews were conducted to focus groups of twenty learners per group.

3.4 Research Instruments

The instruments that were used are:

- Questionnaires. Items on the questionnaire sought personal data, education levels of the parents, community and cultural background, aptitude and attitude towards Geography as a subject of the learners.
- Interview schedule. The Grade 12 Geography learners of 2000, the subject teacher, the library teacher and the school principal were interviewed. Questions were about the general characteristics of the school, preferred teaching and learning style, resources at the school and the school environment.
- Observation schedules. These provided information on important aspects of the behaviour of the teachers, learners, principal and general aspects of the school.
- Actual mock question papers. The researcher and the advisory teacher for Geography worked through the August 2000 papers to ascertain the skill areas that are covered as well as to determine the performance of learners in the different skill areas. The mock examination was used because it is supposed to follow the same format as the final examination.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The interviews were conducted to gather information regarding the experiences and knowledge of the learners, teachers and the principal as well as that of the advisory teacher and the inspector regarding the teaching of Geography at the school. The questions were structured in such a way that current and past information on the performance of Grade 12 learners in

Geography was obtained. On October 16, 2000, the questionnaire was administered at the school to 66 (68%) of the 96 Geography learners who were present at the school. Of those present 37 were females (56%) and 29 were males (44%). It must be mentioned though that the learners were finished with the work and some of the learners stayed home because they had to prepare themselves for the final examinations. I got their answer sheets of the August 2000 mock examination and analyzed the papers. With the help of the advisory teacher I put the papers in the different skill areas. Informal observations were also conducted on the occasions that I visited the school and are integrated in the study. This included characteristics of the school environment, Geography class, amount of furniture and equipment and presence or absence of other facilities.

Brief descriptions of the research instruments follow.

(a) Analyses of mock examination papers. The August 2000 papers, set by the teacher, were analysed in order to ascertain what skill areas are covered by their papers and whether it is in line with what will be tested at the end of the year. Answer sheets of the learners were analysed to try to find out in which skill areas they have problems with. The percentages of marks obtained, by the learners per skill area, are illustrated in table format in the discussion of results section of the report. The proportions of actual marks for August 2000 marks for Geography for a specific skill area are given in chapter four.

(b) Interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data on the social-cultural factors, resources, methods of teaching and the school environment. Triangulation was achieved through open-ended interviews, questionnaires and observations. The principal, advisory teacher for Geography, Geography teachers and all of the learners were interviewed. Only 66 learners were present when the questionnaire was administered and this was done in four groups. The interviews were conducted in groups of twenty and the interview schedule and questionnaire were used for this purpose.

(c) Observations were conducted to obtain a detailed picture of the behaviours, events and contexts surrounding schooling at Rehoboth High School.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

The answer papers of the learners were analysed with reference to the question papers of the teacher to see what skill areas are covered and in what skill areas the learners are experiencing problems. The variation of achievement of the learners was determined with the scores of boys and girls separately. To be able to know if the mean males' score differed from the females' mean score, the T-test was used. The data that was collected with the questionnaire was analysed question by question and the responses were given in the appropriate places. A checklist in the questionnaire solicited responses for the resources at the school. Feedback was also

obtained from the learners on their view of the teaching methods of the teacher. The school environment views were also obtained from the learners and teachers. All these responses are given in table format in chapter four. The interviews with the learners, the teachers, the principal, the advisory teacher and the school inspector were tape recorded, transcribed and incorporated in the text.

CHAPTER FOUR

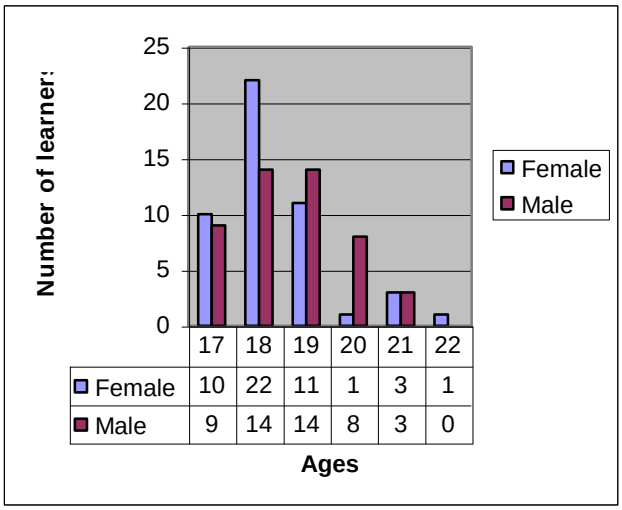
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Background information on the research site

Rehoboth High School has a staff complement of 34 teachers and six cleaners. The school had 815 learners as on September 22, 2000. Of the 143 Grade 12 learners (65 males and 78 females), a total of 96 (67%) took Geography. Of the 96 who took Geography 48 (50%) were females.

The ages of the Grade 12 Geography learners are given below (as of October 16, 2000) so as to give the reader an idea of the presence of over-aged learners in the Geography classroom. The teacher that was offering the Grade 12 Geography syllabus is in his early thirties.

Figure 2: Ages of the Geography Grade 12 learners as on October 16, 2000.



	17	18	19	20	21	22
Female	10	22	11	1	3	1
Male	9	14	14	8	3	0

4.2 The Structure of the Examination Papers

This section addresses question 1 on page 11. The IGCSE Geography syllabus is made up of four papers. Papers 1 and 2 are targeted at differential levels of achievement. The questions on Paper 1 are more structured than those for Paper 2. All the IGCSE candidates have to take Paper 3 and Paper 5.

Paper 1: Candidates are required to answer three questions (3 X 25 marks). Six questions are set: two on each of the three themes. The themes are:

1. Population and Settlement;
2. The Natural Environment; and
3. Economic Development and the Use of Resources.

Questions are structured with gradients of difficulty and are resource-based, and tasks are described in Assessment Objectives A, B, and C. A typical question that could be set for this Paper is to refer to the population pyramids and learners would then be asked to describe and suggest reasons for the differences in the shapes.

Paper 2: Candidates are asked to answer three questions (3 X 25 marks). Six questions are set: two on each of the three themes. The themes are:

1. Population and Settlement;
2. The Natural Environment; and
3. Economic Development and the Use of Resources.

Questions are resource-based, involve problem solving and free-response writing, and are on tasks described in Assessment Objectives A, B and C. A typical question for Paper 2 could be to describe population migration and give reasons why people migrate.

Paper 3: Is 60 marks. All candidates take this paper and they have to answer all the questions. Candidates have to demonstrate skills of analysis and interpretation and application of graphical and other techniques as appropriate. The learners have to study maps and have to explain and give reasons for the growth of settlements in specific areas.

Paper 5: Is also 60 marks. The learners may opt to undertake school-based assignments but written approval is required from UCLES. As an alternative

to Coursework, a written examination on issues relating to one or more of the following syllabus themes are set: The themes are:

1. Population and Settlement.
2. The Natural Environment.
3. Economic development and the use of Resources.

Candidates have to answer all the questions. This paper provides an emphasis on the Assessment Objective D. The Paper concentrates on a research site and candidates have to draw inferences from the study, e.g. they have to identify similarities and differences in the pattern of surface flow across the river at ten selected sites.

In order to answer the questions of the study, the researcher and the Geography advisory teacher analysed the examination papers and categorised the papers to the domains as described in Table 2 of this research report. In view of this, breakdown of the August 2000 mock Grade 12 Geography examination papers at Rehoboth High School (case study site) together with the format are given in Tables 3, 5 and 7, to ascertain whether it is in line with the prescriptions in Table 2.

Table 3 gives the breakdown of the different skill areas in paper 1 of the August 2000 mock Geography Grade 12 examination. The marks indicated in the “total” column are what each of the individual questions contributed.

Table 3: Skill areas of the Grade 12 Geography Paper 1 August 2000 Mock Examination.

		Skill areas			
Question	Total Marks	Knowledge with Understanding	Analysis	Judgement and Decision Making	Investigation
1 (a)	6*	6*			
1 (b) (i)	2	2			
1 (b) (ii)	6		6		
1 (c) (i)	6	6			
1 (c) (ii)	5	5			
2 (a) (i)	5		5		
2 (a) (ii)	2	2			
2 (a) (iii)	3		3		
2 (b) (i)	4	4			
2 (b) (ii)	2	2			
2 (b) (iii)	5	5			
2 (c)	4	4			
3 (a) (i)	3		3		
3 (a) (ii) 1	3			3	
3 (a) (ii) 2	5			5	
3 (b) (i)	3	3			
3 (b) (ii)	2	2			
3 (b) (iii)	1	1			
3 (c) (i)	1	1			
3 (c) (ii)	1	1			
3 (c) (iii)	2	2			
3 (c) (iv)	4			4	
Total	75	46 (61%)	17 (23%)	12 (16%)	0 (0%)
Assessment objec.⌘		40%	30%	30%	

***Question 1 (a) weighed 6 marks and covered the knowledge with understanding skill area.**
⌘ Assessment Objectives as adopted from Geography syllabus code: 0460:2000

As can be seen from Table 3, knowledge with understanding questions covered 61% (46 marks out of 75), analysis questions 23% (17 marks out of 75) and judgement and decision-making questions 16% (12 marks out of 75). This is not what the assessment objectives prescribe (knowledge with understanding 40%, analysis 30% and judgement and decision-making 30%). In order to record the learner's achievement accurately, the performance has to be standardised against agreed upon criteria.

The actual marks that the learners achieved in the examination are given in Table 4. The total number of female learners that sat for Paper 1 is 36 while 35 male learners took the same paper.

Table 4: Marks distribution of learners in Paper 1 (N=71; Females=36, Males=35).

Paper 1						
Skill areas (Marks obtained by learners in the skill areas)						
Cases	Knowledge with Understanding (Total Marks: 46)		Analysis (Total Marks: 17)		Judgement and decision-making (Total Marks: 12)	
	F (%)*	M (%)	F (%)*	M (%)	F (%)*	M (%)
# 1	13.0	34.8	5.8	41.2	41.7	58.3
# 2	10.9	15.2	29.4	23.5	8.3	33.3
# 3	4.4	6.5	23.5	29.4	25.0	16.7
# 4	6.5	17.4	35.3	41.2	8.3	16.7
# 5	23.9	6.5	29.4	11.8	41.7	0.0
# 6	6.5	19.6	17.7	47.1	0.0	25.0
# 7	17.4	13.0	23.5	41.2	50.0	25.0
# 8	21.7	21.7	29.4	41.2	33.3	41.7
# 9	15.2	21.7	23.5	29.4	33.3	8.3
# 10	6.5	8.7	35.3	17.7	25.0	8.3
# 11	17.4	6.5	35.3	17.7	16.7	8.3
# 12	10.9	28.3	47.1	47.1	33.3	58.3
# 13	10.9	26.1	35.3	35.3	41.7	33.3
# 14	21.7	2.2	41.2	35.3	25.0	8.3
# 15	13.0	10.9	29.4	23.5	41.7	0.0
# 16	13.0	15.2	11.8	41.2	8.3	16.7
# 17	19.6	6.5	23.5	47.1	33.3	8.3
# 18	8.7	13.0	17.7	17.7	25.0	33.3
# 19	4.4	17.4	29.4	29.4	0.0	25.0
# 20	19.6	17.4	52.9	47.1	8.3	50.0
# 21	13.0	32.6	41.2	41.2	25.0	33.3
# 22	26.1	13.0	23.5	47.1	33.3	25.0
# 23	10.9	32.6	29.4	47.1	16.7	8.3
# 24	8.7	23.9	52.9	11.8	25.0	33.3
# 25	17.4	8.7	17.7	52.9	16.7	25.0
# 26	15.2	26.1	52.9	58.8	16.7	0.0
# 27	10.9	26.1	0.0	29.4	16.7	41.7
# 28	4.4	10.9	47.1	23.5	16.7	33.3
# 29	6.5	19.6	17.7	23.5	0.0	0.0
# 30	21.7	21.7	47.1	29.4	25.0	8.3
# 31	10.9	8.7	52.9	17.7	16.7	16.7
# 32	6.5	30.4	41.2	64.0	16.7	25.0

# 33	23.9	23.9	41.2	35.3	33.3	25.0
# 34	17.4	21.7	47.1	35.3	33.3	66.7
# 35	17.4	26.1	17.7	35.3	0.0	25.0
# 36	21.7		41.2		50.0	
Total	229	292	195	207	101	101
Average	6.36	8.34	5.42	5.91	2.81	2.89
Average%	13.8	18.1	31.9	34.8	23.4	24.1
T-test	-2.38765		-0.92152		-0.17813	

*** Indicates the marks for female for various skill areas.**

It can be seen that the learners taking the mock Paper 1 (core curriculum) performed on average better in the skill analysis (31.9% females and 34.8% males respectively) whereas judgement and decision-making assumed on average the second place overall (23.4% females and 24.1% males respectively. The learners did not do very well in the knowledge with understanding section of the paper (13.8% females and 18.1% males respectively. In order to answer the question on the contrast in performance between the male and female learners a T-test was performed to see if there was a significant difference in their performance. The calculated t value of 2.38 at the α=0.05 with 79 degrees of freedom is greater than that obtained from the tables. Therefore there is a significant difference in the scores of the males and the females in Paper 1 in the skill area knowledge with understanding. The calculated t value of 0.92 at the α=0.05 with 79 degrees of freedom is smaller than that obtained from the tables. Therefore there is no significant difference in the scores of the males and the females in Paper 1 in the skill area analysis. The calculated t value of 0.17 at the α=0.05 with 79 degrees of freedom is smaller than that obtained from the tables.

Therefore there is no significant difference in the scores of the males and the females in Paper 1 in the skill area judgement and decision-making.

Paper 2 of the Geography examination is taken by the extended curriculum. This is a more complex curriculum than the core. Table 5 reflects the skill areas that were tested in Paper 2 in the August 2000 mock Geography examination.

Table 5: Skill areas of the Grade 12 Geography Paper 2 August 2000 Mock Examination.

		Skill areas			
Question	Total Marks	Knowledge with Understanding	Analysis	Judgement and Decision Making	Investigation
1 (a) (i)	4	4			
1 (a) (ii)	6		6		
1 (b) (i)	8	8			
1 (b) (ii)	7	7			
2 (a) (i)	1	1			
2 (a) (ii)	3	3			
2 (a) (iii)	4	4			
2 (a) (iv)	3	3			
2 (b) (i)	5		5		
2 (b) (ii)	4	4			
2 (b) (iii)	5	5			
3 (a)	5	5			
3 (b) (i)	5	5			
3 (b) (ii)	8	8			
3 (b) (iii)	7			7	
Total	75	57(76%)	11(14.7%)	7(9.3%)	
Assessment objec.⌘		40%	30%	30%	

***Question 1 (a) weighed 4 marks and covered the knowledge with understanding skill area.**
⌘ Assessment Objectives as adopted from Geography syllabus code: 0460:2000

As can be seen from Table 5, knowledge with understanding questions covered 76% (57 marks out of 75), analysis questions14.7% (11 marks out of 75) and judgement and decision-making questions 9.3% (7 marks out of 75).

This is not what the assessment objectives prescribe (knowledge with understanding 40%, analysis 30% and judgement and decision-making 30%). In order to record the learner's achievement accurately, the performance has to be standardised against agreed upon criteria.

Table 6 reflects the marks of the learners in the Grade 12 Geography Paper 2 mock examination during August 2000. The total number of female learners that sat for Paper 2 is 12 while 13 male learners took the same paper.

Table 6: Marks distribution of learners in Paper 2 (N=25; Females=12, Males=13).

Paper 2						
Skill areas (Marks obtained by learners in skill areas)						
Cases	Knowledge with Understanding (Total marks: 57)		Analysis (Total marks: 11)		Judgement and decision-making (Total marks: 7)	
	F (%)*	M (%)	F (%)*	M (%)	F (%)*	M (%)
# 1	28.1	38.6	36.4	45.5	28.6	71.4
# 2	38.6	29.8	27.3	27.3	42.9	28.6
# 3	45.6	36.8	18.2	45.5	85.7	57.1
# 4	61.4	56.14	36.4	63.6	85.7	57.1
# 5	57.9	54.4	18.2	72.7	71.4	42.9
# 6	28.1	49.1	36.4	27.3	42.9	57.1
# 7	47.4	49.1	9.1	9.1	71.4	71.4
# 8	36.8	38.6	36.4	27.3	57.1	57.1
# 9	38.6	42.1	36.4	18.2	57.1	42.9
# 10	47.4	57.9	18.2	36.4	57.1	28.6
# 11	54.4	31.6	36.4	9.1	57.1	14.3
# 12	61.4	49.1	45.5	36.4	71.4	42.9
# 13		38.6		36.4		28.6
Total	311	326	39	50	51	42
Average	25.9	25.1	3.3	3.9	4.3	3.2
Average %	45.5	44.0	29.5	35.0	60.7	46.1
T-test	0.349893		-0.86399		2.080063	

*** Indicates the marks for female for various skill areas.**

It can be seen that the learners taking Paper 2 (extended curriculum) performed on average better in the skill judgement and decision-making (60.7% females and 46.1% males respectively) and that knowledge with understanding came in second, slightly lower on average 45.5% females and 44.0% males respectively. In order to answer the question on the performance of males and females, a T-test was performed to see if there was a significant difference in the performance.

The calculated t value of 0.35 at the α=0.05 with 23 degrees of freedom is smaller than that obtained from the tables. Therefore there is no significant difference in the scores of the males and the females in Paper 2 in the skill area knowledge with understanding. The calculated t value of 0.86 at the α=0.05 with 23 degrees of freedom is also smaller than that obtained from the tables. Therefore there is also no significant difference in the scores of the males and the females in Paper 2 in the skill area analysis. The calculated t value of 2.08 at the α=0.05 with 23 degrees of freedom is greater than that obtained from the tables. Therefore there is a significant difference in the scores of the males and the females in Paper 2 in the skill area judgement and decision-making.

All the candidates take Paper 3. The candidates have to demonstrate skills of analysis of graphical techniques. Table 7 reflects the skill areas that were tested in the August 2000 Geography mock examination.

Table 7: Skill areas of the Grade 12 Geography Paper 3 August 2000 Mock Examination.

		Skill areas			
Question	Total Marks	Knowledge with Understanding	Analysis	Judgement and Decision Making	Investigation
1 (a) (i)	1*		1*		
1 (a) (ii)	1		1		
1 (a) (iii)	4		4		
1 (b) (i)	1		1		
1 (b) (ii)	1		1		
1 (c)	4		4		
1 (d)	4	4			
1 (e)	4			4	
2 (a) (i) A	2		2		
2 (a) (i) B	2		2		
2 (a) (ii)	4	4			
2 (a) (iii)	3		3		
2 (b) (i)	3	3			
2 (b) (ii)	2	2			
2 (b) (iii)	4	4			
3 (a)	6		6		
3 (b) (i)	1	1			
3 (b) (ii)	5	5			
3 (c) (i)	1			1	
3 (c) (ii)	1		1		
3 (c) (iii)	6			6	
Total	60	23(38.3%)	26(43.3%)	11(18.3%)	
Assessment objec.⌘		10%	80%	10%	

***Question 1 (a) (i) weighed 1 mark and covered the analysis skill area.**
⌘ Assessment Objectives as adopted from Geography syllabus code: 0460:2000

As can be seen from Table 7, knowledge with understanding covered 38.3% (23 marks out of 60), analysis 43.3% (26 marks out of 60) and judgement and decision-making 18.3% (11 marks out of 60). This is not what the assessment objectives prescribe (i.e. it prescribes 10% knowledge with understanding, 80% analysis and 10% judgement and decision making). In order to record the learner's achievement accurately, the performance has to be standardised against agreed upon criteria.

Table 8 shows the marks of the learners in Paper 3 during the August 2000 mock Geography examination. An equal number of female and male learners (i.e. 48 each) sat for Paper 3.

Table 8: Marks distribution of the learners in Paper 3 (N=96; Females=48, Males=48).

Paper 3						
Skill areas (Marks obtained by learners in skill areas)						
Cases	Knowledge with Understanding (Total marks: 23)		Analysis (Total marks: 26)		Judgement and decision-making (Total marks: 11)	
	F (%)*	M (%)	F (%)*	M (%)	F (%)*	M (%)
# 1	13.0	26.1	23.1	34.6	0.0	0.0
# 2	43.5	21.7	30.8	26.9	18.2	18.2
# 3	17.4	17.4	11.5	26.9	9.1	27.3
# 4	13.0	26.1	50.0	19.2	18.2	0.0
# 5	17.4	26.1	26.9	11.5	9.1	9.1
# 6	34.8	17.4	19.2	57.7	0.0	9.1
# 7	30.4	26.1	30.8	26.9	9.1	18.2
# 8	13.0	17.4	23.1	23.1	9.1	9.1
# 9	17.4	47.8	23.1	38.5	9.1	18.2
# 10	21.7	34.8	38.5	7.7	18.2	9.1
# 11	21.7	8.7	30.8	19.2	0.0	9.1
# 12	17.4	17.4	26.9	15.4	9.1	18.2
# 13	30.4	17.4	23.1	19.2	0.0	9.1
# 14	39.1	17.4	50.0	26.9	9.1	9.1
# 15	21.7	13.0	30.8	19.2	0.0	9.1
# 16	17.4	4.4	23.1	19.2	18.2	9.1
# 17	47.8	39.1	15.4	57.7	18.2	0.0
# 18	21.7	39.1	19.2	30.8	9.1	18.2
# 19	21.7	8.7	15.4	15.4	9.1	9.1
# 20	39.1	17.4	23.1	34.6	9.1	9.1
# 21	0.0	8.7	15.4	26.9	9.1	9.1
# 22	17.4	43.5	23.1	38.5	9.1	18.2
# 23	43.5	17.4	42.3	38.5	27.3	9.1
# 24	0.0	8.7	42.3	38.5	0.0	9.1
# 25	26.1	21.7	38.5	42.3	9.1	18.2
# 26	39.1	13.0	26.9	38.5	18.2	9.1
# 27	26.1	34.8	34.6	38.5	9.1	0.0
# 28	21.7	17.4	38.5	23.1	18.2	9.1
# 29	17.4	17.4	23.1	46.2	9.1	0.0
# 30	17.4	8.7	23.1	30.8	0.0	0.0
# 31	21.7	43.5	23.1	46.2	18.2	9.1
# 32	17.4	17.4	11.5	57.7	0.0	18.2

# 33	8.7	30.4	15.4	50.0	0.0	9.1
# 34	39.1	26.1	42.3	42.3	9.1	18.2
# 35	60.9	30.4	50.0	46.2	18.2	9.1
# 36	30.4	8.7	23.1	23.1	9.1	9.1
# 37	8.7	43.5	34.6	30.8	0.0	9.1
# 38	21.7	34.8	53.9	57.7	9.1	9.1
# 39	39.1	47.8	34.6	30.7	27.3	18.2
# 40	26.1	30.4	46.2	30.8	0.0	0.0
# 41	30.4	65.2	34.6	38.5	9.1	18.2
# 42	56.5	60.9	42.3	50.0	18.2	18.2
# 43	8.7	47.8	53.9	38.5	9.1	18.2
# 44	39.1	52.2	46.2	34.6	9.1	18.2
# 45	47.8	39.1	61.5	50.0	9.1	27.3
# 46	47.8	26.1	42.3	42.3	18.2	27.3
# 47	34.8	26.1	15.4	15.4	9.1	9.1
# 48	34.8	39.1	30.8	50.0	9.1	27.3
Total	295	300	391	423	52	63
Average	6.2	6.3	8.2	8.8	1.1	1.3
Average %	26.7	27.2	31.3	33.9	9.8	11.9
T-test	-0.15547		-0.98039		-1.34804	

*** Indicates the marks for female #1 for various skill areas.**

The candidates overall performed better on average in the skill analysis (31.3% females and 33.9% males respectively). In the skill area judgement and decision-making the females got 9.8% and the males 11.9% respectively on average.

The calculated t value of 0.16 (knowledge with understanding), 0.98 (analysis) and 1.35 (judgement and decision-making) at the α=0.05 with 94 degrees of freedom is smaller than that obtained from the tables. Therefore there is no significant difference in the scores of the males and the females in Paper 3 in all the skill areas covered.

Paper 5 is taken by all the candidates and is an alternative to coursework. An equal number of female and male learners sat for Paper 5 (i.e. 48 each).

Table 9 reflects the skill areas tested during the August 2000 Geography mock examination.

Table 9: Skill areas of the Grade 12 Geography Paper 5 August 2000 Mock Examination.

		Skill areas (Marks obtained by learners in skill areas)			
Question	Total Marks	Knowledge with Understanding	Analysis	Judgement and Decision Making	Investigation
1 (a) (i)	3*				3*
1 (a) (ii)	2				2
1 (a) (iii)	4				4
1 (a) (iv)	2				2
1 (a) (v)	3				3
1 (b)	4		4		
1 (c) (i)	1		1		
1 (c) (ii)	3				3
1 (c) (iii)	4				4
1 (d)	5				5
1 (e)	5				5
2 (a) (i)	2	2			
2 (a) (ii)	1	1			
2 (a) (iii)	5	5			
2 (a) (iv)	3	3			
2 (b) (i)	5	5			
2 (b) (ii)	3		3		
2 (b) (iii)	3		3		
2 (b) (iv)	2				2
Total	60	16(26%)	11(18%)	0(0%)	33(55%)
Assessment objec.⌘		20%	20%	20%	40%

***Question 1 (a) (i) weighed 3 marks and covered the investigation skill area.**
⌘ Assessment Objectives as adopted from Geography syllabus code: 0460:2000

As can be seen from Table 9, knowledge with understanding covered 26% (16 out of 60), analysis 18% (11 out of 60) and judgement and decision-making 0% (0 out of 60) and investigation 55% (33 out of 60). This is not what the assessment objectives prescribe (i.e. knowledge with understanding 20%, analysis 20%, judgement and decision making 20% and investigation

40%). In order to record the learner's achievement accurately, the performance has to be standardised against agreed upon criteria.

Table 10 shows the marks of the learners during the August 2000 Geography mock examination.

Table 10: Marks distribution of learners in Paper 5 (N=96; Females=48, Males=48).

Paper 5						
Skill areas (Marks obtained by learners in skill areas)						
Cases	Knowledge with Understanding (Total marks: 16)		Analysis (Total marks: 11)		Investigation (Total marks: 33)	
	F (%)*	M (%)	F (%)*	M (%)	F (%)*	M (%)
# 1	62.5	37.5	9.1	36.4	63.6	63.6
# 2	50.0	31.3	18.2	36.4	75.8	63.6
# 3	50.0	18.8	36.4	9.1	39.4	78.8
# 4	50.0	56.3	36.4	36.4	54.6	81.8
# 5	50.0	43.8	36.4	9.1	54.6	78.8
# 6	50.0	56.3	36.4	18.2	45.5	75.8
# 7	56.3	50.0	36.4	36.4	45.5	60.6
# 8	12.5	43.8	9.1	9.1	54.6	78.8
# 9	37.5	50.0	18.2	36.4	36.4	48.5
# 10	43.8	37.5	27.3	36.4	39.4	48.5
# 11	43.8	37.5	36.4	9.1	24.2	60.6
# 12	50.0	43.8	27.3	36.4	63.6	36.4
# 13	31.3	43.8	18.2	36.4	42.4	63.6
# 14	56.3	56.3	36.4	9.1	57.6	54.6
# 15	43.8	6.3	9.1	9.1	36.4	15.2
# 16	31.3	31.3	36.4	36.4	48.5	66.7
# 17	12.5	37.5	36.4	9.1	18.2	42.4
# 18	31.3	56.3	9.1	36.4	18.2	69.7
# 19	50.0	12.5	9.1	9.1	54.6	18.2
# 20	43.8	56.3	18.2	18.2	15.2	36.4
# 21	37.5	37.5	18.2	36.4	72.7	60.6
# 22	50.0	50.0	9.1	9.1	72.7	30.3
# 23	56.3	12.5	36.4	9.1	30.3	36.4
# 24	31.3	43.8	9.1	36.4	66.7	18.2
# 25	56.3	62.5	36.4	36.4	51.5	72.7
# 26	56.3	62.5	9.1	18.2	81.8	57.6
# 27	56.3	50.0	9.1	36.4	27.3	72.7
# 28	12.5	50.0	36.4	36.4	21.2	78.8

# 29	50.0	68.8	18.2	27.3	42.4	36.4
# 30	25.0	50.0	36.4	27.3	66.7	63.6
# 31	37.5	56.3	9.1	9.1	66.7	36.4
# 32	18.8	37.5	18.2	45.5	21.2	54.6
# 33	6.3	56.3	9.1	9.1	30.3	30.3
# 34	18.8	50.0	9.1	9.1	15.2	48.5
# 35	37.5	43.8	9.1	36.4	63.6	48.5
# 36	18.8	50.0	9.1	54.6	42.4	69.7
# 37	56.3	37.5	27.3	36.4	36.4	69.7
# 38	12.5	62.5	9.1	18.2	45.5	57.6
# 39	50.0	31.3	18.2	18.2	63.6	24.2
# 40	43.8	31.3	9.1	0.0	57.6	27.3
# 41	31.3	43.8	45.5	63.6	75.8	75.8
# 42	37.5	31.3	36.4	18.2	66.7	15.2
# 43	43.8	56.3	18.2	9.1	54.6	63.6
# 44	50.0	0.0	54.6	9.1	87.9	36.4
# 45	56.3	50.0	9.1	9.1	63.6	54.6
# 46	43.8	50.0	36.4	9.1	57.6	54.6
# 47	37.5	31.3	9.1	9.1	69.7	57.6
# 48	62.5	37.5	45.5	9.1	81.8	51.5
Total	312	328	121	123	799	840
Average	6.5	6.8	2.5	2.6	16.7	17.5
Average %	40.6	42.7	22.9	23.3	50.5	53.0
T-test	-0.68027		-0.13021		-0.66214	

*** Indicates the marks for females for various skill areas.**

The learners performed relatively well in the skill of investigation (50.5% females and 53.0% males respectively) and their knowledge with understanding was above average (40.6% females and 42.7% males respectively).

The calculated t value of 0.68 (knowledge with understanding), 0.13 (analysis) and 0.66 (investigation) at the α=0.05 with 94 degrees of freedom is smaller than that obtained from the tables. Therefore there is no significant difference in the scores of the males and the females in Paper 5 in all the skill areas covered.

From the analysis of the different mock examination papers at Rehoboth High School it appears that learners performed on average better in the skill area analysis in Papers 1 (31.9% females and 34.9% males) and in Paper 3, analysis on average shows 31.3% for females and 33.9% for males respectively. There is however no significant difference in the performance of males and females in this skill area. In Paper 2 the learners performed on average better in the skill knowledge with understanding (45.5% for females and 44.0% for males respectively). Although the learners did not perform very well in judgement and decision making the females performed significantly better on average than the males. In Paper 3 and 5 it seems that there is no significant difference in the performance of the males and the females in the mock examination paper. However, in Paper 5 the learners performed on average better in the skill investigation (50.5% females and 53.0% males respectively). It must however be mentioned that the skill judgement and decision making was not covered at all in the August 2000 mock examination at the school. It seems that in the skill judgement and decision making learners performed on average lower in Papers 2 and 3 but that there is no significant difference in the performance of males and females.

4.3 Social-cultural factors

This section attempts to answer question 2 on page 11. It is concerned with community and family factors that might have an influence on the

performance of the learners. The questionnaire, tried to determine the home language(s) of the learners and the question was intended to get an idea of the different language backgrounds of the learners. Table 11 gives the responses of the learners that completed the questionnaire.

Table 11: Home languages of the Grade 12 learners (N=66; Females=37, Males=29).

Home Language	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Afrikaans	18(27.3)	9(13.6)	27(40.9)
Nama/Damara	8(12.1)	11(16.7)	19(28.8)
Herero	2(3.0)	0(0.0)	2(3.0)
Oshiwambo	2(3.0)	1(1.5)	3(4.6)
Afrikaans and English	1(1.5)	1(1.5)	2(3.0)
Afrikaans and Oshiwambo	1(1.5)	0(0.0)	1(1.5)
English	0(0.0)	2(3.0)	2(3.0)
Afrikaans and Tswana	0(0.0)	1(1.5)	1(1.5)
Afrikaans and Nama/Damara	0(0.0)	1(1.5)	1(1.5)
Learners not answering question	5(7.6)	3(4.6)	8(12.2)

Percentages are given in brackets.

Mother tongues, except Afrikaans, are generally underdeveloped, particularly with regards to literature. Afrikaans is widely used and there was greater temptation among many Namibians to use it, instead of mother tongue or English.

The fact that a child acquires his or her mother tongue in a cultural environment plays a particular important part in the moulding of concepts. The child will find it hard to grasp any new concepts which are alien to his or her cultural environment. Geography concepts and English are very different from the cultural environments of most Namibian learners. Learning difficulties are therefore greatly increased because, the children do not only come in contact with Geography concepts for the first time, but also find it difficult to express themselves in English.

The environment in which the learner stays in during the school week will either afford him/her opportunities to study or will be inhibiting. To that end, a question was asked as to where learners stay during the school week. Table 12 summarises the answers of the respondents.

Table 12: Places where learners stay during the school week (N=66; Females 37, Males=29).

Where learners stay during the school week	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
With Parents or Guardians	11(16.7)	19(28.8)	30(45.5)
With relatives or other family	5(7.6)	6(9.1)	11(16.7)
In a hostel	9(13.6)	10(15.2)	19(28.8)
On their own with other children	4(6.1)	2(3.0)	6(9.1)

Percentages are given in brackets.

As can be seen from the Table 12, 9.1% of the learners have to take care of others and themselves. It can therefore be deduced that they will have very

little time to pay attention to their schoolwork, as a result of the added responsibilities.

The researcher is of the opinion that the education levels of the parents of the learners might influence learners' academic performance positively or negatively. The parents with higher education levels are more likely to be supportive of the school and its activities. A question was asked as to the education levels of the respondents' parents and Tables 13 (a) and (b) summarise the results.

Table 13 (a): Education of Mother (N=66; Females=37, Males=29).

Education level	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
Did not go to school	4(6.1)	2(3.1)	6(9.2)
Some Primary School Grades	4(6.1)	11(16.7)	15(22.8)
All of Primary School	1(1.5)	3(4.6)	4(6.1)
Some Secondary School Grades	14(21.2)	14(21.2)	28(42.4)
All of Secondary School	1(1.5)	2(3.0)	3(4.5)
Tertiary Education	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Do not know	5(7.6)	5(7.6)	10(15.2)

Percentages are given in brackets.

It seems that the majority of the mothers of the learners attended some secondary school grades (46.9%). Only 4.5% of the mothers finished secondary school. It is worrisome that 15.2% of the respondents do not know the education attainment of their mothers. Due to the low education

qualification of the mothers the researcher thinks that the mothers might not be in a position to effectively aide their children with skills needed in Geography studies.

Table 13 (b): Education of Father (N=66; Females=37, Males=29).

Education level	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
Did not go to school	1(1.5)	3(4.6)	4(6.1)
Some Primary School Grades	4(6.1)	6(9.1)	10(15.2)
All of Primary School	3(4.6)	2(3.0)	5(7.6)
Some Secondary School Grades	13(19.7)	8(12.1)	21(31.8)
All of Secondary School	3(4.6)	6(9.1)	9(13.7)
Tertiary Education	0(0.0)	5(7.6)	5(7.6)
Do not know	3(4.6)	6(9.1)	9(13.7)
Learners not answering question	2(3.0)	1(1.5)	3(4.5)

Percentages are given in brackets.

The education levels of the fathers are not remarkably different from that of the mothers. It seems that 45.5% of the respondents' fathers have attended some secondary school grades. Some of the respondents' fathers have attended tertiary education institutions (7.6%). What is also disturbing to the researcher in the responses to this question is that 13.7% of the respondents do not know the education levels of their fathers. This could be an indication that effective communication is not taking place in the home environment. The researcher is of the opinion that the fathers also are not in a position to render academic support in the acquisition of Geography skills to their children just as the mothers.

There are a number of factors that can make it difficult for learners to concentrate completely on their studies. Accordingly, the learners were asked to rank factors that they considered contributed to the learners finding it most difficult to be successful in Geography. Table 14 gives the ranking of factors by the learners.

Table 14: Factors learners considered to contribute to making it difficult to be successful in Geography.

	1st		2nd		3rd		4th		5th		6th	
	F %	**M %**	**F %**	**M %**	**F %**	**M %**	**F %**	**M %**	**F %**	**M %**	**F %**	**M %**
Illiteracy/Poor Education of Parents **N = 24**	4.2	12.5	12.5	4.2	4.2	8.3	12.5	12.5	4.2	12.5	8.3	4.2
Total % (F+M)	**16.7**		**16.7**		**12.5**		**25.0**		**16.7**		**12.5**	
Lack of Geography text-books **N = 27**	29.6	33.3	3.7	7.4	3.7	0.0	7.4	7.4	3.7	0.0	0.0	3.7
Total % (F+M)	**62.9**		**11.1**		**3.7**		**14.8**		**3.7**		**3.7**	
Lack of Hostel Accommo-dation **N = 22**	0.0	0.0	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	9.1	0.0	13.6	22.7	9.1	27.3
Total % F+M)	**0.0**		**9.2**		**9.2**		**9.1**		**36.3**		**36.4**	
Lack of Parental Involve-ment **N = 24**	0.0	8.3	16.7	12.5	8.3	25.0	4.2	0.0	12.5	4.2	0.0	8.3
Total % (F+M)	**8.3**		**29.2**		**33.3**		**4.2**		**16.7**		**8.3**	
Financial Problems **N = 22**	0.0	0.0	4.6	13.6	13.6	13.6	0.0	13.6	9.1	13.6	13.6	4.6
Total (F+M)	**0.0**		**18.2**		**27.2**		**13.6**		**22.7**		**18.2**	
Poor relationship between Parents and teachers **N = 24**	16.7	4.2	12.5	16.7	4.2	4.2	4.2	20.8	0.0	4.2	4.2	8.3
Total % (F+M)	**20.9**		**29.2**		**8.4**		**25.0**		**4.2**		**12.5**	

Note: N is indicated for each item. Not all the respondents answered all the items.

From the responses given in Table 14, it seems that the poor relationship between the parents and the teachers, rates second (29.2%) as the most important factor adversely affecting their learning success. Financial problems seems the least problematic to the learners (0% rated it as first). Only 14 females and 13 males responded to some of the items on the questionnaire. It could be that learners did not understand what they were supposed to do as some only made a tick to one of the items.

The education levels of the parents are relatively low with only 4.5% of mothers and 13.7% of the fathers of the respondents finishing secondary schooling. It will be difficult for the parents to assist their children with Geography, especially given the historical language background of Namibia. Only 3.0% (see Table 11) of the respondents indicated that their home language is English. Prior to Independence the medium of instruction was either Afrikaans or English. The support base for the learners is probably not very good at home and it is likely that performance could be influenced negatively.

4.4 Resources

This section attempts to answer question 3 on page 11 by assessing the adequacy of material resources for teaching Geography at Rehoboth High School. From the responses in Table 14, it seems the lack of Geography textbooks is the main problem for the learners to be successful in

Geography. From the respondents, 62.9% indicated that the lack of Geography textbooks is the overriding factor which makes learning Geography difficult. A list was designed as a measure of the provision of resources in the classroom. Table 15 summarises the responses.

Table 15: State of Materials in the Geography class.

Type of Material	**Excellent**		**Good**		**Fair**		**Poor**	
	M (%)	**F (%)**	**M (%)**	**F (%)**	**M (%)**	**F (%)**	**M (%)**	**F (%)**
Textbooks **N = 66**	7.6	12.1	24.2	28.8	6.1	10.6	6.1	4.6
Total %(M+F)	**19.7**		**53.0**		**16.7**		**10.7**	
References **N = 64**	0.0	6.3	12.5	20.3	17.2	9.4	14.1	20.3
Total (M+F)	**6.3**		**32.8**		**26.6**		**34.4**	
Audio/Visual Aids **N = 64**	1.6	7.8	9.4	7.8	10.9	10.9	23.4	28.1
Total % (M+F)	**9.4**		**17.2**		**21.8**		**51.5**	
Maps **N = 66**	7.6	4.6	19.7	22.8	15.2	19.7	1.5	9.1
Total % (M+F)	**12.2**		**42.5**		**34.9**		**10.6**	
Readers **N = 63**	1.6	6.4	14.3	22.2	19.1	14.3	9.5	12.7
Total % (M+F)	**8.0**		**36.5**		**33.4**		**22.2**	
Map of Namibia **N = 62**	4.8	9.7	21.0	25.8	12.9	8.1	6.5	11.3
Total % (M+F)	**14.5**		**46.8**		**21.0**		**17.8**	
Map of Africa **N = 64**	6.3	9.4	21.9	29.7	12.5	11.0	4.7	4.7
Total % (M+F)	**15.7**		**51.6**		**23.5**		**9.4**	
Map of the World **N = 64**	9.4	11.0	18.8	23.4	12.5	17.2	3.1	4.7
Total % (M+F)	**20.4**		**42.2**		**29.7**		**7.8**	
Atlas **N = 60**	1.7	8.3	10.0	20.0	21.7	8.3	13.3	16.7
Total % (M+F)	**10.0**		**30.0**		**30.0**		**30.0**	
Classroom Library **N = 64**	1.6	3.1	3.1	3.1%	14.1	6.3	25.0	43.8
Total % (M+F)	**4.7**		**6.2**		**20.4**		**68.8**	
Wall Charts **N = 65**	3.1	3.1	7.7	10.8	13.9	18.5	20.0	23.1
Total % (M+F)	**6.2**		**18.5**		**32.4**		**43.1**	
English Dictionary **N = 63**	11.1	7.9	7.9	17.5	11.1	12.7	14.3	17.5
Total % (M+F)	**19.0**		**25.4**		**23.8**		**31.8**	
Globes	6.7	5.0	10.0	11.7	5.0	11.7	23.3	26.7

N = 60								
Total % (M+F)	**11.7**		**21.7**		**16.7**		**50.0**	
Compasses **N = 63**	1.6	1.6	3.2	11.1	7.9	12.7	30.2	31.8
Total % (M+F)	3.2		14.3		20.6		62.0	

Note: N is indicated for each item. Not all the respondents answered all the items.

Looking at the resources in the Geography classroom it seems that the learners that responded to the questionnaire think that textbooks (53.0%), maps (42.5%), readers (36.5%), map of Namibia (46.8%), map of Africa (51.6%) and map of the world (42.2%) are “good”. They think that the references (34.4%), audio/visual aids (51.5%), classroom library (68.8%), wall charts (43.1%), English dictionary (31.8%), globes (50.0%) and compasses (62.0%) are in the “poor” category. Atlases are viewed by the same number of individual’s views as “good” (30.0%) “fair” (30.0%), and “poor” (30.0%).

On the question of how the learners perceive their school library in terms of resources in Geography no male learner saw it as excellent. Table 16 summarises the responses to the question.

Table 16: How learners view their school library (N=66; Females=37, Males=29.

State of School library	**Female (%)**	**Male (%)**	**Total (%)**
Excellent	6.1	0.0	6.1
Good	9.1	6.1	15.2
Fair	15.2	15.2	30.4
Poor	22.7	21.2	43.9

Learners not answering question	3.1	1.5	4.6

The respondents are of the opinion that the library is in the “fair” to “poor” state. A total of 43.9% of the respondents think that the library is “poor”, while 30.4% think of the library as being “fair”. What is interesting is that 6.1% of the respondents think that the library is “excellent”. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that during an interview with the teacher that is responsible for the library, she indicated that the library was not functional. Due to staff shortages the teacher was having a full teaching load and only saw the Grade 12 learners for one period per week. From observations the researcher is of the view that the library is not in a position to cater for Geography needs. The teacher also mentioned that the learners were permitted to take out books but due to thefts of books, the issuing had been stopped during the library period on the timetable. She mentioned that she had suggested that the school appoint an out of school youth to run the school library who would be paid from the school fees. But, approval has yet to be obtained from the Regional Office and the Permanent Secretary before this could be started. In the interview, the learners indicated that the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture should provide more textbooks and equipment.

The respondents are of the opinion that the resource base of the school is relatively good. However, the resources in the Geography class seem problematic. The respondents rate the classroom library and the audio/visual

aids overwhelmingly as poor. The respondents also rate the school library as poor (51.5%). It seems that lack of resources in the Geography classroom might influence the performance in Geography learners negatively.

4.5 Teaching Methods

This section attempts to answer question 4 on page 11, namely to identify the teaching methods used by the Geography teacher. Several responses were obtained from the question which sought information from the learners regarding the teaching methods used in teaching of Geography at the school. Table 17 summarises their answers to the question of Geography teaching at Rehoboth High School.

Table 17: Verbatim responses of learners on teaching methods.

Kindly add any comments that you would like to make with regard to teaching Geography at the school.
Respondent 1: "I would like to see that learners are being taken to places like rivers to do the exercises practically. It is also one of the factors contributing to poor results of learners".
Respondent 2: "Learners should do a lot of practical work as well as writing tests after each chapter."
Respondent 3: "Teachers should pay more attention to children that have problems in the subject".
Respondent 4: "The teacher laughs when you ask a question, so one gets afraid of asking a question, but Geography is the most interesting subject".

Respondent 5: “I think another problem contributing to the lack of high results is the lack of geographical material. The fact that the learners do not go out on field trips, in part because of a lack of finances and if this could be overcome, the results could improve as well”.

Respondent 6: “Improve the textbooks, Please!”.

Respondent 7: “More outdoors projects for us and more textbooks. The book we have does not contain all the things of Geography”.

Respondent 8: “Making it more interesting and by making use of different experiments. Giving students more attention”.

Respondent 9: “I think that the teacher should let us do things in groups and the lack of Geography textbooks play a part in the path of unsuccessful learning”.

Respondent 10: “I would really like our Geography teacher to let us work in groups and respond to him or let us have debates at the school”.

Respondent 11: “My geography teacher is good and there is no problem with the teaching of Geography at the school”.

Respondent 12: “Teaching at the school is excellent because Geography is the science of the earth”.

Respondent 13: “Teaching is made very clear and I hope that every learner understands it”.

Apparently, according to the learners during the interview, they indicated that the Grade 11 learners have textbooks, whilst a number of the Grade 12 learners have to go without textbooks. They feel that the Grade 12s should be given preference.

Follow up questions addressed the issue of the actual teaching methods mostly used in the Geography classroom. Table 18 (a) reflects the learners’ responses.

Table 18 (a): Frequency of the use of identified teaching methods.

Teaching method	Regularly		Often		Seldom		Never	
	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)
Groupwork **N = 65**	4.6	0.0	4.6	9.2	16.9	24.6	18.5	21.5
Total % (M+F)	**4.6**		**13.8**		**41.5**		**40.0**	
Discussion **N = 66**	19.7	24.2	19.7	19.7	4.6	4.6	0.0	7.6
Total % (M+F)	**43.9**		**39.4**		**9.2**		**7.6**	
Peer-group learning **N = 60**	6.7	1.7	13.3	11.7	8.3	18.3	16.7	23.3
Total % (M+F)	**8.4**		**25.0**		**26.6**		**40.0**	
Practical Activity **N = 62**	8.1	12.9	22.6	11.3	4.8	17.7	9.7	12.9
Total % (M+F)	**21.0**		**33.9**		**22.5**		**22.6**	
Learners able to initiate discussion or activity **N = 63**	7.9	17.5	19.1	22.2	14.3	7.9	4.8	6.4
Total % (M+F)	**25.4**		**41.3**		**22.2**		**11.2**	
Teacher gives positive comments to learners **N = 66**	19.7	31.8	13.6	13.6	3.0	6.1	7.6	4.6
Total % (M+F)	**51.5**		**27.2**		**9.1**		**12.2**	

Note: N is indicated for each item. Not all the respondents answered all the items.

From the responses in Table 18 (a) it seems that group discussion (43.9%) is regularly used while positive comments on learners work are made on a regular basis (51.5%). The respondents also indicated that the teacher seldom or never makes use of group work and peer group learning. The respondents (41.3%) indicated that the teacher allows time for discussion and activity initiated by the learners. 40% of the respondents indicated that the teacher never uses peer-group learning in the teaching of Geography.

The teacher is seen as someone who is the arbiter of knowledge and whose task it is to pass it on to the learners. The teacher is therefore in a unique

position to control the learning opportunities. If the teacher introduces the topic before teaching it, the learners can fit it into a broader framework of the curriculum. The teacher therefore provides the context of individual lessons within a theme. In addition, if the teacher asks questions to assess comprehension, the teacher is in a position to vary the teaching approach and the learners become involved in the teaching/learning process. The learners are therefore in a position to identify their problems with certain concepts early on and the teacher could explain to them a second time or use another approach to explain to them. In addition, if the teacher produces his or her own teaching materials the teacher is better prepared to teach the topic. Questions were asked to the learners to indicate the frequency that the teacher makes use of selected methods and Table 18 (b) summarises the responses.

Table 18 (b): Frequency of the use of selected teaching approaches.

Selected teaching approach	**Regularly**		**Often**		**Seldom**		**Never**	
	M	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**
Introducing the topic before teaching it **N = 65**	35.4	36.9	9.2	7.7	0.0	3.1	0.0	7.7
Total % (M+F)	**72.3**		**16.9**		**3.1**		**7.7**	
Asking questions to assess topic compre-hension **N = 65**	20.0	38.5	20.0	10.8	3.1	4.6	1.5	1.5
Total % (M+F)	**58.5**		**30.8**		**7.7**		**3.0**	
Using his/her own materials **N = 65**	10.8	10.8	15.4	15.4	10.8	16.9	7.7	12.3
Total % (M+F)	**21.6**		**30.8**		**27.7**		**20.0**	

Note: N is indicated for each item. Not all the respondents answered all the items.

From the responses it seems that the teacher often introduces the topic before teaching it on a regular basis (72.3%). A total of 30.8% of the respondents indicated that the teacher makes use often of his own materials to present the lessons to them, and asks questions to ascertain learner understanding of the topic given by 58.5% of the respondents.

The methodological approach to be implemented at all school levels is one where learners should be actively involved in the teaching and learning process. It is referred to as the learner-centred approach. A question was asked to the learners in order to ascertain to what extent this approach was being applied in the Geography class. Table 19 summarises the responses.

Table 19: The extent to which learner-centred education was applied in the Geography class (N=66; Females=37, Males=29).

Extent of use of learner-centred method	Males %	Females %	Total %
Very successfully	7.6	6.1	13.7
Moderately successful	22.7	33.3	56.0
Unsuccessful	7.6	7.6	15.2
Not attempted	6.1	1.5	7.6
Learners not answering question	0.0	7.6	7.6

From the responses given in Table 19, it seemed that the teacher uses the learner-centred approach moderately successfully (56.0%). The learners also

had the opportunity to rate the Geography teacher on certain traits. Table 20 reflects their ratings.

Table 20: Rating of the teacher on certain traits (N=66; Females=37, Males=29).

Teacher trait	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor	
	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %
Knowledge of content	22.7	30.3	18.2	22.7	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Total % (M+F)	**53.0**		**40.9**		**3.0**		**3.0**	
Friendliness	13.6	18.2	18.2	25.8	10.6	6.1	1.5	6.1
Total % (M+F)	**31.8**		**43.9**		**16.7**		**7.6**	
Helpfulness	15.2	34.9	22.7	18.2	3.0	1.5	3.0	1.5
Total % (M+F)	**50.1**		**40.9**		**4.5**		**4.5**	
Ability to inspire learners	10.6	22.7	22.7	16.7	4.6	12.1	6.1	4.6
Total % (M+F)	**33.3**		**39.4**		**16.7**		**10.7**	
English proficiency	16.7	21.2	16.7	30.3	9.1	3.0	1.5	1.5
Total % (M+F)	**37.9**		**47.0**		**12.1**		**3.0**	

From the responses 53.0% of the respondents think that the teacher's knowledge and content of the Geography subject is "excellent". Friendliness and helpfulness are rated by 43.9% and 40.9% respectively in the "good" category. Likewise is the ability to inspire and the English proficiency rated in the "good" category by 39.4% and 47.0% respectively by the respondents.

The teachers interviewed were also asked to indicate the role of the advisory teacher and factors they considered most important and most difficult for a Geography teacher. The responses of the teachers are given in Table 21.

Table 21: Responses of Geography teachers on the role of the advisory teacher and factors they considered most important and most difficult for a Geography teacher.

What do you consider is the role of the advisory teacher?

The advisory teacher should:

* explain curriculum content
* clarify educational objectives
* recommend new teaching materials
* make suggestions to improve teaching materials
* encourage professional contact between different Geography teachers
* provide information for self-development

Indicate factors that you consider make it most important to being a Geography teacher.

* seeing learners learn
* more adequate teaching materials
* assistance from the advisory teacher
* regular Geography subject meetings
* smaller class sizes
* quality classroom supplies
* quality school buildings
* quality school management and administration
* amicable working relationships with other teachers
* study opportunities for teachers
* good relationships with the local community
* availability of teacher housing and accommodation
* higher salary
* expanded opportunities for promotion

Indicate factors that you consider most difficult to be an effective Geography teacher.

* lack of Geography textbooks
* lack of parental involvement
* illiteracy and poor education of the parents

* poor relationship between parents and teachers
* too high teaching load with limited or no time for preparation
* lack of hostel accommodation
* financial problems

In summary; the teaching methods are varied to accommodate the different learning styles and that the learner centred teaching is moderately successfully implemented in the Geography classroom. The teacher is also rated very highly in competencies in content, language proficiency, helpfulness and inspiration ability. It seems that teaching in the classroom is contributing positively to learner performance and that the teaching approaches used in the Geography classroom is not contributing adversely on the performance of learners.

4.6 Attitude towards Geography as a subject

This section provides the answer to question 5 on page 11. It examines the attitudes of Grade 12 learners towards Geography. On the question of whether learners like Geography as a subject 88.33% of the respondents indicated that they liked Geography as a subject and 16.67% indicated that they disliked it.

Regarding the attitudes of the learners towards the subject, Table 22 gives the learners' responses:

Table 22: Attitude of the learners towards Geography (N=66; Females=37, Males=29).

Attitude towards Geography	Female %	Male %	Total %
Excellent	6.1	9.1	15.2
Good	21.2	30.3	51.5
Fair	21.2	1.5	22.7
Poor	4.6	3.0	7.6
Learners not answering question	3.0	0.0	3.0

Fifty two per cent of the respondents think that they have a “good” attitude towards Geography as a subject. A total of 22.7% of the respondents indicated that they have a “fair” attitude and 7.6% thought their attitude towards the subject is “poor”. Table 23 gives the verbatim responses of three of the learners that were interviewed.

Table 23: Verbatim responses of learners on attitude towards subject.

What is your view towards Geography as a subject?
Respondent 1: “Geography is such an interesting subject which teaches us about life, therefore I would like teachers to inspire the learners to take more part in Geography”.
Respondent 2: “I find it difficult to start with my work, as I do not possess the ability to motivate myself.
Respondent 3: “I think the problem is always from myself because I do not offer my best”.

The learners were not very responsive towards this question. It seems that the majority of the respondents have a positive attitude towards the subject.

As mentioned earlier in the text a positive attitude towards Geography as a subject makes a difference between success and failure.

4.7 School environment

This section gives the answers to question 6 on page 11, with respect to the extent the school environment influences the learners' performance in Geography. Learners were asked to give their opinions whether the school creates opportunities for them to live and learn peacefully. The responses are given in Table 24.

Table 24: Opportunities for peaceful study (N=66; Females=37, Males=29).

Response	Male %	Female %	Total %
Yes	15.2	33.3	48.5
No	18.2	15.2	33.4
Learners not answering question	10.6	7.6	18.2

A total of 48.5% of the respondents indicated "yes" and 33.4% indicated "no". The verbatim responses of the learners on this question are given in Table 25.

Table 25: Verbatim responses on whether the school provides a chance for peaceful study.

In your opinion, does the school create opportunities for learners to live and learn peacefully?
Respondent 1: "In some cases there are opportunities to learn but teachers sometimes break our confidence and disappoint us".

Respondent 2: “There is always some kind of disturbance to prevent the learners from studying peacefully”.

Respondent 3: “Some teachers tend to listen more to some learners than others”.

Respondent 4: “Some teachers are too involved in my life as a student, and going to my parents for the smallest mistakes I sometimes made. I think they should assist me in my school work and there it should stop”.

Respondent 5: “In some classes there is simply no order and learners are not motivated and encouraged to give attention to their work and to study hard. Some differences also usually occur in the learner-to-learner or teacher-learner relationship, but they are usually resolved in one or another way”.

Respondent 6: “Teachers are not doing enough to create the opportunities, as we are not given enough time to study”.

Respondent 7: “The school is providing opportunities for us but that we do not make use of it”

Respondent 8: “We as learners don’t use the opportunities because we have our own interests and sometimes our friends don’t want us to learn”.

Respondent 9: “We are just busy with unnecessary things and we don’t care of all the things the school creates for us”.

Respondent 10: “Strict rules are introduced and the school is given us access to the library and are giving attention to our problems”.

Respondent 11: “The school is providing hostel accommodation for learners to live and learn peacefully”.

Respondent 12: “I feel very welcome here at this school. This is the best school for me in this town”.

Respondent 13: “It is enjoyable for learners to live and learn at the school”.

Respondent 14: “The environment does not have an influence on me as I am at school to study and do not pay much attention to the environment. The colour of the school is not distracting me”.

A follow up question was posed to ascertain how the learners perceive the condition of the school buildings. Table 26 summarises the responses.

Table 26: How learners perceive the condition of the school buildings (N=66; Females=37, Males=29).

Condition of school buildings	Male %	Female %	Total %
Need major repairs	33.3	37.9	71.2
Need minor repairs	10.6	13.6	24.2
Is in good condition	0.0	4.6	4.6

It appears that the majority of the learners (71.2%) think that major repairs need to be done and only 4.6% (all female) think that the school buildings are in a good condition. When the researcher visited the school it seemed as if the school had started to repaint some of the blocks but that the exercise was discontinued. This was probably due to a lack of funds, as the principal indicated that the support and attendance of the parents and community members at meetings and functions, were not very encouraging.

The school environment seems to provide the opportunity for learners to study Geography. Some of the respondents felt that they do not make use of the opportunities provided to them and they could not indicate why they do not make use of the opportunities. It also seems that some respondents blame their fellow learners for not providing them the opportunity to do their work. The learners feel that the school buildings need major repairs but some feel that it does not have an influence on their Geography performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

There are many factors that affect how well a learner performs in Geography and whether that performance will deteriorate or improve. The factors that affect learning are related to the structure of the examination papers, social-cultural factors, resources, teaching methods, attitude towards Geography as a subject and the school environment.

In this study it seems that the learners overall performed better in the skill analysis section of the examination papers. In Paper 2 there was also a significant difference in performance in the skill judgement and decision making between the males and the females. In all the other skill areas there appeared to be no significant difference in the performance of males and females.

Parents and guardians play a major role in supporting and facilitating the teaching and learning of the learners. This calls for a good relation and cooperation between the teachers and the parents and the guardians. The poor relationships between parents and teachers received the second highest rating as one of the factors that learners considered made it most difficult for them to be successful in Geography. The teacher and/or the

principal need to hold meetings with the parents and visit those parents that are not responding positively or actively in helping the learners to get their work done or attend to studies at home. The school communities should also provide opportunities to learners to get to know each other. Davis (2001) indicates that contact outside the classroom provides strong motivation for learners to perform well in the class and to participate in the broad social and intellectual life of the school. Teachers and community members can get a sense of how the learners feel about the social and cultural environment of the school. This will also serve a valuable purpose in that it will inform the teachers and the community members about the history and culture of the learners.

From the responses of the learners regarding Geography specific resources in the classroom, the learners are in general agreement that the resources (maps, readers, map of Namibia, map of Africa and map of the world) are “good”. Improving the use of instructional materials in the Geography classroom is imperative for learning to take place. It is crucial in helping the learners learn what the syllabus requires. The learners rated the lack of Geography textbooks as the major factor making it most difficult for them to be successful in Geography. According to Lockheed and associates (1991) choosing effective inputs is the first step toward improving learning, but managing them well at the school level is also necessary. The impact of enhanced inputs ultimately depends on how well the school uses the available resources. It requires that the school constantly and continuously

monitors the progress of the learners in order to determine whether what is required is actually attained. It also requires that those outside the school should be aware of the situation of learners.

Instructional materials and practical exposure to the content are critical ingredients in learning and the syllabus cannot be easily implemented without them. Instructional materials and fieldwork provide opportunities to the learners to better understand what they are learning. Practical exposure has the unique opportunity to help the learners acquire and strengthen attitudes on which a solid Geography knowledge can be built. The fieldwork activities also promote learner independence. Griffith (1999) suggests that with choices and power, the soul begins to emerge as it associates with the environment. The learners therefore begin to learn from experience what is real, what is valuable and what really matters. Effective teaching strategies are also vital and it should be paced to the learners' level and it should take individual differences into consideration. It also calls for time when the learners can practice and apply what they have learned, particularly in relation to their own experiences. These can only be achieved if adequate provision is made for fieldwork and practical activity.

In order to improve the attitudes of the learners towards the study of Geography, the parents and the teachers can encourage the learners to do well. The teachers and the parents should also model high expectations and

that will promote learning. When learners are well guided they can become hardworking and successful in their learning.

The researcher believes that all learners are able to learn under favourable conditions. Favourable conditions that can have a positive influence on the learning at school are when:

- learners have textbooks to use;
- learners are motivated to learn;
- learners show consideration for one another and for the teachers; and
- learners have a good attitude towards their work.

The learners also need an environment where all of them are treated equally. According to Wadsworth and Mennen (1997) classrooms that are characterised by equity are ones in which all the learners, regardless of their gender, race or background, have an equal opportunity to learn and master the course content.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation One: Educational policy should be put in place to provide indicators of how learners perform in order to develop test items that can be standardised and also enforce the setting of mock examinations that are in compliance with end of year requirements. This means that tests administered at various stages during the years should cover the same

content and criteria and are scored exactly the same for all the learners. This means that teachers have to ensure that the testing conditions and the format of the examinations have to be consistent with the mock examination prescriptions.

Recommendation Two: The school should conduct workshops for parents, teachers and learners. The workshops should contain helpful, productive and idea-orientated information that will fulfil the interests of the parents, the teachers and the learners. The participants will gain the personal satisfaction of knowing they can have direct involvement in learning how to make a difference in the learning process. The workshop content can be different every time and can cover contentious issues that influence the performance of the learners at school.

The school could also try to have continuous parent-teacher activities like an open door policy whereby parents can come to school any time. The school could also give progress notes to parents on a regular basis. Occasional telephone calls to parents and guardians can also go a long way to motivate the learners and the parents to stay engaged in the learning process. A Geography newsletter can also highlight the important events, concepts and jargon of the subject. Geography meetings could also be scheduled on a regular basis to discuss problems. In these meetings the teachers, parents and learners could develop lists of recommendations to help the home and school contribute to the learners' success in Geography. The group can also

develop a handbook that includes information describing the respective roles and how they are sensitive to diverse family structures, academic performance, values and needs of the learners. This can also serve as a forum to answer the following questions:

- What kind of obstacles does the teacher encounter in working with the learners?
- How can the school be oriented more toward parents and families?
- What kind of assistance should be provided for parents unable to attend workshops and parent meetings?
- What can parents and families do at home to help teachers in the learning and teaching process?
- What kinds of school activities promote good parent-teacher relationships?

Recommendation Three: The examiners, moderators and evaluators of the examination and other test materials should be sensitive to the learners whose first language is not English. These individuals can develop topics that encourage learners to explore roles that are prevalent in their own respective communities and backgrounds and give exams that recognise learners' diverse backgrounds and special interests.

Recommendation Four: In order to maximise the chances for learners to be successful, learners can form study teams that meet outside the class. By studying together, the learners can both improve their academic performance

and overcome making the seven problems that Phiri (1998) mentioned, namely:

- Rubric errors.
- Failure to follow basic instructions stipulated in the papers.
- Failure to recognise the demands of the examinations.
- Difficulties in the interpretation of resources provided in a question.
- Language and communication skills.
- Limited knowledge of subject matter.
- Difficulties associated with investigative and/or research skills.

Recommendation Five: Although it will be important for the school to provide resources to the Geography classroom and the school environment it is also imperative that current resources be managed efficiently. The school should also add inputs that may contribute significantly to learning and must acquire those resources that are the least expensive relative to their educational contributions. Lockheed, Verspoor, Bloch, Englebert, Futler, King, Middleton, Paqueo, Rodd, Romain and Welmond (1991) state that national education authorities should actively seek national financial support corresponding to the high priority that the education deserves. This, according to them, involves studying the overall allocation of government resources and developing an effective strategy for strengthening political and bureaucratic support for the education sector.

Recommendation Six: It is also recommended that a follow up study be done in order to compare the results of the learners in the November 2000 external examination and the August 2000 mock examinations. This is to determine the reliability of the mock August 2000 results as an indicator of actual performance in the final examinations.

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ANNEX A: BREAKDOWN OF SKILLS

A: Knowledge and understanding

1. the wide range of processes, including human actions, actions contributing to the development of
   (a) physical, economic, social, political and cultural environment and their associated effects on the landscapes;
   (b) spacial patterns and interactions which are important within such environments;
2. the inter-relationships between people's activities and the total environment and an ability to seek explanations for them;
3. the importance of scale (whether local, regional or global) and the time at which spacial distributions and the working of systems are considered;
4. the changes which occur through time in places, landscapes and spacial distribution.

B: Analysis

5. select, organise, present and interpret geographical data;
6. use and apply geographical knowledge and understanding in verbal, numerical, diagrammatic, pictorial and graphical form;

7. use geographical data to recognise patterns in such data and to deduce relationships

C: Judgement and decision making

8. reason, make judgements (including evaluation and conclusions) which demonstrate, where appropriate
   (a) a sensitivity to, and a concern for, landscape and the environment;
   (b) an aesthetic appreciation of the earth including its people, places, landscapes, natural processes and phenomena;
   (c) an appreciation of the attitudes, values and beliefs of others in cultural, economic, environmental, political and social issues which have a geographical dimension;
   (d) an awareness of the contrasting opportunities and constrains of people living in different places and under different physical and human conditions;
   (e) a willingness to review their own attitudes in the light of new knowledge and experiences;
9. recognise the role of decision making within a geographical context as affected by;
   (a) the physical and human contexts in which decisions are made;
   (b) the values and perceptions of groups or individuals;

(c) the choices available to decision makers and the influences and constraints within which they operate.

D: Investigation (enquiry, practical and presentation skills)

10. select and use suitable basic techniques for observing, collecting, classifying, presenting, analysing and interpreting data;
11. use a variety of sources for obtaining information including
    (a) maps and plans at a variety of scales;
    (b) audiovisual materials such as pictures, photographs, film, television and radio;
    (c) documentary materials such as books, newspapers and magazines;
    (d) statistics
12. depict information in simple map and diagrammatic form;
13. select, use and present geographical information in an appropriate form and an effective manner.

Adopted from Geography syllabus code: 0460

ANNEX B: GRADE 12 GEOGRAPHY LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Geography Learner

I am a Master of Education (M.Ed.) student at the University of Namibia and would like to investigate **factors influencing Grade 12 Geography results at Rehoboth High School.** Your views will only be incorporated in my dissertation, as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Education Degree. Your views will be treated with confidentiality. Would you be so kind to respond to the items below and **please** try to answer every item.

A. Biographical Data

1. Name of School: Rehoboth High School

2. Your sex
   - (a) Male
   - (b) Female

3. What is your age?
   - (a) 16-17
   - (b) 18-19
   - (c) 20-21
   - (d) 21-22
   - (e) >22

4. Home Language(s)
   - (a) English
   - (b) Afrikaans
   - (c) Otjiherero
   - (d) Nama/Damara
   - (e) Oshiwambo
   - (f) Tswana
   - (g) Other ..Specify ……

B. Socio-Cultural Factors

5. Where do you stay during the school week?
   - (a) With Parents or Guardians
   - (b) With Relatives or other family
   - (c) In a hostel
   - (d) On your own with other children

6. Please indicate the education of your mother

(a) Did not go to School	
(b) Some Primary School Grades	
(c) All of Primary School	
(d) Some Secondary School Grades	
(e) All of Secondary School	
(f) Tertiary Education	
(g) Do not Know	

7. Please indicate the education of your father

(a) Did not go to School	
(b) Some Primary School Grades	
(c) All of Primary School	
(d) Some Secondary School Grades	
(e) All of Secondary School	
(f) Tertiary Education	
(g) Do not Know	

8. Kindly rank, in order of importance, factors that you would consider, **most difficult, to be successful in Geography. Rank 1, most important, 2 next in importance, etc.**

(a) Illiteracy and Poor Education of Parents _____
(b) Lack of Geography textbooks _____
(c) Lack of Hostel Accommodation _____
(d) Lack of Parental Involvement _____
(e) Financial Problems _____
(f) Poor Relationship Between Parents and Teachers _____

C. Resources

9. How would you evaluate the adequacy of materials in Geography in the school?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
(a) Textbooks				
(b) References				
(c) Audio/Visual Aids				
(d) Maps				
(e) Readers				
(f) Map of Namibia				

(g) Map of Africa				
(h) Map of the World				
(i) Atlas				
(j) Classroom Library				
(k) Wall charts				
(l) English Dictionary				
(m) Globes				
(n) Compasses				

10. How would you rate your school library in terms of resources in Geography?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

D. Teaching Methods

11. Please indicate the frequency that the teacher is using the methods below:

	Regularly	Often	Seldom	Never
(a) Groupwork				
(b) Discussion				
(c) Peer-group learning				
(d) Practical Activity				
(e) Learners able to initiate discussion or activity				
(f) Teacher gives positive comments to learners				

12. Please indicate the frequency that the teacher is using the methods below:

	Regularly	Often	Seldom	Never
(a) Introducing Background of topic before teaching it				
(b) Asking questions to assess topic comprehension				
(c) Using his/her materials				

13. The methodological approach to be implemented at all school levels is one where learners should be actively involved in the teaching and learning process (learner-centred education). To what extent has this been

successfully implemented at your school?

(a) Very Successful	
(b) Moderately Successful	
(c) Unsuccessful	
(d) Not Attempted	

14. How would you rate your Geography teacher on the following?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
(a) Knowledge of content				
(b) Friendliness				
(c) Helpfulness				
(d) Ability to inspire learners				
(e) English proficiency				

E. School Environment

15. In your opinion, does the school create opportunities for learners to live and learn peacefully?

……
……
……

16. How do you perceive the condition of the school buildings?

(a) Need major repairs	
(b) Need minor repairs	
(c) Is in good condition	

F. Attitude Towards Geography

17. Do you like Geography as a subject?

Yes	
No	

18. How would you rate your attitude towards Geography as a learner?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

19. Kindly add any other comments that you would like to make with regard to teaching/learning Geography at the school.

……

……

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

C. Titus

ANNEX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(FOR LEARNERS AND TEACHERS)

- How often does the teacher meet with learners?
- How often do you have a meeting with parents at the school?
- How often do the teachers meet?
- How often does the management of the school meet?
- How often does the school board meet?
- What extra-mural activities does the school offer?
- What factors are considered most important to be an effective teacher?
- What are some of the major/minor management problems at school?
- How does teacher morale rate at the school?
- What is the role of the advisory teacher?
- How often does the learners write formal tests?
- How are the resources at the school? - Availability? Frequency of use?

ANNEX D: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

- Is there evidence of a good atmosphere in the school, with positive discipline?
- Are the school grounds clean and well cared for?

Availability of Resources

	Yes	No
(a) Textbooks		
(b) References		
(c) Audio/Visual Aids		
(d) Maps		
(e) Readers		
(f) Map of Namibia		
(g) Map of Africa		
(h) Map of the World		
(i) Atlas		
(j) Classroom Library		
(k) Wall Charts		
(l) English Dictionary		

Teaching Strategies

	Never	Often	Seldom	Regularly
(a) Groupwork				
(b) Discussion				
(c) Peer group learning				
(d) Practical Activity				
(e) Learners able to initiate discussion or activity				
(f) Teachers giving positive comments to learners				

	Yes	No
Is the classroom organised to accommodate learner-centred learning?		
Is the classroom attractively decorated, and are the materials properly displayed?		
Do classroom seating arrangements prevent learners from		

disturbing one another when entering or exiting the room?		
Does the classroom have adequate heating, lighting and ventilation?		
Does the classroom have enough space for the teacher and the learners to move easily about the room?		
Does the classroom present the image that the school is a safe and peaceful place in which to learn?		

ANNEX E: AUGUST 2000 MOCK EXAMINATION QUESTION PAPERS

PAPER 1
PAPER 2
PAPER 3
PAPER 5