

**AN ASSESSMENT OF HOW THEORIES CAN BE USED AT THE
SIXTH FORM LEVEL TO STEM THE DECLINING NUMBER OF
STUENTS PURSUING GEOGRAPHY BETWEEN FIFTH AND
SIXTH FORMS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN JAMAICA**

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ABSTRACT

An assessment of how theories can be used at the sixth form level to stem the declining number of students pursuing Geography between fifth and sixth forms in selected schools in Jamaica.

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This study arose out of a concern for the apparent decline in Geography. The study therefore highlighted a number of areas in which decline is evident and zeroed in on the declining number of students between fifth and sixth forms. To stem this decline and to encourage more students to pursue geography at the sixth form level, the researcher proposed a change or improvement in the methods used in the teaching of theory.

This area of the syllabus was selected for examination, based on a number of facts:

1. The A level and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) syllabuses are heavily weighted with theories/models.
2. CAPE reports have shown that students generally perform poorly on theory/models.
3. Geographers have always seen theory as a vital part of the discipline.

The History of theory and its place and role in the discipline was examined to provide a framework for making the proposition that theory can help to stem the declining number of students pursuing Geography between the fifth and sixth form level. The findings are as follows:

1. The major reasons for students not going on to pursue Geography at sixth form were that students found the subject difficult and some did not see where Geography could help them in their career choice. This should be focused on in stemming the decline identified.
2. Most students were able to identify subjects from which Geography has drawn its content. Only 15.5% of the students were unable to identify a subject to which Geography is connected.
3. That the mean score of the test was approximately 38%, which indicated poor performance.
4. Teachers generally saw theory as important but they do not allow students to theorize or formulate theory. This must be done in order to stem the decline in the number of students between the two forms.
5. Teachers' methods were seen as the major factor affecting students' performance on theory.