

A Social Realist Account of Curriculum Development and Implementation in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2004: With Special Reference to the Education with Production Model

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ABSTRACT Following the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe in 1980, the dual education system for blacks and whites was abolished and an experimental education system linked to the Marxist concept of polytechnic education known as Education with Production (EWP) was introduced to model the country's socialist ideology. The aim of this article is to evaluate, through a social realist theoretical framework, using the concepts of structure, culture and agency the implementation of the EWP educational innovation. This was a qualitative study conducted through interviews and document analysis. The finding in this article is that while structures were put in place to implement the new curriculum, at the level of culture, teachers largely inherited from the colonial education system were not adequately oriented or prepared for the new education system, neither was public debate opened on the envisioned education system. In terms of agency, the paper argues that preparation of personnel and the involvement of stakeholders before an innovation is implemented are crucial for the successful implementation of such an innovation.

INTRODUCTION

Education reform has been a major area of challenge in post-colonial states in an attempt to dismantle the vestiges of colonialism and introduce democratic education. A two tier education system was introduced in colonial Zimbabwe; one for the coloniser and the other for the colonised. One of the manifestations of the racial dual colonial education agenda can be seen in the F2 education system. The F2 system was introduced for blacks under the 1966 Education Plan following the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the Smith Regime in 1965 (Zvobbo 1996). The plan proposed the introduction of a new junior secondary school (F2) whose emphasis was on practical or vocational subjects in addition to the F1 School which would offer academic subjects intended mainly for the settler population. This was a deliberate ploy to restrict the numbers of Africans pursuing the academic curriculum (The F1 School) who held the threat of competing with the settlers' children for employment. McLaughlin et al. (2002), pointing out that the F2 system produced only manual labourers without management skills, cite the example of a builder from the F2 system who could not interpret the architectural plans or do the costing of projects but could only follow

orders. The result was that all the people who were trained under such a system had to seek employment somewhere else because they could not take on jobs which required more than manual skills (Chinyamundzore 1995). In this regard, Oats (2014) states that colonial education was mainly for the few and had interest in producing 'puppets' of the British government as well as labourers who were prepared to work for the white masters and that on the basis of this assertion, it could be argued that colonial schools in Africa were planned to exchange Africans from barbarians into civilised people for the benefit of the Europeans in the production of goods through the provision of labour for miserable pay.

The qualifications from these F2 schools were also not recognized by employers and as a result parents and teachers looked down upon the curriculum in F2 schools (Madzorere 1995). This inferior education system had a stigma attached to it right from its inception. Teachers, parents and pupils resented it, particularly as they knew that a certificate in non-academic courses such as agriculture, carpentry and building offered fewer employment prospects than one in academic subjects.

One of the agendas of the anti-colonial movement was to redress this inequality in the provi-

sion of education. The Zimbabwe African People's Union (Patriotic Front), (PF)-ZAPU and the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front), ZANU (PF) which spearheaded the nationalist movement, instituted an education system in the liberation war camps in Zambia and Mozambique aimed at inculcating critical consciousness in the cadres. One of the interesting aspects of this education introduced in the war schools was the Education with Production (EWP) philosophy. As shown by Chung and Ngara (1985), according to Marxist educational philosophy, central to such an education is teaching about production and providing labour training and work experience to youngsters while they are in secondary and higher education. Intended to prepare youth for the world of work after school, it offers managerial, technical, agricultural and academic training. The EWP philosophy is rooted in the Marxist concept of polytechnic education. According to Margaret (2013) in Ndebele and Tshuma (2014) having experienced the ills of colonialism, the choice of socialism from the point of view of the ruling party in Zimbabwe was justified as the intention was to develop the masses mentally and physically in order to enable them to work for and develop the country as well as provide equal opportunity for education and wealth.

Polytechnic education, the brain child of Marx (1976), arose out of his work on worker education. In his early work he attacked the division between manual and mental labour as one of the main mechanisms for subjugating the majority of the people. He called for a society in which everyone would be both a mental and manual worker. In Volume I of "Capital" Marx (1976) shows how a broadly based polytechnic education is the pre-condition for the emancipation of labour, the only way to make workers capable of controlling the economic and technological forces of industrial society. The goal of this polytechnic education is to produce a worker who is not a passive executor of orders but rather, "a totally developed individual, for whom the different social functions are different modes of activity he takes up in turn" (Marx 1976:618). Marx saw the method for achieving this goal as a new type of learning which was linked with productive work from a young age. Parents are however not always positive with such curriculum changes that direct their children towards manual work. Commenting on the

self-reliance philosophy in Tanzania, Shizha (2013) notes that the philosophy failed to achieve its goal because parents were against a system of education that made their children labourers. At independence this EWP philosophy from the war camps was translated into reality by the incoming government of Zimbabwe through eight schools established for returning ex-combatants.

Theoretical Framework

This paper uses Margaret Archer's (1995) social realist concepts of structure, culture and agency to analyse the development and implementation of the Education with Production curriculum innovation in Zimbabwe. Archer's work builds on Roy Bhaskar's (1978) critical realism theoretical framework. Critical realism accepts that there exists a reality independent of our representation of it but acknowledges that our knowledge of reality is subject to all kinds of historical and other influences. Bhaskar conceptualizes three domains of reality which can be separated; the real, the actual and the empirical. Boughey (2010) explains Bhaskar's depth ontology in the following way:

The empirical stratum is that of experience and observation and is the layer from which all our explorations of reality must begin...The second layer in Bhaskar's ontology, the actual, consists of events which take place in the world...The final layer, the real, consists of structures and mechanisms, both natural and social and which have an objective existence and from which events at the level of the actual and observations and experiences at the level of the empirical emerge (Boughey 2010: 4).

It is apparent from the quotation that the empirical is what we actually observe. However we are not able to observe everything that exists. There is infinity of events that do actually occur but are never empirically observed. The actual refers to what actually happens whether we observe it or not. At the level of the real are the causal mechanisms and structures that produce actual events, a subset of which is then empirically observed.

The three domains should however not be seen as mutually exclusive. The domain of the empirical (what we experience) is only part of the domain of the actual (what happens) which is in turn only part of the domain of the real. The real does not only consist of what we experi-

ence or even what happens, it also includes the mechanisms that cause things to happen. Our experiences, the events from which these experiences emerge and the mechanisms that cause these events to happen can sometimes happen at the same time and be inseparable and the separation is only for analytical purposes.

Using Bhaskar's critical realist notion of a stratified reality, Archer (1996) focuses specifically on the social world. She provides a model of social reality as comprising three milieus; structure, culture and agency. These three milieus can be superimposed on each of the three layers of the empirical, actual and real by Bhaskar (1978).

According to Archer (1996), the structural milieu comprises things which exist such as policies, committees as well as more abstract phenomena such as race, gender, social class and knowledge structures in the disciplines themselves. The cultural milieu comprises how and what we think about things. This includes our values, beliefs, attitudes and ideologies. The agential milieu comprises people. "Agency refers to the personal and psychological make-up of individuals, their social roles and relates to the capacity people have to act in a voluntary way" (Boughey 2010: 5).

Archer holds it that social structures exert causal influences on social interactions while the actions of individuals and groups affect social structures by modifying them "Morphogenetically understood, structure pre-dates action which, in turn, reproduces or transforms the structure and, therefore, pre-dates that particular form of structure in the production of which it participates" (Kinvinen and Piironen 2006).

Looking at the EWP curriculum project through a social realist framework as shown in the results section, structure, played a pivotal role in shaping the development and implementation of this curriculum. A pre-existing colonial education structure was inherited, and the introduction of EWP was an action meant to transform that structure and in the process create a new socialist education structure. The EWP innovation was introduced in an existing educational structure that was largely academic. This new education innovation was meant to transform the hitherto existing colonial education structure. New structures such as the Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production

(ZIMFEP), a unit created by government to oversee the EWP innovation at the eight created schools, and the specific EWP schools emerged following the advent of independence in 1980.

Examining the EWP innovation in the domain of culture and agency shows that, a new culture emerged, based on socialist ideological beliefs and new agents came to the fore, who had to try and transform the existing status quo, that is, transform the capitalist education system into a socialist education system through the EWP curriculum project. Gijssels (2003: 11), argues that, "(Re)New(ed) social structures emerge from the work of agents, and the work of agents is enabled and constrained by existing social structures that are themselves elaborations of previous structures, mediated by human agents." Thus it seems that challenges facing the EWP project partly emanated from inherited 'structures' and 'cultural' entrenchments leading to enthusiasm by some and resistance by other 'agents' to the transformation agenda. As Danermark et al. (2005) argue, it is social structures that lay down the conditions for what we can do and not do by placing us in various social situations and, "That is why a socially emancipatory objective should be directed against structures."

Objectives of the Study

The central issue in this article concerns the degree to which the socialist curriculum was modeled through the EWP philosophy as enunciated by ZANU (PF) at independence. Using Archer's analytical framework, the analysis examined the interplay of structure, culture and agency in this educational transformation process. Given this focus, the research problem of this study was: How did Socialist Curriculum Development and Implementation in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2004 take place through the EWP model? The following were the specific objectives of the study;

- ♦ Examine the extent to which the socialist philosophy was modeled through the Education with Production curriculum in Zimbabwe,
- ♦ Evaluate, through a social realist theoretical framework, using the concepts of structure, culture and agency the implementation of the Education with Production educational innovation,

- ♦ Draw lessons on curriculum development and implementation from the Education with Production curriculum project of Zimbabwe in Zimbabwe

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This was basically a case study. Robson (1993) defines a case study as a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular phenomenon. In the current study, the case studied is EWP as a selected socialist educational innovation. The school and respondents at this school constitute the embedded units of the case.

Population and Sampling

The new EWP philosophy was introduced in eight pilot schools for returning ex-combatants in Zimbabwe. In this study one EWP pilot school was selected for study out of eight EWP pilot schools using the random sampling technique. All the thirteen teachers responsible for the various EWP subjects constituted the embedded units of the case and were interviewed. In addition, eighteen pupils at the Education with Production pilot school were selected using the random sampling technique and interviewed in three replication focus groups. For ease of reference, a codification system was designed for the various categories of participants as follows; PLT for the EWP pilot school teachers and FG for focus groups.

Data Collection

Multiple sources of evidence were used in this study in order to enhance the validity and hence credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Individual interviews, focus group interviews and documentary analysis were conducted.

The Individual Interview

The data collection technique used for the gathering of individual oral data in this study was the semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews involve a series of open ended questions based on the areas the researcher wants to cover. Although the encounter between the interviewer and participants is structured and the major aspects of the study are explicated,

participants are given considerable liberty in expressing their definition of the situation presented to them (Nachmias and Nachmias 1981: 103). In this study, for example, when an interviewee had difficulty answering a question or provided only a brief response, cues or prompts were used to encourage the interviewee to consider the question further

Focus Group Interviews

In addition to individual interviews, focus group interviews were also conducted with pupils at the EWP pilot school. A focus group is defined as a small gathering of individuals who have a common interest or characteristic, assembled by a moderator who uses the group and its interactions as a way to gain information about a particular topic (Karts and Williams 2002; Kreuger 1988). The topic under study lent itself readily to the use of focus groups, for as Karts and Williams (2001: 4) show "*If researchers or educators want to create learning tools that appeal to students and teachers, identify the sort of information young people are attaining and retaining from their classes or measure how teachers feel about sensitive curriculum issues, focus groups may be a useful departure point.*"

This study sought to obtain from students in the focus groups the sort of information, knowledge and skills they were attaining and retaining from their EWP classes. Students engaged in various EWP activities in the various subjects were identified and constituted into three focus groups. While some students appeared shy initially, as the proceedings progressed they opened up and freely expressed their ideas.

Documentary Evidence

An analysis of documents constitutes a major technique used in this study. The main data sources were official government publications, including, but not limited to acts, annual reports policy circulars. Documents pertaining to the conceptualisation and implementation of EWP in Zimbabwe were also sought and analysed.

Data Analysis

The first stage in the data analysis process involved transcribing all the interview tapes. Next, data for each question for all the respon-

dents was then classified together to form the initial data sets. The second stage of the data set involved classifying the data according to research questions. Finally, analysis of the data sets and other collected documents was done using the thematic approach drawing insights from content analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Emancipatory Objectives of the EWP Project

EWP was intended to be an emancipatory project to produce graduates who would be able to create their own employment rather than look to the formal employment sector for livelihood. Focus group interviews were held with students to find out if they were benefiting from the innovation. Students boasted of various skills they had gained from EWP as shown by the following responses from focus groups:

As an agriculture person I now know the soil types so I just taught them (parents) how to use particular crops on particular soil. (FG 2)

As a woodworker I have taught my family which types of glues to use for different equipment, for example, bathroom equipment, sitting room equipment, things used with water (FG 2)

I have assisted my uncle in building a two roomed house in Cowdry Park (A suburb in the city of Bulawayo) (FG 3)

The transformative objective of EWP appears to have begun to produce results at the pilot school as shown by these responses. It is through such marrying of theory with practice that students could grow up to become the manipulators and not victims of nature and the environment. The new school vision as envisaged by the Zimbabwean president, Mugabe (1984: 18), appeared to take shape at the EWP pilot school. “*The concept of EWP tries to transform the school into a garden, a farm, a zoo, a factory for clothes, a workshop for mechanical repairs, a piggery, a fishery and a construction complex—all in one.*” The sampled EWP pilot school seemed to mirror the president’s vision in terms of equipping students with an assortment of entrepreneurial skills. Citing Outlaw (1987), Shizha (2013) argues that postcolonial Africa needs to transform through educational deconstruction and reconstruction (such as the reconstructed curriculum in the form of the Education with Production).

The Role of Structure (and Agency) in the Implementation of the EWP Philosophy

One of the questions in the interview schedule sought to establish the structures that had been put in place to ensure the success of the new innovation. There was a question in the EWP pilot school interview schedule that sought to find out whether government had played any role in the implementation of EWP. Government had indeed set up structures to implement the innovation. A new structure, a unit, known as the Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production (ZIMFEP) was established to spearhead the introduction of the new innovation. The central role of government in post-colonial educational transformation is also evident in other countries. In South Africa for example, Naidoo and Muthukrishna (2014) state that from 1994, South Africa was burdened with the massive project of dismantling and re-structuring institutions (with education as one of the main focus areas) that had survived more than a century of imperialism, colonialism and apartheid. In Zimbabwe, in addition to the establishment of ZIMFEP, eight pilot schools were opened across the country to pilot the new philosophy. According to responses received for this question, however, despite having introduced EWP as an innovation to model a socialist curriculum, government, through the Ministry of Education, appears to have left the burden of the implementation of EWP wholly on the shoulders of ZIMFEP. As a result, ZIMFEP’s activities remained confined to the eight pilot schools and there was no organised expansion into the whole country because of lack of government support. Eleven out of the thirteen participants had not noticed any government role in the activities of the EWP School. Pilot School Teacher 3 (PLT 3) fumed at the lack of government support, “*... no input, no capital; we want this done, how? Zero. No explanation.*” What the participant notes is that despite political pronouncements by political leaders advocating for EWP, in reality there appeared to be no concrete commitment in terms of the necessary support in the form of resources and technical support. Empty promises without action cannot lead to transformation. Commenting on policy implementation in Nigeria, Awhien et al. (2014) note that very often, laudable policies formulated by government go into thin air at the implementation stage

as a result of lack of publicity and enlightenment of the populace of the essence of the policies at the embryonic stage.

The fact that government had allowed ZIMFEP to pilot the project however was itself considered as an indication of government commitment by some respondents, “*I think personally government has been very supportive in the sense that they allowed ZIMFEP to pilot the project, so that is being supportive*” (PLT 10). But as already shown, this should have been followed by action on the part of government in terms of providing financial, material and skilled personnel support.

In order for complete transformation to take place, a country’s teacher training institutions have to redesign curricula in line with the new social order. It was part of this study to find out what role training institutions such as teachers colleges and universities (as structural enablers) had played in preparing the implementers of the new EWP curriculum. Twelve of the thirteen EWP pilot school teachers had come across socialist related courses in their careers, mainly in sociology, political economy and philosophy. One participant (PLT 8) who had acquired a degree qualification in Cuba claimed that they had intensive lessons on the merits of socialism as compared to capitalism. The overall impression was that teachers had generally been exposed to socialist philosophy before going into schools. The responses are consistent with former president Banana’s (1983: 53) vision for teachers colleges, “*Colleges of education should produce teachers who have the correct ideological orientation. This means that they must be socialist and revolutionary in outlook and thoroughly conversant with the principles and practices of socialist education.*” The significance of teacher training before introducing new innovations is also reported by Oats (2014) who writes that in Botswana, the nature and quality of social studies teacher education (in the case of Zimbabwe, Education with Production) for citizenship education is a key element in expanding the education system to materialise a democratic dispensation. Oats further adds that in Botswana teachers are trained to be able to appropriately impart the social studies curriculum.

Teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe had indeed to produce teachers who understood the problems, philosophy, culture, objectives and needs of the new Zimbabwean education sys-

tem. It is an insurmountable task to change education (in the domain of culture) without a re-orientation of teachers. Teachers, as Mutumbuka (1986: 12) argues, are among the most important agents for change in Zimbabwe. However without proper re-education there may also be conservative elements in society, opposing any change to the status quo.

Another structural constraint to the EWP innovation was the introduction of an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in the country. After a decade of independence, economic reforms in the form of ESAP were introduced in Zimbabwe in 1991 (Government of Zimbabwe 1991). The first decade of independence had witnessed a deteriorating economy, signaling a need for economic reforms. In order to institute such reforms, however, the resources, conditionally available from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, had to be acquired. According to Narman (1998: 116) a basic underlying notion of structural adjustment is that, “*The market is to play a supreme role in the development process with a consequent need to undertake privatisations, trade liberalisations and monetary reforms as well as scaling down the state to an absolute minimum.*” The reduced role of the state is related to the need to reduce national expenses and prevent government distortions of the free market economy. Citing Moutsios (2009)”, Naidoo and Muthukrishna (2014: 276) also magnify, “*the World Bank (WB) - International Monetary Fund (IMF) pairing; the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as some institutions that engage in, and manipulate, global policy making... Hence, education policy-making is no longer the exclusive reserve of the nation-state. These international and transnational institutions provide the main frameworks for defining major, global educational aims, largely through non-democratic and doubtful procedures.*”

Socialist education emphasises collectivism and cooperation among citizens while the new ESAP neo-liberal ideology encouraged a free market economy and competition. ESAP signaled a shift in the domain of culture. The new era being ushered in, was not consistent with the original socialist ideology. One of the major aims of ZIMFEP according to the ZIMFEP Annual Report (1984) was to continue the process of

mental de-colonisation by promoting a national culture and by developing a political consciousness that reflected Zimbabwe's socialist goals through a programme of research, publications, workshops and seminars. Meanwhile, Banana (1983: 52), former president of Zimbabwe, warned; *"Only a socialist system of education and a socialist way of life can help bring about genuine transformation and the birth of a just socialist society."* Under a neo-liberal ideology promoting a free market economy in a global society, EWP as a socialist transformation project in Zimbabwe lost its place from the year 1990 as it was no longer relevant in the new cultural milieu. Thus, after a decade of experimenting with EWP, a change in ideology towards neo-liberalism as a result of external pressure signaled the end of enthusiasm for socialist curricula.

The Concept of EWP and the Interplay of Culture and Agency

For any innovation to succeed, it is critical that implementers have adequate knowledge and understanding of the innovation. It was with this in mind that staff members at the EWP pilot school were asked to provide their conception of the concept of EWP and to see if they could distinguish it from the previous F2 education system. The definitions given by participant tended to converge. Most participants saw it as the inculcation of both academic and practical skills to students for both present and future use. PLT 13 for example had this to say:

I understand that it is putting theory into practice. The theory that pupils learn putting into practice so that they come up with a product in the end (sic). A product or a service, for example I teach accounts. Maybe I can teach them the concepts that apply in accounts then afterwards maybe they produce some financial statements for a local shop.

Pertinent in the definitions is the issue of marrying theory with practice, integrating theoretical work with practical work. The definitions indicate that the respondents have an idea of what EWP involves. The critical defining feature of EWP however is not merely the marrying of theory with practice but the philosophy behind this. The aim is to produce a worker intellectual who will not only be a master of his/her environment but also to break down the socially divisive separation of mental and manual labour

which in Zimbabwe was pronounced through the F2 education system. Thus while at the level of culture there appeared to be some understanding of EWP, the definitions did not go beyond the teaching and learning situation to indicate the broader philosophy of EWP. This positive finding, however where teachers indicated a general understanding of EWP is in contrast to findings by Ndebele and Tshuma (2014). In their research on the social studies curriculum in Zimbabwe, Ndebele and Tshuma (2014) found that the concept of socialism was not clearly understood by the implementers and was not always practiced as expected and concluded that one constraint of the primary school socialist curriculum process was lack of appropriate knowledge about the philosophy of socialism among teachers.

There was a probing question that sought to find out if the teachers at the pilot school could distinguish between EWP and the F2 system of the colonial era. The F2 system was introduced for blacks under the 1966 Education Plan following the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the Smith Regime in 1965 (Zvogbo 1996). To find out if participants could distinguish between EWP and the F2 education system, an assortment of responses was obtained. Most participants saw the difference in terms of admission criteria, that is, the F2 system was specifically for black students and the EWP curriculum was intended for all citizens. Generally participants regarded the curriculum of the two education systems as similar and believed that EWP was simply a renaming of the F2 education system. Participant PLT 8 felt F2 had simply been given the new name EWP as both emphasized practical skills as shown in this comment, *"Ah –there is no much difference, it's only in the naming of everything..."*

As already defined elsewhere, according to Archer, culture consists of the values and belief system. The beliefs that people hold, have a great influence on what they will do in practice. If the agents believed that EWP and the F2 system were the same, when the F2 system had been resisted by the majority population, they were bound to resist the new EWP curriculum and to influence students against it. This misconception of EWP by many agents at the level of culture therefore could be one of the reasons for the failure of the innovation. What seemed not to have been explicit to all the relevant agents was the differences in the philosophy behind

each of the two innovations. While the F2 system was intended to produce semi-skilled workers to work in the settlers' industries, EWP was intended to equip school leavers with self-reliance skills with which they can start their own income generating projects and own their own businesses. This misconception between EWP and the F2 education system seemed to have been picked up by one of the key agents at national level, the then Minister of Education, Mutumbuka, (1985: 99), who, having noted the confusion between EWP and F2 had this to say, "*Education with Production is not a resuscitation of the F2 schools under another guise but demands the highest academic, practical and managerial skills to be combined.*" EWP sought to combine practical, academic and managerial skills to produce a total person fully developed, "*a totally developed individual, for whom the different social functions are different modes of activity he takes up in turn*" (Marx 1976: 618). The foregoing discussion shows that the new innovation was confused with the colonial F2 education system and, as shown in a subsequent section, this contributed towards its demise. Although teachers' colleges were making efforts to incorporate socialist ideals in their curriculum, it appears there were difficulties in engaging with agency in the domain of culture to create a paradigm shift.

The Role of Agency (and Structure) In the Implementation of the EWP Curriculum

One of the characteristics of a socialist society is the democratic participation of all citizens in matters affecting their lives, such as the direction their education system should take. According to Nhundu (1997: 51), when ZIMFEP was formed, "*A broad based board of directors was set up comprising civil servants, former combatants, journalists and notably Fay Chung who later became the third minister of education. Absent from the board were representatives from industry, the church and teachers organisations.*" The church, teachers' organisations and industry are three critical sections of civil society that should have been drawn into the ZIMFEP board. The church is and has always been a major actor in the education system in Zimbabwe right from early missionary days, having provided the bulk of the education for the indigenous population. In a study by

Naidoo and Muthukrishna (2014) teachers also explained that educational reforms were carried out unilaterally, the process was not consultative and that the education department just imposed the curriculum on them. The two authors recommend the creation of appropriate forums where critical engagement and negotiation occur amongst the relevant stakeholders over issues and struggles in areas of policy-practice.

Teachers' organisations, as the legitimate representatives of the implementers of policy, the teachers, occupy a strategic position in the curriculum process. Yet, as shown in the responses teachers' organisations were said to play only a reactionist role in shaping the curriculum development process. "*Zimbabwe Teachers Association is actually a watch dog... Once you implement a curriculum which is not in taste with our profession, definitely they raise eyebrows*" (PLT 7). Instead of being an active participant in the curriculum process the Zimbabwe Teachers Association waits for policies to be promulgated and then only reacts to what is already in place. In their paper, Eunitah et al. (2013) recommend increased and more genuine involvement of teachers in curriculum development to reduce the risk of tissue rejection and disparity in curriculum interpretation and implementation.

Industry, which is the labour market for the school leavers, according to Nhundu (1997), was also left out of the ZIMFEP board. If the education system was to adequately respond to the economic circumstances of the country, then the captains of industry (though capitalist at the time) should have been drawn into the curriculum process. These could have provided opportunities for students to actually visit industry and integrate their theoretical base with real industrial experience. In this regard, Oats (2014) foregrounds the need for partnership with other bodies responsible for curriculum development for teacher education and training indicating the need on constant basis for teacher training colleges to collaborate with varied stakeholders in order to get ideas and help from them.

In response to a question which sought to find out the extent to which the EWP teachers had been involved in the development and implementation of the EWP curriculum, ten out of the thirteen participants at the EWP pilot school had attended workshops on the concept of EWP.

Workshops attended included briefings on the concept of EWP, entrepreneurship and open days where sister schools displayed their products. PLT 9 commented, *“It was at J Z (another ZIMFEP school) and they were displaying some of the products that they had done during the term... They were displaying what they have in piggery, what they do in Food and Nutrition, what they do in bakery, what they do in Fashion and Fabrics...”*

The idea of pilot schools inviting teachers from fellow pilot schools to see what they could produce indeed provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and insights to those who might be new at such schools. This gave teachers the opportunity to see actual benefits of EWP. These implementers were able to learn from each other as to how they could tackle challenges they might face.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the findings shows that indeed structure, culture and agency played a pivotal role in the development and implementation of the EWP philosophy in Zimbabwe. According to the social realist framework, new social structures emerge from the work of agents, and the work of agents is enabled and constrained by existing social structures. At independence the country inherited a dual education structure, an F2 education system for the Africans and an F1 academic education system for the colonial settlers. The incoming socialist cadres, as new agents, created new structures to change the existing education structure and introduce a new education structure through EWP. This is evidenced in the creation of a new structure, ZIMFEP, which was established to spearhead the introduction of the new innovation.

The constraints in the implementation of the new innovation can be seen in the domain of culture where the previous F2 education system was viewed as inferior as it offered fewer employment opportunities for the graduates in the productive economic sector. The conflation of the inferior F2 education system with EWP and the entrenched culture of valuing an academic type of curriculum as the gate way to employment and a prosperous future had a negative impact on the EWP innovation. In addition, the shift in ideology from a socialist orientation to a free market economy with the introduction of the

structural adjustment programme a decade later cemented the demise of the EWP curriculum.

In the domain of culture, it is the researcher's considered view that the extent to which agency is exercised in the ideological and educational debate has an impact on the extent of success of the reform and implementation of the curriculum. EWP, while a noble emancipatory project intended to change the lives of Zimbabweans in line with socialism, appears from the findings to have been bedeviled with problems. The concepts of socialism and EWP were not quite understood by the teachers who were expected to implement the innovation. There was inadequate preparation of teachers for the new innovation. This was further exacerbated by the confusion between EWP and the F2 colonial education system as some thought it was the same thing under a new name. In terms of structure, while government initiated the innovation, it left the burden of implementation entirely on the shoulders of ZIMFEP, without a clear role for itself. As a result ZIMFEP failed to institutionalise the programme beyond the pilot schools to cover the whole country.

One objective widely regarded as an important condition for and guarantee of sustainable success in implementing educational reforms is the participation of all interested stakeholders and partners (such as teachers' organisations, non-governmental organisations and the church) at local and national levels in the development and renovation of the of the education system. Although the ideological orientation and consciousness of some of the agents may be problematic, it is essential that their views be sought so that they do not deliberately thwart efforts at reform. In terms of agency, however, as shown in the findings, these key actors were left out of the newly established ZIMFEP board. Yet the church had always been a major actor in the education system in Zimbabwe. A buy-in from key partners such as the church, the teachers, who were ultimately responsible for implementing the innovation and industry which held the means of production would have gone a long way in enabling the implementation of the innovation. The mere fact that only eight schools across the whole country experimented with the new innovation while the rest of the school system adopted the highly academic school curriculum and the comparatively higher rewards from the formal white collar employment sector contributed to a disparaging of the concept of EWP.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the preceding findings and conclusions the following recommendations are advanced; firstly, preparation of personnel before an innovation is implemented is pertinent for the success of such an innovation. The researcher recommends that teachers be oriented before a curriculum innovation is introduced, preferably right from pre-service training in teacher education institutions. Work needs to be done in domain of culture to create a paradigm shift. Secondly, thorough research is carried out in future innovations and lessons be drawn from other countries that might have experimented with similar innovations. Good lessons for example could have been drawn from countries such as Botswana and Cuba.

Thirdly, structural enablers that do not constrain the implementation process (such as clear roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders) need to be in place. In addition initiators of an innovation, in this case the government, need to provide the necessary implementation support. Finally, evaluation is a critical component of the policy making and implementation process. An evaluation of the challenges facing the EWP experimental schools should have been undertaken formatively in order to take appropriate remedial action timeously.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study left some unanswered questions which could be fertile ground for further research. The use of the experimental/projects model to bring about national curriculum change needs further analysis to determine its impact on curriculum development and implementation. The issue of stakeholder participation in the curriculum process needs further research with larger samples as this was only a case study using a small sample. How a new consciousness is developed through education would be fertile ground for further research as a way of finding out the role of education as an ideological and hegemonic tool. Finally there is need for further research on the interplay between educational and economic reform and to explore the nature of the interaction.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study, like any other study does have some limitations. Firstly the study sampled only one Education with Production pilot school out of the eight schools that had been established. A bigger sample involving maybe half of the schools might have painted a different picture. Solace however, can be found in the fact that the findings are generally consistent with findings from other studies in the literature. Secondly as this was a sensitive political topic and participants did not know the researcher, some might have withheld issues they felt could have negative effects on them if their identities were revealed. This was minimised through assuring the participants of the confidentiality of respondents. They were informed that data would only be reported as group data and that no individual identities would be revealed.

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