“THE PERCEPTIONS OF GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS ON THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEW CURRICULUM IN ZIMBABWE”

BY

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B1543505

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION OF BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION, FACULTY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

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APPROVAL FORM

I, T. Samukange hereby certify that I have read this project entitled “THE PERCEPTIONS OF GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS ON THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEW CURRICULUM IN ZIMBABWE” conducted by Moreblessing T. Katiyo in partial fulfilment of the Post Graduate Diploma in Science Education requirements. I further approve its submission and recommend to Bindura University of Science Education for it to be examined.

________________________________________________________

Name of Supervisor

________________________________________________________

Signature of Supervisor

________________________________________________________

Date signed
DECLARATION

I, Moreblessing T. Katiyo, student no B1543505, declare that this project is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Post graduate Diploma in Science Education in the Department of Science and Mathematics Education, Faculty of Science Education of the Bindura University of Science Education. It has not been submitted before for any degree in any other University.

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ABSTRACT

This research sought to address the problem of teachers, including Geography teachers, who lacked a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and meaning of the new curriculum which was rolled out in January 2017 by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The research aim was to define the role of geography under the new curriculum in Zimbabwe through the perceptions of Geography teachers. At the centre of this research was the identification of key skills and themes in secondary geography education, the usefulness of geography to the society and a review of the implementation of the geography curriculum so far. The descriptive survey was used within the qualitative research paradigm. Questionnaires and interviews were employed as data collection methods from a purposively selected data source in Murewa district. The main findings of the study show that themes like sustainability, progressive education, adoption of advanced educational technologies, the integrated approach and experimentation are central to geography education. The key skills identified were problem solving skills, research skills, information technologies application, entrepreneurship skills and field work skills. The results point towards an unquestionable significance of geography in the curriculum as it imparts skills and awareness on scientific enquiry, citizenship education, empowerment of communities and economic progress. The challenges facing the new curriculum such as lack of complete and clear assessment criteria and shortage of support resources were also revealed.
DEDICATION

To my wife, a teacher by profession, who so wished me to be a teacher as well.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In a post graduate study, one is indebted to so many people and organizations for assistance, such that it is practically impossible to list them all. Yet without them, this research could not have been undertaken. At the risk of all possible omissions, I would particularly like to thank the following people and institutions:

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Dr Manyani, the chairman of the Geography and Environmental Sciences Department at the Bindura University of Science Education for his assistance from the start.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, schools, heads and teachers in the schools covered by the study for making the fieldwork for the dissertation possible.
Most importantly I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to all the geography teachers who participated in this study. I say this because they motivated me to go out to the field and find out more on what geography teaching is all about under the auspices of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe.

However, any flaws that may be perceived in this document remain my full ultimate responsibility.

MT Katiyo
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<td>ZIMSEC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe School Examination Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESD</td>
<td>Education for Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
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<td>GIS</td>
<td>Geographic Information Systems</td>
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<td>GPS</td>
<td>Geographic Positioning Systems</td>
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<td>Information and Communication Technologies</td>
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research was situated in the qualitative research paradigm. The research aimed to question the place of Geography as a subject in the secondary school curriculum. It is not the goal of the researcher to redefine the envisioned objectives of the national ZIMSEC Geography syllabi, but rather, the intention of the research was to test the existence and or the possibility of goal congruency between the curriculum designers and the curriculum implementers. The researcher intended to use the ideas of classroom practitioners to generate knowledge on the role of geography to the learner and the society. Attention shall be given to the shortfalls and strengths enshrined in the new curriculum. This report begins by giving a brief background of circumstances motivating the researcher to undertake the investigation. From the background the identified problems will be stated, leading to the purpose of the study and the formulation of research questions and objectives. After the statement of the objectives a justification of the study will be given to prove its significance. General assumptions will be stated followed by the delimitations of the study and the limitations. The chapter will close with a definition of operational terms used in the study and a summary of the chapter.

1.2 Background to the study

The design and implementation of the new curriculum for primary and secondary education in Zimbabwe has drawn overwhelming interest from all stakeholders. Some have been skeptical of the curriculum, while others are very optimistic about it. There has been as much criticism as there has been support for the new curriculum from all walks of life. Needless to say, the most affected and keenly interested stakeholder in matters concerning the new curriculum is the teacher because it directly affects him/her daily experiences as the curriculum implementer. The researcher was involved in the preliminary workshops arranged by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education towards the culmination of the New Curriculum’s launch in January 2017. It was from these experiences that the researcher identified various points of interest among teachers concerning the new
curriculum, hence motivating him to undertake this research project. The researcher realized that teachers were inherently disinterested in the changes associated with the new curriculum roll out. Moreover, teachers had various questions regarding the new curriculum that even the staff developing personnel as well as senior administrative officers were not able to answer satisfactorily. Some teachers complained about complex rearrangement of topics and concepts in the new syllabi, while some noted insufficient meaningful change of the curriculum in the light of modern learning needs. Lunch time would elapse without one noticing it as teachers viciously and passionately debated these issues. In some cases, the discussions would go beyond academic debate, spilling over into emotion-filled quarrelling.

Teachers aside, one would be interested to know how much tension has been gathering up regarding the new curriculum in the civil society. In the question and answer session of the Parliament of Zimbabwe on the 9th of February 2017, one member of parliament went on to ask the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Hon. Dr Lazarus Dokora that; “what is your motivation behind this new curriculum thing? Why is it that you are so energetic about it, yet it is so stressing to teachers, parents and the learners? What is your motivation? “In response, the minister cited the Nziramasanga commission as his motivation, arguing that it was his mandate to fulfill the recommendations of the presidential enquiry into education and training so as to align the country’s educational system to modern economic, social and global skills demands (Nziramasanga, 1999). It follows therefore that the new curriculum has had much attention from the teachers, politicians, students, the media, parents and publishing houses. From all these observations, the researcher realized that there were chances of teachers being confused about the real meaning of teaching geography. Thus, the researcher streamed the challenges regarding the new curriculum to Geography so that he can have a workable focus and scope with the hope to generate valuable insights for his discipline as an active Geographer. Therefore, the sentiments of all stakeholders regarding the new curriculum have motivated the teacher to enquire about other teachers’ views regarding their understanding of the aims of Geography in the new curriculum as well as what they think should be the purpose of Geography learning in the modern world.
1.3 Statement of the Problem

The problem identified by the researcher is that teachers lacked a clear understanding of the philosophy behind the new curriculum, hence making it difficult to define the role of Geography in the Zimbabwean new secondary school curriculum. Moreover, geography has been left out of the core subjects in the new curriculum. Considering the vast potential that lies in Geography learning, the researcher felt that the curriculum might be missing an important core element. Could it be possible that the custodians of this noble discipline should feel guilty for the cowardice of letting the nation ignore a fundamental discipline in the core-subjects package? Furthermore, after analyzing the new Geography syllabus, the researcher felt that there was no solid connection between the key values enshrined in the Nziramasanga commission and the new syllabus. These values include among other things; the focus on equipping learners with practical, life sustaining skills, encouraging technological innovation, problem solving and citizenship education (Nziramasanga, 2015). This anomaly may lead to poor performance by the students especially at Advanced level where the general pass rate for Geography has mostly been low and quite unsatisfactory. When something is new or the way that something is done is changed there will be high chances of poor goal attainment, sabotage due to resistance to change or even the change itself turning things for the worst. Thus, the researcher got inspired to consult the views of other teachers so as to fill-in the knowledge gaps.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study is not a free-lance essay, but rather work intended to fill some knowledge gaps in the design, implementation and evaluation of the new curriculum in the specific context of Geography as a subject within the curriculum. As such it should be objective, guided by clear focus areas. This research aims to explore the ideas of Geography teachers on the purpose of geography in the curriculum and society and to justify the importance of Geography in modern global communities as a way of marking the beginning of the new curriculum review process.
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the above stated objectives, the following questions shall be answered;

i) What themes or concepts are important in the Geography curriculum?

ii) What are the critical skills that Geography should offer to the learner?

iii) Why is Geography important in the modern society?

iv) Does the approach incorporated in the teaching of Geography under the new curriculum equip the learner with the best skills that the subject can actually offer?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is cowardice and incompetency for students of a discipline to remain silent when their discipline is at stake. Green, (2008) in his book on power and poverty argued that the weaker members of society can only attain justice by active citizenship and collective bargaining. In the case of curriculum implementation in Zimbabwe, the process is more politically controlled with the curriculum development unit doing much of the designing (Gatawa, 1990). As such, the curriculum may be imposed on the teacher for implementation; hence the teacher is the weaker stakeholder in this case. As an active citizen, one should engage in the curriculum design, implementation and evaluation process of his/her country to avoid being a victim of the curriculum. This task should be completed by engaging in candid academic debate without limits so as to provoke rational thinking and sound judgment. Geography teachers like this researcher must seize the opportunity to review the new curriculum in the context of their discipline so as to correct any discrepancies or to enhance continuous improvement of the quality of Geography teaching and learning. Mavhunga (2006:144) confirms this view as he emphasises the imperative nature of curriculum analysis when he asserts that it is the business of the curriculum “— to overcome meaninglessness in any education system, hence the need to constantly subject the curriculum to some analysis.” Geography as a science must empower human development, whilst as an art, it must be a means to express one’s scientific creativity as well as a means to interpret, explain and change societies. This is only achievable if the best philosophies are integrated into the
teaching of Geography. It is hoped that this research shall expose the key philosophy and practices that should be employed in the roll out of the new curriculum.

The insights from this research will help fellow Geography teachers in developing a clearer picture of the function of Geography in a globalized and highly competitive world. Teachers will gain more from this research as they will gain a detailed analysis of the role of Geography beyond the national syllabus’s preamble, aims and objectives which are stated in summary and in vague terms.

It is also hoped that the findings from this research will help curriculum designers with insights needed to in improving the curriculum. Since the new curriculum is already in effect, the insights will be useful in curriculum review processes.

Apart from the above, the Ministry of education will benefit from the findings of the study, assisting them to identify areas that need staff development where teachers fail to interpret to new curriculum very well. This will result in overall improved quality performance by the learners in the long run.

Last but not least, this research work will be very useful to the researcher as he will gain more insight both as a researcher and from interacting with academic experts. Thus, the researcher’s research skills shall be enhanced. Most importantly, the whole process will help in the professional development of the researcher as a geographer.

1.7 Assumptions

For viability of the study, certain assumptions shall be considered holding because the research topic is very broad. It is assumed that the problem identified by the researcher at the former group A school is being experienced in most schools in Zimbabwe. This is important for the generalization of the research’s findings. In addition, it is also assumed that the role of Geography is the same regardless of the level of study be it junior, ordinary or advanced level, since Geography intends to cover the same objectives generally. It is also an assumption that this research will employ the best methods in the whole enquiry process.
The data collection process shall mainly be done in schools within the 15km radius from Murewa Township so as to cut on travel expenses. This study is not an explanatory work on the new Geography syllabi, but rather an informative enquiry undertaken in order to appraise the new curriculum with specific attention to geography. The views of teachers shall be analyzed and converted into information but no attempt will be made to test the applicability of their ideas. From a population of over 80 Geography teachers, a sample size of 20 teachers will be worked on. No particular attention shall be given to gender of the participants although level of academic qualifications shall be considered as well as teaching experience.

The data will be based on a very small geographical base. This may reduce the relevance of the data as the sample size is very small if it is intended for application to the whole nation. However, the researcher has to operate within a realistic budget guided by time and monetary constraints. Another constraint is that the researcher may not have absolute control of the participants since he will only work with those willing to cooperate up to the stage where they feel comfortable with. This may compromise the attainment of high quality information generation. These limitations should however be offset by the quality of the data extracted rather than the quantity.

For purposes of clarity and to ensure that the reader and the researcher are on the same page, key terms have to be defined. Creswell, (2007) maintains that a perception is a subjective, personal view about a subject, behavior or phenomena which one has interacted with. Hence a perception is a judgment of the phenomena under analysis. He stresses that a perception is both a reasoned logical presentation of facts accompanied by intuition or opinion. Thus a perception is a conception guided by ones cognitive competency, level of education, experience and personal values. In this research, a perception shall be treated within the parameters of the above given definition.
Within the context of this research, a Geography teacher will be one who specialized in the field of Geography and environmental science with a pedagogical background. Therefore all the participants should be Geography teachers by profession. Teachers teaching Geography without a background of pedagogics in Geography teaching will be excluded from the data collection process. This will make it easy for the researcher to approach the problem form an educational point and not from a layman’s view.

According to the Oxford dictionary of education, a role is a purpose or the importance of an object or a subject. In this research, role will mean the significance of Geography to the learner and to the society. In other words role will mean the same as place or duty, or significance as the researcher tries to answer questions like, what is the place of geography in the new curriculum? What is the duty of Geography teaching and learning in the context of the new curriculum?

Among several definitions, Gunter (2012) defines Geography as a cross-cutting discipline bridging the sciences and the social science paradigms with the goal to assist the learner with appropriate skills to analyze the spatial interactions in the natural and human worlds so as to account for cause and effect, scale and form, as well as the justification of differences between phenomena. Gunter (2012) goes on to say that the supreme goal of Geography is to assist man in environmental and spatial problem solving. Peterson, (2008) views Geography as a body of knowledge generated through observing, experimenting and experiencing the environment which one encounters with emphasis on understanding how that environment works, its setbacks and opportunities for advancement. These definitions satisfactorily fit the researcher’s conceptualization of Geography as a subject.

Last but not least, according to Kerr (1998) as cited in Mavhunga (2006), a curriculum is a set of subjects which form a part or the whole experiences of a child in a formal schooling situation. The most important thing from this definition is that Geography is a subject; hence it is part of the curriculum. Primrose and Alexander (2013) argue that a curriculum entails all the experiences that a child experiences during the learning process. This definition implies that a curriculum entails both the planned learning activities and the unplanned learning experiences(Tanner & Tanner, 1995). In the context of this definition, a child interacts with geographical
phenomena both in class and outside the class. Both definitions will be employed throughout this study. The new curriculum in Zimbabwe was unveiled to schools in January 2017 following a nationwide curriculum review process.

This study was inspired by an active engagement with current affairs in which the teaching field is overwhelmed by the various consequences of change. The researcher has identified a knowledge gap whereby the curriculum designers fail to give a clear picture of the role of Geography in facilitating the materialization of the values advocated by the philosophy behind the new curriculum. Instead of cherishing the approaches in the Nziramasanga commission of 1999, which might be now outdated, the researcher hopes to use the ideas of other teachers to unearth the operational goals which geography should attain in the life of a modern global citizen. The research is vital as a step forward in the process of curriculum review/evaluation. From this introduction, the research topic is juxtaposed against other related literature to avoid reinventing the wheel and develop informed methods of enquiry.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the researcher has consulted other research and academic schools of thought that shed more light on the topic understudy to the research topic. To be frank, finding accurate literature related to the topic under consideration has not been an easy task, as such the researcher had to infer and relate near-accurate studies. Partly this challenge has been due to the obvious fact that the new curriculum is still a new topic in the Zimbabwean academic circles especially with reference to Geography. The other problems are limited access to a wide range of academic sources. Both theoretical and empirical literature has been visited from a critical perspective.

2.1 Skills in Geography learning

Before indulging into what Zimbabwean teachers think Geography teaching should achieve, the researcher inquired about other views in the Geography literature. Mahmet (20II) conducted a study in secondary schools in Turkey with an aim to study realization levels of geographical skills. Mehmet (20II) argues that, the main goal of high school Geography education is to equip pupil with skills which increase their spatial perceptions. Turkey’s Geography curriculum whose main elements are skills, concepts, values, and attitudes was adopted in 2005 (Mehmet, 20II). Mehmet (20II) used a descriptive survey to assert the level of skill realisation among high school pupils drawn form a simple sample within reachable parameters. From the findings of his study, Mehmet suggested that, in order to equip pupils with adequate geographical skills, “skill-based” activities should be employed.

Mehmet (20II) identified the key skills which Geography should offer as; critical thinking skill, creative thinking skill, communication and empathy skill, problem-solving skill, deciding skill, using information technology skill and entrepreneur skills. Subject-wise, Mehmet maintained that the afore mentioned skills work hand in hand with; map skills, field skills, observation skills, statistical literacy, time
perception skills, proof using/ verification and geographic investigation skills. Mehmet (20II) argues that Geographic investigation is one of the basic skills emanating from an encounter with Geography science. It can be defined as, ‘handling the events and objects in the environments according to the fundamental perspectives of Geography science, explaining and developing solutions and suggestions for the problems with the methods and techniques used by Geography’ (Mehmet, 20II:2168).

In this vein, Mehmet (20II) emulated the Turkish Geography curriculum body for upholding the view that, the subject must be learned by the students, not taught by the teachers, advocating for a rather new approach in Geography education via active learning philosophy. Thus, Mehmet’s findings can be explained in pedagogical lens as his findings fit with those of our own Zimbabwean researchers like Dambudzo (2015) as well as those of educational philosopher Dewey’s democracy in education approach (Dewey, 1938). His findings on geographic skills partially answer questions I and 2 of my research albeit falling short on context. Thus in the case of this research, borrowing from Mehmet’s study, the researcher will try and unearth the Geography teacher’s perceptions on the room for teacher-student empowerment under the new curriculum.

2.2 The role of Geography in sustainable development

In his research titled ‘The Matter of Geography in Education for Sustainable Development: The Case of Danish University Geography’ conducted with top ranking Danish university professors, Grindsted (2015) carried a case study of the role of Geography in dealing with sustainability issues in the curriculum. The challenges with Grindsted’s research in the context of the study at hand is that he had a thrust on tertiary education curricula, touching sparingly on the primary and secondary school curricula. Moreover, his research is too Eurocentric as he was studying for his region. Nonetheless, he deserves the credit for pointing out some discrepancies in the Geography curricula which are not only exclusive to Europe but also to Zimbabwe.

In the 2015 follow up paper, Grindsted aimed to examine how Geography in Danish higher education contributes to ‘education for sustainable development’ (
ESD) approaches. In light of this problem, Grindsted (2015) tried to answer the research questions such as: (1) Is the human environment theme being reconfigured in Geography? (2) How do Geography courses contribute to ESD? and (3) How are issues of sustainability addressed in curricula? This research has a similar interest to Grindsted’s study as it questions the possibility of radical changes in the new curriculum in Zimbabwe.

Interestingly enough, as Grindsted was trying to inquire on the role of Geography in the curricula on addressing critical issues related to sustainability, he realised that there was a shift in the role of Geography (Grindsted, 2015:16). Geography has migrated from a focus on describing and explaining spatial characteristics to one that seeks to advice policy making on responsible use of the environment.

Some of the findings by Grindsted show that most teachers and academics acknowledged that the concept of sustainability is paramount to the Geography curricula at any academic level although others preferred to try other concepts like resilience, vulnerability, ecology or other concepts flexible in geographical analysis. Bednarz (2006: 239) as cited in Grindsted (2015) states that: “It seems that non-geographers also think that Geography has an important role to play in environmental education”. On a similar note, Sayer (2009), as cited in Grindsted (2015: 15) advocated for progressive incorporation of sustainability themes into Geography curriculums, arguing that: “global warming presents an enormous threat to humanity, but the response from academia, including geography, has been relatively slow…I find this surprising, indeed astonishing, for there could hardly be a more important Geographical topic” (Sayer, 2009: 350).

From this perspective, the researcher has been motivated to investigate the degree to which Geography teachers are satisfied by the coverage of sustainability in the secondary school curriculum as well as their expectations regarding the issue.

There are quite a lot of avenues of comparative analysis that can be done on the Zimbabwean approach to geographical concepts in comparison to other countries. As Grindsted (2015) points out, in 2007 the Nordic Council of Ministers committed to boost environmental education by devising a strategy that states that the Nordic countries should integrate knowledge on sustainable development into curricula from primary school, secondary school, adult education and higher education.
In the same vein, the European University Association’s president, Maria Helena Nazaré, acknowledged that the concerns of sustainability pose the greatest challenges for humanity, quoted verbatim as saying: “Sustainability is the biggest issue for humanity on Earth… informing sustainable values and achievements should be part of education” (Grindsted, 2015: 15).

From this observation, this researcher may go a step further and test how teachers feel about the treatment of sustainability issues in the new secondary school geography curriculum. Is the integrated approach being applied in the teaching of environmental issues in secondary education? If not what should be done?

In a study in the same context as Grindsted’s stand-point, Dambudzo (2015) tackles the role of Geography in education for sustainable development (ESD) from a general perspective with Zimbabwe as a case study. Dambudzo makes fundamental proposals relevant to the current study. Dambudzo (2015) argues that ecologically relevant teaching is one that focuses on problem solving and practical approaches as what happens when projects are used. Dambudzo’s (2015: 12) study of urban and rural schools implementation of the curriculum revealed that the best approach to sustainable education is one that stimulates learner interaction. Under such conditions of learning, it becomes possible that the impact of education becomes clearly visible to the community, argues Dambudzo (2015). He goes on to emphasize that for the curriculum to impact on society, its assessment methodologies should reinforce curriculum implementation by prioritising demonstration of competence rather than just subject knowledge. In this light, he maintains that a curriculum must be regularly adjusted to keep pace with the times. Dambudzo (2015, p. 16) quotes Jacobs (2009) who underscored the point by saying:

“We need to overhaul, update and inject life into our curriculum and dramatically alter the format of what schools look like, match the times in which we live. Our responsibility is to prepare the learners in our care for their world and their future. There is rising concern about 21st century skills and tools for our learners.”

Hence Zimbabwe has taken the right direction by updating its curriculum but the question remains, are we doing it right?
According to Dambudzo (2015:16), the above question can be best analyzed through asking even more questions about the curriculum such as: Does the curriculum foster competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes—openness and critical thinking, tolerance and respect, and holistic personal development)? Is it relevant? Is it feasible? Is it assessable? Are there school/community links and integration of school and labour market? Is it practically problem-solving oriented? Is it challenging and motivating? Does it integrate stakeholder views? The results of Dambudzo’s (2015) study showed that, although both rural and urban schools shared the same curriculum document, their implementation varied from school to school as some schools were more innovative than others, thereby incorporating the integration with the environment and industry, and developing competencies for the world after school by using modern technology in their curriculum. In this study the data collection will seek to answer the questions raised above as they help to answer the research questions of the current study.

2.3 The role of geography in international affairs

In their discussion paper titled: ‘UN Interventions: The Role of Geography’, Duque, Jetter and Sosa (2014) focused on the role of Geography in understanding international conflicts, global peace cooperation and the allocation of foreign humanitarian aid. Duque, Jetter and Sosa (2014) used one of the most fundamental dimensions of Geography, that is; distance, in their study. They looked at the relationship between international conflict interventions by the United Nations Security Council and distance of the affected states from the permanent and non-permanent member states of the United Nations Security Council. Their methodology involved analysis of secondary sources as well as statistical data from the World Bank which was quantitatively manipulated using the ‘probit framework’ to test for the probabilities of interventions across various quantifiable variables.

Duque et al (2014) tried to address study questions like; Why does the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) decide to intervene in some conflicts but not in others? For example, the reluctance of the UN to act decisively on the Rwandan genocide of 1994, to which the then Secretary General Kofi Annan later admitted that “the international community failed Rwanda” (Duque et al. 2014, p.2).
However, other contemporary conflicts such as the Yugoslav wars, due to their proximity to Europe’s super powers have received much greater attention from the UN. Duque and colleagues do not rule out the possibility that geographical factors would have played in differently had Rwanda been a European country. In the light of this argument, Duque et al, (2014) attempted to shed light on the factors associated with UN military interventions, particularly focusing on the geographical component in relation to the five permanent UNSC members.

In theory, the geographical proximity to the UNSC members needs not be questioned concerning UN interventions since the UN guidelines assert its impartial commitment to keeping peace throughout the world. However, Duque et al’s (2014, p. 1) analysis suggests otherwise as they argued that:

*Our paper adds to the literature on a potential bias in UNSC decisions by showing that interventions tend to occur in countries that are geographically closer to its three permanent Western members…’ (Duque et al, 2014, p. 1).

The limitations of their study in the context of the current research are that it has more emphasis on the relevance of geo-spatial factors on international relations than the pedagogical thrust of teaching and learning Geography as a discipline. It also employs methods situated in the quantitative paradigm yet it is handling matters that are best understood when examined from a qualitative perspective as the authors admit in their concluding remarks that, “Political decisions are often made behind closed doors, and many times their true intentions are difficult to expose”(Duque, et al, 2014: 1).

However, something useful can be derived from their research, which this researcher can test in the field. The researcher has to investigate what Geography teachers think about the role of geography in understanding international affairs and the degree to which the new curriculum is covering this dimension.

In an official pamphlet published by the Canadian Council for Geographic Education (CCGE), under the banner: ‘the importance of Geography in the school curriculum’, emphasis has been placed on the role of Geography in the moulding of holistic citizens who have knowledge of the environmental issues around them. The
CCGE pointed out that Geography give learners a better appreciation of global cultural diversity, its merits and challenges.

2.4 The role of geography in economic development

The role of geography in the curriculum is not a new issue in academia. Krugman (1998) advocated for the application of geographic theories and models in assessing economic potential, challenges and solutions of various economic development zones.

Krugman’s research shows that complex relationships among economic factors like labour, rentals, raw material, access to ports, distance from markets and cost of transport can be manipulated in the context of geographic and economic theories to guide policy or at least account for variation in the scale and pattern of economic development across the geographical divide. In the process, Krugman (1998) asserts clearly the critical role of geography or at least economic geography in economics as he argues that; “...the reason that Geography has finally made it into the economic mainstream is therefore obvious: imperfect competition is no longer regarded as impossible to model...”

Krugman suggests the application of economic Geography theories like the Dixit-Stiglitz, icebergs, evolution, and the computer models approach (Krugman and Venables, 1995).

Through the above stated techniques, Krugman (1998) illustrates that geographical factors like climate, diseases like malaria, highly populated ports and navigable rivers have played an advantage for western economies in the past millennium. However, improved transport and communication facilities as well as the corresponding continuing reduction of transport costs, improvements in fighting tropical diseases and increasing populations may posit an opportunity for developing countries in the new millennium.

What is however important to note from his case is that the Geographer has an important tool to exploit towards economic development. Krugman’s insights on the potential of geographic theories and computer based models have motivated this researcher to inquire about; how Geography teachers feel about the employment of computer modelling Information technologies in the new curriculum in secondary
Geography education? This question is fundamental in the appraisal of the new secondary school geography curriculum.

2.5 Role of geography in science education and practice

As old as it may appear, Rickey and Tuchinsky’s (1980) work on the role of Geography in the sciences is more interesting. Their article titled ‘An Application of Geography to Mathematics: History of the Integral of the Secant’ aims to show how ancient cartographers applied geographical concepts into mathematics and vice versa. They demonstrated how the geographic principles used in cartography and mathematics have been developed from conjures to real proven mathematical formulae to explain the unfinished job by Mercator in the Mercator map projection. In this paper, Rickey and Tuchinsky’s (1980) show how simple models can be used in schools to prove the Mercator projection. A look at the new Geography syllabi shows that there has been sufficient attention towards the application of mathematical principles in mapwork such as the Pythagoras theorem. However, there seems to be less coverage of how mathematical principles can be applied to enhance the teaching and learning of geographical aspects or vice versa. The researcher will inquire on teachers’ views regarding this concern.

2.6 The role of geography in the curriculum

A study similar to the current research was conducted by Aladag and Aladag (2010), under the topic, ‘The Role of Geography in the Primary Schools curriculum: Example of Turkey’. The aim of their study was to determine the role of Geography in primary education Life Studies curriculum of 2005. They focused on the learning objectives as well as teaching and learning processes. Their research question was, “In every class level, which geographic skills and knowledge are planning to gain in the curriculum? They also looked into the appropriate techniques and strategies recommended in the teaching of geography. Aladag and Aladag’s (2010) research reveals interesting things that our curriculum might be found lacking in. In the themes and standards at primary level from first grade to third grade, pupils are exposed to concepts like map reading, problem solving, basic astronomy, natural hazards and managing hazardous environments among others. At early childhood
formal education, Turkish pupils are exposed to a rigorous geographical curriculum as can be revealed by Aladag and Aladag (2010):

“some skills aimed in this lesson are critical thinking, research, communication, problem solving, decision making security, self-direction, using sources effectively, knowing the basic concepts of science...as students realize changing, interaction, cause and effect relation, similarity, mutual dependency concepts”

The differences between Aladag and Aladag’s work and the current paper are that their work was based on one case study of Turkey. This limits the applicability of their findings to answer the questions raised in this paper in a Zimbabwean situation. Moreover, they focused mainly on the primary education curriculum whereas this paper has an interest in the treatment of Geography in the secondary school curriculum.

However, a close analysis of the Turkish approach to Geography teaching at primary level leaves one with a curiosity to know how they progress to secondary school Geography. One thing is obvious though, that a good footing in the discipline prepares pupils for competence at higher levels. If primary school children in turkey are introduced to earth observation and practical problem solving, how much similar challenge are Zimbabwe’s learners being exposed to at form one or any level? The researcher will use this Turkish challenge as a debate provoking start point when interviewing teachers.

In a reader designed for the Open University Flexible Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) on ‘Teaching Geography in secondary schools’, Smith (2005) and others argue that Geography is one of the most important school subjects and one of the most difficult to teach. As such, they argue that Geography deserves a place in the curriculum, not because it pays, but because we just cannot have a noble education system without Geography.

Smith (2005) stresses the point by Goodson (1992: 66) who suggested that,

“dominant social groups in society have been able to establish their language, and their knowledge priorities, learning styles, pedagogical preferences, in the formal curriculum. These dominant groups achieve this by dictating their notions of important and useful knowledge, their ways of
presenting truth, their ways of arguing and establishing correctness, and the institutional norms by which academic and scholastic success is defined and assessed."

In the light of the above theoretical framework, this researcher will try to investigate, on one hand, if there is any possibility of a geography curriculum that is elitist or one that has been hijacked by a certain dominant group. On the other hand, attention will be paid to assert the role of geography in the lives of the marginalized groups.

2.7 The State and the Curriculum

As the researcher was reviewing literature on curriculum, interesting revelations about the facts and myths in the history of curriculum development in Zimbabwe have been encountered. Jansen (1991:76) in a journal article titled: ‘The State and Curriculum in the Transition to Socialism: The Zimbabwean Experience,’ wrote that, “Much still remains to be done if African education systems, either in their curricula or their methods are to be divorced from colonial systems.” Since independence, the Zimbabwean educational system has been struggling to win itself off from colonial hangovers from all sectors of the society, education included. Similarly, one may wonder; what took the Presidential Commission for Inquiry into Education and Training of 1999 (Nziramasanga Commission) to take so long to implement? Understanding these issues is central to curriculum review processes so as not to recycle old mistakes. One important explanation for curriculum challenges is state meddling as explained below in brief.

Jansen (1991:76) argues that, “across curriculum perspectives, there is a broad consensus in the literature that postcolonial curriculum reconstruction has failed in fundamental ways.’ Jansen (1991) rests the blame for this trend on the concept of Curriculum continuity. According to Jansen (1991), curriculum continuity refers to the relative stability in the colonial curriculum content as codified in textbooks, syllabi and examinations during the postcolonial period. Curriculum continuity creates a stale and obsolete knowledge base among its recipients, thereby failing the economy in matters of progress and development. This is true in the face of rapid technological changes and dynamic societies. The reason for curriculum continuity
is chiefly due to too much state meddling with educational issues, which usually takes the form of centralized curriculum design, implementation and evaluation (Jansen 1991).

Hence struggles over education (curriculum) distribution, content, and objectives are therefore profoundly ideological political struggles, often hijacked by selfish personal propagandas. Thus, the curriculum becomes a platform of conflict and contestation since it embodies the attitudes, values, norms, objectives, interests, directions and priorities of the state and other powerful players such as the church/religion, argues Jansen (1991).

This insight given by Jansen here is important in the view of this study as it gives the researcher and the reader an overview of the trends and patterns in curriculum design from a Zimbabwean perspective. Throughout the study, attention will be paid to test the Geography teacher’s perspective of the new curriculum with Geography at the centre, on issues such as curriculum continuity, the milestones and setbacks enshrined in the new secondary school Geography curriculum.

2.8 Chapter summary

From the review of related literature, it is evident that there has been little focus on research that is directly concerned on the role of geography in the society or curriculum. Researchers have preferred to focus on the content of Geography with little interest to concretely define the discipline to the extent that one anonymous professor once defined Geography as “the study of everything”. For an established discipline like Geography, it is the role of its practitioners to always redefine it and reconstruct it in accordance with the times; hence this research surely has a knowledge gap to fill especially in the context of the Zimbabwean new curriculum rollout. The geographic community agrees that geography has a role in economic development, sustainable development, global affairs, science exploration and heritage education. The engagement with the varied literature has exposed various insights on theoretical frameworks, philosophical insights and methodological ideas that the researcher could have taken for granted and its omission could have jeopardized the quality of this research. Therefore, the researcher owes credit to scholars for their invaluable insights.
The interaction with various literature in the preceding section has enlightened the researcher on appropriate research methodology. The majority of the sources reviewed were situated within the qualitative research paradigm, employing mainly the descriptive survey research design and the case study method. This chapter will report how the research was actually conducted, that is, the research design, sampling methods, research instruments, data collection procedures, data presentation and analysis procedures closing off with the chapter summary.

3.1 Research design

The researcher has chosen to situate himself in the qualitative research paradigm since the issue under study is a subjective issue, one that deals with individual tastes, perceptions and judgments.

This study was conducted using the descriptive survey design. The descriptive survey method has been chosen because it allows the researcher and the participants to describe what they see over and beyond (Babbie, 1997: 62 in Primrose, & Alexander, 2013). Thus the researcher has chosen this method so as to allow respondents to usher out their exact perceptions of the status of Geography and its role in the new curriculum.

The method chosen here is anti-positivist in theory, but practically, the researcher was coming from a neutral perspective, to handle a subject that cuts across the sciences and the arts. The descriptive survey could thus fail to yield verifiable information in some respects but the researcher will make an effort to produce a balanced analysis.

Through the descriptive survey, the researcher was able to get the details on the teachers’ perceptions through flexible data collection methods. The researcher could have had opted for action research but due to time limits and the challenges of being embedded within the research in formal schools restricted his flexibility with this
design. Hence the descriptive survey suited both the nature of the research topic as well as the abilities of the researcher.

3.1.2 Research context

This study was conducted in a manner that can be discussed in three ways namely geographical location, timing of the research and the scope of coverage.

3.1.3 Geographical location

The research was conducted in Murewa district, approximately eighty kilometres from Harare. This is a district with mainly rural schools. Most of the schools are council run, with several missionary schools and government run schools. There are only 2 urban schools which were included in the sample and six other rural schools.

The rationale of choosing Murewa District is that it is the residing area for the researcher, which goes a long way on cutting down logistical costs associated with the research such as transport and time. The nature of the research will not be significantly influenced by locational variables, hence the single district focus suffices.

3.1.4 Timing of the research

The research was conducted in the first term of 2017 during the early stages of the launch of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe. This term ran from the 10th of January to the 6th of April. The timing of the research may affect the quality of the research findings as teachers are not yet fully familiarized with the dictates of the new curriculum. However, it is important to note that this paper marks preliminary academic review of the new curriculum in the post implementation stages and any changes in attitudes and practices will be reported by later works as improvements, changes or developments along the way.

3.1.5 Scope of coverage

The researcher was covering the views of teacher on what they think the new Geography curriculum should focus on as well as what they felt has been covered in the new curriculum so far. There is no attempt to apply the methods of comparative
education per-se, but rather to identify key skills in Geography teaching in the twenty first century.

3.1.6 Research participants

The research was conducted using a single interactive data source, that is; in-service geography teachers who are currently engaging with the new curriculum. The researcher eliminated the learner from the equation on the basis that most ordinary level and advanced level learners are not yet acquainted with the new Geography curriculum in detail and lack experience to decide productively on policy matters. The sex of the participants was considered without setting reservations on representation quotas. This is because, back to basics, a Geography teacher is a Geography teacher regardless of gender. However, the researcher had to accommodate both sexes as there are chances of unique trends in the way the different sexes respond to the research issues.

3.1.7 Target population

The researcher targeted geography teachers who had a specialization in Geography teaching at tertiary education level. The researcher confirmed this through the respective headmasters of the sampled schools so that he was given a list of geography teachers. At some schools this information was obtained from Head of the Geography Department (H.O.D)

The researcher did not obtain information on the number of Geography teachers in Zimbabwe, but for Murewa district, there are approximately over eighty teachers currently teaching geography. Of these teachers, over 80 percent are experts at their discipline. Teachers mandated to take Geography classes without a tertiary education background on the discipline were excluded from the data collection process.

3.2 Sampling techniques

According to Mpofu (2015), in qualitative research, sampling does not always mean representative selection of subjects but rather it is the strategic search from information rich sources who add value to the research. Although it can be debated
that by selecting participants with specific qualities one is predetermining the results of the research, it is still very logical that where quality data is sought for, one has to pre-empt the sources of valuable information. Therefore, in this research purposive sampling was used when selecting the data sources.

According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling entails the selection of cases of study on the basis of their richness in information and illuminative capabilities which implies that sampling, then, is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalization from a sample to a population. Purposive sampling was used to select the teachers, targeting teachers who specialized in Geography education and are currently teaching Geography.

The research made three divisions of schools within the delineated area within fifteen kilometres radius from Murewa centre. The first division was the urban schools group of 2 schools, the other group was the group of 3 schools at which the researcher worked as a relief teacher and the other was the independent group of 3 schools again.

The research targeted to engage about twenty teachers from this pool. This was very viable since it was possible to find more than 4 Geography teachers at some big schools. More so, this pool is statistically representative of the target population. However, for this kind of research, emphasis is placed on data quality than quantity.

The urban schools cohort was incorporated as it was considered a rich data source since the teachers are close to the curriculum implementation overseeing body which is the district ministry of primary and secondary education office. These urban teachers also have a better chance of accessing up-to-date information pertaining the new curriculum from the news and other information sources such as cluster workshops, internet and all news outlets, rendering them a rich source of information.
3.2. 2 Division 2- familiar schools

According to Nyawaranda (2014), “for a researcher to be accepted by the community being researched, and to arrive at authentic data,…he or she has to stay in the field for a long time interacting with the participants, triangulating the various data from different tools of data collection”. This observation by Nyawaranda compelled the researcher to incorporate all the schools he worked at into the sample since he has a working rapport with the geography teachers at a personal level. This familiarity makes the participants more willing to participate as they are less suspicious of the researcher.

Division 3- independent group

This group included schools near Murewa. In order to identify the schools to be used from this division, simple random sampling was used. The researcher wrote the names of the 6 secondary schools in folded pieces of paper. The papers were given to 3 independent students who randomly picked the required numbers from this division. Any school whose name was chosen from the division was included in the list of sampled schools.

3.3 Research instruments

3.3. 1 Questionnaires

The advantages of questionnaires are that; they are straightforward, hence less time consuming, easy to understand, allow flexible correspondence between researcher and participant and are user friendly in data capture (Cohen, 2007).

The drawbacks of the questionnaire method according to Nyawaranda (2014) are that they are restricting on both the researcher and the participant; they take an etic view, suitable to the quantitative researcher which is more subjective than is thought by many a researcher since hypotheses are formulated apriori in quantitative research.
An open-ended questionnaire was used as the chief data gathering instrument because researcher like Best and Kahn (1993: 202) as cited in Omoro and Nato, (2014) argue that: “questionnaires and surveys can be used to gather either quantitative or qualitative data”. Open ended questionnaires give participants an opportunity to elaborate on research issues (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Burton, 2000). Therefore, open-ended questions may allow for more detailed expression of respondents’ views hence rendering them far more helpful than aggregated statistical data.

The researcher also incorporated in-depth interviews to obtain a deeper understanding of the teachers’ perceptions

3.3.2 Interviews

The researcher realized that the questionnaire method did not yield high quality data as respondents could not explain themselves deeper. Hence he opted to complement the questionnaire with the interviews. The researcher used the research aims, research questions as well as the insights from the literature review process to design a comprehensive interview guide of 18 questions (see appendix 3). The interview guide varied the questioning style to avoid monotony and it incorporated quotations and discursive illustrations so as to provoke theory-laden thinking throughout the discussion (see appendix 3).

These interviews were not recorded for storage so as to reduce the challenges of ethical dilemmas. The researcher took notes of the main points as the interviewees responded to the questions. In some cases two teachers sharing the same office were interviewed at the same time, giving each other the opportunity to speak. This improved information sharing as the teachers would critically debate with each other along the way. The researcher made sure there was little digression although digression was tolerated and harnessed as an unforeseen source of information.

The advantages of interviews are that they allow the interviewees to freely express themselves and they give room for clarifications while allowing the interviewer to read the non-verbal cues of the interviewees (Makore-Rukuni, 2004).
Their drawback is that they are too subjective as the presence of the interviewer may alter reactions (Creswell, 2007). Argyle (1978) as cited in Cohen (2007) questions whether carefully controlled interviews commonly used in social surveys are inaccurate, suggesting that even the less controlled interviews carry even greater risks of inaccuracy. The researcher had to ask interviewees to clarify themselves several times to ensure accurate reporting.

### 3.3.3 Validity and reliability

The researcher designed user friendly questionnaires which allowed the respondents to explain themselves, with a mixture of closed and open ended questions to vary the discussion (see appendix 2). This design was meant to reduce the drawbacks of questionnaires highlighted by Nyawaranda above.

Where the teachers used deep technical jargon or theory laden expression beyond the researcher’s aptitude, the researcher would beg for an explanation of the concept instead of pretending to understand when in fact he was lost. This ensured validity of the data collected. The researcher ensured validity of the findings by focusing on the participants’ provided data and restricting the analysis to the research questions. This confinement ensured originality as well as limiting chances of digression. The filled questionnaires were stored for any further references.

To safeguard the reliability of the information collected, the researcher kept detailed records of the interview notes, dates and venues. However, personal information on the participants has been withheld to comply with research ethics (Howe and Moses, 1999). No incentives were given to participants so as to avoid double standards. Such fair participation also renders the data gathered reliable as the researcher did not employ any form of extrinsic manipulation.

### 3.4 Documents and data collection tools

The researcher looked into the new ZIMSEC Ordinary level and Advanced level geography syllabi under the new curriculum for a deeper understanding of their treatment of geographic concepts. These documents were carried by the researcher during the interview sessions for cross reference.
The researcher also used notebooks for capturing responses and records keeping. Electronic media was used in the form of the recorder application on smart phones to record the interviewees where necessary. No videos were taken though for ethical considerations.

3.5.1 Research data

For research questions 1 and 2, the skills and themes will be randomly arranged and the respondents will be asked to rank the skills and themes in their perceived order of importance. The respondents were also given an opportunity to identify their own skills and themes in the questionnaire so as to avoid dictating ideas into their minds (see appendix 2). Table 3:1 below summarises how the research questions were treated with reference to data sources, data collection methods, tool and resulting data types.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R Q</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data Generating Tool</th>
<th>Recording Tool</th>
<th>Type of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Syllabi, teachers, literature</td>
<td>Literature review, ranking,</td>
<td>questionnaire</td>
<td>Text &amp; statistical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Syllabi, teachers, literature</td>
<td>Ranking, identifying</td>
<td>Open and closed questions</td>
<td>questionnaire</td>
<td>Text &amp; statistical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.5.2 Pilot study

The researcher undertook a pilot study with a school that was not included on the target research pool so as to test the feasibility of the research instruments. This activity was very helpful to the researcher as it revealed some shortcomings in the original questionnaire and interview guide which were then improved for better interaction with respondents. A lot of adjustments were done to the wording and vocabulary used in the research instruments so that it was simple, straightforward and easy to understand.

### 3.6 Procedures for generating data

The researcher used his personal contacts to book appointments with Geography teachers from the schools which he has once worked with via the cell phone using text messages and Whatsapp social media platform since the researcher shares a personal relationship with the participants who were even more willing to participate. At schools where the researcher had no earlier links, physical visits were made to the schools in the morning so that appointments were made on the same day as the data collection. Table 3.2 below summarises the outline of events and activities.

**Table 3.2 Outline of the schedule of activities and how the activities were executed.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL TASK</th>
<th>SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilot study. Machake school</td>
<td>Testing the viability and user friendliness of research instruments</td>
<td>03/03/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection – urban schools</td>
<td>Questionnaire distribution and rounds of interviews with 7 teachers at 2 schools.</td>
<td>08/03/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>urban schools</td>
<td>Collection of questionnaires</td>
<td>10/03/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division 2- Data collection</td>
<td>Questionnaire distribution/collection and rounds of interviews with 6 teachers at 2 schools.</td>
<td>14/03/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division 2 final round</td>
<td>Questionnaire distribution/collection and rounds of interviews with 3 teachers at one school.</td>
<td>20/03/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division 3- data collection</td>
<td>Questionnaire distribution/collection and rounds of interviews with one teacher at one school.</td>
<td>22/03/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Questionnaire distribution/collection and rounds of interviews with 3 teachers at one school.</td>
<td>23/03/17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For schools in the researcher’s proximity, collection of the questionnaires was done after 3 days to give the respondents more time to complete them given that the researcher had no travelling costs to hurry the collection process. However, the research instruments distribution and retrieval was done concurrently for schools further away from the researcher’s base to cut down on transport costs.

### 3.7 Research authority

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from Bindura University of Science Education introducing him and his research. He used this letter together with a personal letter at the Murewa District Education offices to seek permission to undertake his research. The district offices granted the permission but advised the researcher to start with the provincial office or the head office as the controlling offices on all issues. Such bureaucracy acts as an impediment to voluntary research.
if it is done to academic professionals training towards the teaching profession. However, the researcher had to comply with all orders as was advised.

All participants obtained written forms detailing their rights to privacy, autonomy to withdraw from the research, freedom of expression and assurance of careful handling of sensitive information (see appendix I). This according to Chisi et al (2004), is a requirement of every research.

The researcher employed ethical codes of conducted as stipulated by the university guidelines as well as the dictates of ethics of educational research. Borrowing from the two main philosophical schools of thought, that is, utilitarianism and deontology (Howe & Moses, 2006), the researcher ensured utmost moral conduct throughout the research. From the utilitarian perspective, the researcher sacrificed his own views and used the information from research participants to generate knowledge, thereby seeking the common good. Throughout the research, utmost respect was given to research participants’ dignity, autonomy and rights to practice personal sovereignty.

According to Nyawaranda (2014), in qualitative research, the emphasis is on data interpretation rather than data analysis. Nyawaranda argues that data interpretation is a meaning-making process, different from data analysis which is more inclined to data classification and objective-linear conclusion drawing. Thus, the researcher undertook hypothesis formulation posteriori, through inductive analysis of recurring themes both from the document analysis (literature review) and from the actual descriptive survey. From the questionnaire, responses could be quantified, hence making room for data analysis while from the interviews; the thrust was on data interpretation.

The data obtained was content analysed and interpreted through the following ways.

3.8.2 Simple statistical analysis
The closed open responses used in the questionnaire and some other structured questions from the interview guide yielded responses that can be quantified. From this type of data simple statistical analysis using the mean and showing certain trends through the percentage was possible. For example, the percentage of teachers who felt that geography was either a practical subject or an academic subjected could be asserted and conclusions could be drawn from that analysis as will be proven later.

3.8.3 Data transcription

This involves transcribing of verbal or audio data into written text data (Mpofu, 2015). This process produces a transcript summarizing bulk data into usable simplified data sources. In the process, the resulting text data is content analysed to check for recurrence of ideas which are then coded, classified and ascribed a meaning. The researcher thus had to look for common terms used, re-emerging themes, quotable statements and problems or justifications which emerged. Arguments which differed from the general trend or revealed much deeper information were quoted and used to elaborate the points discussion. A sample of the data transcription process from the interview sessions can be seen on Appendix 4.

3.8.4 Data familiarisation

The researcher also made sure that he was familiar with the data before rushing into conclusions. This was done by taking one transcript and reading it through several times so as to capture the significant ideas from the data which are responding to the research questions.

3.8.5 Coding and classification

After transcribing the data and familiarization with the data, the data was organized and transformed into relevant information. This was done through coding and categorization of data. According to Mpofu (2015), coding is a process of identifying ideas expressed in a word, sentence or the entire document answering the research questions. Thus a code is a label which the researcher as the interpreter attaches to the emerging ideas from the data which answer the research questions.
For example, from the questionnaire, most respondents considered geography to be a ‘cross-cutting subject’, a subject bridging the arts and sciences, a study of relationships etcetera, prompting the researcher to assign the label: “multidisciplinary subject” to the definition of geography.

Classification of data was done to assemble all responses answering the same research question to the same group so that a general trend or meaning could be derived. For example all interview responses to do with the topics were categorized as “content issues” while those to do with evaluation, objective testing and evidence of learning were coded as “assessment issues”. Issues to do with teaching aids were classified as “support material/ resources”. Whereas ideas related to subject content but referring to specific concepts were classified as “learning themes” such as education for sustainability, citizenship education, information technology focus, education for empowerment and impact oriented education. Therefore, through coding and classification, it was possible to develop broad themes using various units of analysis.

Quotations of the participants were incorporated in the data reporting so as to let the respondents directly speak for themselves, hence providing an insider’s view. The researcher then gave the outsider’s view which was informed by his own perception of the compacted data. Thus the researcher used inductive reasoning to develop and explain similarities and contrasts in the field-generated data.

The data was presented chiefly as text data. However, tables, figures and statistical data were also used in reporting the findings. Text was chosen mainly because it affords the researcher enough opportunity to share his findings in the most original state with little bias or manipulation of data. The tables and figures were employed to allow better illustration of results and to support the text method. Table 3:3 below summarises how the data was analysed, coded and presented against the research questions (RQ).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R Q</th>
<th>Source of data</th>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>Typical Code</th>
<th>Emerging themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 themes</td>
<td>Qn.1, 3, II INGn 4, 5, 6 &amp; II</td>
<td>Numeric, ranking text, audio,</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary, relationships, hands-on, integration</td>
<td>Systems approach, integrated approach, education for sustainable development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 skills</td>
<td>Qn: 4;5;6;7;8 INGn: 3</td>
<td>Numeric, ranking, text,</td>
<td>Cause and effect, effecting change, solution building, graphicy, impact</td>
<td>Changes over time, action/impact, evidence of geographic phenomena, problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 importance</td>
<td>Qn. 2;3;3; INGn. 7;8;9;10; II</td>
<td>Numeric, text, audio</td>
<td>Role, purpose, multidisciplinary, integrated approach, Combinations, choice, basic, important skills, responsibility</td>
<td>Environmental responsibility, holistic curriculum, education for empowerment, citizenship education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Pedagogical issues</td>
<td>Qn. 10; 1; 1 1:1; 2 INGn. :11; 1 2; 1 3; 1 4; 1 5; 1 6; 1 7</td>
<td>Text, audio</td>
<td>GIS, information technologies, assessment, decentralization, relevant skills</td>
<td>Hands on GIS, formative assessment, redefining geography, project based learning, inadequate planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Research aims</td>
<td>Qn. 1;13 INGn. 1 ; 2; 9; 1 8</td>
<td>Text, audio</td>
<td>responsibility, relationships, change, curriculum imposition, curriculum ownership, readmission, support materials/resources</td>
<td>Readmission into the core-curriculum, Practical application of ICTs in the teaching of geography.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Key: RQ- research question, Qn- questionnaire question number, INGn- interview guide question number.

From the codes and emerging themes, main points were derived to develop general subheadings for discussion of the results in the succeeding chapter.

3.10 Chapter summary
In this chapter, the key element of the research process has been outlined in detail from the research design, context, participant selection, research instruments used up to the data handling part of it. It is key because it details how the actual research was undertaken, spanning both the theoretical and practical component of the research process. The following chapter will present and report in detail on how generated data was interpreted into information.
This chapter serves to illustrate how the efforts undertaken in the preceding methodology section have been helpful in answering the research questions and in addressing the identified problem. From this introduction, the chapter will unveil how the data collection process unfolded then report on the actual results leading up to the summary of the chapter.

4.1 Data collection results

All in all, 25 geography teachers were contacted. However, 3 teachers from different schools declined the opportunity to participate in the research citing work pressure as they were holders of administrative offices. Mr Zhawawu (pseudonym), a Sports Organizer was busy with the new curriculum sports schedule, Mr Dzimai was the senior teacher of a big school whilst the other was the deputy headmaster. Of the 22 teachers who volunteered to participate, 19 were professional Geography teachers while the rest were geography teachers undergoing pedagogical training majoring in geography. The graph below summarises the sex of the teachers.

![Graph showing sex distribution of teachers](image)

**Figure 4.1 showing the sex distribution of the teachers in the sample**

Male teachers generally expressed more interest to share more information in the study as compared to females especially on the interview section (Table 4.1 also confirms this trend). This might be due to the fact that males tend to pay much attention to current affairs than females. Most male teachers were abreast with news
and developments on the new curriculum than females. This does not imply that women are lagging behind on the new curriculum but that male teachers seemed to concern themselves more as far as the new curriculum is concerned.

The data collection process did not unfold accurately as was desired. At some points participants participated in one component of the research process and failed to participate in the other. Table 4.1 shows how the respondents co-operated with the research process.

Table 4.1 Participation of respondents in data collection process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of data collection</th>
<th>Female participants</th>
<th>Male participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>questionnaire</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interview</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full process (interview +</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>questionnaire)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Null response (blank/missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>questionnaires)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two respondents were frank enough to return the blank questionnaires citing work pressure while another respondent was not reachable during collection time. One male teacher opted for the interview as he stated that he preferred discussion than writing. Generally, all the respondents expressed satisfaction with the opportunity to air their views on the current study.

4.2 Discussion of findings

This section will be split into several sub-sections based on themes derived from the problem statement, research aims and research questions. However the goals of each subsection complement the main goal of the research hence they have not been considered in isolation.
4.3 Defining geography and its role

The objective of this study was not to redefine geography per se, but; would it be possible to assert the role of geography without clearly defining it? This would be like building on no foundation. In the questionnaire, (see appendix 2) the respondents were asked to define Geography in their own understanding and not the text bookish definition. Some defined it as a ‘multidisciplinary subject/discipline’, ‘a study of relationships between spatial phenomena with men at the centre’, one said its ‘a humanistic approach to natural sciences and applied sciences’ while others defined it ‘as an attempt to improve men’s relationship with mother earth’. The statement ‘multidisciplinary’ appeared by far more often than others. It follows therefore that teachers feel that Geography is a subject in harmony with other subjects. This reality prompted most respondents (97% of all respondents) to argue that geography should be included in the core-subjects package that are made compulsory at Ordinary level.

One respondent said, “we are not happy with the structure of the new curriculum as far as geography is concerned because Geography is no longer a core subject.” To which the interviewer made a follow-up question “but it has never been compulsory in the old curriculum so I don’t see any reason for being disgruntled” and he replied, “no, it has never been yes, but before we used to have all form I and 2 classes doing geography and even all O level classes with individual students dropping it, but now only 2 classes per stream are taking geography, hence some pupils are not being afforded the opportunity to experience geography under the new curriculum.” Finally I got his point. Other respondents erred that the integrated approach is no longer effective in the teaching of geography although teachers can try to use it within related Geography topics and concepts. Several respondents agreed on this issue, hence the new curriculum has relegated the subject, resulting in a missing link amongst the curricula subjects. However this could be an indirect indication of the bias towards one’s discipline or profession common to human nature.

Nonetheless, secondary research conducted by the researcher during the literature review process shows that most scholars appreciate the role of geography in the curriculum. The National Geographic Society in America reveals in an article published on the theme; ‘why geography is important’ that American schools had
once removed Geography from the core subjects but as of the 21st century, most states have re-introduced Geography as a core subject in secondary education (Avarez, Deal, Gress, et. al, 2007). The same development has happened in Canada, the UK and several other countries. Whilst Zimbabwe has taken an opposite trajectory by letting pupils study geography as an elective, there might be serious repercussions in the future as the school curriculum will be producing graduates without sound skills that geography offers. This possibility leads to the question ‘what is it that is so special about Geography for it to demand space in the core-subjects package?’ Fortunately the research addressed this question by answering research questions 1 and 2 on special concepts (themes) and skills offered by geography to the learner as detailed below.

### 4.4.1 Themes

In response to the first research question, the respondents identified themes like Geographic information systems (GIS), education for sustainable development, cause and effect analysis, environmental monitoring (changes over time), systems approach, integrated approach, experimentation, project-based learning and impact oriented education as paramount to geography learners.

The evidence from the data instruments showed that teachers ranked highly the three themes namely; education for sustainable development, GIS and impact oriented education.

### 4.4.2 Impact oriented education

When responding to question number 6 in the interviews which read, ‘What should geography focus on so that it remains significant in the curriculum and so that it impacts on learners’ attitudes, cognitive and psychomotor skills development?’, most of the respondents cited that geography education in the new curriculum must be action oriented. Answering this question demonstrated the interviewee’s understanding of the philosophy behind the new curriculum. Those who lacked sound understanding would focus on syllabi objectives whilst others reported that the new curriculum intends to boost practical skills for self-sufficiency, problem
solving and innovation. “Geography must equip learners with practical skills such as accurate weather prediction, erosion control, pollution management, resource conservation and so on…” elaborated one interviewee.

Others considered teaching the child what he/she encounters in everyday life such as deforestation in rural areas, traffic congestion in urban areas etcetera, focusing on problem solving. Hence problem solving was emphasized as a crucial theme and skill in Geography. A notion to focus Geography studies on local case studies was identified throughout the study as teachers stressed that in the new curriculum, geography must become more practical by addressing environmental problems which pupils encounter. This can become possible if coursework assessment is made effective and decentralized to allow local case studies and projects to dominate the curriculum.

4.4.3 Geography and information technologies

Respondents generally agreed on the significance of the use and advancement of information technologies in the new curriculum. One respondent said, “It’s good that the new curriculum recognizes GIS and GPS as key themes but a lot should be done, straight from the roll-out stage the new curriculum was supposed to effect practice of these learning experiences”. The challenge on the issue is inadequate resources to support the new curriculum component.

From the analysis of the data, it seems that most respondents agree with Dambudzo’s (2015) view that a curriculum that focuses solely on academic knowledge acquisition with very little or no industry related skills is self-defeating to the role of Geography, which is partly to prepare pupils for post-secondary school employment. Teachers feel that the role of Geography in the 21st century should be to make maximum use of modern technology in integrating academic work with industry.

4.4.4 Education for sustainable development

There was a general trend whereby teachers felt that sustainability issues are not being covered adequately in the new curriculum. This is because sustainability is being taught outside the real world context. For example deforestation and gold
panning are on the rise despite their condemnation. One solution to tackle this challenge is through education by challenging pupils to showcase their talents in fighting these problems, for example through science expos, theatre and arts community education and designing alternative solution technologies. Under the new curriculum, geography should focus on practicing its solutions just like any science discipline. One respondent noted that for a long time environmentally friendly energy sources have been taught but very few schools have been able to demonstrate the biogas digester, 100% organic fertilizers or indigenous plants aforestation. Rather, pupils should be equipped with conservation skills, advocacy and active citizenship skills to solve sustainability issues. Hence under the new curriculum, emphasis must be placed on education that yields practical solutions to problems. Other researches point in the same direction. Dambudzo (2015) lampooned that in Zimbabwean schools, the environment, industry and community are not linked to the learners’ education experience; hence there is little or no contribution to sustainable development.

In response to research question 2 on critical skill in geography, various skills have been identified as shown on table 4.2 below. The idea was not to list all skills but those hailed by the respondents. A general hierarchy of common responses from the questionnaire data analysis was compiled to list the skill by their weight.

<p>| Table 4.2 Critical geography skills and their ranking according to the data |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Skill                          | Rank/degree of significance | Description     |
|  |  |  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem solving</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>Objective study, effecting change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verification skills</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Testing hypothesis, experimentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic investigation skills</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Contextualizing phenomena into space, pace and place, systems approach,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field skills</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Data collection, storage and meaning deduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT literacy</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>GIS, computer modeling, electronic learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical ability</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Relationships and correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time perception</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>Cause and effect, changes over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map skills</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>Locating physical objects, showing relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical literacy</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>Application of number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation skills</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>Attention to detail, questioning everything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphicacy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Good use of illustration and media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Systematic solution development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur skills</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Economic productivity versatility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report writing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Feedback on studies/work done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research skills</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Increasing the knowledge base for oneself/others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management skills</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Resource coordination, organization and accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate skills</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Defending theory, sound propositions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the skills ranked one to ten, a general trend of their ranking or nomination in the questionnaire was common throughout, while the other skills were sparingly found on single transcripts. The ranking is not the objective here, what is important is to question whether the new geography curriculum is affording learners an opportunity
to develop all these skills fully? Dambuzo (2015:19) says, “problem solving skills and entrepreneurship skills are limited” in our education system.

It is important to note that the new geography curriculum has been very assertive as expressed in the syllabi on key geographical skills but it lacks adequate authority on ensuring that pupils get these skills adequately. For example, a focus on the exam which weighs 70% of the overall assessment mark will divert teachers and pupils to content based learning thereby side-lining crucial learning activities like fieldwork, experiments, research work, ‘real’ project –based learning and observation skills since these will be considered as time consuming learning styles.

The above argument is in line with the findings of other researchers, for example Mehmet (2011:2170) discovered that in Turkish schools, field research trip or observational skills could not be put in practice due to the regulations at schools. The same challenge faces Zimbabwe since under the new curriculum schools are expected to undertake a minimum of one Geography trip per year which most respondents considered too low for a benchmark. It should be seen as a major disadvantage for students not to acquire skills about field trips which are the fundamental skills in Geography. Thus, Mehmet’s findings can be explained in pedagogical lens as his findings fit with Dambudzo’s (2015) ideas as well as those of educational philosopher John Dewey’s (1938) democracy in education approach which seeks to allow the child to gain skills through free experimentation and interaction with the environment. In the modern society, Geography should serve to accord the learner as much exposure to the real world as possible so as to boost interest among learners in the subject for the better of society.

While on the issue of skills Aladag and Aladag (2010) agree with the above findings as they said,

“some skills aimed in this [Geography] lesson are critical thinking, research, communication, problem solving, decision making security, self-direction, using sources effectively, knowing the basic concepts of science…in knowing the basic concepts of science skills students realize changing, interaction, cause and effect relation, similarity, mutual dependency concepts …In research skills students gain some acquisitions like asking questions, observation, estimating, data collecting, declaring data and presenting research results.”
However, other respondents applauded the new curriculum on the introduction of GIS, GPS and remote sensing into the Geography syllabi. It is indeed a positive development.

When responding to the question on the role of geography in understanding international affairs (see question 6 appendix 3) one interviewee said, “Since we are now living in a globalised world, it is important that pupils learn all the subjects that explain the forces of globalization, which geography does exceptionally.” While another one mentioned that, “environmental issues, such as boundary disputes, resources allocation and exploitation trigger debates that spark civil, regional and international conflicts.” These findings are in line with the ideas of Avarez, Deal, Gress, et. al, (2007) who hold that: “Learning Geography will create citizens who are able to understand and do something about some of the major issues and problems facing the world including climate change, energy dependencies, war and regional conflicts, globalization and international terrorism.” This is because these problems have patterns of development that put the spatial aspect (space, place and pace) at the centre. It is the duty of the Geography academic to bring better understanding of these issues than any other subject. The Geography curriculum must have a clear strategy to prepare citizens who are able to understand these problems and contribute to solve them. Unfortunately the new curriculum gives little attention to this perspective.

Krugmen and Venables (1995) concur with Duque et al (2014), holding that Geography should be linked to the very important issues affecting the daily lives of pupils, for example, pupils need to be introduced to the geographies of uneven economic development, conflict resolution and the relationships between environmental issues and international security. Putting into perspective large environmental issues like drought in Somalia, Yemen, Sudan and other countries, one can appreciate that shortage of food leads or prolongs conflict resolution as hostile groups deprive each other the vital commodities. The BP oil spill can be used to illustrate how diplomatic relations were stretched between the US and the UK
stretching over to the other offshore oil mining regions such as the South American countries like Brazil and Venezuela (Gunter, 2012). It is also paramount to mention at this point that the argument posed herein justifies the significance of geography as a core subject in the understanding of historical and heritage related issues. There are complex geo-spatial components affecting historical, present and future social, cultural, political and economic developments that a mind without a geographical inclination would not fully comprehend. This study’s findings lead to the argument that secondary school Geography plays a role in equipping Zimbabwean learners with adequate skills required in handling environmental problems even at diplomatic levels.

Apart from enhancing the appreciation of foreign affairs, geography also has a duty to spearhead economic development through the adoption of an entrepreneurial approach in its teaching. Dambuzo (2015) argued that the education systems of most developing countries are characterized by lack of entrepreneurship which leads to frustration of graduates. The results show that under the new curriculum, little emphasis has been placed on entrepreneurship skills. Most respondents regarded economic geography to be synonymous to entrepreneurship. However the researcher was overwhelmed by one respondent who believed that in the new curriculum, entrepreneurship must to be taught within the context of Geography, not only as an independent subject or as a way to describe places and activities. Thus in every topic, teachers and learners have to inquire how they can develop sustainable business models in a bid to solve environmental problems. For example forming private litter management companies to ferry and recycle waste from homes, forming associations or foundations to conserve the natural landscape, undertaking virtual tourism through use of ICTs and other ways. By so doing, Geography becomes lively, interesting, rewarding and impact delivering.

4.6.3 The importance of geography in citizenship education

On question II of the interview on the role of geography in citizenship education, only 30% of the respondents responded to the question in detail while the other 70% thought it was a distant topic to Geography. However one response went like this,
“Geography is central to citizenship education, for there is no real citizenship education without geography because Geography inculcates a culture of environmental responsibility, a sense of pride in resource endowment, ownership and accountability, any other form of citizenship education [may be] prone to ideological indoctrination so to say.”

This point of view sounded well informed and it is in line with the ideas of other Geography authorities like Fairgrieve (1926) as cited in Smith (2005: 4) who argued that, “The function of Geography in school is to train future citizens to imagine accurately the conditions of the great world stage, and so help them to think sanely about political and social problems in the world around.” Mavhunga, Moyo and Chinyani (2012) also maintain that education must develop a sense of ownership among learners towards their heritage, environment as well as their future. Through education for sustainable development (ESD), Geography plays a role in citizenship education. This is true because in some countries like the United States of America Geography and history are taught as the ‘civics’ which is their mode of citizenship education.

4.6.4 Community development, activism and empowerment

An attempt was made to see if there was a consensus among Geography teachers that geography has a role to play in community development through advocacy, activism and context-based learning. One respondent ruled out the possibility of Geography helping marginalized societies, quoted saying “no, maybe it’s the duty of sociology”. On the possibility of an elitist geography curriculum designed to propel the goals of dominant societal groups, one interviewee said,

“you cannot rule out the possibility of curriculum ownership by the state or hijacking of the curriculum by the educated elite...I am not sure if the current curriculum makes the same sense to the urban child as well as the rural child, or the same sense to a child in Binga, as it would to a child in Murewa.”
(interview respondent)

The above analysis points to a similar finding by Dambudzo (2015) that confirmed a general possibility of different forms of curriculum implementation between rural and urban schools.
Another respondent said the curriculum is still elitist as it is characterized by western influence and it pays little attention to indigenous knowledge systems. This observation is true as one western writer, Jansen (1991) admits that, ‘across curriculum perspectives, there is a broad consensus in the literature that postcolonial curriculum reconstruction has failed in fundamental ways.’ This is due to what Jansen calls Curriculum continuity which is the relative stability in the colonial curriculum content as codified in textbooks, syllabi and examinations during the postcolonial period. Jansen once said, ‘Today, in almost every colonial nation, there is evidence of greater continuity within the curriculum than the radical change envisaged by official policy.’ This continuity arises from centralised curriculum designs that restrict progressive critical thinking. As lampooned by Samoff (cited in Jansen, 1991: 79),

‘the state is the principal force shaping transition society so that politics (not economics) dominates transformation...in the transition; education is the state’s principal ideological apparatus... If, indeed, the state is the principal shaper of transition society, this fact is clearest in the formulation and implementation of curriculum policy in Zimbabwe.’

As old as the analysis may seem, it may still evaluate the new geography curriculum fairly. If this is the case, geography in the new curriculum should focus on enlightening societies on how to benefit from their natural resources and claiming ownership of their destinies as far as their environments and lives are concerned, thereby empowering the marginalized societies. Geography should serve as the fact-based subject to impart ideas on gender issues and development, tracing how some societies have harnessed resource distribution between men and women, how environmental (nature) and socio-economic (nurture) experiences shape the gender imbalances across the geographic divide and devising progressive solutions.

4.7.1 Degree and mode of change

From the data, about 50% of the responses indicated that the Geography curriculum has undergone moderate change, while some categorized the degree of change in the curriculum between two opposites. On one hand there is the view that there is very
little change in the curriculum content as compared to the old curriculum whereas on the other hand there has been radical change in the structure of the content, especially in the manner that the topics now have to be taught, every topic is covered in themes from form to four.

4.7.2 Support material and resources

In an attempt to answer the question on the extent to which the new curriculum exposes Geography students to theoretical simulation and practical computer modelling, the study revealed that teachers lacked both technical skills and resources to deliver on this component of the new curriculum.

From the analysis of Krugman’s (1998) ideas on computer modelling and the interviewees’ responses, the researcher can safely conclude that the new curriculum fails to assertively point out how teachers are going to use computer modelling technologies albeit mentioning the use of models and simulation as suggested teaching methods in the new geography syllabi. The curriculum designers ought to have a clear starting point of the minimum conditions in realizing the potential of these methods if the curriculum is to produce any competent learners. For example designing simulation and modelling software for use in schools and equipping schools with basic necessary resources. Such interventions could entail supplying schools with Google earth packages for GIS simple modelling, ILWIS, and other models. Hong Kong has taken a similar approach whereby the Curriculum Development Institute supplied teachers with resources to support the new secondary school curriculum (Hong Kong CDI). Results also indicated problems of absence of clear assessment criteria on the new Geography curriculum especially on coursework evaluation.

These findings answer the 4th of the research questions which queried the teaching methods envisioned by the new curriculum syllabi so as to test whether they allow Geography teaching to yield its full potential among learners or whether there is need for improvement so that geography is delivered competently.

4.8 Chapter summary

The researcher tried by all means not to make this chapter look like a Geography ‘handbook’ by summarising the data which could have been explained in a lengthy
manner. The research process did not progress artificially, indicating that these are the true characteristics of qualitative research as it is controlled by the situations which the researcher interacts with. The results helped to redefine Geography in the light of the new curriculum by showing the key themes like ESD, progressive education, adoption of advanced educational technologies, the integrated approach and experimentation. In the new curriculum, teachers feel that problem solving skills, GIS skills, field skills, analytical skills, time perception skills, map skills, statistical literacy, observation skills, entrepreneurial skills and research skills are central in Geography teaching and learning. Generally, the results point to the significance of Geography in the curriculum as it allows curriculum subjects to converge in a manner that yields synergic results in which the results are greater than the sum of units. In the 21st century, Geography teaching should aim to enhance understanding of globalization issues, international studies, scientific enquiry, citizenship education, empowerment of communities and economic progress. The findings also revealed a complex perception of change between the old and the new curriculum as well as the challenges facing the new curriculum. In the following chapter an overview of the whole study will be given.
This chapter will summarise the research process with an emphasis on the results then conclusions will be drawn on the findings leading to the recommendations and list of references consulted.

5.1 Summary

Educational philosophers Peters and Hirst (2009) argue that, for any educational system to be considered meaningful, it should produce ‘certain desirable qualities’ in its learners. These desirable qualities are derived from the curriculum. These desirable qualities cannot be known if the purpose of the subject is not clarified. It is the belief of this researcher that an attempt has been made to show what Geography teaching must seek to achieve in the 21st century.

This research was motivated by an interest to assert the role of geography in secondary education. One cannot complete teacher training without comprehensive knowledge about the core of the subject. This study enabled the researcher to gain more exposure on subject content fundamentals. More importantly, it helped to address the problem of defining the role of geography under the new curriculum in Zimbabwe through the use of insights from practicing teachers. Confusion surrounding the new curriculum launch inspired this study which aimed to identify the key skills and themes in geography as well as the importance of the discipline to learners. The study has been most important to the researcher who experienced every part of its gruesome learning experiences. Moreover, it will be invaluable to fellow Geography teachers, aspiring researchers, policy makers as well as the geographic community at large.

The consultation of other sources during the literature review process has helped map the course of this research. The researcher consulted various insights on the curricula of other countries and the ideas of other researchers who influenced the methodology of this study. There have been several points of convergence of ideas between the ideas emerging from the literature review process and the findings of this study.

From the chosen research design, the researcher acknowledges the power of qualitative research in knowledge generation. The descriptive survey methodology was employed using questionnaires and interviews as data collection methods.
Through purposive sampling, the researcher interacted with familiar teachers in a friendly atmosphere that encouraged participation, free information sharing and deeper analysis of issues. Although there were some challenges in the data collection process such as partial participation and null responses, the process was done objectively. Data was analysed and presented critically, allowing the voices and views of the respondents to speak for themselves while upholding participant dignity and research ethics.

The findings of the study redefine Geography in the light of the new curriculum. The results have also helped to show the key themes like ESD, progressive education, adoption of advanced educational technologies, the integrated approach and experimentation.

The study found out that geography teaching allows pupils to understand issues on globalization and international relations. This is because pupils exposed to Geography are better equipped to handle policy issues concerning issues like terrorism, xenophobia, genocides, wars, climate change and migration in a world these issues are causing a migraine world-wide.

This study found out that a nation boasts of its resources and the ability to harness these to the benefit of the society. Geography trains the child to take pride in resources conservation, preservation and management, hence it teaches responsible citizenship. Through the integrated approach, active citizenship and community empowerment can be achieved through skills gained from Geography learning. This is achievable through a comprehensive Geography curriculum as indicated by the research findings.

The findings also revealed the challenges facing the new curriculum such as lack of complete and clear assessment criteria and shortage of support resources.

Finally, I admit that chances of digression cannot be ruled out throughout the study, but in any way, I have the confidence that it was an adventure in search of wisdom.

The study sought to answer the following research questions:
i) What themes or concepts are important in the Geography curriculum?

ii) What are the critical skills that Geography should offer to the learner?

iii) Why is geography important in the modern society?

iv) Does the approach incorporated in the teaching of Geography under the new curriculum equip the learner with the best skills that the subject can actually offer?

The following conclusions have been drawn from the analysis of results:

A close analysis of the results confirmed that concepts like education for sustainable development, progressive education, indigenous knowledge systems, adoption of advanced educational technologies, the integrated approach and experimentation are the key themes in secondary Geography education.

The study found out that teachers feel that, problem solving skills, GIS skills, field skills, analytical skills, time perception skills, map skills, statistical literacy, observation skills, entrepreneurial skills and research skills are central in Geography teaching and learning in the new curriculum. The results point towards a general consensus among teachers to position geography as a practical subject which should be characterized by the use of the scientific methods, practical exercises, experimentation and action oriented education.

While geography imparts skills necessary to its existence, it is also important to acknowledge that it has other benefits to the learner and the society. The importance of geography cannot be overemphasized. It supports responsible citizenship education, entrepreneurship and community empowerment. However the results indicate that there is a need to decentralize the implementation of the geography curriculum so as to allow unique groups including marginalized societies to create their own meanings and interpretations of Geographic theory and practice within the context of their cultures and experiences.

Moreover, the findings have shown that the new curriculum is lagging behind on several issues which create a gap between what the learners are actually getting from the discipline and what they can potentially gain if everything is perfectly done. This
includes an unclear assessment framework, lack of support material and poor minimum standards set by the curriculum implementation regulatory body.

Finally, I would like to confess that this study was not an easy task; it took a lot of sacrifice, with lows and downs throughout the way. More importantly, I appreciate the fact that this study may not have covered all issues concerning Geography teaching under the new curriculum, but fortunately, instead of apologizing, I can make a safe suggestion that; since Geography is such a crucial factor in human development, it is an important subject for further research.

From the research findings and the conclusions drawn above, the following recommendations have been proposed:
In the light of the above conclusions, it is recommended that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education considers geography to be a core subject at ordinary level.

While the new curriculum clearly defines the skills and themes in geography, it is recommended that policy makers, school administrators and Geography teachers commit themselves to ensure that these skills are being natured among learners instead of just drilling pupils for examinations. This can be achieved by making sure that Geography has a clear focus on the real world which the learner perceives around his/her surroundings and can appreciate it constructively.

It is also recommended that the Curriculum Development Unit, ZIMSEC and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education work hand in hand to develop support systems for the Geography curriculum’s effective implementation. This includes staff development on new concepts like GIS, ICTs, ESD and entrepreneurship in Geography education.

This study recommends that further research be conducted on the best teaching methods that can be used to enhance the development of skills and themes identified in this research in order to ensure that Geography teaching yields its maximum potential.

Basing on a confession by Kent (1997) as cited in Smith(2005) that, “The extreme difficulty faced by teachers wishing to undertake vital and ongoing professional development is damaging to both their health and that of the system. There is insufficient ‘space’ for teachers to allow them to develop professionally”, there is need for more teacher support services in research.

REFERENCES


Canadian Council for Geographic Education, ‘The importance of geography in the school curriculum,’ Faculty of Education, Queen’s University, Kingston: Ontario.


APENDICES

Appendix I: Consent Form

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CONSENT FORM

Dear research participant.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research which I think is invaluable to the geographic community which yourself and I are proud members of. Before you participate in the research, you may find the following information important.

**Purpose of research**

The research is being conducted under the topic “THE PERCEPTIONS OF GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS ON THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEW CURRICULUM IN ZIMBABWE”. It aims to explore the ideas of geography teachers on the purpose of geography in the curriculum and society, justify the importance of geography in modern global communities and also mark the beginning of the curriculum review process for the benefit of the geographic fraternity.

**Eligibility to participate: Only** teachers who have majored in Geography at tertiary education level are expected to participate in this research. However, if you have been teaching geography and feel that you wish to participate in this research, your input will be greatly appreciated.

**Procedures and duration:** It is estimated that it would take 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire and the interview.
Risks, discomforts or injury: It is hoped that participating in this research is as general as it is also social as it can be, hence very safe. The researcher bears ultimate responsibility on any issues related to the data.

Benefits, compensation and additional costs: No financial incentives will be provided for undertaking this study because it is purely academic and not a sponsored research. It is believed incentivizing the study may alter the quality of the study. Any costs related to the study are met by the researcher.

Confidentiality: All data and information generated from this study will be kept confidential. All participating schools and teachers will be identified by pseudonyms to protect their professional image. Information will be kept in private places and the questionnaires will not have any traceable form of identity of the respondent.

Voluntary participation: Please be informed that participation in this study is 100% voluntary. You are free to participate in either the interview only or the questionnaire or both. The participants will respond to questions in interview. Some sections of the interview maybe recorded with your consent for the benefit of the interviewer and no other person. The audio tape will be deleted soon after data capture.

You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time as you deem necessary. You are not obliged to answer every question although doing so will be appreciated.

Additional information: For any further information regarding this study and your rights as a research participant, you can contact the researcher on cell no/ 077463287 or via email at: moreblessingkativo@gmail.com

With regards

MT Katiyo (researcher) on behalf of Bindura University of Science Education

Appendix 2 : Questionnaire
RESEARCH TOPIC: ‘THE PERCEPTIONS OF GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS ON THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEW CURRICULUM IN ZIMBABWE’.

Dear participant.

Your views regarding this survey will be very valuable towards the attainment of the goal of this study and the geographic community. Please tick the box below if you have read the consent, privacy and participant autonomy form. Ticking also confirms that you majored in Geography at tertiary level.

INSTRUCTIONS: where check boxes are given please tick - √. Where an explanation is needed, please write in BLOCKS/Legibly.

Questions

SECTION A: Role of geography

1. How would you define geography as a discipline?

2. A). Do you think geography is important in the secondary school curriculum?

   YES □ NO □

   b) why?

3. a). Should geography be included in the core- subjects list (compulsory) at ‘O’ LEVEL
b). why?

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SECTION B: Skills and concepts in geography

4. Is geography an academic or a practical subject?
   Academic [ ] Practical [ ]

5. Where do you posit geography as a subject?
   Arts [ ] Sciences [ ] Humanities [ ]
   Neutral [ ]

6. Can you rank the following themes in the order of significance in geography education?
   - community based focus
   - Education for sustainable development
   - problem solving approach
   - project based learning
   - field-work focus
   - inter-disciplinary systems approach
   - experimentation
   - information technology based learning

7. What are the critical skills that geography should offer to the learner?
   i) ................................................................. ii) .................................
   ................................................................. iv) .................................
   ................................................................. vi) .................................
   ................................................................. vii) .................................
   ................................................................. viii) ..............................
   ................................................................. ix) .................................
   ................................................................. x) .................................

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b) Which one of the above skills is a priority in your opinion?

8. Use numbers **one to eight** to rank the skills below in the order of their significance in geography:

   - critical thinking skill,
   - creative thinking skill,
   - communication and empathy skill,
   - problem-solving (case analysis) skill,
   - decision making skill,
   - using information technology skill,
   - entrepreneur skills,
   - complex analytical skills

9. Use numbers **1 to 7** to rank the skills below in the order of their significance in geography:

   - map skills,
   - field skills,
   - observation skills,
   - statistical literacy,
   - time perception skills (changes over time),
   - proof using/verification skills,
   - geographic investigation skills
I0. Under the new curriculum, are there any areas that you think they need improvements in the teaching of geography especially on the subject content, assessment or teaching methods?

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II. How have issues of environmental sustainability been handled under the new curriculum?

Poorly □ Fairly □ Satisfactorily □

I2. a). To what extent does the new geography curriculum prepare its learners with skills for the 21st century?

Lesser □ fairly enough □ greater □ not sure □

b).comments........................................................................................................................................................
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13. Overall, to what extent do you think the new curriculum has changed as compared to the previous curriculum with regards to the geography subject?

No change □ Little change □ Moderate change □ Radical □ change
Appendix 3: In-Depth Interview Guide

1. What is your understanding of the motivation behind the new curriculum in Zimbabwe? BRA

2. Do you think that the objectives and values enshrined in the Nziramasanga commission tally with the values being advocated under the new curriculum with reference to geography teaching and learning? RQ4 BRA

3. Is the integrated approach being applied in the teaching of environmental sustainability issues in secondary education? RQ1

4. To what extent does the new curriculum expose geography pupils to theoretical and practical modelling? RQ1

5. Under the new curriculum, is there room for entrepreneurship skills to be incorporated within geography lessons? RQ1 & 4

6. What should geography focus on so that it remains significant in the curriculum and so that it impacts on learners’ attitudes, cognitive and psychomotor skills development? RQ1 & 2

7. What do you think about the role of geography in understanding international affairs and the degree to which the new curriculum is covering this dimension? RQ1 & 3

8. Do you think that geography has a role in ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’ as advocated by Paulo Fereire or any role to play in the enlightenment of the learners? RQ3

9. Goodson (1992: 66) as cited in Smith et al, (2005) suggested that, “dominant social groups in society have been able to establish their language, and their knowledge priorities, learning styles, pedagogical preferences, in the formal curriculum. These dominant groups achieve this by dictating their notions of important and useful knowledge, their ways of presenting truth, their ways of arguing and establishing correctness, and the institutional norms by which academic and scholastic success is defined and assessed”. From this analysis, what can you say about Zimbabwe in the face of the new curriculum? BRA

What is the role of geography in the lives of the marginalized groups? RQ3
10. What is your position on the role of geography in citizenship education?  
RQ3

11. Do you think it is the role of the geography discipline to equip pupils with skills about environmental activism and community organization in solving environmental issues? What is the position of the new curriculum in this regard? RQ3&4

12. A close analysis of the Turkish approach to Geography teaching at primary level suggests a rigorous coverage of geographic concepts at ECD. One thing is obvious though, that a good footing in the discipline prepares pupils for competence at higher levels. Primary school children in Turkey are introduced to earth observation and practical problem solving at an early stage. How much challenge are Zimbabwe’s learners being exposed to with regards to earth observation, weather recording and interaction and spatial data collection? RQ4

13. Do you determine the case studies/projects that pupils work on? RQ4

14. Are you satisfied by the scientific component of the geography syllabi under the new curriculum? Explain RQ4

15. Are you satisfied by the artistic component of the geography syllabi under the new curriculum? explain RQ4

16. Are you satisfied by the entrepreneurship component of the geography syllabi under the new curriculum? explain RQ4

17. If geography was to be combined with any other subject(s), which one(s) would you chose? Why? RQ4

18. What are your expectations regarding the teaching of geography in the future? BRA

*Key: RQ= Research Question, BRA= Broad Research Aims*
Appendix 4: Sample of interview response data transcript

NB: transcribed response is italicized

1. What is your understanding of the motivation behind the new curriculum in Zimbabwe? BRA

*Nziramasanga commission; standard system; zim asset/political pressure BRA*

2. Do you think that the objectives and values enshrined in the Nziramasanga commission tally with the values being advocated under the new curriculum with reference to geography teaching and learning? RQ4/ BRA

*No. – no emphasis on practical skills, too theoretical, “no strategic change, they only changed the structure of the syllabus and recycled the old curriculum”*

3. Is the integrated approach being applied in the teaching of environmental sustainability issues in secondary education? RQ1

*“yes but the challenge is that geography is not compulsory, so some pupils are left behind on the concept” no integration, curriculum not holistic without geography*

4. To what extent does the new curriculum expose geography pupils to theoretical and practical modelling? RQ1

*Lesser, access to ICTs not mandatory in geo, too simplified focus on improvisation*

5. Under the new curriculum, is there room for entrepreneurship skills to be incorporated within geography lessons? RQ1 & 4

*Little. Focus is on content mastery, assessment objectives far from transforming geography*

6. What should geography focus on so that it remains significant in the curriculum and so that it impacts on learners’ attitudes, cognitive and psychomotor skills development? RQ1 & 2

*Environmental responsibility/accountability, cause and effect analysis, problem solving, practicals like map making, surveying, observation*
7. What do you think about the role of geography in understanding international affairs and the degree to which the new curriculum is covering this dimension? RQI&3

Significant, little coverage, environmental issues, spatial debates trigger international conflicts

8. Do you think that geography has a role in 'pedagogy of the oppressed' as advocated by Paulo Ferreira or any role to play in the enlightenment of the learners? RQ3

No. maybe sociology. “Geography is apolitical”

9. Goodson (1992: 66) as cited in Smith et al, (2005) suggested that,“dominant social groups in society have been able to establish their language, and their knowledge priorities, learning styles, pedagogical preferences, in the formal curriculum. These dominant groups achieve this by dictating their notions of important and useful knowledge, their ways of presenting truth, their ways of arguing and establishing correctness, and the institutional norms by which academic and scholastic success is defined and assessed”. From this analysis, what can you say about Zimbabwe in the face of the new curriculum? BRA

“you cannot rule out the possibility of curriculum ownership by the state or hijacking of the curriculum by the educated elite” “I am not sure the current curriculum makes the same sense to the urban child as well as the rural child, or the same sense to a child in Binga, as it would to a child in Murewa”, western influence- little attention to indigenous knowledge systems

10. What is the role of geography in the lives of the marginalized groups? RQ3

Know about other places, communities and cultures, share knowledge/ experiences

11. What is your position on the role of geography in citizenship education? RQ3

Central. “no real citizenship education without geography because geography inculcates a culture of environmental responsibility, a sense of pride in resource
endowment, ownership and accountability, any other form of citizenship education is prone to ideological indoctrination so to say”

12. Do you think it is the role of the geography discipline to equip pupils with skills about environmental activism and community organization in solving environmental issues? What is the position of the new curriculum in this regard? **RQ3&4**

“Activism is too complex but maybe community organization-yes.” “Education must yield positive results and impact on societies”, curriculum not objective on the issue, no concrete way of inculcating positive attitudes among learners

13. A close analysis of the Turkish approach to Geography teaching at primary level suggests a rigorous coverage of geographic concepts at ECD. One thing is obvious though, that a good footing in the discipline prepares pupils for competence at higher levels. Primary school children in Turkey are introduced to earth observation and practical problem solving at an early stage. How much challenge are Zimbabwe’s learners being exposed to with regards to earth observation, weather recording and interaction and spatial data collection? **RQ4**

Assessment criteria for coursework still pending, not clear yet, focus on theory minimum practice, time restrictions

14. Do you determine the case studies/projects that pupils work on? **RQ4**

*Sometimes. It depends, but there is a bias on large scale national cases than local cases in exams*

15. Are you satisfied by the scientific component of the geography syllabi under the new curriculum? Explain**RQ4**

*No- little focus on experimentation and discovery*

16. Are you satisfied by the artistic component of the geography syllabi under the new curriculum? explain**RQ4**

*Yes, good emphasis on graphicacy and humanistic approach on socio-economic aspects*
17. If geography was to be combined with any other subject(s), which one(s) would you chose? Why? RQ4

None, geography is unique.

18. What are your expectations regarding the teaching of geography in the future? BRA

More theory development to explain global and local spatial trends, more practical solutions to environmental problems,

*Key : RQ= Research Question, BRA= Broad Research Aim