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Biology teachers' views and attitudes towards practical work in the Khomas region, Namibia

Biology examination reports confirm that the performance of learners is moderately low when answering the Biology Paper 3 (the Practical examination paper). No reasons have been provided for this outcome. However, an interest is developing in understanding why learners perform poorly in this specific paper, when compared to their performance in Papers 1 and 2. Practical work as a section of the Science educational curriculum is considered to be a methodology which engages learners in practical exercises. It aims to assist learners to reach the target of an adequately detailed scientific investigation as required by the curriculum, since this forms the central focus of science. The focus of this study was on teachers' attitudes and views of practical work because these attributes impact on learners' performance in practical work.

This study adopted a quantitative design, which included a questionnaire that accommodated a few short qualitative open-ended questions. The instrument contained items which had to be thoroughly studied and examined. The population consisted of the Biology secondary school teachers in the Khomas region of Namibia who were teaching Grades 9 to 11 levels. The study targeted at least two to three teachers in each school offering Biology, which were visited by the researcher in the Khomas region in 2019.

This study aimed at assessing the views and attitudes of Biology teachers towards practical work in the Khomas region of Namibia. The participants in this study showed positive attitudes towards practical work and there were no significant differences among the mean rankings of the different items on the instrument that measured teachers' views of the aims of practical work. On the whole there were no significant differences between male and female teachers' attitudes and views towards practical work.