Chapter 11
Educational Decolonization:
Retracing and Reconstructing African Education Ecosystem Through Heritage–Based Education Philosophy – A Case of Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

African countries fought wars of liberations meant to liberate their citizens from the jaws of oppression. The ultimate goal was self-governance and self-determination which was supposed to usher in a developmental trajectory based on equity and equal opportunities. Unfortunately, after the attainment of independence more than half of the population in Africa is still walloping on poverty despite being rich in natural resources. This research study investigated the role played by Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) curriculum in the promotion of innovation and industrialization. Mixed Methods Research approach which integrates both Qualitative and Quantitative Research was used. Data was collected using survey questionnaires and interviews from a sample size of 50 and the respondents were randomly selected from both TVET training institutions and the industry. Analysis of the data was done using Microsoft Excel. The use of mixed methods provided a holistic approach in combining and analyzing the statistical data with deeper contextualized insights. The research study recommended the need to Africanise and decolonize the education system by revising the TVET curricula to focus on heritage-based education philosophy so that learners are capacitated in harnessing and adding value to local resources, solve their local problems through entrepreneurship and employment creation.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Africa is a continent gifted with a wide range of natural resources including the flora and fauna. Africans used to live in harmony with the flora and fauna before the ecosystem was disrupted by colonization although there was rise and fall of diverse societies, cultures, and civilizations that thrived long before colonization (*CATALYST PLANET - Africa's History Before Colonialism*, 2023). This brought about significant changes in the way of life of Africans, that is, the people were affected religiously, culturally, socially and politically. Cultural settings grounded how people in Africa used to interact and engage with each other. The richness of the African history and its heritage attracted people from all over the world. This is a testimony of how much it is appreciated. Colonilisation resulted in loss of sovereignty and the right to control their own destiny and to play a role in their own development or even conduct their own diplomacy and management of their resources. These colonial boundaries led to the creation of present-day independent states of Africa. To ensure continuity of their systems the colonizers introduced a surface education system that was meant to create a product that would walk, dress, talk and be subordinate to them. This also included the bastardisation of African culture and obliteration of its languages as tools of communication. Their effects are still felt today in the form of conflicts among communities in a country, coups, genocides, corruption all being byproducts of colonisation (Okoli, 2023). The post-independence leadership was seen trying to restore the cultural settings, for example, the late former president of Burkina Faso (Thomas Sankara) implemented many successful policies under a socialist framework. His focus was on equality, education, and ecological preservation, he improved healthcare, greatly reducing infant mortality there by empowering women, and increasing access to education. Another example is the late former president of Zimbabwe who in his first years of his administration made great strides in reconciliation, forming coalitions between the Shona and Ndebele people, and importantly guaranteeing safety to the white farmers on whom the economy of Zimbabwe relied (*5 Influential African Leaders of the 20th Century*, 2023).

African governments have generally ignored indigenous TVET Knowledge systems in favour of foreign-centric technologies, which have perpetuated the dependency syndrome to the extent that Africa is now a vast warehouse of everything foreign inclusive of political systems, education systems, health systems, industrial systems, farming, living systems and technologies. Extractive industries, intellectual and social capital have continued to be drain and shipped out to sustain foreign industries to this very day. This characterized the developmental entropy now dominating and haunting Africa through the perpetuation of dependence syndrome. The best human resources and material, cultural and intellectual resources cannot be shipped to foreign industries to fuel industrialization. African countries are at the mercy of neo-colonization through technology systems, educational systems, political systems, and health systems among others, which are generously embraced without interrogation at all times. Even when publishing papers African scholars look up to their colonial master for paper acceptance and ranking. This tends to demean the value of African education system as being subservient to that of other nations. The curricula systems studied in various educational institutions across Africa are built and anchored in foreign-centric philosophies of particular communities for specific purposes and designed and developed to produce and perpetuate a certain cultural orientation. This is a great threat to the development of the Africanisation agenda, which must ground declolonisation tenets. Yet they are leaving behind vast wealth in all forms only to be exploited by the former colonisers who then come

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