

Learning Difficulties in Geography and Mathematics Classrooms in North West Province, South Africa: Causes and Solutions

Jean De Dieu Sakubu , Radjabu Nahimana

St. Martin's Private Christian School, South Africa

Abstract

Learning difficulties in geography and mathematics remain a major concern in South African secondary schools, particularly in provinces facing socioeconomic and resource constraints. These difficulties often result in poor learner performance, low confidence, and limited acquisition of critical skills such as problem- solving, spatial reasoning, and analytical thinking. Factors such as inadequate teaching resources, ineffective teaching strategies, overcrowded classrooms, and limited learner support significantly contribute to these challenges. Understanding these causes is essential for developing effective interventions. This study investigated the causes of learning difficulties in geography and mathematics classrooms in selected secondary schools in North West, South Africa, and explored practical solutions to address them. A quantitative descriptive research design was employed. Data were collected from a sample of 150 participants, comprising 120 learners and 30 teachers from six secondary schools. Structured questionnaires and classroom observations were used to gather information on teaching practices, resource availability, learner engagement, and classroom conditions. The data were analysed via descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. The findings revealed that the main causes of learning difficulties included a lack of teaching and learning materials, limited use of learner-centred teaching methods, insufficient teacher training, large class sizes, and low learner motivation. Many learners also experienced difficulty understanding abstract concepts due to limited practical and visual learning opportunities. The study recommends providing adequate teaching resources, ongoing teacher professional development, integrating technology-enhanced learning, and adopting interactive teaching strategies. Strengthening academic support programmes and improving classroom conditions can significantly reduce learning difficulties and enhance learner performance in geography and mathematics.

Keywords: Academic Achievement, Learner Support, Classroom Challenges, Teaching Methods, Secondary Schools