

Learners' Perception of Physical Geography as a Barrier to Choice of Geography in Secondary Schools in Kiminini Sub-County, Kenya



Abigael Jepng'etich Rono^{1*}, Mak'obila, L.A², Isaac Shitubi³

^{1,2,3} Moi University

ABSTRACT: The number of students studying Geography in secondary schools in Kenya has significantly declined in recent years. It was against this background that the study sought to determine how learners' perception of physical geography hindered them from selecting the subject in secondary schools in Kiminini Sub-county in Kenya. The study was based on Lev Vygotsky's social constructivist theory which explains how a learner's cognitive development and learning ability guides and mediates their learning hence their choices. The study was carried out among selected secondary schools in Kiminini Sub- County, which is one of the sub counties in Trans-Nzoia County. Three main groups were selected as participants of the study. These were the form III learners who had dropped geography after Form II, the geography teachers and Heads of Departments for geography. The research used stratification to categorize secondary schools into National, Extra County, County and Sub- County, selecting 2 national schools, 2 extra county schools and 2 county and two sub-county schools for the study. This yielded a total of eight schools, 2 in every category. Furthermore, random purposive sampling technique was used to select ten students from each of the selected schools. There was therefore a total of 80 students who participated in the study. These were Form III students who were not taking geography. Geography teachers who had taught a Form II class were selected from each of the sampled schools whereas the heads of department were purposively sampled. The study adopted a qualitative approach in which data was collected using unstructured questionnaire, face to face interview and focus group discussion. A thematic analysis was adopted for the study which saw the study findings represented through thematic narratives. The study revealed that most learners who had dropped geography had negative attitude towards physical geography which they considered abstract and uninteresting. Geography teachers on the other hand were well trained and experienced but strictly ensured learners took part in all learning activities which often led to learners leaving the subject and dropping out. The syllabus content for physical geography was considered wide with complex concepts that made the field difficult for learners. This paper should be able to provide useful information to players involved in teaching geography and aid in expanding knowledge on geography instruction.

KEY WORDS: Physical Geography, Optional Subject, Secondary School Learners, Learners' Choice.

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Geography assumes an important role in the school curriculum. It provides knowledge about the world by reinforcing basic geographic concepts while examining values and dispositions about environments as well as developing intellectual and practical skills. Emphasis on Geography education aids in preparing learners for an increasingly changing world. As a discipline that is alive, geography presents learners with opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and values and attitudes that in turn aid them to reform their society. In a sense Geography contributes towards individual growth and sustainable development for the good of humanity. Geography deals with issues that affect the earth and how man relates with the environment. Geography is a multi-disciplinary subject whose teaching leads to understanding of ecological, social, economic, political and technological purposes of its learning.

The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (2016) lists geography as one of the subjects which requires the use of core competencies that give learners hands-on experiences as to better relate with the environment. The study of Geography aims to bridge the gap between the changing physical and biological phenomena and the changing human phenomena.

Meanwhile, debate about perceived disparities in the difficulty of different subjects has over the years been at the center in explaining contributions to lower uptake of key subject areas. Studies have been done to determine whether some subjects are more difficult than others. Consensus has however remained elusive. One way of addressing the issue is interrogating how the education system has been affected by learners' perceived interest in the subject content. Even though this may not resolve the debate on how subjects differ in their level of difficulty, learners' choices and behaviours drive what they believe to be true.

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International context is characterized by studies about learners' perceptions of geographic concepts. For example, in England Catling (2001) studied learners' interpretation of geography. The findings indicated that most learners had a clear sense of the meaning of geography. However, the emphasis in learners' definitions mainly centered on the traditional aspects of geography such as the use of maps and knowledge about countries and the world. These definitions reflected elements of the geography curriculum in England. Hopwood (2004) explored the conception of geography among final year learners in comprehensive schools in England. Learners viewed geography as a subject about the world, people and ways of life. They considered geography as a dynamic subject in which multiple perspectives were considered. The learners perceived the main skills in geography to be map reading skills, life skills, understanding the perspective of other people and understanding knowledge of geography. According to the study, learners perceived geography as a subject that related to developing attitude about respective people's culture, and the environment as the main values of geography.

Biddulph and Adey (2004) explored the attitude of secondary school learners towards effective teaching and learning of geography. Learners rated highly those strategies that involved investigative work, group work, use of technology, discussion, debate and fieldwork. The students did not enjoy answering questions from worksheets and books because these provided them with limited experience. The findings indicated that teaching and learning activities were more influential in shaping students' attitudes and perceptions towards geography than the content.

In many African countries geography is taught in order to provide learners with opportunities to develop key knowledge, skills and values that enable students to become responsible citizens. The curriculum framework for geography in most African countries acknowledges the importance of the location of Africa, environments and natural resources of the continent and the needs and ambitions of its people. Learners from as early as basic education stage engage in geography as part of social studies curriculum. In secondary schools most geography curricular is centered on physical geography, human and economic geography and modern technologies.

In spite of the importance of geography in offering solutions to the increasing environmental challenges such as climate change and global warming the enrolment of students in the subject is declining. In Nigeria for example, Akintade (2012) noted that there had been a sharp decline in the number of students that offer to take geography at senior secondary school. According to Okpala (2000) any subject that is not termed essential at any educational level has to work extra mile for its continued existence because such a subject runs the risk of being phased out for lack of students. It could also be relegated to the background if an allied subject is thought to be more relevant to the citizens. Geography is facing this threat in Kenya since it is optional in form three and form four. The number of students taking geography continues to drop. This should be a cause of concern granted the significant role in education generally, and how the knowledge of geography specifically is treated. Generally, success in education is equated with good academic performance. However, studying subjects that directly impacts on individual lives as well as the society should equally be of concern. Geography is one such subject. Geography is key to some careers, it is a cornerstone to socio-economic development and its study aids in reducing poverty by mitigating its effects on population, health and the environment. Since education reforms aim at making education an effective vehicle for national development, school subjects cannot be taken for granted. Education creates choices and opportunities for people, it reduces poverty and diseases and gives a stronger voice to the society. For nations to create a dynamic workforce and well-informed citizens able to compete globally, its citizens require to make informed choices about what to study and what not to study.

Geography is one subject which is viewed as aiding learners develop critical thinking ability while providing learners with sound knowledge of their environment. It aims to develop in the learner, the ability to comprehend and explain natural phenomena. Through geography learners are able to comprehend spatial relationships among various features on the earth's surface and acquire technical skills which could help them in their future. Such skills include statistical skills, logical reasoning as well as imagining skills.

Globally, geography is increasingly registering few students. This has been attributed to the fact it is considered difficult because of how it is taught as well as its nature. It is argued that its teaching discourages open questions, inquiry and active participation. The resultant effect is that the subject no longer attracts students due to the dull, uninspiring and stereotyped approach being adopted (Sofowora & Agbedokum, 2010).

Compared to other subjects in the humanities, Geography has continuously registered a drop in enrollment, especially between 2010 and 2014. The number of students taking geography kept reducing in comparison to History and Christian Religious Studies. Thus establishing the cause of the drop in enrollment was feasible.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Geography Education and School Climate

Geography education contributes massively to a well-rounded education. Among other benefits geography equips learners with skills relevant to interpreting the world around them. Similarly, it provides the learner with skills that enable them engage in meaningful citizenship. Researches on teaching and learning of geography in schools have hugely revolved around teaching

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strategies, digital technologies and fieldwork. Active pedagogy such as inquiry-based approach of teaching and learning has been cited as promoting learners' engagement, flexible thinking, collaborative learning, interactive learning, transfer of learning and the capacity to address complex issues. This is contrary to traditional approaches which have been criticized for being too teacher centred and not engaging enough for the learners. Mundende and Namase (2019) recommended the provision of equal opportunities in the teaching and learning of geography to ensure no learner is left behind. Emphasis was placed on teachers attending to individual learners' specific needs. This notion is in tandem with Athumani (2017) who advocates for teaching strategies that enhance the natural curiosity of learners which encourages them to ask questions. Despite widespread acknowledgement of innovative strategies of teaching as a motivator for learners, there is still widespread reliance on traditional methods; Teachers apparently have little regard for the implementation of such innovative strategies as inquiry-based teaching and learning.

The study of geography has been cited as opening gates to varied careers. This is because the teaching of geography trains learners in fundamental concepts and methodologies that are amenable to specialized areas. For example, fieldwork which is central in teaching of geography exposes the learners to travelling to different localities. This makes learners easily adjustable to new environments. On the whole geography studies lead to specialized disciplines such as urban planning, population studies and hydrology. The promise of such lucrative careers should naturally pull learners towards embracing geography as a subject.

Geography is a versatile subject that easily combines with other subjects. This makes sense to learners who are keen on pursuing careers in teaching where the teaching of at least two subjects is mandatory within the teaching set up in Kenya. Geography can be combined with Mathematics, Business Studies or Economics, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, History and Religion. This awareness is critical since the choice of teaching subjects is a consideration that is central to teaching in secondary schools in Kenya. Geography can therefore be pursued because of its utilitarian value, and its utilitarian value. This should make the subject popular among learners.

The teaching of Geography is a critical component of a well-rounded education. It equips learners with the relevant skills necessary to understand and interpret the world around them. It also enables them to engage in meaningful citizenship, which is one of the key competencies of the current Competency Based Curriculum that Kenya is pursuing.

Traditionally, the teaching of geography has been characterized by teacher-centred pedagogies. This approach has been criticized for not engaging learners enough. Effective and more creative approaches have been proposed. These include the use of poetry, drama and art as creative approaches that could be used to reach geography. Other pedagogues have recommended the provision of equal opportunities in teaching geography in which no child is left behind. In this context teachers are expected to teach each learner individually and attend to their specific needs. The teaching of geography has been enriched by the use of digital technologies. Learners who use digital technologies perform better than those who do not.

School climate is a critical element which contributes towards the success of a school. School climate involves both internal and external environments which interact to create different types of school climates. The principal of a school plays a central role in defining the school climate largely because of their management position.

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life or the overall characteristics. It is based on patterns and the safety of the school environment, experiences and the principal's leadership practices. Similarly, teachers play a pivotal role in educating students. Where the school climate becomes unfavourable, the teachers' job performance and the learners' learning outcomes are affected.

Literature is replete with school types. Resources, teachers' workload, team building, principal's leadership behaviour, administrative support, communication, interpersonal relationships and organizational structure for study have been identified as indicators for school climate. Because of the positive relationship between school climate and teachers' productivity and learners' performance positive climate is key to sustainable development of school. This development may be related to how learners view particular subjects and the choice of subjects. Furthermore, learners' perception of school climate and school identification plays significant roles in learners' academic achievement.

There are several types of organization climate. These include open climate, closed climate, autonomous, controlled paternal and familiar climate. Open climate experience low disengagement, hindrance, high intimacy, high morale and high consideration. The staff members are treated humanely and there is open interaction between the principals and teachers. This is manifested through supportive and receptive attitude to each other's ideas and their commitment to work. The principal shows genuine concern for teachers whom he motivates and allows them the freedom to carry out their duties to the best of their knowledge.

The closed climate on the other hand is defined by high disengagement, low morale and low consideration. This climate promotes lack of commitment and low consideration. The school administration is seen as being rigid, controlling, unsupportive, inconsiderate and unresponsive. Due to frustration the staff is generally displeased and disrespects the school administration. This affects teachers' productivity and performance which also impacts on how learners' view of different subjects.

Unlike the closed climate, an autonomous climate is characterized by teachers' freedom to work. Teachers have great desire to work which highly motivates learners. The school administration is seen as being distant from the teachers as opposed to controlled climates in which there is lesser degree of openness. There is more emphasis on achievement. The climate is defined by more

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results orientation with less attention to staff needs and welfare. The school climate affects teachers' productivity which in turn affects learners' choice of subjects based on teachers' morale. Apart from teachers' content knowledge and proactive teaching skills academic achievement in a subject is a product of school climate. The effectiveness and stability of schools is often based on school climate and the satisfaction of teachers. Similarly, performance in and selection of a subject depends on varied factors. These include teachers' characteristics, students' characteristics and teaching and learning resources. School resources determine whether or not learners choose a given optional subject.

School climate is equally a product of teacher quality. Teachers influence not only the performance in a subject but also how learners perceive a given subject. The quality of teachers is a product of many factors. Key among them is their experience and in-service training. In-service training equally addresses emerging issues in teaching. How teachers deal with emerging issues in a given subject may be a factor that drives learners towards or away from given subjects.

2.2 Learners' Perception and Subject Choices

Geography faces the challenge of its identity and recognition as a useful academic discipline. This situation affects learners' perception of the subject at various levels. In a study by Al-Nofli (2010) in Oman, it was reported that learners had a positive attitude towards the subject. Geography was seen to be enjoyable since it facilitated learning about other countries, the weather, natural disasters and other physical and economic aspects. This was attributed to the learners understanding of geography as a subject which dealt with political boundaries, landforms and maps. These aspects were seen as exciting learners in the process of studying geography. The learners were motivated to learn the subject because they considered it gainful. The intricacies of the concepts of geography were not considered in the study thus the widespread belief that the subject was enjoyable. Similarly, the study did not demonstrate how this positive view of geography informed learners' choice of the subject was examinations.

In some contexts, geography is considered by many learners as a less important subject in shaping their career. For professional success, learners would rather offer Chemistry, Physics or Biology and Maths. For example, Tomal (2010) reported that geography was ranked number four by learners in Turkey. Even though the study did not establish how the ranking of the subject affected its teaching it offered an explanation on why learners would opt not to take the subject in circumstances where it was optional.

Fisher and Binns (2016) posit that a positive perception in the learning process is developed by the interest students have in the subject and the attitude of the teacher towards the subject and the learners. Learners' choice of a subject consequently heavily depends on how the subject is taught. It is therefore, important that a teacher motivates their learners if the learners have to appreciate the sense of studying the subject.

Perceptions about the importance of geography, geography content, instructional methods and teachers have been reported as factors that influence learners' choice of geography. Inter-subject comparability is a debate that characterizes discourse on learners' choice subjects. Comparability is often anchored on the content of the subject and its relative importance in the learner's life. Some subjects have been viewed to be more difficult than others. Learners' subject choices, has for long been determined by perceptions of difficulty which is at times discussed in terms of likelihood of doing well in a subject. The enjoyment of a subject, its perceived usefulness, its perceived difficulty and ability and the advice of friends, teachers and parents aid students' decision-making process. The relationship between perceptions of difficulty and subject choices is not a simple one. Enjoyment and usefulness could interact to supersede this relationship. Weeden (2007) argues that the conflict between perceived difficulty and enjoyment and usefulness is always resolved by balancing the competing concerns of the subject against its enjoyment and the learners' ambitions to achieve future goals.

Learners' choices have also been affected by their perceptions towards teaching approaches adopted by teachers during instruction. For example, Biddulph and Adey (2004) while exploring learners' perceptions towards effective teaching, drew a dichotomy between those strategies which were viewed enjoyable and those they considered uninspiring. Learners were attracted more to investigative work, group work, use of technology, discussion, debates and fieldwork as opposed to answering questions from worksheets and books and copying from the board. This was attributed to the fact that these approaches gave them limited avenues for learning. Teaching and learning approaches thus shaped learners' attitudes towards a subject more than the main content.

Learners have also been reported to have a negative attitude towards subject which they considered as having no meaning to their future lives. Elementary learners have been reported to place low importance on social studies and associated subjects compared to other subjects such as mathematics and reading. Understanding learners' perception towards a subject could aid teachers provide meaningful learning experiences and materials to make such subjects attractive to the learners.

2.3 Physical Geography

Physical geography is one of the three branches of Geography. It deals with the processes and patterns in the natural environment such as the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere and geosphere. In physical Geography learners' study natural phenomena that comprise the environment. These include rivers, mountains, landforms, weather, climate, soils, plants and other physical aspects of the earth surface. The secondary school curriculum demands that physical geography is studied in lower secondary school classes where all subjects are taught.

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The teaching of physical geography is meant to foster in the learners' theoretical methodological and instrumental knowledge. The learner is expected to make comprehensive analyses, interpret spatial problems and processes and make territorial diagnoses. To demonstrate attainment of the above the learners are expected to creatively solve problems and analytically and technically communicate their knowledge. They are expected to read, analyse and construct maps as well as use of geographic techniques and perspective to address contemporary issues which include demographic changes, economic inequality and environmental injustice. The learners are expected to learn and demonstrate the use of cartographic skills which allow them to create and interpret maps, photographs as well as use graphical numerical and statistical skills. These are technical skills that demand patience and a lot of interest which can partly be nurtured through innovative teaching. They demand that learners practice extensively to enhance their proficiency and mastery of the skills. This initial content at the start of secondary school circle could be demoralizing if a positive attitude is not cultivated towards this component of the subject.

3. METHODOLOGY

The current paper adopted qualitative approach. The approach was flexible and the researcher was able to generate and analyze holistic data using sufficiently rigorous and ethical methods and techniques

The paper reports findings of a descriptive phenomenological case study method. This method is consistent with qualitative approach. A case study is a type of research which involves studying an issue through one or more cases (Creswell, 2011). A case is an entity whose features are within and others outside the case but still important as it provides the context for the study. The purpose of the current phenomenological study was to investigate multiple students' and teachers' experiences in an elective course. A case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon within the context of real life.

The study was conducted in Kiminini Sub- County, which is one of the sub-counties of Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya. The sub-county is cosmopolitan and has all the categories of schools namely 2 national schools, extra-county schools, county schools and sub-county school. From each category, schools were picked because geography is taught in all the schools as an optional subject. This provided the researcher with a rich array from which to collect comprehensive data.

In this paper the population comprised of Heads of Humanities Department, teachers of Geography and form three learners who had dropped geography at the end of form two. The participants were picked from all the categories of schools within Kiminini sub-county. This enabled the paper to report rich data that related to the study objective.

The researcher used non-probability sampling techniques to identify schools from where the participants were sampled. One of the techniques included simple random sampling which enabled picking of schools from each of the categories of schools. The researcher purposively selected two national schools because there were only two such schools in Kiminini. Those were a boys' and a girls' school. Two extra county schools were randomly selected to represent each of the gender. Similarly, two county and two sub-county schools were equally selected.

Three main data collection techniques were used to generate data. These were in-depth interview, qualitative questionnaire and focus group discussion (FGD). These techniques are in tandem with qualitative studies.

Data was organized and analysed from the collection stage. The data generation phase yielded data set which consisted of interviews, questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion. Making sense out of these massive data involved organizing, noting themes and categorizing the data. This was followed by sifting the data, sorting out, reviews and reflections in order to identify emerging issues. Data was grouped into appropriate and meaningful categories from which explanations were made. Driven by the general goal of data analysis which was to arrive at a general understanding of the phenomenon under study, thematic analysis was carried out.

4. FINDINGS

Perceived difficulty of the content of physical geography influenced the attitude that the learners had towards geography influencing their failure to enroll for geography as an optional subject. The difficulty encountered was attributed to the technical concepts that physical geography entails. Throughout the focus groups it was apparent that students' decisions were based largely upon perceptions of difficulty and enjoyment of the content. Some concepts of physical geography were considered so complex.

These views were supported by the teachers of Geography who reported that the content of physical geography was considered difficult since they were mostly abstract and required patience in learners to gain mastery.

Teachers blamed the unpopularity of geography in most cases on the learners' failure to take instructions, make notes and do all the activities which the content demanded. Learner's attitude appears to have been influenced by different styles of assessment in geography. This caused variations in perceptions of difficult in physical geography at individual level.

This position was echoed by teachers from different schools who felt that the concepts taught in physical geography only made sense when learners practiced them since they required precision.

Learners recognized that their perceptions of physical geography impacted on their subject choices. They purposefully opted out of geography to avoid what they considered difficult. Teachers of geography were able to build an overall impression of the decisions learners made in their classrooms. They provided additional insight on how choices may have varied between students. Some

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teachers recognized that the extent to which students based their decisions and attitude upon perceptions of difficulty was somewhat dependent upon their level of attainment. Higher ability students were less affected than lower ability learners.

There was general consensus among the participants that some content in physical geography was making the subject difficult. The decision to drop or take the subject was considered personal but a times it was influenced by peers and teachers. Certain features made physical geography difficult. The concepts involved in a topic might influence the learner's attitude.

Similarly, the way the concepts are taught and the presence of disruptive learners contributed to perceptions and notions of personal subjective decisions. In some cases, the attitude of the learners was determined by how they understood the concepts. Similarly lack of information on how physical geography affected their daily and future life influenced their attitude. Most learners did not have a better understanding of the topics taught which influenced their selection.

Poor understanding of geographical concepts influenced the non-selection of geography. Since these students had only been taught Physical Geography, this could be a contributing factor. Most concepts in physical geography being abstract are not interesting.

Other factors that the students highlighted that led to their negative view of physical geography included the teachers' personality and choice of teaching methods. Some teachers were said to be uninspiring and cared less whether the learners understood what they taught or not. The students also disapproved of teacher's preoccupation with asking questions whose failure to answer demoralized the learners. Similarly, teachers who were very strict with how the learners wrote notes and drew diagrams were identified as sources of the learners' dislike of physical geography.

On their part the teachers' blamed learners' attitude on insufficient time coupled with a lot of content. This made it difficult for teachers to help individual learners. Apart from books it was the feeling of teachers that resources were limited. This is why teachers expected learners to use the contents of the books to practice drawing and sketching. Similarly, drawing figures and diagrams is part of geography and it is a mark of competence which proves that a learner understands how important it is to represent features. Other teacher factors which learners gave for their failure to select geography included the methods teachers used in teaching, their subject preferences and the influence of their significant others who included friends and parents.

The general picture that arose from the findings of the study regarding learners' perception was that physical geography was boring, hard and comprehensive. Physical geography made a lot of demands on the learners. This gave them the impression that geography was demanding. Similarly, it was apparent that the negative perception towards the subject arose from many factors which included how teachers handled the subject, the vast content and peer influence. These findings echo Hashim and Embong (2015) who found that learners in their teenage years are more inclined to be influenced by group norms due to the need to establish a sense of identity which is in line with the expectation of their peers. Furthermore, teachers indirectly played a vital role in learners' perception of physical geography. By making demands on the learners regarding such aspects of physical geography as drawing diagrams and maps, making notes as well as the approaches they used in teaching, led some learners to hate physical geography thus leading to their failure to choose geography as an optional subject. This finding resonates with what other scholars have written about students and how they make their choices. Ndalichako and Komba (2014) posit that learners' preferences dependent on the commitment and support of teachers and their teaching approaches. The teachers influenced the subjects which learners chose as a result of their teaching methods, styles, strategies, personality traits and mastery of the subject matter. Learners may or may not choose a subject depending on how the subject teacher demonstrates the above factors in the case of the current study learners did not like the strictness with which teachers demanded that they respond to physical geography work.

The teaching of physical geography requires many resources and a lot of time. Limited access to specialized resources for teaching physical geography such as maps, globes and other related equipment weighed heavily on how learners perceived geography. Many considered the concepts abstract hence hard to relate with leading to their hatred of the content. It further limited their better understanding of the content. Their poor understanding of the concept led to their hatred of geography leading to their dropping the subject. Gikunda (2016) noted that positive perception in the learning process is developed by the interest cultivated by the learner, based on how they performed in the subject. Learners who did not perform well in physical geography ended up dropping geography. Generally, many scholars have listed factors that influence learners' decision making and perception of difficulty or usefulness of a subject have taken centre stage. Several commonalities have been given and these include enjoyment, perceived usefulness, perceived difficulty and ability. These lead to intrinsic motivation and from the study findings it is probable that the learners did not orient themselves positively in these aspects leading to their dropping of geography because they were not intrinsically motivated.

Teachers, HoDs and learners all agreed that physical geography was wide. The concepts taught were many yet the resources and time for coverage was limited. The materials taught were said to be abstract. This posed challenges in learning physical geography which translated into learners dropping geography. If what is taught is too remote from pre-existing learners' knowledge or skill base, learning is hampered. Learning what is perceived as too complex or taxing and assessment of how much one knows about a topic or field inhibits curiosity, interest and in the long run leads to repulsion of anything associated with the content.

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Wide content of physical geography meant that the teachers gave learners a lot of work to do on their own if they were to cover the syllabus. In an area that learners already treated as technically difficult, this approach led to more apathy from learners and total avoidance.

Physical geography content was considered difficult by most learners. The field was equally wide with so many concepts which should be covered. These limited the capacity of learners to succeed at learning and perform well on associated tasks. Learners repeated experiences in recognizing that their focused efforts could not result in progress and credible learning achievement, made them unwilling to tackle geography and persevere through more challenging tasks. Perceptions about the content of physical geography, along with the low achievement and the many tasks learners were subjected to, contributed to make it easy for learners to drop geography.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the main objective of the study which was to examine secondary school students' perception of physical geography, the findings revealed that learners who had dropped geography disliked physical geography. They considered the concepts as being abstract thus incapable of cultivating interest. The amount of work expected of learners further strengthened their repulsion of the subject, a lot of writing notes which were inspected by teachers and depending on how the notes had been written, corrective measures which teachers gave did not sit well with the learners.

Learners developed attitude based on their performance in geography. They were also influenced by their peers especially those who were ahead of them and who did not have a favourable view of the subject.

The teaching approaches which were adopted by teachers to a given extent contributed to the negative perception towards physical geography. Learners did not like question-and-answer approach to teaching yet teachers could not organize field trips for all the concepts taught in physical geography. Learners blaming their hatred of physical geography based on their view of how content was delivered was a simple way of explaining their loathing of physical geography.

On their part the teachers revealed that learners demonstrated apathy to physical geography by failing to undertake activities that were critical in developing skills that would be necessary in geography. Such activities included drawing diagrams and maps, doing simple calculations and preparing models.

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