AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS THAT CAUSE LOW PERFORMANCE IN GEOGRAPHY BY FEMALE STUDENTS. A CASE STUDY OF O LEVEL GEOGRAPHY STUDENTS AT NYARUKUNDA SECONDARY SCHOOL IN SHAMVA DISTRICT.

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my late sister Mildred Makasi as she provided assistance in many ways into my academic pursuits but never lived to witness this day.
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I would like to thank my supervisor Mr E Mandoga for the invaluable mentorship which he provided and his precious time in working with me, his feedback was encouraging.

My special gratitude goes to my uncle Mr Richard Gamuchirai Banda for the financial support and encouragement to finish this project, my mother and family members for the support.

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Above all I would like to give honour and glory to GOD who protected throughout the study.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out and analyse the factors that cause low and poor performance by female students in geography as compared to male students at ordinary level using Nyarukunda secondary school in Shamva district as a case study. Ordinary level geography Zimbabwe school examinations results from the year 2010 to 2014 was used and twenty (20) form three, ten (10) boys and 10 girls from 3A and 3C were used as questionnaire respondents. The geography head of department was interviewed. The main research methodology used was a case study and other qualitative approaches. The study found out that female students regard geography as a masculine subject, there are socio-economic factors which affect female performance in geography, there is lack of good attitude from female students as they perform better in other subjects except for geography and other science subjects, lack of female teachers, lack of parental support and house chores affect female performance in geography. The study recommends that children must be given the opportunity to choose subjects they want to do at school and be encouraged to work hard without basing on gender, number female teachers should be equal to number of male teachers who teach geography and that parents and relatives should be educated on the need to give children time to study especially girls.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS
O LEVEL..................................Ordinary level

A LEVEL..................................Advanced level

H.O.D.....................................Head of department

ZIMSEC.....................................Zimbabwe school examination council.

CHAPTER 1.
1.0 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter is going to present a plan of how the research is going to be carried out. It briefly discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions, and delimitations and limitations.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Male superiority over females is an accepted truism which has been accepted by many people, in recent years females claim to be equal to males in all fields of life. Gender difference in performance on spatial tasks does not appear in all cultures.

In order to find out the situation at Nyarukunda O level ZIMSEC results from the year 2010 to 2014 for the school were analyzed in this study to compare factors causing gender difference in geography.

In several education systems all over the world, geographical knowledge acquired in lower levels is vital for student to progress to upper classes in secondary schools and tertiary education.

Gender differences in exams and achievements generate a lot attention and debate. A comparative analytical methodology in performance of O level students at Nyarukunda secondary reveals gender connotations and there is a marginal gap between these genders. An analysis of O level ZIMSEC examinations by boys and girls for 4 consecutive years up to 2014 at Nyarukunda shows that failure rate in geography by girls is higher than that of male students. In an overview of declining pass rates Nyarukunda secondary pass rates shows that there is great need for research into why female students fail geography.
The following table shows an overview of ordinary level school pass rates for geography written in 2010-2014 at Nyarukunda secondary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>% PASSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: O LEVEL RESULTS NYARUKUNDA SECONDARY SCHOOL.

This study therefore seeks to find reasons why female students fail geography as compared to male students. From the above scenario, the main concern of this study is to find out the factors that contribute to low pass rate by girls in geography at Nyarukunda secondary.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem is that there is performance difference between geography male and female O level students. By carrying out a survey, this research will find the reasons why things are like this.
Therefore by finding out the reason proper strategic solutions can be put forward to address the problem.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to identify both internal and external causes of the lower academic performance of female students to male students.

More specifically this study has the following set of objectives

1. To investigate the major contributing factors for poor academic performance by female students as compared to male students.
2. To identify the environmental influences at Nyarukunda this may mislead female student behavior.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

1. What are the causes of performance difference between the two sexes?

2. Do female students receive adequate support from teachers in learning geography?

3. What are the surrounding environmental factors that affect female student’s academic performance?

4. What is the attitude of female students towards geography?
5. Do chores at home affect girls’ performance?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study will help to identify the root causes of poor academic performance.

This study will help teachers to improve on methods that may help improve or increase the females pass rate in geography.

A Level teachers are also beneficiaries of this study in that the findings will help them to design strategies to increase performance pass rate in geography at Nyarukunda.

The study must come up with solutions that are specific to Nyarukunda in an effort to address the problems faced by boys and girls in geography.

The study provides informed data that should influence relevant authorities such as Ministry of Education, School Development Committees (SDA) and School Development Associations (SDA) to review their policies on motivating schools and communities.

1.6 ASSUMPTIONS
The following assumptions were used for the study

1. The study assumes that, male students perform better than females in geography.

2. The study assumes that, female students believe that geography is not a female subject.

3. The study assumes that the school has adequate learning and teaching materials.

4. The study assumes that school has trained and experienced personnel to teach geography.

5. The study assumes that there are socio-cultural factors that influence girl child performance

1.7 DELIMITATIONS

The research will be carried out at Nyarukunda Secondary school in Mashonaland central province, Shamva district. The school is located 35 kilometres from Bindura Town Centre and 2km west from the Bindura –Mt Darwin high way. Three A, C and the previous ordinary level streams back to 2010 were chosen to represent the Ordinary level students at Nyarukunda secondary school. The study will focus on 20 selected pupils, five boys and girls from each form 3 classes and then geography result analysis of form 4 boys and girls who wrote their exams.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.
This research is a self sponsored project conducted by a working student, a school teacher. In this respect, time and travelling expenses to effectively conduct the research may be experienced. Because of time and expenses the study will be limited to Nyarukunda secondary in Shamva district. Because the research is limited to Nyarukunda secondary it may not be possible to generalize the findings of the study to the whole province.

1.9 SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the background to the study, the problem has been stated. Lists of assumptions have been given. The purpose and significance of the study has been noted. The next chapter is going to review literature on the areas of the study chosen.

Chapter 2

2.0 Introduction
This chapter reviewed literature on factors that cause low performance rate in females as compared to males. Literature on factors that cause low performance to female students was discussed. Reference to Nyarukunda secondary school was made. The chapter will discuss issues under the following sub headings importance of geography and cultural values, school environment, sex stereotyping and juvenile delinquency as factors affecting female student performance in geography.

2.1 FACTORS AFFECTING FEMALE STUDENTS PERFORMANCE IN GEOGRAPHY

A good school is measured by its production of high pass rate both in female and male students in examination. This study is based on the understanding that various factors combine to influence the performance in any examination. Good or poor performance depends on the interaction of factors within the school environment and home environment.

Factors in the home environment which influence student performance include house chores, parents support and school based factors include teacher expectations, career opportunities, and sex stereotyping and student attitudes.

According to Maurice (2013) the achievement of pupils in school is determined by a set of interacting variables ranging from home background, teacher aspirations and learning resources.

2.2 CULTURAL VALUES
According to Wang et al (1996) parental influence has been identified as an important factor affecting girl student academic achievement. Parent’s education and encouragement are strongly related to improved girl child achievement.

Parents have different attitudes towards their sons and daughters. Daughters are brought up for female roles such as child rearing while sons have a whole working life to devote to career building. Most of the parents especially the uneducated parents in rural areas believe that females do not have qualities of independence, initiative and assertiveness. Siegel (1987) argues that parents react differently whenever things go wrong for boys and girls in school performance. With this in mind female pupils are discouraged in school and as a result they poorly perform.

Harris (2014) is of the view that poor performance of rural secondary pupils to lack of parental support. There is a correlation between parental support in homework activities and performance of students. Students with parental support in homework achieved better than those without parental support in homework activities and performance of work. Because most of the parents prefer to give their support to boys than girls female students they underperform because they are not given enough parental support.

According to the UNESCO and UNICEF (1990), the inability to pay fees and purchase books compel parents to invest in education of their sons whom they see as a source of future family support in preference to their daughters whose economic contribution could as well be to a different household. As a result of this female student they are discouraged to perform better in school work and worse in subjects like geography which are regarded as masculine.

### 2.3 HOUSE CHORES AT HOMES

There small jobs that both males and females are supposed to do regularly, for females there are certain types of jobs that they have to do every day to keep the house clean everyday chores like cleaning, sweeping, fetching of water, laundry and many more.
UNESCO (1994) propound that one of the constrains that hinder girls to effectively do their school work during their spare time at home is the greatest amount of work girls have to do at home. Girls are given too much work to do at home than boys and it leaves girls with less time to do their work.

According to the Provincial Director of Education in Nigeria (2009) cultural factors in Nyanza Province believed to have a big influence on girl student academic achievement than boys’ student. Thus the girl child is subjected to domestic chores daily in case of day schools. Furthermore the boy child is given preference were financial resources are scarce as a result of this the girl child does not attend school regularly as desired.

Odanga and Henveld (1996) observed that one of the constrains that hinder the cognitive development of a girl child is the greatest amount of work she does within and outside household. The girl child faces demands of the chores and responsibilities in excess of her time. The scholar observed that girls work for longer hours in the domestic field than boys. By the time she settles down to read she will be tired. She will only be able to cope up with the demands of less challenging subjects and not geography and other science subjects.

In addition in most of the developing countries where there are child headed families the girl child is affected by incidents of HIV and AIDS pandemic. In most of the Zimbabwean most societies the girl student is compelled to take care of the sick sibling and parents. In serious cases of loss of income the girl child is forced to drop out of school than the boy child and continue later as a result the child poorly performs in geography.

2.4 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
Apple (1980) postulates that the relationship between students and their school is one significant predictor of social and academic development. The general school climate is the overall interaction and the practice the female students make with the school personnel, institutional rules and regulations, sanctions and the organizational structure which in turn affect students practice in school and their perception towards school.

Apple (1980) further argues that the managerial and organizational structure of the school unfairly treats students on their background. In most of the schools the administration favours the boy child at the expense of the female child as a result the female pupil will not relate well with the school climate and poorly performs.

Craft (1996) is of the view that unfavourable school climate adversely affects female students daily academic performance by reducing their willingness to persist at academic tasks and interfering with the cognitive process involved in learning. Unfavourable school climate may cause school failure more than intellectual ability for some female students.

2.5 TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

Kathuri (1991) in his study revealed that teacher’s ability to communicate, organize and manipulate resources into useful products in order to achieve good results become important. Teacher’s characteristics and patience come into play.

Zimbabwean school teachers have encouraged students to take certain subjects at the expense of others. Boys have got more than just adequate encouragement to do subjects like geography while few girls get little encouragement. Girls nomater how willing they are to do the subject they have got little encouragement from the teachers. As a result of this female student
perform according to their teacher’s expectations and boys they perform better than girls in order to fulfil their teacher expectations.

2.6 SEX STEOROTYPING IN SCHOOLS

There are sex stereotyping and female students on their abilities in geography and related courses. Kofo (2012) carried out a research in Nigeria and found out that there is a commonly held perception and the opinion that doing geography and related subjects is consistent with a male self image. There is the belief that girls should not reveal their intelligence less it compromises their sexual desirability and thus their social roles as wives or mothers, Durojaiye et al (2006). Further to this is a particular statement that geography is a very difficult subject. Female students in cases like this they are greatly discouraged.

2.7 LACK OF CAREER GUIDANCE, ROLE MODELS AND FEMALE TEACHERS

Often girls are not given enough information about career opportunities requiring competence or very good knowledge of the subject. Most researchers have revealed that females’ pupils have not been introduced to the roles female geographers can play in society nor what career opportunities female geographers can properly fit in and prosper. This is coupled with the teachers’ foster problems for girls’ poor perception of girls’ performance, class dynamics and teaching methods.

Conner (2011) revealed that many teachers including female geographers do not believe that girls have the ability to perform well in some subjects. As a result, directly and inadvertently teachers discourage students from registering, active participation and eventually excellent performance.
2.8 JUVENILE DELIQUENCY

Conduct by a juvenile is characterized by anti social behaviour that is beyond parental control and therefore subject to legal action. Discipline in schools is a collective responsibility and involves all people in the community. It is the foundation of good performance and responsible behaviour, Petter (2004). Indiscipline poses a serious problem to both males and females.

Reports of drugs in schools for instance drinking and smoking have got effects to all pupils. Scholars are of the view that female students are highly affected as compared to male students. In additions there are high drop outs to female students as a result of pregnancies due to sexual relationships which happen within the school environment and home environment.

2.9 SUMMARY

The main focus of this chapter has been the view of other researchers’ on the factors that cause poor performance rate by female students at Nyarukunda secondary school and other countries. It is clear from the discussion that there are many researchers who have written the concept of achievement by female students. The next chapter will look at research methodology.
Chapter 3

3.0 Research approach

The study will utilize qualitative approach because it studies variables in their natural settings and attempts to interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them, (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). In addition, the qualitative approach is suitable because, “it is grounded in the experiences and voices of the research participants” Muzvidzwa (2007). In this case, the O level male students perform better than female students in geography at Nyarukunda secondary school and there are factors which cause that.

3.1 Research design

A research design is defined by Ander and Mellenberg (2008) as framework that is used for collection and analysis of data. A case study design has been chosen because it enables the researcher to collect intensive data on the factors causing low performance by female students at Nyarukunda secondary school.

This design will be suitable for research which seeks to have an analysis of factors that cause low performance by female students as compared to male students in geography at Nyarukunda secondary school. A case study design has been chosen as the best method as it involves comprehensive description and analysis of single case. It allows for a detailed description and analysis of the same results of performance difference between O level male and female students in geography at Nyarukunda secondary school.

3.2 Study population.
According to Cooper and Schindler (2006), a study population is a group of interest from which the individual participant or object of measurement is taken. Some scholars define it as an overall collection of elements about which individuals wish to make some suppositions. The population of this study will be composed of, twenty form 3 students that is 10 pupils from 3 A and 10 from 3C at Nyarukunda secondary school and the geography Head of Department.

3.3 SAMPLING

The researcher will use judgment sampling in selecting the key informants who are the Head of Department for geography and the twenty form 3 students (10 boys and 10 girls).

Judgment sampling is a non probability sampling method through which the researcher selects participants who really have the qualities the researcher is interested in. Fisher (2008) is of the view that judgment sampling allows the researcher to focus on the specific group under the study that can help answer the research questions. The pupils (students) are important to the study as they are needed for collecting information on personal experiences. The head of department is necessary for this study as they have knowledge about teachers in the department, students, and causes of high and low performance (pass rates). In addition the H.O.D will be involved for his/her position in the education of the target group.

3.4 Data collection method

Data will be collected through questionnaires and interviews.

3.5 Document Analysis
The researcher will analyze the O level results from the year 2010 to 2014. Will analyses the pass rates for boys and girls. The form 3 students tests marks will help the researcher to find out how the pupils perform thereby adding information to the O level past results. From the books, social record books and attendance registers the researcher will get information on the social background of the pupils. Document analysis is relevant to the study in that it involves the scrutinizing of all sorts of archival material, as a result the researcher will be able to analyze all the possible effects causing gender difference in geography.

3.6 Questionnaires

There will be one questionnaire for the form 3 students. Open ended and closed questioning will be used. Questionnaires are important to this study as they offer great anonymity. There are sensitive questions on the questionnaire; it helps to increase the chances of getting accurate information since there is no face to face interaction between the respondents and the interviewer.

The questionnaires will be distributed physically to the selected sample of students and this reduces costs and any chances of questionnaires not reaching the respondents. The questionnaires will be self administered and this reduces bias since there will be no researcher influence. The questionnaires will be collected at an agreed time ensuring that all of them will be filled in.

3.7 Interviews

The geography head of department will be interviewed using general interview guide approach to get information in detail. Interviews are relevant to this study as it is possible to ask probing
questions beyond the predetermined questions in a set of sequence. The researcher can probe and get information crucial on the factors causing gender difference in O level geography students.

From the students data will be collected through informal conversational interviews with the participants. These promote free data responses and this can make students open up to the researcher giving information on factors that help students to performance well and that can help the researcher to indentify factors that cause female students to perform poorly.

3.8 PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS SECTION

The participants will be made to sign a voluntary consent form from which will be explained to them in both English and Shona. The researcher will apply confidentiality and non–judgmental attitude during data collection. All opinions will be respected.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has described how the study will be carried out. The next chapter will present the findings of the study.
Chapter 4

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is going to present and analyze the findings of the study. The results were collected through interviews, document analysis, students’ written work and questionnaires. The findings are represented under the following headings O level geography results from 2011-2014, summary of O level pass rates, summary of form three participants, extent which daily chores contribute to low performance, how socio-economic contributes to poor performance, summary from the head of department and students who dropped geography.

4.1 Profile of Respondents.

This section presents the profiles of the study of the respondents that is the O level geography results from 2011 to 2014, twenty form three (ten boys and ten girls) and the Geography head of department.

4.2 Table 2. O LEVEL GEOGRAPHY RESULTS FROM 2011-2014

Through document analysis the researcher was able to compile a profile of students showing details necessary to the study.
The analysis from table one shows that from 2011 to 2014 O level geography results, male students they performed better than female students. Except for the year 2012, which had the highest number of female students who wrote geography, the other three years the number of females who wrote the ZIMSEC exam was less the number of males who wrote the examinations.

In addition less than five female students managed to get A’s at Ordinary level in geography from the year 2011 to 2014. This information showed that female students are not performing
well in geography. Females had the highest percentage of U’s (84%) in the year 2012 whilst males had 59% half the number of female pupils.

Strang and Morris (1964) postulated that the basic qualities to succeed in any field are the right attitude towards work, accuracy and ability to get along with others. From the findings the study revealed, that female students might be lacking these qualities as compared to male students at Nyarukunda secondary school as evidenced by the graph below showing a summary the pass rates of male and female students from 2011 to 2014.

**Summary of O level performance in geography from 2011 to 2014**

![Graph showing pass rates of male and female students from 2011 to 2014.](image)

Through document analysis the researcher found out that, although females are always less the number of male students in geography and other science subjects male students perform better as compared to female students. The graph below shows the pass rates of boys and girls in the year 2014 in arts subjects and other science subjects.
4.3 Findings on 2014 O level performance of Arts subjects and other science subjects

Summary of 2014 pass rates Arts and other Science subjects

In addition the study found out that, there are subjects which female students prefer as compared to others. Science subjects like geography are viewed as masculine as compared to arts and commercial subjects. Only 3 (30%) out of the 10 (100%) girls who answered the questionnaires mentioned that they prefer science subjects. This evidence is supported by information from document analysis as shown by history on the graph which had 68% pass rate from the females in 2014. In physics all the four pupils who wrote the ZIMSEC O Level exam were boys only. In 2015 only three out of forty six form three girls are doing physics.

4.4 Summary of Form three participants.

Through the questionnaires and students written work assigned during the study, the researcher was able to compile a profile of students showing details crucial to the study such as number of
students who are offered support at home, their exam mark and the chores they perform at home. For the sake of privacy the students were labelled A-F.

4.4 Table 3 Findings on to the extent which home background and daily chores contribute to low performance by female students in geography.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Exam mark %</th>
<th>Support offered at home</th>
<th>Daily chores at home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Fees and stationary</td>
<td>Cooking, fetching firewood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>No support, works for own fees</td>
<td>Looking after siblings and selling tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>No support looks after himself</td>
<td>Selling vegetables, firewood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Homework, fees, emotional</td>
<td>Simple house chores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fees, stationary</td>
<td>Heading cattle, fetching firewood water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Homework, fees, motivation</td>
<td>Heading cattle, gardening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis from table 3 shows that from the 6 students (3 males and 3 females) social background does affect students performance. From the results the researcher noted that house chores affects performance especially for students living in the rural areas. Girl child is given little time for her homework and time to study, and because most of them they do not have
electricity at home, when they are through with cooking in the evening they will sleep all night because they will be tired. Therefore the study is based on the understanding that home environment, socio-economic status of the family, family household chores have some inputs in schooling process, motivation and time management and affects student outcome performance. In this context social background affect pupil’s performance in geography. Maurice (2013) is of the view that achievement in school is determined by a set of interacting variables ranging from child ability to home back ground.

4.5 Findings on how student’s socio-economic background contributes to poor performance in geography by girls as compared to boys.

On analyzing the O level (form 3) registers and the social record book, the researcher also got information on where most of the students with low passes came from, and the people they stay with at home.

.4.5 Table 4 Findings on how social background contributes to low performance in girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% got in end of 1st term 2015</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives(Orphans)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% got in end of 1st term 2015</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand parents</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% got in end of 1st term 2015</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Table 5. Findings on how social background contributes to low performance.

**BOYS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% got in end of 1st term 2015</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives(orphans)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% got in end of 1st term 2015</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% got in end of 1st term 2015</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study found out that performance may be affected by the social background. There is a difference in performance between pupils staying with their biological parents and those who are not. From the findings the researcher found that both students who stay with their parents perform well. It is important to note that the girl they perform poorly in geography as compared to boys. Both boys and girls mentioned that the person whom they stay with plays a pivotal role in their school work.

In addition there is a significant link between a teacher’s positive attitude towards the importance of the subject for boys and girls and the probability of girls staying in a school environment. The
researcher noted that school environment at Nyarukunda were discouraging girls. Teachers’ low expectations of students academic abilities can lead to students lower expectations of themselves and low confidence and leads to classroom underachievement.

4.6 SUMMARY FROM THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT’S INTERVIEWS

The researcher conducted an interview with the Geography Head of Department. The questions that were asked was how many students both boys and girls failed to write geography from 2011 to 2014 and the reasons for dropping the subject, causes of failure in geography and the number of teachers in the department.

4.6 (i) TABLE 6: Students who dropped geography.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Number of students.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=19

It should be noted from the numbers given by the Head of Department that nineteen students dropped out of the school from 2011-2014. Six pupils were males and 14 girls.
It should be noted that from this, the female or girl child dropped out the subject because of several factors. The Head of Department pointed out that 3 of the girls dropped the subject because of lack of failure to register the subject with ZIMSEC. It is important to note that O level students they pay examination fee for them to write a certain subject. The researcher also found out that one girl dropped out of the school to take care of her grandmother and siblings at home. The rest of the girls got pregnant and stopped coming to school.

The male students dropped the subject due to financial constrains to pay for their exam fee. For students to effectively perform well in school they need financial support at home for their fees, examination fee, field trips and other things which are needed at school and also to be disciplined.

The H.O.D Geography mentioned that there are no female teachers in the Department. There is only one female teacher out of the six science teachers at Nyarukunda secondary school. There is often considerable shortage of female teachers at the school and other disadvantaged rural areas which significantly are also were the largest gender gaps in leaning outcomes occur. Durajaiye (2006) is of the view that female teachers are needed for female students so that they should share with girls the challenges they had faced, how they succeeded and the benefits of the subject and their lives. Female teachers they act as role models to pupils. As a result of this female students at Nyarukunda secondary school lacks motivation which make pupils to perform well since there is no female teacher in the department.

When interviewed the Head of Department said that most of the students who poorly perform in Geography, that they do not come to school daily.

The H.O.D explained some students’ absenteeism when she said that many of the students have problems with school fees payment and they lose a lot when they are out of school looking for fees. It is usually impossible for such students to catch with others.
The study noted that students were not allowed into school until they had paid school fees. The time the students spent away from school looking for fees was time lost since the aspects taught in their absence were usually never revisited. As a result students did not get exposed to the aspects covered in their absence. Therefore parents’ failure to pay students’ fees in time is a factor causing poor performance. However due to economic hardships farming activities which most parents in the area rely on are not giving much profit as they used to do. Therefore many parents are out of work and have difficulty raising the school fees, examination fees and field trips. In cases were some parents have got both the male and female students parents they prefer paying fees first for the male student.

4.7 Conclusion

The data presentation and discussion of the findings of the research have helped the researcher to establish factors that cause low performance by O level female students in geography at Nyarukunda secondary school. The factors founded by the study included that geography is regarded as a male subject, lack of parental and teacher support, socio-economic factors, house chores and lack of good attitudes by student
Chapter 5

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study that set out to establish the factors causing poor performance by O level female students in geography at Nyarukunda secondary school in Shamva District. The chapter will be divided into two sections with the first section giving a brief summary of the findings of the study and the other section presenting recommendations based on the findings of the study.

5.1 Research findings

An important finding by the study is that there was inadequate parental support for female students. This implied that parents are not providing enough resources for the girl child at home such as books and fees to enable students to carry out their activities at school and home.

The study found out that social and economic background affects the girl child mostly as compared to the boy child.

The study found out that teacher, parents and relatives influence pupil’s choice of subjects in school and career opportunities.

The findings from the study reveal that chores at home seriously affected the girl child performance as compared to the male child, as much work is left for the female child to do.
The study also found out that there is lack of information from career guidance especially on the jobs found in the geographic field. Relevance of geography later in life is also lacking.

The study also found out that female pupils regard geography and related careers as a male subject. This means female students will end up concentrating in subjects regarded as feminine for example history and religious studies. The study also found out that the presence of a female teacher in the subject plays a pivotal role in encouraging the girl child to do well.

The study found out that a positive attitude and high aspirations plays a pivotal role in performance of a student. In this case the girls they had low educational aspirations than boys.

Another finding was that there are factors which affect the girl child to drop out of school than the boy child for instance pregnancies.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that parents and relatives should be educated on the need to give children time to study at home especially girls.

The study recommends that children must be given the opportunity to choose the subjects they want to do at school. Children must also be encouraged to work hard in all of their subjects and teachers have to encourage pupils to work hard without basing on gender.
The study recommends that teachers are encouraged to take a leading role in career education. As agents of change their thinking, attitudes and behaviour should be gender sensitive. There is need for teachers to motivate students to the fact that there is nothing to stop either boys or girls to pass geography and get into any career field provided they have the interest and ability and take advantage of the opportunity.

The study also recommends that male geography teachers should be equal with female geography teachers at the school. In addition female teachers should be made to facilitate field trips, practical to motivate female students.

Also women with sound geographic background should be made to lead seminars and facilitates as guest lecturers to pupils. It is important to take into account that a female teacher can represent an inspiring and motivating role model for girls and demonstrate to boys, girls, teachers and community that women can be equally professional and perform well as men.

Quite a number of students miss school due to lack of fees. There is need for an effective social safety net better than BEAM which will meet the students’ fees payment without fail every term.

5.3 Conclusion

The study on factors causing gender performance difference at Nyarukunda Secondary School aimed to establish the reasons why O level female students are failing to perform well in geography. The researcher hoped to get findings that would help teachers, students, School development committees and the community to understand the factors causing students to poorly perform well.
The findings of the study are based on a close examination of sample of students and the Head of department of humanities through document analysis, questionnaires, tasks and interviews.

The findings showed that lack of support, gender stereotyping by parents and teachers, lack of motivating roles and also socio-economic factors are causing poor pass rates by females. It is the hope of the researcher that other researches on gender performances will be carried on.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

FIRST SECTION

TICK THE CORRECT BOX

1. Sex

   Male   Female

2. Age

   

3. Total number of subjects you do at school?:

   5-7   7-8   8-10

4. Subjects you prefer at school.

   Arts   commercials   Sciences

5. Subjects you enjoy at school.

   


6. Do you enjoy Geography?

Yes  No

7. Boys and girls are they treated the same in the teaching and learning of geography?

Yes  No

8. Do you want or wish to pursue a career in geography?

Yes  No

9. Do you have enough information about careers in geographic field?

Yes  No

10. What is the attitude of teachers in geography?

..............................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................

11. Are there enough resources in geography? Is failure caused by lack of resources?

..............................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................

12. Do you as a male/female student get enough support from your parents/guardian to promote learning of geography? What form of support do you receive?

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...................................................................................................................
13. Is your performance at school in geography affected by house chores? If yes what kind of house chores do you do at home affects you?
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...................................................................................................................................................................................................................

14. Did you pass geography in the end of term exams you wrote? What percentage did you get?
.............................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................................................

16. Is geography regarded important as any other subject at your school? How is the subject regarded?
.............................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................................................

17. Who do you stay with at home? How do they play a role you passing or failing of geography?
.............................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................................................

18. Are your parents able to pay your fees in time?
.............................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................................................................................
............

APPENDIX 2. INTERVIEWS FOR THE GEOGRAPHY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT.

2  The professional qualification you have to be the Head of department?
3  When did you start teaching geography?

4  What level do you teach?

5  For how long have you been at Nyarukunda Secondary school?

6  What are the trends of geography pass rate in geography for the past years?

7  In your opinion what is the root cause of failure in geography?

8  How many students dropped the subject as from 2010-2014?

9  What was the reason for these drop outs?

10 Do you have enough teaching and learning resources in geography?

11 Is failure by female students only in geography?

12 What form of support and help do you give your pupils in geography?

13 How many male and female geography teachers do you have?
14  What are you doing as a department to improve the performance rate?

15  Do you have qualified teachers in your department?