

Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of Multicultural Education in Primary Schools in Chegutu District, Zimbabwe

Francis Muchenje¹ and Prem J. H. Heeralal^{2*}

¹University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe

²University of South Africa, P.O. Box 392, Pretoria, South Africa

E-mail: ¹<muchenje francis@gmail.com>, ²<heerapj@unisa.ac.za>

KEYWORDS Culture. Diversity. Sub-culture. Post-modernism. Desegregation. Multiracialism. Prejudice

ABSTRACT The aim of the present paper is to explore teachers' perceptions on the implementation of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools. The paper focuses on five selected schools in Chegutu district. Qualitative research was chosen as the research method. Phenomenology was selected as the research design. The sample consisted of twenty teachers (10 male and 10 female) selected through purposive sampling technique. Data was collected through unstructured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. It was found out that teachers tend to have a narrow focus in terms of their conceptualisation of multicultural education. The paper reveals that multicultural education is being implemented at the additive level through the accommodation of cultural diversity in some school subjects as well as the language in education policy. The paper recommends that multicultural education should be part of the curriculum in pre service teacher education. There is also need for seminars and workshops hosted by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to conscientise teachers on the practice of multicultural education.

INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education has gained prominence in a number of countries worldwide during the last fifty years. It is based on the assumption that there are certain discriminatory practices in education that negatively affect the educational experiences of students. Such discriminatory practices tend to be based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability and social class. Thus, some pupils, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, become invisible in the content of educational materials as well as classroom pedagogy. As schools are open to learners of all races, culture, religious convictions and value systems, teachers are increasingly being confronted with multicultural learning compositions at school and in the classroom (Le Roux 2000: 19).

Multicultural education is relevant to a number of African countries chiefly for two reasons. Firstly, it is recognised that most African countries are multicultural and multiethnic where the

need to tolerate and appreciate cultural differences is of fundamental importance. Secondly, Africa's colonial experience saw the imposition of an alien curriculum that was mono cultural, ethnocentric and Eurocentric in outlook. This curriculum did not give due attention to local circumstances, particularly accommodating the needs of the learner in terms of cultural diversity. In addition, with the attainment of independence in most African states, there is need for multicultural curricula that accommodate the needs of all learners, particularly in terms of race, ethnicity, gender and social class. Meier and Hartell (2009: 180) argue that the increasing cultural diversity in educational institutions necessitates that educationist teach and manage learners with cultures, languages and backgrounds that are unknown to them. Thus, educational leaders can no longer pretend not to take note of the reality and manifestation of diversity in schools (Lemmer et al. 2006: 5). The present paper therefore, seeks to explore teacher perceptions on the implementation of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools. Exploration of teacher perceptions is important considering that multicultural education is such a complex concept that its usefulness and validity for teachers must be examined by (the perspective of) those who implement the curriculum (McKinney and Soudien 2010: 6).

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Prem J. H. Heeralal

Senior Lecturer

University of South Africa

P.O. Box 392

Pretoria, South Africa

E-mail: heerapj@unisa.ac.za

Theoretical Framework

The study is informed by the postmodernist theoretical perspective. Post-modernism places a lot of emphasis on the accommodation of difference in society. Soudien et al. (2004: 28) state that to accommodate difference, educational inclusion has taken the form of multicultural education or education for pluralism. Such observation makes postmodernism relevant to the practice of multicultural education. Ballantine and Hammack (2012: 18) argue that postmodernists call for respect and understanding of human differences. The emphasis on diversity in society provides the rationale for the adoption and implementation of multicultural education. Rose and Potts (2011: 3) argue that cultural diversity therefore, includes the various ways in which the human experience can be diverse as expressed through race, ethnicity, class, language, religion, ability, gender and sexual orientation. Postmodernism can be observed as a theoretical perspective that upholds the acceptance of diversity in society (Taylor et al. 2011: 401). To emphasise the importance of diversity, Sadovnik (2007: 8) advises that postmodern theories of education call for teachers and students to explore difference between what may seem like inherently contradictory positions in an effort to achieve understanding, respect and change. This means that the curricula should be interdisciplinary and represent diverse interests, that universal skills such as critical theory should be stressed and that individual children should reach a common goal by different paths (Ballantine and Hammack 2012: 19).

Definition of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education presents difficulties in terms of definition. Zimmerman (2004: 1) submits that a survey of the literature (Tiedt and Tiedt 2005; Bruch et al. 2004; Bennet 2003; Banks 2002; Gollnick and Chinn 2002; Grant and Gomez 2001; Hernandez 2001; Nieto 2000; Sleeter and Grant 1999) indicates the complexity, and even contradictions of creating a definition of multicultural education without going into how to teach or implement it. Banks (2009: 25) accepts that multicultural education is an idea or concept, reform movement and a process. As an idea multicultural education states that all students regardless of the groups they belong to

such as those related to gender, ethnicity, race, culture, language, social class, religion or exceptionality should experience educational equality in schools. This definition is in agreement with the ideas of postmodernism where the accommodation of diversity is of paramount importance. Multicultural education is also a reform movement designed to bring about a transformation of the school so that students from both genders and from diverse cultural experiences, language and ethnic groups have an equal chance to educational success. Banks (2009: 25) concludes by saying that multicultural education is also a continuing process because the idealised goals it tries to actualise such as educational equality and the eradication of all forms of discrimination can never be fully achieved in society. Gollnick and Chinn (2002) cited by Maatta (2008: 9) define multicultural education as a strategy in which pupils backgrounds are used in order to develop effective school environments and classroom instruction.

Finally, Manning and Baruth (2008: 5) state that multicultural education is both a concept and a deliberate process designed to: teach learners to recognise, accept and appreciate differences in culture, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, religion, ability/disability and gender; instil a sense of responsibility and commitment to work in learners during their crucial development years and a commitment to work towards the democratic ideals of justice, equality and democracy.

Multicultural education therefore seeks to accommodate diversity. Runhare and Mulaudzi (2012: 194) posit that multicultural education seeks to accommodate equality in educational access, representation in curriculum knowledge, staff composition, academic achievement, treatment of learners and teachers' competence to handle global classes. Matsumoto (2013: 2) agreed that multicultural education approach is now spread across the world because it provides one of the most promising methods by which groups belonging to different cultures, races, religions and social class can coexist with each other in a peaceful interactive way. Multicultural education is relevant for Zimbabwe when looked at in the context of Zimbabwe's Cultural Policy whose objectives include: to promote Zimbabwean culture in a multicultural society and take into account, the different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups (Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture 2004: 6).

Approaches to Implementation of Multicultural Education

There are a number of approaches that have suggested for the implementation of multicultural education. Authorities such as Gibson (2010), Banks (2009), Grant and Sleeter (2009), Nieto (2002), and Bruch et al. in Zimmerman (2000) have provided different models for the implementation of multicultural education.

This section shall focus on Banks (2009: 237-248) levels of the implementation of multicultural education which are: contributions, additive, transformative and social action. The contributions level features the use of lessons and activities that celebrate heroes, holidays and special events of certain cultures (Yao et al. 2009: 3). The contributions approach is characterised by the insertion of ethnic heroes and discrete cultural artefacts into the curriculum selected using criteria similar to those used to select mainstream heroes and cultural artefacts (Banks 2009: 237). The ethnic additive approach is accomplished by the addition of a book or unit, or a course to the curriculum without changing it substantially. The transformative level changes the basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view (Banks 2009: 242). Finally the last approach is an extension of the transformative level. The social action level represents a step further by asking students not only to understand views and perspectives of others, but also to take action to bring about social changes.

The significance of Banks (2009) approach can be taken as the basis of a spiral curriculum in multicultural education. Out of various approaches, the 'contributions' approach can be used as a vehicle to move to other, more intellectually challenging approaches such as the transformation and social action approaches (Banks 2009: 246). Banks's (2009) approach should therefore be conceptualised along a continuum of approaches (contributions, ethnic additive, transformation and decision making and social action) (Herera et al. 2012: 3).

Statement of the Problem

Zimbabwe is a multiracial, multiethnic and multicultural nation. It is therefore characterised

by cultural diversity which needs to be reflected in the content and practice of education. The implementation of multicultural education appears to be problematic not only in Zimbabwe but also in other countries worldwide. It is generally assumed that the desegregation of education that took place at independence in 1980 and was reinforced by the 1987 Education Act (as amended) has made all the schools in the country multiracial and multiethnic. It is assumed that multicultural education is being practised in the schools. The absence of an official policy on multicultural education presents problems in terms of implementation. Thus, the paper seeks to explore teachers' perceptions on the implementation of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools.

Research Objectives

The research was guided by the following objectives:

- (a) to explore teacher perceptions on the implementation of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools ;
- (b) to identify teacher perceptions on how curriculum instructional materials currently in use reflect Zimbabwe's plural character.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The research method adopted for the study is the qualitative research paradigm. The purpose of qualitative research is to develop an understanding of individuals and events in their natural state, taking into account the relevant context (Marshall and Rossman 2006: 2; Patton 2002: 39). Phenomenology was selected as the research design. Johnson and Christensen (2008: 395) posit that phenomenology refers to the description of one or more individual's consciousness and experience of a phenomenon. Data was obtained through the use of in-depth unstructured interviews and focus group discussions.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of all the teachers in the selected five schools. From this population a sample of twenty teachers (10 male and 10

female) was selected using purposive sampling techniques. Patton (2002: 230) added that the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information rich cases for study in depth. All teachers selected into the sample had a minimum of five years post qualifying experience. The schools in the sample were selected using purposive sampling procedures so that a school was selected from each of the following settings: urban high density, urban low density, communal lands, farm/mining community and mission/ church school. The participants were allocated pseudonyms and the schools were allocated numbers to enhance anonymity and confidentiality.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data was analysed through a thematic analysis. Gibson and Brown (2009: 126) recommended that thematic analysis refers to the process of analysing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across data set. In the presentation of the data the responses of the participants were quoted verbatim in line with transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas 1994 cited in Creswell 2007: 58).

FINDINGS

Content of the Primary School Curriculum and Zimbabwe's Multicultural Character

A large number of the participants (16) felt that the content of Zimbabwe's primary school curriculum reflects the nation's multicultural character. School subjects such as the languages, Social Studies, Religious and Moral Education were seen to reflect the multicultural character of Zimbabwean society. Social Studies and *Shona* were seen to accommodate the multicultural character of the nation as one participant observed:

Maybe in terms of the subjects themselves they cut across all the syllabi. As evidence, in Social Studies, you find that it talks of the Karanga, the Zezuru, the Korekores to expose the child to different ethnic groups in Zimbabwe and also try to let the child appreciate that no other child or culture is superior to another culture. The same thing may be for Shona in the sense that they have now catered for all the dialects (Mr. Bvumayi School 2).

Religious and Moral Education was considered to embrace the multicultural character of the nation. Religious and Moral Education through its emphasis on different religions from different parts of the world was seen to reflect multiculturalism. According to another participant Religious and Moral Education accommodates cultural diversity because:

The curriculum in almost every subject shows that there is need for children to be accommodated in their cultures. It can be observed that in Religious Education most of the religions, Christianity, Traditional Religion, Hinduism and Islam is taught (Mr. Marara School 3).

Similar views were collected during focus group discussions. The accommodation of different dialects, particularly in *Shona* was seen as a way of accommodating the multicultural character of Zimbabwean society. One participant had this to say about the accommodation of different dialects:

(The curriculum) it is designed in a way that it caters for all dialects in Zimbabwe, the Ndaus, the Karangas, Zezurus and Manyikas. Textbooks are designed in such a way that those languages are catered for. Some of the examples in the textbooks are written in Karanga and others in Ndebele (Mrs. Chumi School 4).

The language policy and the different indigenous languages taught in the primary schools were also viewed as part of a multicultural school curriculum. A number of marginalised indigenous languages are now being taught and this was seen as an attempt to accommodate the nation's multicultural character. This was illustrated by one participant who opined:

Surely it is catering for multicultural groups because you find that there are pupils who are learning other languages that were not taught before here in Zimbabwe like Kalanga, Venda and the like. It can be said that a multicultural approach is being implemented (Mr. Mabara School 4).

In a similar vein another participant observed:

Like in the past it was compulsory to do either Shona or Ndebele, but they have now introduced Kalanga, Tonga, Nambya and others as examinable subjects at grade seven level. So they are trying to cater for those small dialects in terms of exposing the child at any early age to learn languages which they speak at home (Mr. Bvumayi School 2).

These views were supported by responses from focus group discussions where the teaching of marginalised indigenous languages was emphasised. One participant noted:

There is the process of including other minority languages in the curriculum which is actually being done. But I think the process has to be stepped up to increase the pace so that no one is left out in the curriculum (Mr. Mabasa School 2).

The co-curricula programme in the different schools was seen as one way in which the multicultural character of Zimbabwe is reflected. This is achieved through competition in different traditional dance themes annually at district and national level. Music competitions are also held annually at district and national level with music pieces being written in different languages on an annual rotational basis. One participant had this to say regarding the co-curricula programme:

It can be noted that, culturally our traditional dances encompass many cultural activities. You find that there are some white pupils who are dancing to our own dances like jerusarema (a Zezuru sub cultural dance), jiti (Korekore sub cultural dance) (Mr. Mabasa School 4).

Traditional dance themes which are drawn from different sub cultural groups annually were also seen as a way of accommodating the multicultural character of Zimbabwean society. A participant added regarding the schools' co-curricula programme:

When it comes to music pupils from the Shona area like where I am right now are competing with those from the Ndebele area. The music piece they are doing right now is a Ndebele one. So you see the Shonas are competing to sing a Ndebele song which is quite plain that they are taking information from different areas. We move on to things like traditional dance. Last time we had a dance from Matabeleland South, I am forgetting its name now, yah, amabhiza (Ndebele sub cultural dance). But we had to compete on that one because; the idea is to accommodate everyone. Last year, we had another dance, eh, this one was from Masvingo, pure Karanga that one. The other year we had jerusarema (Zezuru sub cultural dance) which is from Mashonaland East. Now I think that is testimony that different cultures are accommodated in the system (Mr. Penyai School 3).

In agreement another participant revealed that:

In co-curricula activities the multicultural character of our society is shown. For example when we teach traditional dance we don't only teach traditional dances in Zimbabwe, but we also accommodate other cultures within Zimbabwe itself and outside Zimbabwe. We teach muchongoyo (Shangaan sub cultural dance) we teach all sorts of dances (Mr. Marara School 3).

School enrolment patterns in the schools in the sample are multicultural in terms of ethnicity, gender, social class and religion among others. Commenting on multicultural enrolment patterns one participant pointed out that:

Yah, looking at the class I am teaching now, it is being reflected that pupils from different cultures are being accommodated. Um, we have Ndebeles, we have Shonas, we also have pupils from different religious backgrounds, Moslems, Christians, from Pentecostal churches, from African Tradition Religion and they are accommodated (Mr Penyai School 3).

Participants' Views on the Implementation of Multicultural Education in Zimbabwe

All the participants were of the view that multicultural education is being practised in Zimbabwean primary schools to varying degrees. As per the participants' views, this is shown in terms of multicultural enrolment patterns, content of different subjects and the language policy. Commenting on the language policy and the content of textbooks a participant had this to say:

I think the Ministry has taken the right steps in trying to implement it. The first example is that of the languages that are now being introduced in the primary school syllabus. It is now compulsory for a child in grade 1, ECD (Early Childhood Development) to be taught using his/her own language (mother tongue) that is culture. I think the Ministry has begun doing that. But I believe more needs to be done in terms of having textbooks that cut across. For example if it is a Ndebele textbook, it should also reflect on what is done in other areas that are not Ndebele maybe through stories and so on (Mr Bvumayi School 2).

Another participant expressed similar views by saying:

Yes, after having said this it shows that the direction of the school policy, the direction of

the education policy is to consider every cultural aspect of cultural diversity in Zimbabwe. Especially when I see an item in the referendum considering sixteen languages it means that in the languages that is where we see cultural diversity. In the languages that is where we see the expression of a culture. So by considering that aspect, considering other languages to be examinable and taught in schools is a direction where consideration is being given (Mr Marara School 3).

The need for improvement in terms of implementation was also observed. Another participant emphasised the need for improvement. She observed:

I feel it needs to be improved. We have just started practising multiculturalism. But I feel a lot more still needs to be done so that all the different cultures feel they are well represented (Mrs. Bango School 3).

Some constraints in the implementation of multicultural education were observed.

Lack of a government policy on multicultural education and financial constraints were seen as challenges in the implementation of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools. With regard to the constraints a participant argued:

Multicultural education is being practised to some extent. Some are trying but to some extent they are still not there. Because of financial constraints we don't have the facilities, and we don't have specialist teachers to teach some of the subjects. Looking at our government itself, it does not have policies and laws which are clear and specific to accommodate multicultural education (Mrs Zongororo School 1).

Multicultural enrolment patterns where pupils are recruited from different ethnic backgrounds were cited as evidence of the implementation of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools. A participant had this to say about multicultural enrolment patterns:

I think it is being practised, in some other schools you can see there are coloureds, together with these, with us blacks who are learning in the same schools. Eh, say we go to Bulawayo you will see Shona speaking pupils there; they are also in the same class together with Ndebele speaking pupils. They are mixed, so I think that one is being practised. They are taken as one (Mr. Mwenga School 5).

Similar views were expressed during focus group discussions. Multicultural enrolment patterns, the teaching of some marginalised minority languages and the content of subjects such as Social Studies were once more cited as evidence of the practice of multicultural education in Zimbabwe. One participant opined:

I feel we are implementing that in the sense that we have pupils from different cultures that is point number one. We also have the use of language. They use languages of their choice, we also have books we use, and they cater for different cultures like I have already said (Mr. Penyai School 3).

However, there are some challenges that were identified in the implementation of multicultural education. The need for in service teacher training in multicultural education as well as the reform of textbooks were also seen as challenges in the effective practice of multicultural education. One participant suggested the following solutions to mitigate challenges in the practice of multicultural education. She remarked:

It is being implemented but not to a large extent. I think there is a need for it to be done at a higher level. Teachers should be trained about multicultural education. The textbooks should be modified to cater for everyone. For example if Chapter 1 has a Zezuru story, then they can have a Korekore story so that all pupils' cultural backgrounds are covered (Mrs Mupfuti School 1).

Another participant expressed a similar opinion. He suggested:

In my view, they should start at the top. To start with a revamp of the syllabi so that it reflects multiculturalism. Textbooks should reflect multicultural education. When the books and the syllabi come to the people it means the teacher will be forced by the subjects to implement multicultural education (Mr. Banda School 1).

The need to address teacher attitudes towards multicultural education was emphasised. One participant expressed the concern that:

I don't think multicultural education is being practised in Zimbabwean primary schools because I think from the highest levels documents of these curricula show that it is there but it is not implemented in the school system. This is due to negativity, just being negative. So this is negativity on the part of people who

should be learning different cultures (Mrs. Gotor School 3).

DISCUSSION

These views by the participants signify that a start by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in the implementation of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools. They also reflect the participants' understanding of the concept of multicultural education, which appears to be narrowly focused. The range of subjects that was seen to reflect the nation's multicultural character appears to be rather narrow and limited. In their responses the participants did not cite subjects such as Home Economics, Physical Education, HIV and AIDS Education, Music and Mathematics as reflecting the nation's multicultural character. This omission tends to reinforce the view that there are some school subjects that tend to reflect the nation's multicultural character more than others. Manning and Baruth (2008: 8-9) advise that multicultural education should permeate the entire school curriculum rather than be doled out in a 'one course' or teaching unit approach. Yao et al. (2009) concur and posit that ideally multicultural education according to the Banks model would be infused throughout educational content and experiences. Besides, the multicultural character of Zimbabwe should be reflected in all primary school subjects. What may be debatable at this juncture is the extent to which multicultural education as is practised in Zimbabwe currently, embraces the ideals of multicultural education as set out by theorists such as Banks (2009: 237-249), Nieto (1992: 46, 2002: 31-46).

As per the views of the participants, it appears that the content of the primary school curriculum includes the different sub cultures that make up Zimbabwean society. It reflects multiculturalism to a certain extent. This is an acknowledgement that Zimbabwe is a multicultural nation (Ministry of Education, Arts, Sports and Culture 2004: 4; Nziramasanga Commission 1999: 357). The inclusion of different ethnic groups into curriculum content as well as the teaching of marginalised indigenous languages can be seen as an acknowledgement of difference in Zimbabwean society. This inclusion contributes to prejudice reduction which is one of Banks' (2009) dimension of multicultural education

(Matsumoto 2013: 1; McKinney and Soudien 2013: 1; Yao et al. 2009: 2). However, Nieto (2002: 39) is of the view that multicultural education should be seen as a philosophy, a way of looking at the world, not simply a programme or a class or a teacher. In this regard multicultural education has to permeate the entire school curriculum. Based on the responses of the participants, the implementation of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools can be placed at the additive level (Banks 2009: 239). From the additive level other levels such as the transformative and social action can be attained. This is possible when accompanied by relevant curriculum reform as well as the review of curriculum instructional materials to ensure that they fully embrace the multicultural character of Zimbabwean society.

Post-modernists argue that difference lies at the heart of the world (Ritzer 2009: 617) with calls to wage a war on totality and activation of differences (Lyotard 1984) as cited in Ritzer 2009: 617). Cohen et al. (2011: 26) state that one of the distinguishing hall marks of postmodernism is the valorisation of difference, diversity and subjectivity. Banks (2005) brings forth as cited in Runhare and Mulaudzi (2012: 194), multicultural education guides the young generation to immerse themselves in other cultures, engage with difference and acquire diverse cultural competence. The content of the primary school curriculum in Zimbabwe has made some effort to accommodate difference that is found in Zimbabwean society to a certain extent. This is in line with the post-modernist emphasis on including the stories of marginalised groups which encourages cultural diversity and multiculturalism in schools (Ornstein et al. 2011: 508). The accommodation of difference in the primary school curriculum in Zimbabwe is in harmony with the views of Vandeyer (2010: 345) who observed that multicultural education seeks to create educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social class and cultural groups by acknowledging difference.

A large number of issues pertinent to multicultural education such as the school environment and pedagogy among many others were not raised in the analysis of the practice of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools. These views on multicultural education could be a result of the numerous ways in which multicultural education has been defined

and implemented (Lemmer et al. 2006: 2). The numerous ways through which multicultural education has been defined have led to differences in the conceptualisation of the ways in which it is implemented. This has an impact and implications for the practice of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools. In the conceptualisation of multicultural education by the participants, the social and transformation qualities of multicultural education were not mentioned. There was a tendency to focus on a limited number of issues; issues such as gender, social class, the school environment as well as the participation of parents in school activities were not included in the conceptualisation of the practice of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools. These responses reinforce the view that in multicultural education scholarship a gap exists between theory and practice (Gay in Banks 1993: 1). In addition, it is important to note that the concept of multicultural education today is multidimensional and embraces a number of issues (Banks 2011; Pangs 2001 in Gwirayi 2010).

The responses of the participants on the implementation of multicultural education in Zimbabwe are similar to findings of research studies carried out elsewhere. Research carried out by Zimmerman (2004: 17) in the United States demonstrated that the responses of the teachers confirm that teachers viewed multicultural education from the perspective of the celebratory and none of them talked about it in a way that manifested awareness of multicultural education as transformative. Diaz-Rico (1998) in Gorski (2006: 163) also found out that the multicultural education most often practised by teachers, administrators and staff developers and others in the United States is a conservatised, depoliticised version that does more to sustain inequities than to demolish them. Gorski (2006: 167) also found out that in the United States responses of multicultural education professionals in the definition of multicultural education typically reflect more of a compassionate, conservative consciousness than an allegiance to equity and justice. Such a definition of multicultural education may not enable its practice to achieve its intended goals as it is practiced at a superficial level.

CONCLUSION

Teachers' perceptions of the implementation of multicultural education revealed that multi-

cultural education is being practiced in Zimbabwean primary schools. However, it is being practised to a limited extent at the additive level. The multicultural character of Zimbabwean society tends to be accommodated in school subjects such as the languages, Social Studies, Environmental Science, Religious and Moral Education. Co-curricula activities like music and traditional dance were also seen as embracing the multicultural characteristics of the nation. The paper found that the participants conceptualise the practice of multicultural education in narrow terms as their conceptualisation of multicultural education does not reflect a holistic approach in the implementation of multicultural education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should put in place a comprehensive policy to regulate and guide the practice of multicultural education in Zimbabwean primary schools. There is need to enhance capacity building through hosting in service workshops for teachers in the field. The aim of such workshops would be to raise teachers' awareness of multicultural education. Above all, multicultural education should be part of pre-service teacher education curriculum. Publishers of school textbooks should also liaise with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in an attempt to ensure that the content of the textbooks accommodates the multicultural character of Zimbabwean society.

LIMITATIONS

The paper utilised unstructured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as data gathering instruments. Documentary analysis which includes analysis of syllabi and textbooks could have been utilised as another form of triangulation. Further, the research could be carried out to analyse the content of curriculum instructional materials using documentary analysis.

REFERENCES

- Ballantine JH, Hammack FM 2012. *The Sociology of Education: A Systematic Reader*. Boston: Pearson.
- Banks JA 2009. Multicultural education: Characteristics and goals. In: JA Banks, CAM Banks (Eds.): *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, pp. 2-32.

- Banks JA 1993. Multicultural Education: Historical Development Dimensions and Practice. From <<http://www.edu/edleadership/course/EDAD/Banks%20J.%20Multicultural%20Education%20History/InternetExplorer>> (Retrieved on 26 March 2012).
- Cohen L, Manion L, Morrison K 2011. *Research Methods in Education*. London: Routledge.
- Creswell JW 2007. *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Upper Saddle River NJ: Pearson Merrill.
- Gibson IS 2010. Approaches to multicultural education in the United States: Some concepts and assumptions. *Council on Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 7(4): 94-120.
- Gibson WJ, Brown A 2009. *Working with Qualitative Data*. London: Sage.
- Gorski PC 2006. Complicity with conservatism: The depoliticising of multicultural education and intercultural education. *Intercultural Education*, 17(2): 163-177.
- Government of Zimbabwe 1987. *Education Act*. Harare: Government Printer.
- Grant CA, Sleeter CE 2009. Race, class, gender and disability in the classroom. In: JA Banks, CAM Banks (Eds.): *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, pp. 59-82.
- Gwirayi P 2010. Bachelor of Education students' attitudes, beliefs and awareness of multicultural education. *The Dyke*, 4(1): 93-104.
- Herera SG, Holmes MA, Kavimandan SK 2012. Bringing theory to life: Strategies to make culturally responsive pedagogy a reality in diverse secondary classrooms. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 14(3): 1-19.
- Johnson B, Christensen L 2008. *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Approaches*. London: Sage.
- Joshee R, Peck C, Thompson M, Chareka O, Sears A 2010. Multicultural Education, Diversity and Citizenship in Canada. From <<http://www.intalliance.org/fileadmin/user-upload/documents/conference-2010/NP-Capdf>> (Retrieved on 5 June 2012).
- Lemmer EM, Meier C, Van Wyk JN 2006. *Multicultural Education: An Educator's Manual*. Pretoria: Van Schaick Publishers.
- Le Roux J 2000. Multicultural education: A new approach for a new South African dispensation. *Intercultural Education*, 11(1): 19-29.
- Manning ML, Baruth G 2008. *Multicultural Education of Children and Adolescents*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Maatta S 2008. *Experience Matters: Teacher Perceptions of Multicultural Education and Their Competence to Teach from Different Cultural Backgrounds*. Department of Educational Studies, Finland: University of Jyväskylä.
- Matsumoto M 2013. Political theorising and policy implications: The case of Rawlsian approach to multicultural education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 15(1): 1-12.
- Marshall C, Rossman G 2006. *Redesigning Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Ministry of Education, Arts, Sports and Culture 2004. *Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe*. Harare: Government Printer.
- McKinney C, Soudien C 2010. Multicultural Education in South Africa: 2010 ILALEI Country Report. From <<http://www.intalliance.org/fileadmin/user-upload...2010/NP-SApdf>> (Retrieved on 17 May 2013).
- Meier C, Hartell C 2009. Handling cultural diversity in South Africa. *SAEduC Journal*, 6(2): 180-192.
- Nieto S 1992. Characteristics of multicultural education. In: J Le Roux (Ed.): *Multicultural Education: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers, pp. 44-48.
- Nieto S 2002. *Language, Culture and Teaching*. Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- Nziramanga Commission 1999. *Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training*. Harare: Government Printer.
- Ornstein AC, Levine DU, Gutter GL 2011. *Foundations of Education*. Belmont: Cengage Learning.
- Patton MQ 2002. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. London: Sapes.
- Ritzer G 2009. *Sociological Theory*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Rose DN, Potts AD 2011. Examining teacher candidate resistance to diversity: What can teacher educators learn? *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 13(2): 1-9.
- Runhare T, Mulaudzi P 2012. Education for a Rainbow Nation: A desegregated school playground as a model for reconstructing social cohesion in post xenophobic South African communities. *Journal of Social Science*, 3(2): 193-204.
- Sadovnik AR 2007. Theory and research in Sociology of Education. In: AR Sadovnik (Ed.): *Sociology of Education: A Critical Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 3- 21.
- Soudien S, Carrim N, Sayed Y 2004. Inclusion and exclusion in South Africa: Some theoretical and methodological considerations. In: M Nkomo, M Chisholm (Eds.): *Reflection on School Integration Colloquium Proceedings*. Cape Town: HSRC Publishers, pp. 19-42.
- Taylor P, Richardson J, Yeo A, Marsh K, Trobe K, Pilkington A 2011. *Sociology in Focus*. Omskirk: Causeway Press.
- Vandeyer S 2010. Responses of South African teachers to the challenges of school integration. *South African Journal of Education*, 30(1): 343-359.
- Yao Y, Buchanan DL, Chang IJ, Powell-Brown A, Pecina UH 2009. Different drummers: International perspectives on multicultural education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 11(2): 1-17.
- Zimmerman L 2004. Teacher Perceptions of Multicultural Education in the United States. From <<http://www.edu/factor/mountainrise/archieve/vol13no2/html/Zimmerman.pdf>> (Retrieved on 20 April 2012).