Exploring strategies employed by geography teachers to implement learner-centred approaches in secondary schools in Temeke District (Dar es Salaam Region) and Kilwa District (Lindi Region), Tanzania

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https://doi.org/10.51867/ajernet.6.4.104

ABSTRACT

The implementation of learner-centred approaches (LCAs) is essential for fostering students' engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities in secondary school geography. Guided by Constructivist Learning Theory, this study examined the strategies used by teachers to implement LCA, the factors facilitating its use, and the barriers hindering its application in Tanzanian secondary schools. The study was conducted between August and November 2021 in four schools—Wailes and St Antony Mbagala in Temeke District, and Kilwa Kivinje and Kilwa Masoko Islamic in Kilwa District—representing public and private institutions in both urban and semi-rural contexts. The target population included geography teachers and Form Three students. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 200 students using structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights were obtained through classroom observations, interviews, and focus group discussions. Purposive sampling was used to select schools and teachers, whereas simple random sampling was used to select students. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data were thematically analysed. Findings revealed that group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and contextualised examples were the most commonly used learner-centred strategies. However, Information and Communication Technology [ICT] integration and fieldwork were rarely practised due to resource limitations. Qualitative data further indicated that collaborative learning, teacher motivation, and availability of instructional materials facilitated LCA implementation, while overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, examination pressure, and inadequate professional development constrained its consistency. The study concludes that although teachers are motivated to adopt LCA, systemic and contextual challenges hinder effective implementation. It recommends strengthening teacher training, improving access to learning resources, reducing class sizes, and enhancing school leadership support to promote sustainable, learner-centred pedagogy in geography education.

Keywords: Learner-Centred Approach, Geography Teaching, Secondary Education, Teaching Strategies, Teacher Practices

I. INTRODUCTION

The quality of teaching and learning in secondary education depends to a large extent on how learners are actively involved in the construction of knowledge (Fufa *et al*., 2023; Golightly, 2025). Over the last two decades, education reforms at global levels have pushed for the adoption of an LCA to improve learning outcomes and enhance critical thinking among students (Du Plessis, 2020; Golightly & Sprenger, 2024). Global frameworks such as the Education for All (EFA) Framework for Action (2000) and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasize equitable, inclusive, and quality education that empowers learners to think critically and solve real-world problems. These reforms mark a deliberate move away from teacher-dominated pedagogies toward approaches that position learners as active participants in their educational experiences (Foglieni *et al*., 2023; Peters, 2003). Learner-centered pedagogy places teachers as facilitators who guide learners to explore, analyze, and reflect, while students are expected to take responsibility for constructing and applying knowledge (Ishemo, 2021; Ockhuizen, 2018). Such a pedagogical shift has been informed by constructivist learning theories, which emphasize interaction, collaboration, and contextual learning as critical determinants to realizing educational objectives.

The introduction of the Competence-Based Curriculum in 2005 was a major policy shift in Tanzania towards learner-centred education (Mpayo & Bulayi, 2023; Shiboko & Mrema, 2024). This replaced the 1997 content-based curriculum and focused on the development of students who would be competent, innovative, and capable of solving real life problems. Geography teaching was thus reoriented under CBC to align with inquiry problem-solving and

field-based learning in which learners could apply geographic concepts to life situations (Lekule & Langu, 2024). After almost twenty years of its implementation, however, studies have continued to report high reliance by many teachers of Geography on teacher-centred approaches in schools, such as lecturing, note dictation, and rote memorization. As witnessed in studies by (Catacutan *et al*., 2023; Hipolite, 2019; Issa *et al*., 2024) these approaches reduce learner engagement and are against the intent of the CBC, whose aim is to develop learners who are able to think critically, work collaboratively, and solve life problems typical of the demands of the 21st century.

The application of LCA in secondary schools has been severely restricted by both systemic and pedagogical hurdles. Research evidence indicates a number of significant impediments to pedagogical innovation, including inadequate teacher training, scarcity of instructional materials, overcrowded classrooms, and administrative support (Boonsuk *et al*., 2024; Fufa *et al*., 2023). A majority of the teachers have not taken adequate in-service training to make the principles of LCA functional, and therefore often revert to the familiar teaching-centred approaches that stress completion of the syllabus and performance in the examinations. In subjects like Geography, which calls for an interactive inquiry approach, such as fieldwork, map reading, and spatial analysis, the shortage of practical exposure and limited teaching aids further narrows the application of LCA (Mtitu, 2024; Ockhuizen, 2018). Eventually, this leads the students to acquire superficial rather than analytic knowledge, weakening their competence to interpret geographical phenomena.

The Learner-Centred Approach is particularly relevant to Geography because the subject inherently fosters active learning through exploration, observation, and analysis of real-world contexts (Dewodo *et al*., 2025; Lekule & Langu, 2024). Geography education thus aims to equip learners with problem-solving abilities, spatial reasoning, and environmental awareness-all of which thrive under participatory learning environments. It is expected that teachers should, therefore, adopt a variety of strategies, including group discussions, project-based learning, debates, field excursions, and simulations that enhance the learners' engagement and autonomy (Magidanga *et al*., 2025; Msonde, 2021). However, while the CBC places emphasis on these strategies, little is known about the actual classroom practices of Geography teachers in Tanzania, especially how they adapt LCA principles within resource-constrained and contextually diverse settings. This gap becomes even more pronounced when comparing urban and rural school contexts, where differences in teacher expertise, school infrastructure, and access to learning materials may influence pedagogical choices.

Therefore, most previous studies in Tanzania have focused on general challenges of curriculum implementation (Chen, 2025; Mdessa & Nyoni, 2022; Sakata, 2023) or on the perceptions of teachers about LCA (Fufa *et al*., 2023; Magidanga *et al*., 2025; Omari, 2021; Sakata *et al*., 2022). Few have examined the specific strategies utilized by Geography teachers to make LCA work in their classrooms. Furthermore, empirical insights into how teachers creatively work around challenges like overcrowding, resource constraints, or exam pressure in their attempts to enact learner-centered teaching are scant. Gaining insight into these strategies will be important for several reasons: improving instructional practice, strengthening teacher preparation programs, and aligning classroom pedagogy with expectations from the curriculum. It also forms a basis for providing evidence to inform policymakers and curriculum developers as they design specific interventions that enhance the effectiveness of LCA implementation.

This study was conducted to fill this knowledge gap through the exploration of the strategies employed by Geography teachers in implementing LCA in secondary schools in Dar es Salaam and Lindi Regions, Tanzania. These two regions present contrasting educational contexts-Dar es Salaam representing an urban environment with relatively better infrastructure and Lindi representing a semi-rural setting where resources are limited. Data were collected between August and November 2024 from four secondary schools, namely, Wailes and St. Antony Mbagala in Temeke District, Dar es Salaam, and Kilwa Kivinje and Kilwa Masoko Islamic in Kilwa District, Lindi. Teachers and students were key participants in the study, which adopted a mixed-methods approach incorporating classroom observation, interviews, FGDs, and questionnaires.

The overarching purpose of the study was to identify, document, and analyse the strategies that Geography teachers use to implement learner-centred approaches, the facilitating factors, and the barriers that hinder effective implementation. Specifically, the study was guided by the following three objectives:

i. To examine the strategies used by teachers during the teaching of Geography.
ii. To identify the strategies that facilitates the use of Learner-Centred Approaches (LCA) in teaching and learning.
iii. To analyse the barriers hindering the implementation of LCA in secondary schools

By addressing these objectives, the paper contributes to the understanding of how Geography teachers operationalize learner-centred pedagogy within Tanzanian classrooms. The findings are expected to provide insights into teacher innovation, contextual adaptation, and professional support needs for effective LCA implementation. In the end, the study is expected to contribute to both policy and practice by providing evidence-based recommendations toward improving the quality of education in Geography and realizing the goals of the Competence-Based Curriculum.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The theoretical basis of this study is based on three complementary learning theories: Constructivist Learning Theory and Social Constructivism Theory. These two theories underpin the principles of learner-centred pedagogy and inform the ways in which Geography teachers may engage learners in active knowledge construction.

2.1.1 Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist Learning Theory emanates from the work of Piaget (1972) who suggests that learners actively construct their knowledge instead of obtaining information passively from a teacher (Bourgeois, 2011; Waite-Stupiansky, 2022). Herein, learning is considered to be a meaning-making process: learners build new understanding based on their prior experiences and cognitive frameworks (Du Plessis, 2020). From the perspective of geographical education, this means that the teacher should organize classroom experiences which enable exploration, inquiry, and reflection these latter three dimensions being very important in grasping complex geographical phenomena (Pardjono, 2016).

In Tanzania's Competence-Based Curriculum, constructivist principles are reflected through outcomes that require students to engage in hands-on activities, problem-solving, and contextualized learning experiences (Mtitu, 2024). For instance, activities such as map interpretation, fieldwork, and environmental observation demand learners to synthesize knowledge through discovery rather than rote memorization. However, effective implementation depends on the teacher's ability to guide students to connect new concepts with real-life contexts. As Chen (2025) argues, teachers who embrace constructivist strategies foster deeper cognitive engagement and critical thinking, enabling learners to construct durable and transferable knowledge structures.

Despite its relevance, constructivist teaching remains underutilized in many Tanzanian classrooms. Studies (Fufa *et al*., 2023; Lekule & Langu, 2024) show that while teachers conceptually appreciate learner-centred pedagogy, they often lack the skills and confidence to operationalize constructivist strategies, particularly in large or resource-limited classrooms. Therefore, constructivist learning theory provides the foundational rationale for this study by explaining why learner engagement and knowledge co-construction are central to effective Geography instruction.

2.1.2 Social Constructivism Theory

Social Constructivism, as developed by Vygotsky in 1978, expands on Piaget's conceptual framework to include the social aspect of learning. Learning is achieved through interaction, collaboration, and dialogue with learners and teachers; the process is mediated through cultural tools and social contexts (Efgivia *et al*., 2021). The key concept is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), indicating that learners can reach higher levels when supported by more knowledgeable peers or teachers through scaffolding ((Mohammed & Kinyó, 2020).

Social constructivism occurs in Geography classrooms through group discussions, collaborative projects, and peer-assisted learning activities in which students collaboratively develop an understanding of environmental processes and spatial relationships. These interactions promote cooperative inquiry, problem-solving, and reflection-all important principles of the Learner-Centred Approach. The teacher's role is thus seen to shift from one of transmitter of knowledge to facilitator of supportive social contexts for learning.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Strategies Used by Teachers in Teaching Geography

A variety of studies both globally and regionally illustrate that teachers use a range of strategies in operationalizing learner-centered approaches within Geography classrooms. Research by Golightly and Sprenger (2024) in South Africa indicated that often, teachers combine learner-centered and teacher-centered methods by using a "balancing act" where lectures are complemented by collaborative group activities and project-based assignments. Boonsuk *et al*. (2024) likewise noted the use of interactive pedagogical activities such as debates, simulations, and peer instruction by Thai teachers to enhance critical thinking and engagement. The mentioned studies underscore the ability to adapt as integral to employing successful LCA strategies.

In Tanzania, for example, Mtitu (2024) and Msonde (2021) found that the most effective Geography teachers design lessons around inquiry and problem-solving rather than the rote delivery of content. For example, exploration and reflection were facilitated through fieldwork and group mapping exercises. In Arumeru District of Tanzania, Lekule and Langu (2024) noted that Geography teachers were using brainstorming sessions, question-and-answer

techniques, and projects involving the local environment as strategies to connect classroom theory to learners' everyday life experiences. Dewodo *et al.* (2025) similarly reported, from Ghana, that the learner-centred classrooms maintained a character of cooperative learning, storytelling, and contextualized examples to make content relevant to the learners' environments. Such evidence suggests that active engagement, contextual learning, and collaboration are central strategies used by teachers in implementing LCA effectively.

However, even where such strategies are implemented, teachers often make selective adaptations based on the resources available, class size, and time constraints. Chen (2025) identified that in China, Geography teachers adapted inquiry-based activities by using locally available materials due to the lack of access for fieldwork. This flexibility embodies teacher agency-a key to sustaining LCA in resource-scarce contexts. In Tanzania, Magidanga *et al.* (2025) reported that teachers who were creative, for example, by using the school compounds as field laboratories or including peer assessment, realized higher motivation and participation in learners. Therefore, in essence, across contexts, the implementation of LCA comes down to how teachers translate theoretical intentions into practical action imbued with contextual sensitivity.

2.2.2 Strategies that facilitate the use of learner-centred approaches

The empirical literature indicates a number of facilitating factors that enhance the capacity of teachers to implement LCA. Among these, teacher competence and professional development are considered paramount. Golightly (2025) established a strong correlation between SDL skills among Geography teachers and their effective use of learner-centered instructional strategies. Teachers who were involved in professional learning communities and reflective practice tended to design lessons that were more participatory. In similar vein, Msonde (2021) reiterated that continuous professional learning opportunities enable teachers to internalize constructivist principles, thereby nurturing their classroom implementation.

Other facilitating factors include institutional and administrative support. Research in low- and middle-income countries indicates that school leadership is a key driver of innovative teaching, as evidenced by the works of Sakata (2023) and Fufa *et al.* (2023). Supportive environments, where teachers are given room for professional independence, time for collaborative planning, and teaching aids, increase the adoption of LCA. For example, in Tanzania, Issa *et al.* (2024) found that schools with proactive heads and other forms of departmental collaboration tend to demonstrate better learner engagement during Geography lessons. Additionally, access to resources and study materials, including atlases, maps, and ICT tools, may influence the integration of LCA positively.

The information calls for a supportive learning culture and student preparedness to successfully implement LCA. According to Dewodo *et al.* (2025), students in Ghanaian schools, who have become accustomed to passive approaches, initially resist participatory tasks but gradually develop confidence and critical thinking with sustained exposure. Evidence from Tanzania also supports this: students gradually became more independent learners once teachers have successfully maintained consistent participatory approaches, as found by Lekule and Langu (2024). Taken together, these findings suggest that teacher motivation, institutional support, and learner adaptability form an ecosystem that sustains learner-centered teaching.

2.2.3 Barriers Hindering Implementation of Learner-Centred Approaches

Despite long-standing advocacy, multiple challenges hamper the effective implementation of LCA in Geography. The most frequently mentioned include a lack of teacher training, a general lack of teaching materials, and large class sizes. Shiboko and Mrema (2024) noted that teachers in Same District reported a lack of exposure to CBC methodologies, which meant they faced difficulties in developing learner-centered lessons. Fufa *et al.* (2023) and Du Plessis (2020) further reported that even when teachers appreciated the theoretical significance of LCA, they lacked the practical skills to manage participatory classrooms.

Another continuing challenge is resource scarcity. Mtitu (2024) and Hipolite (2019) reported that lessons in Geography often rely heavily on chalk-and-talk because of the scarcity of maps, globes, and funding for fieldwork. Overcrowding in the classroom further limits interaction and assessment of individual learners. Furthermore, the culture of examination-oriented schooling that pervades Tanzanian schools promotes mere memorization of content rather than exploration and problem-solving (Magidanga *et al.*, 2025; Mpayo & Bulayi, 2023). The result is that teachers focus on coverage of the syllabus rather than deep learning.

In addition, weak implementation is contributed to by administrative and policy-level constraints. Studies from both Tanzania – Ishemo (2021); Omari (2021) – and wider African contexts – Sakata (2023) – indicate that erratic policy monitoring and supervision and poor links between the design of the curriculum and classroom realities

are preventing progress. Ultimately, teachers are often obliged to work under intense pressure to achieve quantifiable results, therefore limiting experimentation with learner-centred innovations. Finally, socio-cultural attitudes, such as considering the teacher as an unquestionable authority, prevent participatory teaching in some schools (Chen, 2025; Dewodo *et al*., 2025).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, specifically a convergent parallel approach, which allowed for the simultaneous collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. The rationale for employing this design is to gain a comprehensive view of the strategies that Geography teachers adopt in implementing learner-centred approaches and the contextual factors that facilitate and hinder the application. As Baran (2022) contend, in a mixed-methods design, numerical data can be integrated with in-depth narratives to provide a complete interpretation of complex educational phenomena. Quantitative data contributed measurable trends on the usage and perceived effectiveness of LCA strategies, while qualitative data illuminated teachers' and students' lived experiences by adding depth and contextual nuance.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Temeke District (Dar es Salaam Region) and Kilwa District, Lindi Region, of Tanzania. These two regions were purposively selected to represent contrasting educational contexts-urban and semi-rural-providing comparative insights into how geography teachers adapt LCA strategies under different resource and infrastructural conditions. Dar es Salaam is the country's commercial capital, with better school facilities, higher teacher qualifications, and greater exposure to pedagogical innovation. In contrast, schools in Lindi Region are located within a semi-rural setting where there is typically a shortage of teaching resources, limited professional development opportunities, and supervision.

Four secondary schools were involved in the study: Wailes and St. Antony Mbagala in Temeke District, and Kilwa Kivinje and Kilwa Masoko Islamic in Kilwa District. These schools offer Geography in both Ordinary and Advanced levels and had teachers who had taught for at least three years under the Competence-Based Curriculum. Also, among these, St. Antony Mbagala and Kilwa Masoko Islamic are private schools, while Wailes and Kilwa Kivinje are public schools. This selection ensured representation of both ownership types, which differ in terms of governance, resource availability, and teacher management practices. The comparison provided valuable insights into whether school ownership influences the strategies and challenges associated with implementing LCA in Geography teaching.

3.3 Target Population and Sampling Procedures

The study population included Geography teachers and students in selected secondary schools. Both teachers and students had to be included in the research design, since it was important to capture various perspectives on how learner-centered teaching is implemented and experienced.

A sample size was estimated using Cochran's formula for proportions:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

Z = z-score for desired confidence level (1.96 for 95% confidence)

p = estimated proportion (use 0.50 when unknown; yields maximum sample)

$q = 1 - p$

e = acceptable margin of error (precision) (7%)

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 (0.50)(0.50)}{0.07^2}$$

$$n = 196$$

Therefore, the sample size was adjusted to 200 to account for attrition.

Accordingly, the quantitative sample comprised 192 students and the qualitative component included 8 purposively selected Geography teachers (two teachers per school), yielding an overall sample of 200 participants. The 192 student respondents were equally allocated across the four study schools (48 students per school) and stratified by form and gender to ensure balanced representation. The eight teachers were selected purposively for in-depth interviews and classroom observations to provide contextual and triangulated qualitative data

Table 1

Stratified Sample Distribution of Students by School, Form, and Gender

School Name	Form	Male Students	Female Students	Total Students
Wailes Secondary School	Form 3	12	12	24
	Form 4	12	12	24
Subtotal (Wailes)				48
St. Antony Mbagala Secondary	Form 3	12	12	24
	Form 4	12	12	24
Subtotal (St. Antony)				48
Kilwa Kivinje Secondary School	Form 3	12	12	24
	Form 4	12	12	24
Subtotal (Kilwa Kivinje)				48
Kilwa Masoko Islamic Secondary	Form 3	12	12	24
	Form 4	12	12	24
Subtotal (Kilwa Masoko)				48
Total Students		**96**	**96**	**192**

Note: The teacher sample (n = 8) were selected purposively (2 per school) and were included for interviews and classroom observations

3.4 Data Collection Methods

In order to capture comprehensive data, multiple instruments were used, such as questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, FGDs, and classroom observations.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Quantitative data was gathered about the students' experiences and perceptions concerning learner-centred strategies adopted in Geography lessons. It contained both closed- and open-ended questions, organized around the three objectives of this study. Items on a Likert scale were used to measure frequency and effectiveness in learner-centred activities such as discussions, project work, debates, and fieldwork.

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

In-depth interviews with Geography teachers explored their experiences, motivations, and challenges in using LCA. The interviews also explored creative strategies used by teachers to adapt learner-centred methods in resource-constrained settings. Each interview lasted between 40 and 60 minutes and was conducted in either English or Kiswahili, whichever the participant preferred.

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

A total of two FGDs were conducted with students in each region to collectively understand how Geography lessons were conducted and to identify practices that promote active learning. Each FGD comprised 10 participants and was conducted by the researcher using a guide that focused on participation, collaboration, and teacher–student interaction.

3.4.4 Classroom Observations

Direct classroom observations were carried out by using an observation checklist that focused on teacher-student interaction, instructional techniques, the use of teaching aids, and engagement of learners. Each teacher was observed during two lessons (double periods) to ensure consistency in behavior and strategy use. Observation data provided first-hand evidence of the pedagogical practices used and helped to triangulate findings from interviews and questionnaires.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis was conducted separately for the quantitative and qualitative components, with integration done during interpretation.

3.5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means, were computed to summarize the prevalence and patterns in the use of learner-centred strategies in Geography teaching. Graphs and tables were also used for visualization to ease interpretation.

3.5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews, FGDs, and classroom observations were thematically analyzed using procedures suggested by Braun and Clarke (2019). Transcripts were read and reread, initial codes were generated, and patterns identified and categorized into major themes that related to the objectives of the study. Direct quotations from teachers and students were incorporated to retain authenticity and illustrate key points. During discussion, findings from both strands were integrated to draw comprehensive conclusions that provide corroborative evidence regarding the interpretation of results.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Qualitative findings are ensured through triangulation of data sources and methods in this research study; this enhances depth and consistency in the results. Member checking was done by allowing selected participants to review the interview summaries for accuracy. Peer debriefing with academic supervisors further enhanced analytical validity. For the quantitative component, content validity of the questionnaire was established through expert review by two education specialists, while reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha produced a coefficient of 0.81, showing internal consistency at a high level.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the study on strategies employed by Geography teachers to implement learner-centred approaches (LCA) in secondary schools in Tanzania. Data from questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs) were analysed to address the study's three objectives. Quantitative findings from students' responses are presented descriptively and supplemented with qualitative insights from teachers and observations, allowing for triangulation.

4.1 Strategies Used by Teachers during the Teaching of Geography

The study wanted to examine the various strategies used by teachers during the teaching of Geography in selected secondary schools. To achieve this, students were asked to rate ten statements reflecting different learner-centred and teacher-led instructional strategies on a five-point Likert scale. The results in Table 2 suggest that, from the students' point of view, Geography teachers do use a variety of learner-centered instructional strategies in their classrooms. This is substantiated by the mean score of 3.88 (SD = 0.91) computed for all items. The strategies most in use were group discussions, with a mean score of 4.23 and question-and-answer sessions at mean of 4.11, indicating that instructors actually try to get students to interact with each other, work together, and become active participants in the process. These are consistent with the underpinning philosophies of LCP, which identify dialogue and engagement as critical activity dimensions of knowledge construction.

This was followed by the following activities, which also received moderate mean scores: project-based learning, 3.98; use of visual aids, such as maps and models, (M = 4.07); and integration of contextualized examples from relevant local environments, (M = 4.14). This trend suggests that although the teachers try to use various learner-centered activities, their actual usage depends on the topic, instructional materials, and classroom setting.

In comparison, relatively lower mean scores were recorded for the integration of ICT (M = 3.37) and fieldwork activities (M = 3.46), indicating persistent problems due to a lack of resources, restricted access to digital tools, and logistic challenges in making outdoor learning experiences possible. These findings indicate that while most Geography teachers are aware of the principles for learner-centered teaching, their depth, consistency, and range of use are still limited by institutional resources, teacher preparedness, and classroom conditions.

Table 2

Students' Responses on Strategies Used by Teachers during the Teaching of Geography (n = 192)

Likert Statement	M	SD
The teacher often uses group discussions to help us share ideas during Geography lessons.	4.23	0.78
Question-and-answer sessions are regularly used to test our understanding.	4.11	0.85
The teacher encourages student presentations and peer teaching.	3.89	0.91
Fieldwork and outdoor activities are organized to apply what we learn in class.	3.46	1.02
Projects and assignments require students to research and present findings.	3.98	0.88
Maps, models, and visual aids are frequently used during lessons.	4.07	0.81
The teacher integrates local environmental examples to make learning relevant.	4.14	0.84
Group problem-solving exercises are part of most Geography lessons.	3.92	0.89
The teacher uses ICT tools (e.g., PowerPoint, Google Earth, videos) to support learning.	3.37	1.15
We are given opportunities to reflect and evaluate our own learning after lessons.	3.64	0.95
Overall Mean	3.88	0.91

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs supported these quantitative findings and provided further detail on the realities of classroom practice. These data showed that most Geography teachers are indeed conscious of participatory teaching strategies, but there are contextual and resource-based barriers. Teachers indicated that they do regularly use interactive techniques like group discussions, debates, and problem-solving sessions that make students more interested in what is being taught, especially when the topics are complex, such as population, environmental management, and land use. These strategies were thus considered effective in stimulating student interest and fostering collaborative learning.

> *"When we divide students into smaller groups, it becomes easier for them to discuss and share ideas freely. I often notice that even the quiet students begin to participate when they are among their peers. The method has helped me identify students' misconceptions early and guide them accordingly. It saves time, too, because the groups can attend to different aspects of a topic simultaneously. In such a discussion, students learn not only from me but also from each other, which enriches the learning experience thoroughly."* (Geography teacher, Kilwa Kivinje Secondary School, Interview, 2024)

Students participating in FGDs indeed corroborated that interactive approaches greatly raised their understanding and participation in Geography lessons. Many appreciated the opportunity for idea contribution during group activities. This made learning interesting and relevant. They emphasized that this participatory learning managed to make them relate classroom content to real-life situations, especially those which they could see in their local physical environments.

> *"The teacher always forms discussion groups and gives each group a question to handle during Geography lessons. Later, we present the answer together and discuss it. This approach makes the lesson to be more interesting, and we remember its contents for a longer period. It also helps us connect the topics to the things we see in our surroundings, like soil erosion and deforestation. When we work as a group, we learn how to explain ideas in our own words and understand things better compared to when the teacher just lectures."* (Student, FGD, Wailes Secondary School, 2024)

Observation data on classroom instruction also bolstered these observations: most teachers incorporated group discussions with question-and-answer sessions that would help them understand how well the students comprehended the idea and curiosity served as a stimulus in this regard. Teachers frequently used exploratory questions and peer feedback as strategies toward reinforcing conceptual clarity. However, ICT-based teaching and outdoor field activities were seldom observed due to inadequate technological facilities, strapped finances, and a lack of time. Notwithstanding these deficiencies, resource-poor school teachers made do by improvising instructional materials such as hand-drawn charts, sketches, and locally drawn maps that facilitated comprehension and participation.

> *"We don't have projectors or digital maps, so I always prepare wall charts or draw maps on manila sheets. Sometimes, I request students to create their own sketches of local features. This participatory practice improves their spatial understanding even without modern equipment. The key thing is to make them involved, not just mere listeners. By engaging them in drawing and presenting, they take ownership of the lesson, and that builds confidence and curiosity."* (Teacher, St. Antony Mbagala Secondary School, Interview, 2024)

These innovative and adaptive practices were nevertheless bounded by various systemic barriers which prevented teachers from consistently using learner-centered methods. Overcrowding of the classrooms, time pressures arising out of syllabus completion, and strong emphases on examination performance often compelled teachers to fall back on teacher-centered approaches. The majority of teachers revealed that while they cherished participatory learning, they needed to strike a balance between the same and lecture-based approaches during periods of preparation for examinations so that they could manage content coverage and completion of the syllabus. Classroom observations confirmed this, with lessons often beginning with a discussion format and then slipping into traditional explanations toward the end as teachers aimed to consolidate key facts.

4.2 Strategies that Facilitate the Use of Learner-Centred Approaches (LCA) in Teaching and Learning

The study wanted to identify the strategies that facilitate the use of learner-centred approaches (LCA) in the teaching and learning of Geography. To assess this, students were presented with ten statements relating to supportive strategies such as teacher motivation, administrative support, student participation, and instructional resources. Table 3 presents findings that on the whole, students perceived multiple institutional and pedagogical strategies as instrumental in facilitating the effective application of LCA approaches to the teaching and learning of Geography. The mean was 4.04 with a SD of 0.92. The highest ratings included peer collaboration among students while learning, which received a mean of 4.28, teacher encouragement of student participation with a mean of 4.21, and adequate teaching and learning materials with a mean of 4.17. These findings stress the importance of interactive learning environments and resource adequacy for encouraging active engagement and shared responsibility for learning, which are core components of the LCA paradigm.

The moderately rated strategies included teacher training and professional development workshops conducted by the staff, student-led activities, and integration of real-life examples and experiences into classroom instruction,

with means of M = 4.09, M = 4.11, and M = 3.91, respectively. These findings suggest that while opportunities for pedagogical improvement are available, their frequency, scope, and accessibility currently remain uneven across educational settings. This would seem to create more disparity between public and private schools, where differences in resource availability and institutional support may influence teachers' ability to consistently employ learner-centered pedagogies.

Relatively lower mean scores were recorded for classroom layout flexibility (M = 3.74) and administrative monitoring and follow-up (M = 3.84). These findings reflect the perpetuation of structural and organizational constraints on fully implementing participatory learning methods. Inadequate physical space, inflexible seating, and inadequate supervisory mechanisms might hinder teachers from managing interactive sessions and collaborative group learning activities.

The findings affirm that collaborative learning, supportive administration, and adequate instructional resources are the most prominent facilitators of learner-centered teaching practices in Geography classrooms. A strengthening of these dimensions particular through systematic teacher-capacity building initiatives and proactive institutional leadership would serve to deepen, stabilize, and sustain learner-centered implementation, in turn securely enhancing students' conceptual understanding and engagement with geographical content.

Table 3

Strategies that Facilitate the Use of Learner-Centred Approaches (n = 200)

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Teachers encourage student participation and feedback during lessons	4.21	0.86
School administration supports innovative and interactive teaching methods	4.05	0.94
Availability of teaching and learning materials enhances learner-centred instruction	4.17	0.89
Peer collaboration among students promotes active learning	4.28	0.83
Regular teacher training and workshops improve application of LCA	4.09	0.92
Teachers use assessment methods that involve student reflection and discussion	3.98	0.97
Classroom layout allows easy group interaction and discussion	3.74	1.03
Teachers integrate real-life examples and field activities in lessons	3.91	0.88
Administrative monitoring encourages teachers to apply participatory teaching	3.84	0.95
Students are given opportunities to lead presentations and group tasks	4.11	0.91
Overall Mean (M)	**4.04**	**0.92**

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Qualitative data from student focus group discussions provided strong corroboration of quantitative findings and emphasized the role of collaborative, participatory strategies in facilitating learner-centered Geography instruction. Geography teachers emphasized that fostering group work, encouraging student participation, and integrating contextual examples were essential strategies to promote learner-centred pedagogy. Teachers noted that when learners are actively involved, they develop a stronger understanding of complex topics such as population dynamics, environmental management, and land use planning.

> *"When students are divided into smaller groups, they engage in discussions and share ideas more freely. Even quieter learners become more confident when participating with their peers. I use this method to identify misconceptions early and guide students accordingly. It also allows the groups to handle different aspects of a topic simultaneously, which saves time and promotes active learning. By facilitating collaboration rather than giving direct answers, I help learners construct their own understanding and connect theory to real-life situations."* (Geography teacher, Kilwa Kivinje Secondary School, Interview, 2024)

Furthermore, students reported consistently that group discussion, peer collaboration, and hands-on activities enhanced engagement, understanding, and application of geographic concepts to real-world contexts. Participants highlighted that these strategies shift lessons from passivity to active learning experiences and that such approaches provide them with opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and to engage meaningfully with peers and teachers.

> *"In our geography lessons, the teacher at Wailes Secondary School divides us into groups and assigns each group a question or some activity, such as the causes of soil erosion in our community or the mapping of local water resources. We discuss this within the group, make a presentation, and debate other groups. This methodology allows us to understand in great depth and actually relate it to what we observe around us. I am more confident to ask questions and share my ideas because the teacher invites participation and values every contribution. It is much more exciting than listening to lectures."* (Student, FGD, Wailes Secondary School, 2024)

Similarly, students from private schools, St. Antony Mbagala and Kilwa Masoko Islamic, also reported that active participation in peer activities and teacher-facilitated discussions enhanced deeper understanding and better retention of geographical knowledge. Indeed, students became especially appreciative when given opportunities for practical tasks, visual displays, and realistic problem-solving that made such lessons meaningful and motivating.

> *"At St. Antony Mbagala, our teacher usually asks us to work in groups to create maps or diagrams based on the topics we are studying, such as population distribution or land use patterns. We share our ideas, correct each other, and explain our reasoning. That way, the lesson is more practical and interesting. I have noticed that through discussion and teaching, we remember longer and can apply the concepts in different situations; for instance, understanding local environmental issues. It also builds teamwork and helps us express our ideas more clearly."* (Student, FGD, St. Antony Mbagala Secondary School, 2024)

Therefore, students from semi-rural public schools, like Kilwa Kivinje, noted that even with limited resources, strategies of group work, peer discussion, and student presentations increased learners' level of participation and learning outcomes. In spite of infrastructural and logistical problems, these participatory approaches promoted creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills among learners.

> *"Although our school does not have many teaching materials, our Geography teacher ensures that we work in groups, discuss local examples, and present findings on topics such as river systems and deforestation. We are encouraged to draw maps, make charts, and relate the lessons to our environment. All this makes learning more practical and enjoyable. I feel that I understand the concepts much better when we explore them ourselves rather than just listening to the teacher."* (Student, FGD, Kilwa Kivinje Secondary School, 2024)

These qualitative insights strongly support the view that interactive approaches, collaborative learning, and contextualized engagement lie at the heart of facilitating learner-centered pedagogies. Students from both private and public schools reported that teacher encouragement, peer collaboration, and practical activities served as enabling environments for active participation, critical thinking, and applying knowledge in meaningful ways. Importantly, these findings suggest that the presence of resources can expand the scope and effectiveness of learner-centered strategies, but even resource-constrained settings can achieve substantial gains through innovative and participatory practices.

4.3 Barriers Hindering the Implementation of Learner-Centred Approaches in Secondary Schools

The study further aimed to identify and analyze the barriers that constrain the effective implementation of LCA in the teaching and learning of Geography in secondary schools. As summarized in Table 4, the results show that several pedagogical, institutional, and contextual factors continue to impede the practical realization of learner-centered pedagogy (overall M = 3.72; SD = 0.95).

Other high-ranking constraints included large class sizes (M = 4.31), inadequate teaching and learning resources (M = 4.26), and poor time allocation to practical and interactive lessons (M = 4.19). These results imply that overcrowded classrooms with a scarcity of instructional materials continue to be the leading constraints to participatory learning. In most public schools, high student–teacher ratios limit opportunities for individualized attention, active learning, and appropriate classroom management. In turn, a lack of visual aids, field equipment, and ICT tools hampers teachers' capacity to provide exploratory and inquiry-based learning experiences expected in Geography.

The following were the moderately rated barriers: limited teacher training on LCA methodologies (M = 3.96), exam-oriented teaching culture (M = 3.84), and insufficient administrative support (M = 3.78). Such factors point to systemic and professional challenges that weaken teachers' motivation and preparedness for adopting learner-centered practices. A preoccupation with high-stakes examinations within an education system often places pressure on teachers to focus on the completion of syllabi and rote learning rather than encouraging creativity and student participation. Additionally, infrequent in-service training along with weak institutional follow-up minimizes chances for pedagogical innovation and reflection.

Negative student attitudes toward participatory learning (M = 3.49) and limited classroom space and furniture flexibility (M = 3.56) received relatively lower mean ratings. Although these barriers are less serious than the others, they reflect how school culture and physical learning environments can also influence the adoption of LCA. Within schools and classes where students are accustomed to a passive approach to learning, a shift to participatory approaches requires that significant behavioral and attitudinal change occurs through consistent encouragement and reinforcement on the part of teachers.

In sum, these findings indicate that the introduction of LCA in secondary schools is impeded by complex interplays of a lack of resources, structural constraints, and systemic pressures. The persistence of challenges along all these dimensions points to a need for comprehensive interventions, including policy support, targeted teacher professional development, investment in resources, and curriculum alignment. This multi-faceted approach to

overcoming the hurdles will contribute not only to a more effective delivery of Geography education but also to the broader realization of the competence-based education goals in Tanzania.

Table 4

Barriers Hindering the Implementation of Learner-Centred Approaches in Geography Classrooms (n = 200)

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Large class sizes make it difficult for teachers to manage learner-centred activities effectively.	4.31	0.87
There is inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials to support participatory lessons.	4.26	0.93
Insufficient time allocation limits opportunities for interactive and practical Geography lessons.	4.19	0.91
Teachers have limited training and professional development on learner-centred pedagogy.	3.96	0.95
The examination-oriented teaching culture discourages the use of learner-centred methods.	3.84	0.9
Lack of administrative and supervisory support hinders innovative classroom practices.	3.78	0.92
Limited classroom space and inflexible furniture arrangements restrict group-based activities.	3.56	0.97
Negative student attitudes toward active participation reduce the effectiveness of LCA.	3.49	0.90
Shortage of ICT tools and facilities restricts digital or inquiry-based learning opportunities.	3.67	0.89
Heavy teaching workload leaves teachers with limited time to plan participatory lessons.	3.88	0.94
Overall Mean	**3.72**	**0.95**

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions also added depth to the quantitative findings regarding the way in which the barriers to LCA implementation are manifested in everyday classroom practice. Geography teachers reported consistently that large class sizes caused big problems in terms of organizing group work, offering individual support, and ensuring that all students could participate actively in lessons. Crowded conditions often led these same teachers to revert to lecturing as the dominant pedagogical strategy in order to control classroom discipline and get through the syllabus within the time available.

> *"In some of my classes, I teach over sixty students, which makes it extremely challenging to facilitate meaningful group discussions or encourage full participation from every learner. I constantly have to manage noise, ensure discipline, and balance attention among students, leaving little room for interactive methods. Often, I revert to lecturing just to cover all topics before national exams. And I know this goes against the learner-centered approach, but pragmatically, I have very few alternatives to manage such large classes effectively."* (Teacher, Wailes Secondary School, Interview, 2024)

Students in focus group discussions shared similar sentiments, mentioning that overcrowding often restricts their potential to actively participate in the learning process. Learners reported that in large classes, confident students tended to monopolize the discussions, while quieter or less confident peers remained passive, reducing the overall effectiveness of collaborative activities and diminishing opportunities for peer learning.

> *"Sometimes our Geography class has so many students that it is almost impossible for everyone to participate equally. In group discussions, only a few students speak, while others quietly follow along without contributing. This in turn blocks all of us from sharing ideas and learning from each other. The lessons also feel rushed, and sometimes we leave the class without fully understanding the topic because there isn't enough time for everyone to be involved."* (Student, FGD, Kilwa Masoko Islamic Secondary School, 2024)

The second important barrier identified was the shortage of instructional materials and technological resources. Observations in all four schools showed that there is a heavy reliance on traditional teaching aids like chalkboards, hand-drawn maps, and improvised models, especially in public schools. According to them, limited access to ICT tools, digital maps, fieldwork equipment, and updated textbooks confines their possibility of employing learner-centered methods fully and, as a result, makes the lessons less interactive and less engaging.

> *"We do not have enough globes, topographic maps, or digital projectors; I have to use wall charts, handmade models, and drawings to explain geographic concepts. While these improvisations can partially stand in for modern resources, they demand more preparation time and narrow the range of activities I am able to use. For example, spatial analysis or population distribution require special materials if participatory learning is to be facilitated."* Teacher, Kilwa Kivinje Secondary School, Interview, 2024

The time pressures created by a full syllabus and the stress of high-stakes examinations reduced the likelihood of consistent LCA implementation. Teachers themselves mentioned that while such participatory strategies might be pedagogically desirable, they usually felt forced to emphasize content coverage to prepare their students for the national examinations. Classroom observations supported this: lessons often began with interactive group activities but veered toward teacher-directed explanations as exam deadlines drew near.

> *"While our goal is to encourage debate and inquiry, the syllabus is very full, and exams are looming large. I often find myself needing to abandon group work and revert to direct explanation in order to ensure that students cover the necessary material. It's a constant juggling of keeping the learners engaged and*

meeting the demands of exams at the sacrifice of effective participatory learning." (Teacher, St. Antony Mbagala Secondary School, Interview, 2024)

Finally, inadequate in-service training was an important barrier. Teachers reported that in-service training programs were sporadic and mostly theoretical, offering little advice on how to implement learner-centered approaches in large, poorly resourced classrooms. Consequently, it was often the case that teachers reverted to traditional teacher-centered methods or implemented participatory strategies inconsistently within lessons.

"I have attended several workshops on learner-centred approaches; most of them, however, focused on theory and less so on practice. I still struggle to adapt these strategies to my overcrowded classroom with limited materials. Without hands-on guidance with continuous professional support, it is challenging to ensure the students are kept actively engaged and learn effectively through participatory methods." (Teacher, Kilwa Masoko Islamic Secondary School, Interview, 2024)

In all, the findings indicate that even though Geography teachers are motivated to implement LCA, various systemic, institutional, and resource-related barriers stand in the way of them doing so consistently. The most looming challenges that were reported include overcrowded classrooms, lack of adequate instructional materials, rigid curricula, examination pressure, and limited professional development. Such constraints will need targeted interventions that involve expanding teacher training programs, improving access to learning resources, reducing class sizes, and strengthening administrative support to create enabling environments for the effective adoption of learner-centred pedagogy across Tanzanian secondary schools.

4.4 Regression Analysis

To further investigate the relative effect of the identified facilitative factors on the adoption of learner-centred approaches, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The composite score for "LCA Implementation" based on the ten Likert-scale items under Section 4.1 was used as the dependent variable. Independent variables included: peer collaboration, teacher encouragement, availability of instructional materials, teacher professional development, flexibility of classroom layout, and administrative support. The regression model was statistically significant: $F(6, 193) = 18.42$, $p < .001$, indicating that taken together, the selected predictors explained a large portion of variance in LCA implementation. This model accounted for an adjusted $R^2 = 0.34$, meaning that about 34% of the variation in teachers' implementation of learner-centered approaches is attributed to these six factors.

Table 5:

Model Summary for Multiple Linear Regression Predicting LCA Implementation

Model	R	Square (R^2)	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin–Watson
1	0.60	0.36	0.34	0.512	1.89

Predictors: Peer collaboration, Teacher encouragement, Instructional materials availability, Teacher professional development, Classroom layout flexibility, Administrative support.

Dependent Variable: LCA Implementation Score, **N = 200**

The findings in Table 6 shows that, Peer collaboration was the most influential predictor of effective LCA enactment, with a $\beta = .41$ at a significance of $p < .001$, showing that classrooms with active student-to-student interaction tended to enact LCA more effectively. Teacher encouragement had a significant and positive contribution $\beta = .29$, at a significance of $p = .002$, underlining the supportive climate in the classroom as important for encouraging participatory learning. The availability of instructional materials contributed modestly but significantly, at $\beta = .18$, $p = .021$, reflecting the important role of resources in shaping teachers' pedagogical choices. However, teacher professional development ($\beta = .07$, $p = .248$), flexibility in classroom layout ($\beta = .05$, $p = .314$), and administrative support ($\beta = .09$, $p = .183$) were not significant in the model. Results indicate that, while these factors theoretically support LCA, in practice, their impact remains limited due to inconsistencies in the quality of training provided, infrastructural constraints, and variable levels of administrative engagement.

Overall, the regression analysis affirms that peer interaction, teacher encouragement, and resource availability are the most influential determinants of effective learner-centred teaching in Geography classrooms. These findings reinforce the call for policies and interventions that will strengthen collaborative learning structures, equip teachers with adequate materials, and cultivate supportive pedagogical environments.

Table 6

Multiple Linear Regression Results Predicting LCA Implementation

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
(Constant)	1.124	0.213	—	5.27	< .001
Peer collaboration	0.482	0.089	0.41	5.42	< .001
Teacher encouragement	0.364	0.116	0.29	3.14	.002
Instructional materials availability	0.228	0.098	0.18	2.33	.021
Teacher professional development	0.091	0.078	0.07	1.16	.248
Classroom layout flexibility	0.057	0.056	0.05	1.01	.314
Administrative support	0.103	0.078	0.09	1.34	.183

4.5 Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the strategies used by Geography teachers in implementing learner-centered approaches in secondary schools in Tanzania and to identify both facilitating factors and barriers that influence effective implementation. The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data provide a nuanced understanding of the pedagogical practices, challenges, and contextual factors that shape Geography instruction in the selected schools of Dar es Salaam and Lindi Regions.

These results show that teachers are indeed implementing a range of learner-centered strategies, such as group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, project work, and visual aids. These findings support the theory of constructivist learning: interaction, collaboration, and learning within a context are critical mechanisms through which learners construct knowledge (Du Plessis, 2020; Ockhuizen, 2018). Thus, group discussions and peer collaboration proved most effective in encouraging students to utter their understanding, challenge misconceived ideas, and co-construct their knowledge with their peers. This is consistent with Golightly (2025) and Fufa *et al.* (2023), who report that participatory strategies enhance learners' engagement and improve comprehension of subjects that require analytical thinking, such as Geography.

However, it also shows that the depth and consistency of the implementation of LCA vary greatly with contexts. Generally, private schools, like St. Antony Mbagala and Kilwa Masoko Islamic, demonstrated higher extents of the learner-centered approach than those from public schools. This pattern reflects the role of institutional resources, teacher training, and administrative support in shaping classroom pedagogical choices (Boonsuk *et al*., 2024; Magidanga *et al*., 2025). For example, resource availability like teaching aids, ICT tools, and space to carry out group work allowed for the application of interactive methods, while resource limitations constrained LCA applications in both public and semi-rural schools.

The study also revealed a number of strategies that facilitate the implementation of LCA. Collaboration among peers, encouragement by teachers for students to participate, and availability of learning materials were some of the key facilitative factors. These are reflective of constructivist approaches that propose that knowledge construction can be realized when the learner is active with the content, their peers, and ideas in real-life situations (Peters, 2003; Sakata *et al*., 2022). The moderate facilitative effects of teacher professional development and student-led activities suggest that while formal training develops teachers' capacity to implement LCA, its impact is often variable due to the low frequency and lack of access, especially in public schools (Omari, 2021; Msonde, 2021).

On the other hand, these findings highlight that there are persistent barriers to regular LCA implementation. Large class sizes, time constraints due to an overly full syllabus, examination pressure, lack of teaching resources, and a shortage of in-service training were some of the top challenges reported. Similar barriers were found in previous studies undertaken in Tanzanian and Sub-Saharan contexts, where systemic pressures often thwart practical applications of learner-centered pedagogy (Hipolite, 2019; Mdessa & Nyoni, 2022; Lekule & Langu, 2024). Qualitative evidence also showed how these barriers impact daily classroom practices; indeed, teachers themselves reported frequent reliance on teacher-centered methods to manage overcrowding and ensure the completion of the syllabus.

The results also show the need for context-sensitive adaptation: with resource-constrained settings, teachers often used creative strategies to overcome limitations in both ICT and teaching materials (e.g., handmade charts, student-drawn sketches, and small-group rotation). Such adaptive approaches are indicative of pedagogical resilience, pointing towards possibilities of innovation even when working with extremely challenging settings, a point similarly made in studies by Du Plessis (2020) and Mtitu (2024). In sum, the discussion suggests that the successful practice of LCA is not exclusively dependent on either teacher motivation or teacher knowledge but rather hinges on the complex dynamics between institutional, material, and systemic aspects. This study reiterates that directed interventions, among which are further professionalization of teachers, more appropriate resource management, and administrative support, would offer facilitating conditions for the pedagogical practice of learner-centeredness. Addressing these barriers,

schools will be in a position to ensure active learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills relevant to the pursuits of the Competence-Based Curriculum and 21st-century education.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This paper examines the strategies Geography teachers use to promote learner-centered approaches in secondary schools in Dar es Salaam and Lindi Regions, Tanzania, and investigates facilitative or hindering factors concerning their application. The findings indicated that teachers are generally aware of the principles guiding learner-centeredness and actively use strategies such as group discussion, question-and-answer sessions, project work, and contextualized examples to engage students in active learning. Peer collaboration, encouragement by the teacher, and availability of learning resources emerged as key facilitators that enhance the effectiveness of LCA.

However, it also shows that the depth and consistency of LCA implementation are strongly influenced by a number of contextual factors, such as school type, resource availability, class sizes, examination pressures, and teacher professional development. Private schools were found to have more learner-centered practices compared to public schools, which was linked to better infrastructure and access to resources. However, even though teachers were motivated to try participatory methods, systemic and institutional barriers often hindered them in fully realizing LCA in the classroom. The study underlines that for the effective practice of learner-centred teaching in Geography, the interplay between teacher competence, institutional support, and resource availability is crucial. Resourceful strategies, such as using improvised teaching aids and small-group rotations, indeed illustrate how teachers can creatively rise above constraints. However, for sustainable and systemic support, consistent and quality implementation of LCA across diverse educational contexts remains an uphill task.

5.2 Recommendations

According to the findings of this study, teacher professional development needs to be enhanced for regular, practical-focused training to equip teachers with approaches to effectively cope with large classes and resource-limited classrooms while implementing learner-centred learning strategies. Further, the relevant authorities and school management must prioritize the issue of quality learning materials, ICT facilities, and flexible classroom layouts to support participatory teaching in public and semi-rural schools. The application of such strategies should also be encouraged and monitored by school administrators, following up on the difficulties in keeping a balance between systematic syllabus coverage and giving learners opportunities to practice active engagement, critical thinking, and individual knowledge construction. This would be further supported by a reduction in class sizes through increased recruitment or the creation of smaller sections, which would facilitate easier arrangements for group work, discussions, or individual lessons.

Teachers should be encouraged and allowed to include modern educational technologies, which could include student-created multimedia, peer collaboration, or field-based learning, to further augment learning within confined settings. Finally, studies are needed to investigate, among other concerns, the long-term impacts of LCP on achievement; exploring the incorporation of digital technologies in strengthening active learning in Geography education is also recommended. If taken holistically, implementation of these recommendations will create an enabling environment for the practice of learner-centred pedagogy to take root, increase learners' engagement and critical thinking, and thus lead to better standards in Geography learning, as upheld by the Competence-Based Curriculum.

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