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**Submissions and Correspondence to:**

Chief Editor

*The Fountain: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*

Catholic University of Zimbabwe

P. O. Box H200

Hatfield - HARARE

ZIMBABWE

TEL: +263-4-570570

Email: fjis@cuz.ac.zw, journal@cuz.ac.zw

Journal Website: http://journals.cuz.ac.zw/index.php/fountain

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# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Kudakwashe Maguraushe** is a Lecturer at the Catholic University of Zimbabwe (CUZ), kmaguraushe@cuz.ac.zw

**Paul Maketa** is a Lecturer at Gweru Polytechnic, P O Box 137 Gweru maketa.p@gwerupoly.ac.zw

**Lloyd Hazvineyi** is a History Ph.D. candidate at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

**Antonio Santos Marizane** teaches History and Theology at the Catholic University of Zimbabwe (CUZ).

**Alice Zinyemba** teaches in the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ).

**L Chabikisa** teaches in the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ).

**Paul Nemashakwe** teaches Business Management, at the Bulawayo Campus of the Catholic University of Zimbabwe (CUZ). paulnemashakwe@cuz.ac.zw

**Lawrence Dumisani Nyathi** is a researcher.  unclelaw2012@gmail.com

**Tauya Chinama** is a Ph.D. candidate in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Research, and Innovation at the Catholic University of Zimbabwe (CUZ).

**Edward Muzondo** lectures in the Department of Social Work at the Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU) in Bindura, Zimbabwe.

**Tapiwa Musasa** is a Ph.D. candidate in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Research, and Innovation (FGSRI) at the Catholic University of Zimbabwe.

**Annah Theresa Nyadombo** is the Education Secretary at the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference Secretariate (ZCBC) in Harare and works in the child safeguarding program.

**Prof Ranga Zinyemba** is the Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the Catholic University of Zimbabwe (CUZ).

**Andreas Zvaiwa** is a St Paul's religious brother and former lecturer of psychology at Arrupe Jesuit University in Harare and the Catholic University of Zimbabwe.

**Majahana Lunga** teaches Literary studies at the Catholic University of Zimbabwe and is based at the Bulawayo campus.

**EDITORIAL**

The twelve articles in this volume of the *Fountain Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* cover a variety of subjects that range from mobile computing to witchcraft and historical struggles for belonging to children's rights. A mosaic of research interests across disciplines, methodologies, and ideas reflects the diversity of research pursuits that make society tick. The volume is a departure from the previous two volumes dedicated to special themes such as Cyclone Idai (FJIS, Vol. 3, Issue 1, Nov/Dec 2019) and Covid-19 (FJIS, Vol. 4, Issue 1, Nov/Dec 2020). All the articles in this volume are based on research carried out in Zimbabwe.

In this volume, Kudakwashe Maguraushe and Paul Maketa write on the use of "mobile computing in technical and vocational education institutions such as the Gweru and Kwekwe technical colleges of Zimbabwe". Their question is: should mobile phones be used in the classroom? Their research reveals a gap in perceptions regarding the use of mobile devices in the classroom between lecturers and students. Apart from the challenge of the prohibitive cost of data and poor internet connectivity, lecturers generally believed that these devices were a distraction in the classroom, while students believed that they were critical for the learning process and should be allowed in the classroom. The authors recommend dialogue between teacher and learner to discover the immense learning opportunities that come with mobile devices.

In "Land, Agriculture, and Struggles for Belonging in Colonial Zimbabwe: A Case of Buhera, 1960-1970," historians Lloyd Hazvineyi and Antonio Santos Marizane expose the myth that Ndebele people were confined to Zimbabwe's western provinces of Matabeleland North and South and Bulawayo Metropolitan, by demonstrating the existence of Ndebele enclaves in other areas such as Buhera, right in the middle of what would ordinarily be considered Shona territory. The authors show how the Gwebu people distinguished themselves from their Shona neighbors and sustained their sense of particularism through agricultural success using skills they had acquired from colonial settler farmers before 1925. Using agriculture as a lens to explore the matrix of belonging in Zimbabwe, the study reveals how economic activity can become a factor in establishing independence and identity amidst a majority of others.

The article by Alice Zinyemba and L. Chabikisa analyses the "Impact of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty in Medical Aid Service Providers in Zimbabwe" through a case study of CIMAS. The study reveals that while members are generally satisfied with service provision, hence their loyalty, they are disconcerted by the recurrent shortfalls and cash-upfront policies of CIMAS. Apart from the elimination of this policy, the authors further recommend the establishment of centers outside the Harare Central Business District and in rural areas to ease congestion. They also propose the setting up of customer loyalty programs to increase their market share.

Reflecting on leadership in Africa, Paul Nemashakwe decries the dearth of leadership on the continent, which has perpetuated endemic poverty despite the potential wealth of the continent that is being exploited by others who would rather have the status quo remain. He locates the fault lines in Africa's eclectic leadership models and in the colonial and neo-colonial insistence on western models of leadership that are ill-suited to Africa. Nemashakwe recommends the development of African leadership theory and practice based on the principles of Hunhu and Ubuntu (and Antu).

In an action research project in three Harare primary schools on restorative discipline, Geoff Harris reports that "peacemaking circles" enabled teachers to get to know their students and to respond preemptively to potential problems in class, while peer mediation led to a fall in the number and intensity of playground conflicts. The study shows that such restorative practices can be a promising way of addressing school disciplinary issues.

Lawrence Dumisani Nyathi's article, "Impact of Entrepreneurial Activities on Employment Creation: A Case Study of Gweru," observes that from the year 2000 onwards, capacity utilization has been shrinking in Zimbabwe, resulting in colossal retrenchments both in the private and public sectors. As a result, both skilled and unskilled labour turned to the informal sector for survival. The paper demonstrated that entrepreneurship activities make a significant contribution to employment creation. The government would therefore do well to promote such activities in its larger quest to increase the gross domestic product of the country.

And Zimbabwe's current government seems to be doing that by seeking to enhance industrialization and modernisation in universities, as Hardson

Kwandayi's article reports. Kwandayi's paper recommends several strategies that universities in Zimbabwe can use to advance industrialization and modernization, the key amongst these strategies being that universities should embrace other stakeholders such as schools, colleges, and the private sector as they go about their business. As part of this process, local universities are also expected to streamline themselves to remain relevant.

Tauya Chinama and Edward Muzondo attempt a critical analysis of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They conclude that religious intolerance forms the basis of much other intolerance, leading to human rights abuses, ideological polarization, lawlessness, homophobia, bigotry, tribalism, and hate speech.

In 'The Usefulness of Indigenous Plants and Vegetables in Contemporary Society', Tapiwa Musasa discovered twenty-four (24) indigenous plant varieties, five non-indigenous plants, and five indigenous vegetables that people are using to improve their health in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The same plant varieties have been used in everyday life before the outbreak of the current pandemic, indicating their undeniable usefulness. The paper recommends more research and publications on these plants to safeguard the knowledge for future generations. Documentation is critical as a measure against the extinction of the crucial role of indigenous knowledge systems.

Annah Theresa Nyadombo and Ranga Zinyemba's, "The State of Children's Rights and Initiatives to Protect Them in Zimbabwe", argues that Zimbabwe has adequate legislation (local and international) to deliver and protect children's rights, but that what is lacking is the implementation of such legislation into practice.

The "Psychology of Witchcraft among the Shona People, Myth and Reality: A Case Study of Witchcraft Among the Shona People of Bikita District" argues that witchcraft is a well-known practice across cultures in the history of mankind. The practice can be explained through the Freudian and Jungian theories of the psyche. Zvaiwa argues that witches have trained their abilities to operate in the unconscious area of

the psyche to meet their objectives. The paper rejects the idea that witchcraft is a moral issue and suggests that it is more of a psychological one.

The last article by Majahana Lunga focuses on gender-based violence in the book *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. He claims that while a cursory reading of *Things Fall Apart* could lead to labeling the novel as sexist, a closer reading shows this labeling to be ill-founded. Women are depicted as revered stakeholders with significant religious, economic, cultural, and political roles. This is despite the patrilineal and patriarchal stratification of the traditional pre-colonial and colonial village life portrayed in the novel.

# The Use of Mobile Computing in Technical and Vocational Education Institutions

### By

### Kudakwashe Maguraushe & Paul Maketa

### ABSTRACT

*The motive for this study was to assess how polytechnic students and lecturers were using mobile computing devices for teaching and learning both inside and outside the classroom and how actual student use compares to lecturers' perceptions of student use. The researchers used Gweru Polytechnic and Kwekwe Polytechnic as case studies and data was collected through interviews and questionnaires administered to lecturers and students. The findings revealed that the implementation of mobile learning in polytechnics had some challenges including internet connectivity and high mobile data costs. While lecturers believed that students were primarily using mobile devices to socialize, students reported that they were performing a wide variety of educational tasks. Although some lecturers banned the use of mobile devices in the classroom and prefer mobile learning to remain outside the classroom, students believed that more formal uses both inside and outside the classroom could be beneficial. Students seemed more ready to fully adopt the use of mobile devices for learning while lecturers are somewhat concerned that devices may be distracting and limiting. The researchers recommend increased dialogue amongst stakeholders about the learning opportunities available through mobile devices.*

**Keywords:** *mobile computing, mobile education, technical education.*

**Introduction**

In Zimbabwe's higher education institutions, mobile computing has become an invaluable and inevitable part of the administration, teaching, and learning. Polytechnics, in particular, have played their role in embracing ICT computing, though at different paces and priorities. The researchers intended to assess the use of mobile computing in Technical and Vocational Education. The study was carried out at Gweru and Kwekwe Polytechnic Polytechnics two of the Technical and Vocational Centre's in Zimbabwe.

**Background to the study**

During the period before 2003, Zimbabwe Polytechnics had a mix of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), which varied from one institution to another. There was no uniformity as to what ICTs institutions invested in. While some polytechnics had several clone desktop computer laboratories, some did not have even a single computer. While some had connected to the internet using the telephone line-based dialup system, some had no idea that the internet existed.

A breakthrough came in 2003 when a non-governmental organization called VVOB, a Belgian abbreviation which translates in English to "Flemish for technical assistance", came in to finance, train personnel, and equip the polytechnics with standard computer and network infrastructure (VVOB project document, 2003). The project procured standard desktops installed fibre cable for the internet, and set up Ethernet Local Area Networks (LANs) in polytechnic computer laboratories.

This project became the basis for mobile computing in Zimbabwe Polytechnics. When the project ended in 2008, it left the institutions at the same level in terms of ICTs and with the necessary backbone to expand and embrace future technological developments, such as mobile computing. This research sought to investigate the adoption and implementation of mobile computing at Gweru Polytechnic. A survey was mainly conducted using a questionnaire as the main data source. Literature was,

however, used as a guide to trends in mobile computing in higher education institutions globally.

This research sought to determine the hardware and software systems used by administrative staff, academic staff, and students at Gweru and Kwekwe Polytechnics. It explored how they were being used as well as the achievements and associated benefits realized from the use of mobile computing. The study also sought to highlight the challenges faced by the institution and ways of mitigating them. Finally, this research intended to identify opportunities the polytechnic can exploit if it fully embraced mobile computing.

**Significance of the study**

While academic institutions have used and benefited immensely from ICT in teaching and learning, the bulk of the teaching remains fixed in the classrooms. Technical and Vocational Education institutions need to adjust and implement mobile learning. The research ascertains the existing ICT infrastructure and systems for mobile computing and establishes the gaps that need to be filled.  The findings from the research help in the construction of ICT policy on training.  It will also help in making a Technical and Vocational education curriculum that embraces mobile learning.

**Research Questions**

1.  What are mobile computing devices and applications used in polytechnics?

2.  What are the challenges in the implementation of mobile computing to support teaching and learning?

3.  What are lecturers' attitudes and perceptions about incorporating mobile learning in their classrooms?

**Literature review**

According to Tarun et al. (2013), Mobile Computing is a technology that permits the transmission of data, using a computer, without having to be associated with a physical

connection. Mobile voice communication is widely used throughout the world and has had an exceptionally quick increment in the number of subscribers to the different cellular networks over the last few years. An extension of this technology is the capacity to send and get information over these cellular networks.

Kumawat et al (2013) further affirm that mobile data communication has turned into a vital and quickly developing innovation as it permits users to transmit information from remote areas to other remote or fixed areas. This turns out to be the solution for the most serious issue of businesspeople moving - mobility. Mobile computing encourages interaction through smooth innovation whereby clients sense and control what straightforwardly intrigues them while holding tangential attention to other enlightening open doors that they can whenever decide to concentrate on. This requires consistent access to media, data sharing, and communication through heterogeneous systems, which are distributed and may be profoundly embedded in the physical environment.

According to Tarun et al (2013), mobile computing alludes to the infrastructure put in place to guarantee that consistent and dependable communication goes on. These would incorporate things such as applications, Protocols, Services, Bandwidth, and Portals necessary to facilitate and backing of the stated systems. This guarantees that there is no collision with other existing networks which offer the same service. Since the media is unguided, the overlaying structure is more radio wave-oriented. That is, the signals are carried over the air to intended gadgets that are capable of receiving and sending the same sorts of signals.

Karim and Goodwin (2013) are of the view that mobile devices incorporate cell phones or gadget segments that get or access the administration of mobility. They would extend from portable workstations, Smartphones, Tablet Computers, and Personal Digital Assistants. These gadgets will have receptor mediums that are fit for sending and accepting signs. These gadgets are designed to work in full-duplex, whereby they are fit for sending and receiving signals at the same time. They don't need to hold up until one gadget has completed the process of conveying for the other gadget to start

communications. The mobile devices specified utilize an existing and built-up network to work on. By and large, it would be a wireless network.

Karim and Goodwin (2013) stated that mobile software refers to the actual programs that run on mobile hardware. It manages the characteristics and necessities of mobile applications. This is the brain of that mobile device. In other terms, it is the working arrangement of that device. It's the fundamental segment that makes the mobile device work. In today's registering world, diverse advances have come up. These have developed to bolster existing computer organizations everywhere throughout the world. With mobile communication, we discover that being bound to one physical area has been eliminated. This new technology enables users to update documents, surf the internet, send and receive an e-mail, stream live video files, take photographs, and support video and voice conferencing.

The development of convenient computers and tablets, individual computerized Assistants (PDA), PC Tablets, and Smartphones, has thusly made mobile computing very convenient. The portability of the gadgets guarantees and empowers users to get to all services as though they were in the internal system of their organization; for example, the utilization of Tablet PC and iPad. This new technology empowers clients to upgrade records, surf the web, send and get an email, stream live videos, take photos furthermore bolster video and voice conferencing (Karim and Goodwin, 2013).

According to Hwang et al (2014), the term M-Learning or "Mobile Learning" has different meanings for different authorities, that refer to a subset of E-Learning, educational technology, and distance education, that focuses on learning across contexts and learning with mobile devices. Mobile learning has many different definitions and is known by many different names, like personalized learning, learning while mobile, ubiquitous learning, anytime/anywhere learning, and handheld learning.

Another meaning of mobile learning is, "any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed, foreordained area, or discovering that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technology" (MOBIlearn, 2003). As such, with the utilization of cell phones, learners can learn anyplace and whenever (Crescente and Lee, 2011). Portable learning will be the capacity to use mobile gadgets to bolster learning.

Mobile learning is certainly not only the conjunction of "mobile" and "learning"; it has always implicitly meant 'mobile E-Learning' and its history and development must be understood as both a continuation of 'conventional ', E-Learning and a reaction to this 'conventional' E-Learning and its perceived inadequacies and limitations. It will be the "portable" viewpoint of mobile learning that makes it stand separated from different sorts of learning, specifically designing learning experiences that exploit the opportunities that 'mobility' can offer us (Hwang et al, 2014).

M-Learning focuses on the mobility of the learner, connecting with portable technologies, learning that reflects a focus on how society and its institutions can accommodate and support an increasingly mobile population. This is because mobile devices have components and usefulness for supporting learners. For instance, podcasts of lectures can be made accessible for downloading. Learners are to hope to connect with these advanced tools whilst away from the conventional learning locations. Over the past ten years, mobile learning has grown from a minor research interest to a set of significant projects in schools, workplaces, museums, cities, and rural areas around the world. The M-Learning community is still fragmented, with different national perspectives, differences between academia and industry, and between the school, higher education, and lifelong learning sectors, (Singh, 2010).

Mobile learning helps students to learn and comprehend at an exceptionally fast rate where their gaps may exist. E-learning permits lecturers to convey learning material efficiently and rapidly into the hands of students with a consistency we've never possessed the capacity to have. The technology permits administrators to track and

see whether the learning material is in the hands of the staff, and also the online testing gives quick results. It is noticed that e-learning has made more prominent adaptability and control that regularly bear the cost of learners to get knowledge (Cocoa and Charlier, 2013).

As indicated by Monika (2013), e-learning in the corporate training world is expanding quickly because of the time and spending plan effectiveness in course advancement and conveyance. Numerous authors like McGill, Klobas, and Renzi (2014) have cited that, given the issues identifying with money-related backing, the least positioned condition identified with the activity is being financially beneficial for e-learning. The studies from Joshi, Subrahmanyam, and Anvekar (2014) say that m-learning control costs, increase quality, more qualified for geographically differing representatives, give more predictable course conveyance, and render more individual guidelines and regard for the learners by modernizing the work power. Accessibility of training to a broad audience, sophisticated tracking features that can record individual training performance for training administration, self-directed learning, instructional elements including practice, immediate applicability, quicker and consistent access to the employees, and feedback that can be easily accomplished without interaction with a live instructor are some of the great features of e-learning.

Karim and Goodwin (2013) argue that, as learning management systems adapt to the mobile platform, m-learning may become a common tool for exploration by tech-savvy faculty. The use of mobile devices seems a natural fit for distributed learning and field activities in that handheld technology can not only accompany the learner almost anywhere but also provide a platform that is rapidly evolving and always connected to data. Learning management frameworks may drive grounds to perceive the capability of this always-on, anywhere technology that brings down the physical limits to learning and expands the classroom. Usability offered by mobile devices underpins long-lasting learning, and because the gadgets themselves are part of everyday life, they encourage credible learning. Eventually, it may be the universality of these students' possessed devices that guarantees their use as teaching and learning tools. The rising

prominence of mobile devices ought to advance the improvement of cloud-based applications that support different devices.

Srivastava and Agarwal (2013) cited that hardware for mobile learning represents a wide range of platforms, screen sizes, and functionality, and no clear standards exist for development that addresses all of the tools available. As a result, colleges and universities can find infrastructure issues tricky to resolve. The cost of smartphones and data plans is out of reach for some students, and adoption and ownership are uneven. While the screen size on many mobile devices enforces simplicity of design, the small screens and keys are difficult for some to use effectively, and the additional strain on battery life imposed by mobile apps can be frustrating. Because m-learning is an emerging market, there remains a dearth of applications designed specifically for learning, and repurposing existing lesson materials for the mobile platform might add to the faculty workload. The extensive mix of devices and mobile formats, which are generally subject to student and faculty choice, could delay m-learning development, and standards may be slow to emerge in an environment where manufacturers are often trying to decide whether to merge their mobile devices with slates, tablets, or e-readers. Furthermore, while the devices can go anywhere with students, they might not engage students for long periods, as mobile learning activities are subject to frequent interruptions, Srivastava and Agarwal (2013).

**Methodology**

This research was a case study at two polytechnics i.e., Gweru Polytechnic and Kwekwe Polytechnic in Zimbabwe. The researchers designed a questionnaire and an interview guide which were used to solicit data. Both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used since both approaches gave the advantage of improving on evaluation by ensuring that the limitations of one type of data are balanced by the strengths of another. The random sampling technique was used to select 50 respondents, that is students and staff from the two polytechnics. A general observation was done to verify information obtained through the questionnaires and interviews.

**Research findings**

### a. Lecturers' access to the internet

According to Kumawat et al (2013), connectivity on mobile devices is a major challenge in mobile computing. The issue of internet connectivity can greatly disturb the implementation of mobile learning. The researchers found out that 58.2% of the lecturers in the survey had internet connectivity though it was not consistent while 30.9% indicated that they had a very reliable internet connection. However, a significant 10.9% of the respondents had serious challenges with internet connectivity shown by indicating 'No' on the questionnaire.

### b. Mobile devices used

Karim and Goodwin (2013) are of the view that mobile devices incorporate cell phones or gadget segments that get or access the administration of mobility. They would extend from portable workstations, Smartphones, I-pad, Tablet Computers, and Personal Digital Assistants. These gadgets will have receptor mediums that are fit for sending and accepting signs. The researchers found out that the majority of the staff and students at the polytechnics use laptops (84%). All the respondents indicated that they used either a smartphone (56.4%) or an Ipad (20%) or a tablet (42%).
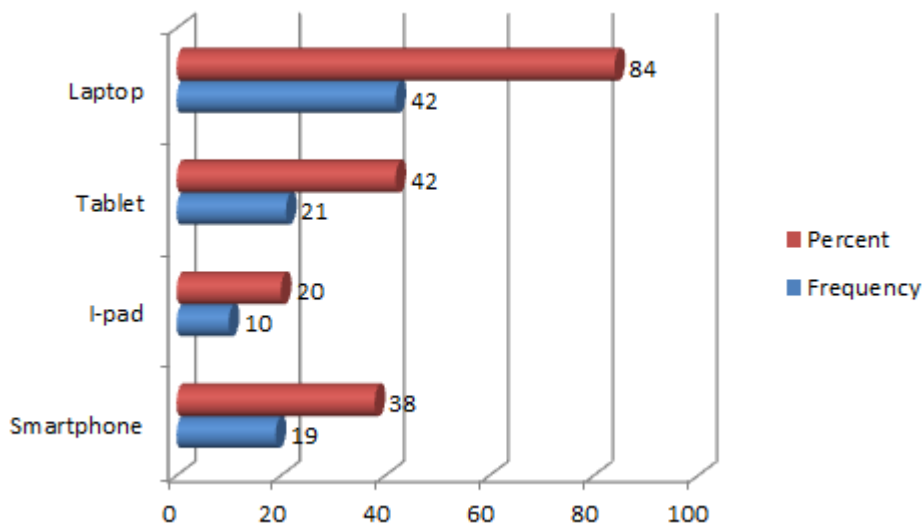


**Figure 1: Devices used**

**3. Lecturers' perceptions of mobile learning**

Table 1 shows the opinions of the lecturers on the use of mobile learning. The findings show that lecturers generally agreed that mobile learning disseminates information quickly (80%), and the idea that mobile learning makes it easier for lecturers to carry out teaching duties also got much support (75%). The majority of the lecturers did not agree with the idea that students would participate more in class if they use mobile devices (25% agreed) and also the respondents did not agree that students would spend more time on classwork when using mobile devices (25% agreed). The most common theme from lecturers' responses indicated that the lecturers that responded have a mostly negative view of mobile device use in the classroom. Still, many lecturers see the potential for using mobile devices in the classroom as a supplement to current methods and believe that course materials should be easily accessible via mobile devices.

**Table 1**: **Lecturers' perceptions of mobile learning**

| | Agree | | Disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of Responses | Percentage | No. of Responses | Percentage |
| Mobile learning disseminates information quickly. | 16 | 80% | 4 | 20% |
| Mobile learning makes it easier for lecturers to carry out teaching duties. | 15 | 75% | 5 | 25% |
| It's easy for lecturers to use mobile learning. | 15 | 75% | 5 | 25% |
| Data on mobile networks is expensive | 16 | 80% | 4 | 20% |
| Students participate more in class | 5 | 25% | 15 | 75% |
| Students spend more time on classwork | 5 | 25% | 15 | 75% |
| Mobile devices cost is expensive. | 11 | 55% | 9 | 45% |

**4. How many of your lecturers use mobile learning?**

40.3% of the students reported that a few polytechnic lecturers use mobile learning and 20.8% of the respondents indicated that none of their lecturers use mobile learning. Only 6.5% of the respondents indicated that all their lecturers use mobile learning.

## 5. Challenges faced using mobile communication devices for learning

This research revealed the following as challenges the institution is facing in trying to improve mobile computing: -

- Limited financial resources to move with mobile technology trends

- Inconsistent internet connectivity, low bandwidth, and congestion

- Electricity outages, since low battery life devices are used by the majority, which require constant battery recharge.

- Expensive data for mobile telephone operators

- Lecturers upload little content

## 6. Achievements

The following were identified as achievements made by the institution in trying to promote mobile computing: -

- The installation of wireless access points to enable access to LAN and the internet through mobile devices.

- Procurement of laptops for staff.

- Increasing internet bandwidth from 10Mbps to 20Mbps.

- Engaging in public-private partnerships with a mobile operator to provide additional wireless interconnectivity.

- ICT skills upgrading for staff.

- Installation of the website, webmail, and eLearning software.

## Discussion

Although students are currently performing educational tasks informally, the data implies that students believe that more formal incorporation of mobile learning would be beneficial and effortless. The data indicates that lecturers, however, would most

likely limit the incorporation of learning opportunities and access to course materials outside the classroom as the data reveals that they do not think participation and engagement would increase with in-class use and they do not prefer mobile devices be used for in-class activities. More prevalent, however, was the use of the device for accessing information and course materials via the web. Although most students were able to access the Internet through their devices, students and lecturers agreed that course materials and learning management systems should be more accessible and easily viewable in a mobile format from devices.

The data also reveals that students are aware of how the use of mobile devices could impact their motivation to learn. Students believe that they would be more likely to participate and engage in-class activities and discussions both inside and outside of class if they could use their mobile devices. The Technology Acceptance Model is a theory that suggests that two main factors, perceived use, and ease of use, influence a user's decision about how and when they will use a technology (Davis, 1989). In this study, survey items were designed to measure students' and lecturers' perceptions about perceived use and ease of use to understand if students and/or Lecturers were willing to adopt the use of mobile devices for learning.

Results from the analysis of the survey items suggest that students may be more ready to fully adopt mobile technology for learning than lecturers. Age and experience, as suggested by some researchers, may be the reason for this difference. Prensky (2001) proposes that there is a distinct difference between "digital natives" and "digital immigrants" in the way they view and use technology. Digital natives, students who have been exposed to and immersed in technology since birth, will likely perceive the use of technology very differently than digital immigrants, in this case, most of the Lecturers members.

This study revealed that students were more open to using mobile devices for learning while Lecturers were concerned with potential distractions. Students and lecturers both agreed that students would be able to learn how to use devices for learning with ease, but admitted they would need additional training. As digital natives, students may have more knowledge of the capabilities of mobile devices than lecturers.

**Recommendations**

Based on the results of this study, the following suggestions are offered to support the effective use of mobile technology in learning at polytechnics in Zimbabwe:

1. Increased lecturers, and training regarding the capabilities of mobile technology and its potential use in the classroom including applications that are available via smartphone stores and textbook companies.

2. Updates to the colleges' websites and learning management systems that allow them to be viewed in a mobile format.

3. Resource page on the college website with recommendations for mobile applications that may apply to students and lecturers.

4. Increased dialogue among students and lecturers, lecturers and lecturers, and lecturers and administrators about the learning opportunities available through mobile devices.

5. Formation of a partnership with a mobile network that reduces the cost of a device and/or data plan for students and lecturers.

6. Collaboration between the polytechnics and either the Information Technology departments or an outside resource that could develop course-specific mobile applications that could be used for general education courses.

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# Land, Agriculture, and Struggles for Belonging in Colonial Zimbabwe: A Case of Buhera, 1960-1970.

**By**

**Lloyd Hazvineyi & Antonio Santos Marizane**

## Abstract

*The article explores the dynamics of belonging in Zimbabwe using the belonging matrix. The study uses the case of the Gwebu area in the Sabi Reserve and covers the period between 1960 and 1970. The Gwebu area of the Sabi Reserve was home to a community of descendants of Ndebele migrants who migrated to the area in 1925. This group was led by Chief Daniel Fish Gwebu, and this resulted in the whole community being referred to as the Gwebu people. The study uses agriculture as a lens to explore various dynamics of belonging during the period between 1960 and 1970. Carefully balancing oral traditions and documentary evidence, the study sets off by identifying the agricultural prowess of the Gwebu Ndebele speakers as one of the major factors that allowed them to establish a semblance of independence from their neighbouring Shona speaking chieftaincies; the Makumbe (also known as the Njanja), as well as the Nyashanu. It also argues that the agricultural prowess of the Gwebu Ndebele people was a result of several historical factors. One such factor given special emphasis in this study is the evident historical interactions between white commercial farmers and the Gwebu people. These connections are traced back to the early years of settler rule in the Matabeleland region of the then Rhodesia colony. The study concludes by arguing that the agricultural success of the Gwebu people over the neighbouring Shona enabled them to build a Ndebele enclave, an aspect that allowed them to sustain their sense of particularism over time.*

***Keywords:*** *belonging matrix, Gwebu people, agriculture*

**Introduction**

The coming of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) to the Zimbabwean plateau in 1890 effected colonial rule. The granting of the colonization Charter to Cecil John Rhodes' BSAC resulted in the territory being subsequently christened Southern Rhodesia. Events that followed saw the massive expropriation of land which started with the creation of reserves in the southwestern tip of the country in 1897.[1] Internally, this resulted in the reconfiguring of the social, economic, cultural, and political landscapes as communities of diverse historical backgrounds were brought together in the reserves. Reserves became the theatre of new multi-cultural interactions in Southern Rhodesia. The multi-cultural outlook of the reserves is well illustrated in the case of the Sabi Reserve, which covered the southeastern mainland to the eastern border with Portuguese Mozambique.

In 1925, the Sabi Reserve which covered Charter and VuHera areas saw an influx of Ndebele evictees following forced removals from Fort Rixon, Douglasdale, and Hope Fountain areas of Matabeleland at the hands of the colonial government. The Ndebele-speaking evictees who migrated under the leadership of their chief, Daniel Fish Gwebu, began to be referred to as the Gwebu people.[2] They settled in an area that was traditionally administered by the Makumbe or the VaNjanja/Njanja people under chief Makumbe in the Sabi Reserve.[3] Their settlement ushered in a new era of first-comer and late-comer relations and struggles over belonging.

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1 Reserves were vast tracts of land, often inhabitable and less productive, that were set aside for Africans in order to pave the way for white settler commercial farming. The first reserves to be created in Zimbabwe were the Gwai and Shangane Reserves in 1897.

2 This was after they had settled in the Sabi Reserve. They were referred to as the Gwebu people because they were under the leadership of Chief Gwebu. This however does not imply that they were entirely from the Gwebu family. There were some households which were not related to the Gwebu. These included the Nkomo family.

3 The Makumbe people belonged to the majority Shona speaking group while the Gwebu belonged to the Ndebele group. The two communities shared different linguistic, cultural and political backgrounds altogether. The Ndebele are comprised of at least three groups including descendents of the Khumalo, a group of Nguni people who migrated from Nguniland during the Mfecane disturbances of the 19th Century. The other two groups, the 'Abenhla' or northerners were coopted into the Ndebele nation on their northward migration and included people of Sotho origin and the 'Amahole' who were incorporated into the nation when it was established in the south west of Zimbabwe and it comprised some local Kalanga and Shona groups.
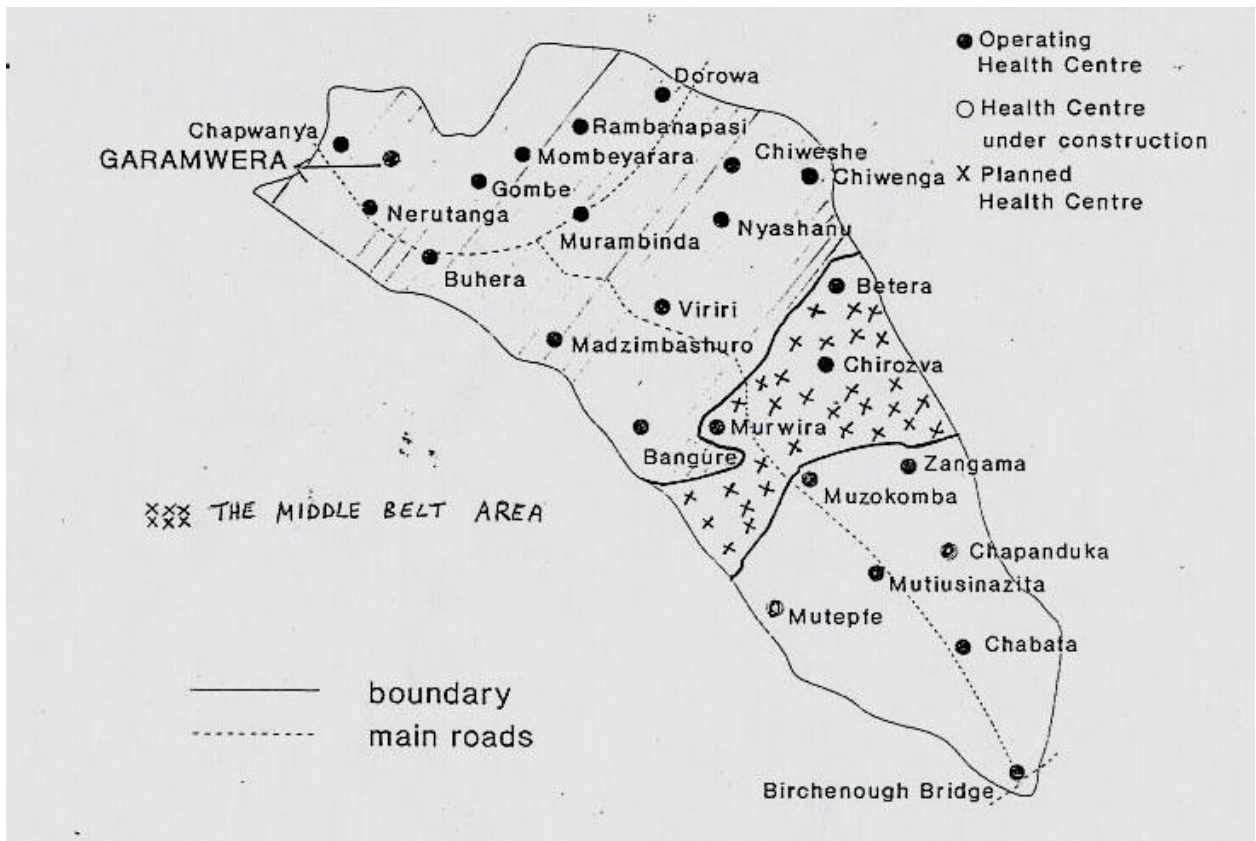
*Fig1: Map of Buhera District.4*

The economic cultures of the Gwebu and the Njanja were different. With a particular focus on agriculture, the Gwebu practiced a form of farming that was interpreted by the colonial native commissioners as 'modern'.5 The neighbouring Shona communities, the Makumbe and the Nyashanu practiced agriculture based on rotational crop cultivation. They specialised in the production of drought-resistant small grains, particularly sorghum and millet. These differences manifested themselves in the number of yields. The Gwebu became dominant in terms of agricultural production which included cattle rearing and crop cultivation. The Shona groups (Makumbe and Nyashanu) pursued their rotational farming which allowed them to rotate their farmlands seasonally.

The success of the Gwebu Ndebele speakers is a result of several historical factors. First, the Gwebu had interacted closely with the earliest crop of white settler farmers in the Matabeleland region. They had witnessed white settler farmers attain good

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4 Friends of Murambinda Hospital, **https://fmh.org.uk/about-2/location/** accessed 21 January 2017.
5 NAZ/4/32/48/5 Office of the Native Commissioner Buhera District, 28 June 1950.

harvests in such soils. Secondly, the Gwebu community included individuals who had worked in the white-owned commercial farms in Fort Rixon and Mzingwane and had been introduced to different aspects of western agriculture. These and other reasons allowed the Gwebu Ndebele speakers to enjoy agricultural success at the expense of the surrounding Shona speaking communities

Among other issues, agricultural success played a pivotal role in differentiating the Gwebu Ndebele speakers from their neighbours; the Njanja Shona speaking people. This article examines the centrality of agriculture in shaping the Ndebele Gwebu's particularism within the trajectory of belonging. The central argument put forward here is that; through agricultural success, the Gwebu people managed to establish a Ndebele enclave in the Sabi Reserve. Whilst the Gwebu was in the process of establishing their particularism as a form of belonging, the Njanja embarked on a crusade of denying the Gwebu agency through naming and renaming.

### *Chibhande*: Agriculture and Gwebu agency in Buhera in Zimbabwe, 1960-1975

The climatic and geographical factors, coupled with the Gwebu's agricultural expertise enabled them to achieve success in the agricultural sector. Chief Gwebu and his people settled in the grasslands between the Mavangwe Hills and Mharabwe hills, an area which was administered by the Njanja people led by Chief Makumbe.6 The area was, in the words of the locals, a land of *isidhaka*/*chidhaka*, meaning it was characterised by the red and black heavy soils.7 Despite the Gwebu people's interest in the red and black heavy soils, it should be noted that they did not have other options considering the political climate during the colonial era. The colonial government was on a massive land grabbing exercise which left most Africans with limited or no choice at all as far as settling was concerned.

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6 Interview with Nichodemus Gwebu, 58 years Old, 8 March 2015, Gwebu Village, Buhera.

7 Ibid.
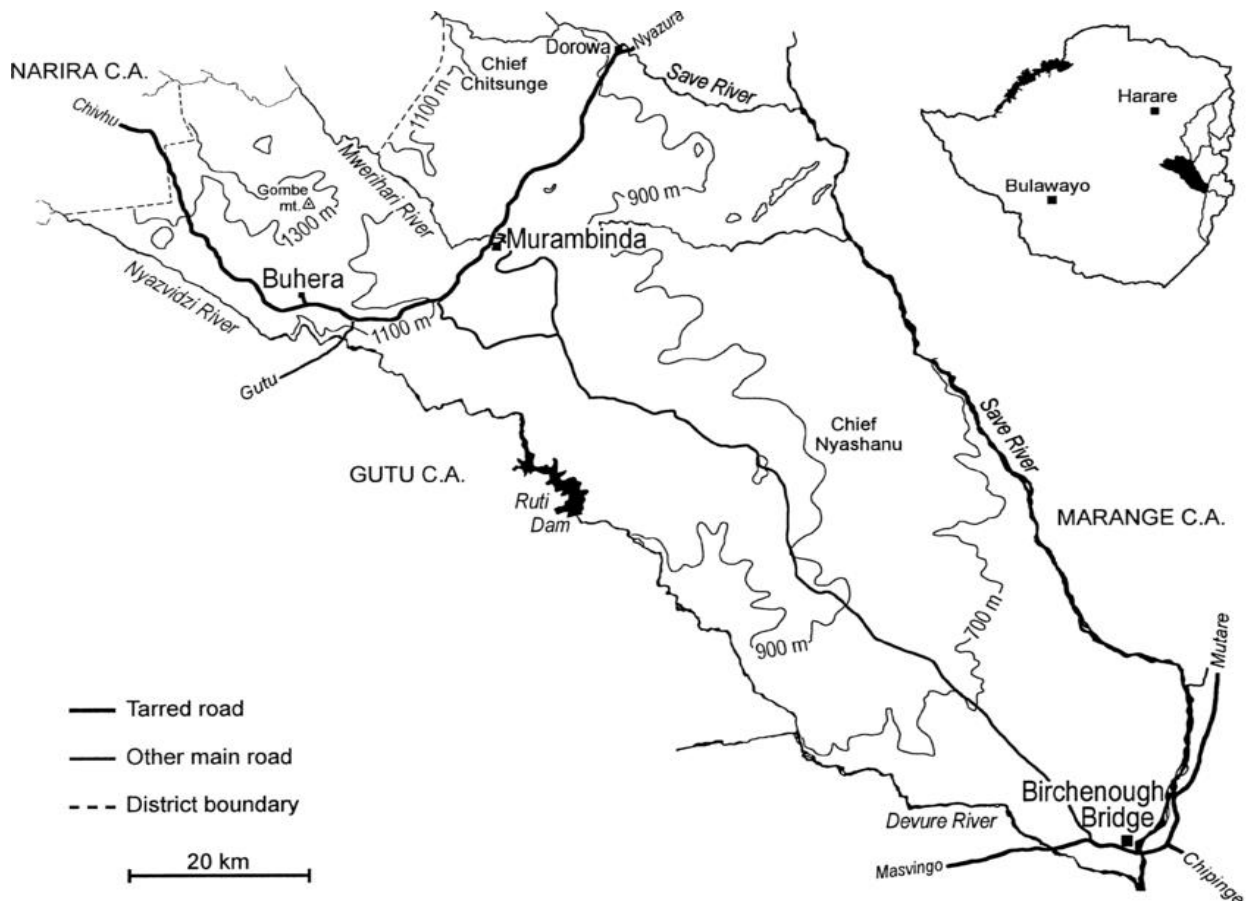
*Fig 2: Map showing Buhera District.8* NB: The Gwebu area is located on the northeastern side between Mwerahari and Nyazvidzi rivers.

These heavy soils were previously shunned by the surrounding Njanja communities due to their adhesive effect on farming tools such as hoes and ploughs. In the words of the Njanja people, the area was shunned because it was labour intensive. Furthermore, it was difficult to work on and people often protested that; "...*ivhu racho rine tsvina uye rinonamira*..." meaning the land was "dirty" and "sticky".9 Besides the fertile black and red soils which the Ndebele got, the area received fairly good rainfall.10 It was characterised by areas with thick grasslands dominated by thorny grass referred to by the locals as *Madungambeva*, abundant water sources, referred

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8 J.A., Andersson, "Administrators' Knowledge and the State of Control in Colonial Zimbabwe: The Invention of the Rural-Urban Divide in Buhera District, 1912-1980", *Journal of African History*, 43, 2002.
9 Interview with Nichodemus Gwebu, 58 years Old, 8 March 2015, Gwebu Village, Buhera.

10 Information gathered from the Buhera District Administrator's Office revealed that the area is classified under region 2B making it an area with the highest rainfall patterns. The information was provided by Mr Madondo who is the District Officer for Buhera (as at March 2015).

to as *jeke*, and good vegetation; all these factors were believed to be signs of an agriculturally productive area.

Evidence deduced from Gwebu's ethnography indicates that each household had more than a one-grain storage facility.11 Although it is difficult to get the actual quantities of grain production, the availability of multiple storage facilities coupled with oral narratives indicate that every household harvested quite huge surpluses at the end of each farming season. In contrast, the Njanja people in Buhera had traditionally preferred the sandy light soils.12 Oral traditions from the Njanja indicate that the locals were concentrated along the hilly and rocky terrain of Chapwanya, Gosho, Chatindo, and Garamwera.13 These areas were characterized by fairly sandy light soils, locally referred to as *Mukwarani.* The areas had accumulated fertility through the rotational farming style.14 This provided them with a good environment for the cultivation of drought-resistant crops such as millet and sorghum. The Njanja used their farmlands on a rotational basis to ensure that the previously tilled lands would swiftly regain fertility after a few years, thus they had a dynamic agricultural system.15 In addition, there are also claims by the Gwebu Ndebele speaking people that the Njanja people in the area could not afford to till the heavy red and black soils because they did not have adequate machinery such as ox-drawn ploughs.16 The few who had ox-drawn ploughs despised the red and black heavy soils due to their tacky effect on tools.17

The period from the late 1960s for the Gwebu-Njanja relations marked an important turning point. This is explained by two major factors. The first factor is that it witnessed the last wave of Ndebele migrants coming into the area from Mzingwane.18 This

11 Interview with Nichodemus Gwebu.

12 F. Musoni, "Forced Removals in Colonial Zimbabwe: The case of the Ndebele in Buhera District: 1927                                                                                              to the late 1960s", pp. 62-72.

13 Interview with Peter Wasarirevhu, Malombo Village, 10 March 2015.

14 Interview with Nichodemus Gwebu, 58 years old, Gwebu Village, 8 March 2015.
15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 F., Musoni, "Forced Resettlement, Ethnicity and the (Un) Making of Ndebele Identity in Buhera District, Zimbabwe", p. 85.

phenomenon undoubtedly helped in further strengthening what historian Musoni terms a unified Ndebele identity.19 Despite the impact on identities, the incoming of this wave of Ndebele migrants enabled the Gwebu to consolidate their possession of the black/red heavy soils, the fertile grasslands, and the so-called "green belt" lands which were now also being targeted by the neighbouring Njanja. Thus, the developments in the late 1960s ultimately left all agriculturally productive black and red soils in the hands of the Gwebu people.

Secondly, the 1960s was a period of a significant agricultural boom for the Gwebu people. Archival sources indicate that the Gwebu had, by this time, attained a fair amount of security regarding land tenure.20 The native commissioner of Buhera district was negotiating with the Native Affairs Department to allocate the Gwebu to their tribal area. This amplifies an already established view that the Gwebu were good farmers and therefore needed the support of the colonial government.21 In addition, they had also managed to clear large tracts of land by this time after years of settling down, acclimatising to the area, as well as identifying the best soils for agriculture. The process of clearing the lands had taken them several years due to the geographical and climatic conditions of the area; thick indigenous forests coupled with thick *madungambeva* grasslands.

The low-lying areas occupied by the Gwebu people began to be descriptively referred to as *Chibande;* a word in the local Shona language used to refer to a particular geographical belt or area. In this case, the area occupied by the Gwebu people was referred to as a belt of red and black soils. Oral narratives indicate that the name *Chibhande* emerged specifically from the Shona speakers from the neighbouring Garamwera areas since the area occupied by the Gwebu had become a distinct 'green belt' in the Sabi Reserve because of Ndebele farming activities.22

For the Shona speaking Njanja, the term *Chibhande* carried a deeper meaning superseding geographical overtones. Prior to the coming of the Ndebele people in the

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19Ibid.

20 NAZ/CHK5 Gwebu, Vol. 1, Minutes of Meeting Held to discuss the problems of Ndebele Kraals living outside Chief Fish's Area, 25 April 1967.

21NAZ/S4/32/48/3, NC Buhera to PNC Gwelo, 18 January 1949.

22 Interview with Nichodemus Gwebu, 58 years old, Gwebu Village, 8 March 2015.

area, the area was just a forest that was not inhabited and was also not ploughed. It thus became a good area for the thriving of a variety of wild game. Njanja oral narratives indicate that hunters would go into the area for hunting and would bring different types of game meat.23 In as much as they did not use the *Chibhande* area for agricultural production, they heavily relied on it for other livelihood activities such as hunting which was a key pillar in the Shona communities' well-being.24 Thus, the Njanja had very close socio-economic links with this area which they called *Chibhande*. Although the name *Chibhande* continued to be used even after the settlement of the Gwebu people, its use during the period from the 1960s was coupled with the Njanja's claims to the area through re-enacting these historical links.

Furthermore, the use of the name *Chibhande* particularly by the Garamwera people, who were part of the Njanja, had the effect of denying the Gwebu people of their agency concerning agricultural success. In this regard, the coining of the name *Chibhande* can be situated in the broader agenda by the first-comer community to deny the agency of the Gwebu in their agricultural success. In his case, the meaning of the name *Chibhande* placed emphasis on agroecological factors; the red and black soils, and the favourable rainfall patterns. Thus, the Njanja attributed the success of the Gwebu people to the geo-climatic conditions of the *Chibhande* area. Thus, the use of the name *Chibhande* falls in the broader belonging context in which the Njanja people gave agency to the geographical area; the favourable climatic conditions in the region as well as the rich black heavy soils, *isidhaka/chidhaka*, rather than to the farming activities of the Ndebele. Denial of the Gwebu agency by the Njanja was part of the local politics of belonging which sought to downplay the role of the former in agricultural progress which had been witnessed between the 1960s and 1970s. For the Njanja, admitting to the view that the Gwebu had achieved considerable agricultural success was bound to sustain the latter's quest for belonging in the area. As far as agricultural success was concerned; the name *Chibhande* was 'empty' of the Gwebu agency because it placed emphasis on favorable rainfall patterns as well as the red and black soils. The study argues that the name *Chibhande,* which emanated

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23 Interview with Peter Wasarirevhu, 67 years old, Malombo Village, Garamwera Area, Ward 3, 11 March 2015.
24 See G. C., Mazarire, "Reflections on Pre-colonial Zimbabwe", c850 -1800s, in B. Raftopoulos and S Mlambo, (eds), *Becoming Zimbabwe, History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2009, pp. 1-38.

from among the Njanja people and was used to refer to an area settled by the Ndebele speaking Gwebu people was a way of contesting the latter's belonging in the Sabi Reserve.

According to one of Chief Gwebu's surviving grandsons, Nicodemus Gwebu, soon after the settlement of the Gwebu people in the late 1920s, the area began to be known as "*nyika yekwaGwebu*", a Shona phrase referring to the area as the land of the Gwebu people.25 This name carried in itself a sense of Gwebu agency. The name Gwebu also made it clear that the Gwebu people had assumed a semblance of ownership of the lands on which they had settled. Thus, the resuscitation of the name *Chibhande* by the Njanja underplayed the Gwebu's knowledge in agriculture as well as years of work on the red soils which had enabled them to turn a previously 'idle' *Chibhande* area into an agriculturally productive area. The name *Chibhande* was rendered empty of Gwebu agency in its meaning and this was consciously perpetuated by the Njanja in their bid to disconnect the people from their success in the agricultural sector. This disentanglement of the Gwebu from their lands would automatically deny them belonging to the Sabi Reserve.

Archival evidence from the 1960s to the 1970s points to the agricultural success of the Gwebu's green belt referred to as *Chibhande.* Although it is difficult to quantify with statistics, there is indeed evidence to substantiate the assertion that Ndebele speakers had indeed established a triumphant trend in agricultural production. It was around the 1970s when the colonial officials began to emphasise the need for a fixed grain storage facility in Chief Gwebu's area.26 The need for a grain collection centre in the area was a confirmation of the fact that general agricultural production had increased. In contrast, the period prior to this was characterized by subsistence farming in which people concentrated on food for consumption and surplus in barter trade.

There are several reasons which contributed to Gwebu's agricultural success. Prior to his coming to Buhera, Chief Daniel Fish Gwebu had been exposed to various forms of 'modern' farming in South Africa in the 1920s.27 He had vast knowledge of various

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25Interview with Nichodemus Gwebu, 58 years old, Gwebu Village, 8 March 2015.

26 NAZ/CHK5/Gwebu PER5/Fish/11/CHK/37, Provincial Commissioner Manicaland, 8 July 1976.

27 Interview with Nichodemus Gwebu, 58 years old, Gwebu Village, 8 March 2015.

soil types and this was cascaded down the lower ranks of his Gwebu community. Whilst in Mzingwane, he had also managed to acquire top-of-the-range agricultural equipment which included two-furrowed ox-drawn ploughs which were uncommon among Africans during this time.28 In addition, most of the Gwebu family men had worked as farm labourers in the earliest settler commercial enterprises in areas such as Fort Rixon in Matabeleland.29 They also had a lot of livestock, which enabled them to till the heavy black soils. It was after these observations that the colonial officials had to report that;

> Chief Gwebu Fish's people have always been very industrious and very good farmers and are at present farming very good land. They are in a very small enclave surrounded by the VaNjanja...30

It was in the late 1970s when the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) commissioned a grain storage building at Gwebu Centre in the heart of the Gwebu territory. This development altered how the local Njanja perceived and interacted with the Gwebu people. On the surface, it presented the assumption that the Gwebu community had progressed ahead of their Njanja counterparts.  This was because the grain collection point was located at Gwebu Shopping Centre, an area surrounded by Ndebele villages under Chief Gwebu. This had the implication of attributing the agricultural success of the area to the Gwebu people at the expense of the Njanja people. Furthermore, the establishment of the grain storage depot also made it clear that the Gwebu had not only become part but had assumed control of agricultural production.

This was further complicated by colonial stereotypes, which in different cases referred to the Gwebu as "...very progressive..." and "...outstanding..."31 In this regard, the colonial government deployed its divide and rule politics, which was characteristic of colonialism elsewhere in Africa. This it did by viewing the Gwebu as superior and progressive. On the contrary, the Shona communities which included the Njanja, Nyashanu, Chamutsa, and Nerutanga communities which composed the bulk of the

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28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 NAZ/CHK5/Chief Gwebu, Vol. 1, PER/5/Chief/Gwebu Fish People, Buhera District, 26 March 1980.

31 NAZ/4/32/48/5 Office of the Native Commissioner Buhera District, 28 June 1950.

Buhera district were described in reductionist terms. These biases are best testified in the words of the Native Commissioner of Buhera, E.C Gutridge, who described the Shona speaking communities as "...unsophisticated, indigenous village atmosphere centred on beer parties and the dance."32 He further claimed that;

> The people appear content with their own life, and well-meaning endeavors to stimulate enthusiasm for other educative interests to meet with an anemic reception that rapidly damps the original ardor of the would-be organizer.33

These assumptions are loaded with reductionist assumptions which portrayed the people as 'backward' and 'primitive'. The role of the colonial government in shaping belonging dynamics should thus not be overlooked. It was the government that perpetuated the notion that the Ndebele were more progressive and their presence in the area was supposed to be protected. Written correspondence between the Native Commissioners of Buhera and the Native Affairs Department confirms this argument. The colonial officials lobbied for the Gwebu people to be granted their tribal territory because they were practising "...good methods of agriculture and good work has been done in conjunction with community demonstrators."34 Chief Gwebu in particular was referred to as ".... the only progressive chief in the district."35 These colonial perceptions had the effect of sanctifying and legitimizing Gwebu belonging to the Sabi Reserve.

Agriculture undoubtedly played a pivotal role in Gwebu's quest for belonging in the Buhera district. The Gwebu had exhibited prowess in agricultural knowledge, livestock production, and generally higher agricultural output than any other community in the district. For the colonial government, the Gwebu was a people who had managed to embrace European civilization. For the colonial administration, the Gwebu people represented a peculiar group that had embraced the most important aspects of

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32 NAZ/S2827/2/2/4 Vol. 1, Report of the Native Commissioner for the District of Buhera For the Year Ended 31 December 1956, Compiled by E.C Gutridge.

33 Ibid.

34 NAZ/4/32//48/3 NC Buhera to PNC Gwelo 29 Dec 1948.

35 Ibid.

colonialism which included Christianity, western education, western medicine, and European agricultural methods.

Under the leadership of chief Daniel Fish Gwebu, the Gwebu people had initiated the establishment of a school in their community which was pioneered by the Gwebu family and other Ndebele speaking households. The establishment of Gwebu Primary School in 1935 signified that the Gwebu had taken over from their Njanja counterparts the mission to westernization and 'modernization' which were fundamentally important for the colonial machinery to institute its dominance over Africans. In addition, the Gwebu people had embraced western medicine with the establishment of a clinic at the chief's residence.36 The clinic was given adequate recognition by the authorities and it even received supplies from government hospitals in Buhera.37 Furthermore, the Gwebu had fairly embraced Christianity as seen by the presence of the Dutch Reformed Church at Gwebu School.38 The church was also responsible for the construction of Gwebu Primary School.39

For these reasons, the Gwebu people were deemed progressive. It should be noted that the colonial government deployed diverse strategies in its quest to gain the loyalty of Africans. These strategies included colonial education and Christianity, which were key in making Africans easy to administer. Thus, the Gwebu had embraced colonial values faster than any other community and this made them a 'progressive community in the eyes of the colonial officials. To this end, one can therefore assert that success in agriculture by the Gwebu made the Gwebu's quest for belonging in the Buhera district tenable. By showing that they had more advanced knowledge in agriculture than their Njanja counterparts, the Gwebu had set something straight; they had shown their ability to capitalize on the previously shunned black soils. They thus based their belonging on successfully tilling the red and black soils, (*isidhaka/chidhaka)* which were previously shunned by the Njanja people. For the Gwebu, this breakthrough in making use of the previously despised black soils allowed them to have a semblance

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36 Interview with Peter Wasarirevhu, 67 years old, Malombo Village, Garamwera Area, Ward 3, 11 March 2015.
37 Ibid.

38 F., Musoni, "Forced Removals in Colonial Zimbabwe: The case of the Ndebele in Buhera District: 1927                                                                                      to
the late 1960s", p. 34.

39 Ibid.

of ownership of the lands historically owned and controlled by the VaNjanja people, hence it became a fundamental aspect of their quest to belong.

The study can draw similarities from the Basotho case in the Gutu Purchase Areas of Zimbabwe during the colonial period.40 The Basotho people in southeast Zimbabwe began to be viewed as "progressive farmers" due to their Christian faith, links with the Dutch Reformed Church Missionaries as well as ownership of property. In comparison, the Gwebu in Buhera had exhibited high agricultural skills and knowledge and this distinguished them from the rest of the community which was generally viewed as primitive and "content".41 By creating such notions of progressive communities and backward communities, it can be argued that the Rhodesian government sowed seeds of ethnic competition and violence along ethnic lines. Scholars such as Aningi and Salihu point to these colonial legacies which were to haunt post-colonial Africa.42 The Rwandan genocide has been used by most historians to illustrate the long-lasting legacy of colonialism in Africa. The Rwandan genocide was to a significant extent a result of the colonial legacy of magnifying the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi and initially favoring the latter as superior.43 In the case of the Gwebu area, such notions by the colonial state played a pivotal role in polarising the Gwebu and the Njanja people.

Agricultural success by the Gwebu community had several ripple effects on the relations with the Njanja. There was a massive inflow of neighbouring Njanja communities who flocked to the Gwebu households in search of maize and maize meal (which the local Njanja did not produce in large quantities), sorghum, and millet. This was more pronounced during the cropping seasons when the grain is perennially

40 J., Mujere, "Autochthons, Strangers, Modernising Educationists, And Progressive Farmers: Basotho Struggles                                                                                                    For Belonging In Zimbabwe 1930s-2008'', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2012, p. 68.

41 S2827/2/2/4 Vol. 1, Report of the Native Commissioner for the District of Buhera for the Year Ended 31 December 1956. Compiled by E.C Gutridge.

42 K., Aning and N., Salihu, "Northern Problem, Postcolony, Identity and Postcolonial (In)stability in Ivory Coast and Congo in S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and B. Mhlanga (eds), *Bondage of Boundaries and Identity Politics in Postcolonial Africa, p.* 105.

43 See G., Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis: History of a Genocide*, 2005.

in short supply.44 Furthermore, small-scale grain dealers would come from as far as Nerutanga, Gosho, and Makumbe areas in search of grain to buy. Narratives indicate that most of the Njanja communities who came looking for grain preferred sorghum and millet as opposed to maize. This was because maize was not common in the semi-arid districts of the Sabi Reserve. The Njanja opted for small grains because they were easy to process using the available indigenous tools such as grinding stones (*huyo*) and grinding drums (*maturi*). The majority were not familiar with maize meal and there were no mechanised grinding mills in the area to process the product into a fine meal.

These sharp differences in agricultural production between the Gwebu and their neighbours reinforced the creation of a Ndebele enclave. Words such as the green belt, *Chibhande, and chidhaka,* which were used to refer to the Gwebu territory, testify to this notion. With only four villages (Gwebu, Malombo, Mutava, and Gwibila), the Gwebu community became distinct from the rest due to their good agriculture which was celebrated by the colonial officials. The Gwebu's agricultural practices perpetuated the notions of ethnic othering by the Shona. Narratives of this period put emphasis on how the Njanja had seen themselves as marginally different from the Gwebu due to their higher maize yields. Different Njanja narratives indicate that the Gwebu had become markedly distinct in various ways. Such narratives which are emphasised by both the Njanja and the Gwebu indicate the notion of othering. This othering was done through the magnifying of small differences: historical as well as imagined.

By the early 1970s, the colonial government had increasingly become clear in its support for the Gwebu at the expense of the other communities. Their success in agriculture had earned them a superior position in the colonial order's bifurcated system. It was also a time when the war of liberation in Rhodesia was beginning to take a more militant stance after the signing of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence earlier in 1965. The political hype of this era saw the emergence of political identities as a way of negotiating belonging.

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44 Interview with Chafa Chigwende, (early 70s), Garamwera Village, 9 March 2015.

**Conclusion**

It has been argued here that the success of the Gwebu people in the agricultural sector was not only necessitated by the black and red soils; rather, the Gwebu people were proactive in turning the *Chibhande* area into an agriculturally productive area. In addition, their acquired farming knowledge coupled with their access to farming implements enabled them to overtake the Njanja in agricultural production. Through agricultural success, the Gwebu managed to build and economically sustain a Ndebele enclave in the Sabi Reserve. Agricultural prowess and dominance allowed them to enjoy prowess in other regards. It cultivated a sense of Ndebele particularism among the Gwebu households. Furthermore, the idea of re-establishing the name *Chibhande* which emanated from among the Shona can be understood as a way of contesting Gwebu belonging in the Sabi Reserve. The name *Chibhande* coined by the Njanja was empty of the Gwebu agency. In all these developments, the colonial government was visibly present. The colonial government, through the Native Affairs Department, played a key role in polarising the Gwebu and Njanja. This it did by establishing cordial relations with the Gwebu Ndebele people and also labelling them as a 'progressive community while creating and perpetuating the notion that they were far ahead of their Njanja neighbours if agricultural production was anything to go by.

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# The Impact of Service Quality On Customer Loyalty To CIMAS In Zimbabwe

**By**

**A Zinyemba and L Chabikisa**

## Abstract

*This paper presents the findings of a study carried out to assess the impact of service quality on customer loyalty to medical aid service providers based on a case study by the Cimas Medical Aid Society. The study employed a mixed-methods approach to research applying both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The population sample was drawn from the University of Zimbabwe employees and students who are registered with Cimas through the society's open fund local packages. The research findings showed that members are satisfied with the services they are getting from the society. Most of the members are not willing to switch from Cimas to another medical aid service provider. Most of the members seem to be dissatisfied about incurring shortfalls and the fact that they are sometimes made to pay cash upfront by medical services providers before they can be attended to. The study recommends that Cimas should eliminate the issue of shortfalls and cash up-fronts. Communication with members and customer care are areas that Cimas should improve upon. The society should expand its healthcare facilities in Harare to the Central Business district to ease congestion on existing facilities. It should also extend its services to small towns and rural areas. Cimas should also engage in loyalty programs to retain its customers and gain more market share. Such programmes could include sponsorships at tertiary institutions like universities.*

**Keywords:** *Service quality, medical aid services, customer loyalty, customer care, medical services provider*

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Most industries in Zimbabwe, including the medical aid industry, are characterised by stiff competition hence it is of vital importance that organisations be more competitive to lure customers. The first and oldest medical aid society in Zimbabwe was the Premier Services Medical Aid Society (PSMAS) which was established in October 1930 to cater to medical aid facilities for the civil service thus leaving the private sector not served. The need for some form of medical aid cover for the private sector then led to the establishment of the Commercial and Industrial Medical Aid Society (CIMAS) - now Cimas as it is no longer an acronym, in October 1945.

Over the past years, there has been some sort of monopoly in the medical aid industry, with PSMAS and Cimas being the only societies known to provide medical aid cover to the civil service and the private sector respectively. The number of registered providers has since increased to 30 including both closed and open medical aid funds.

Only a 10$^{th}$ of the Zimbabwe population is covered by medical aid (Shamu, Loewenson, Machemedze, and Mabika, 2010). The medical aid schemes are voluntary and usually, members join through their employers though individual members can also join in the case of open medical aid funds like Cimas. Membership through the employer normally limits the employee's choice of which medical aid society to join as the decision is usually done at the former's management level. However, in some organisations, the employees are given different choices so that they can select a medical aid provider of their own choice. History has it that over the years, members were relatively loyal to their respective medical aid societies and only migrated on change of employment. However, nowadays the system appears to be a bit more flexible as people can easily change membership if they are not satisfied with their current providers. Medical aid societies registered under AHFoZ recognise the movement of members from one society to another by wavering some waiting periods they would have served on their former medical aid provider.

The increase in the number of players in the medical aid industry has given rise to increased competition in the sector.  To bit competition, medical aid societies have to ensure that they gain customer loyalty to increase their membership bases. One way that

can be employed by medical aid providers to gain customer loyalty is by delivering high-quality services. This is in agreement with Lovelock, Wirtz, and Chew (2009: 313), delivering service quality is one of the strategies to build a foundation of loyalty. Service quality enhances customer satisfaction which is the true foundation of customer loyalty

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Members of medical aid societies in general, appear to be dissatisfied with the quality of services they are experiencing with their medical aid providers. This is depicted in various member complaints being aired in the editors' columns of the press, complaints on social networks as well as on the radio. Many players have also entered the medical aid industry thus intensifying competition.  However, for Cimas to remain competitive in the medical aid sector, it has to gain and retain its members' loyalty. This prompted the researcher to analyse the impact of customers' perceived service quality on their loyalty to Cimas.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to analyse the impact of service quality and customer loyalty to medical aid service providers.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Specific objectives of this research were to:

1. assess Cimas' service quality as perceived by members of the Society;
2. determine the extent to which Cimas members are satisfied by the Society's service quality;
3. ascertain the likelihood of Cimas members switching to another medical aid provider and
4. identify strategies that Cimas can adopt to improve its quality of services to meet its members' expectations.

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## RESEARCH PROPOSITION

The study proposes that the level of service quality by an organisation directly affects customer loyalty to that organisation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Service quality is of significant interest to marketing practitioners as shown in the original work of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985). The trio studied different types of services and came up with several service dimensions which are reliability, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, tangibility, and knowing or understanding the customer. In 1988, these dimensions were narrowed down to 5 main ones namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy thus the invention of the SERVQUAL model, which is a scale used to measure service quality.

Parasuraman et al (1988) agree with Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2006: 117) who suggest that the tangible dimension of a service involves the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and written materials. Responsiveness involves a willingness to help customers and provide a prompt response (*ibid*; 2006). (Khan and Fasih: 2014) and Lovelock et al (2009), point out that reliability can be measured in terms of the firm's ability to offer error-free services. Assurance is centred on the service firm's employees' knowledge, courtesy, and ability to inspire confidence and trust among the customers. It also involves credibility, security, competence, and courtesy of the staff members (Zeithaml et al: 2006). Empathy involves caring for the customers and giving them individualised attention.

Zeithaml et al (2006: 81), suggest that the first and most critical step in delivering quality service is knowing the customer's expectations which include beliefs about service delivery that serve as standards or reference points against which service performance is measured. According to Lovelock et al (2009), there are different perspectives from which service quality can be viewed and these are the transcendent view, manufacturing-based approach, user-based approach, and valued-based approach.

According to Lovelock et al (2009), service quality problems can be identified and corrected by using a Gap Model which was initially developed by Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman. The gaps model identifies 5 gaps which are the knowledge gap, policy gap, delivery gap, communications gap, and perceptions gap. The gaps arise from

differences between customer expectations and their actual service experience. The model is a conceptual tool to identify and correct service quality problems (*ibid*: 2009). However, Lovelock et al (2009) proposed a sixth gap which is the service quality gap. This essentially arises from the difference between what the customers expect to receive and their perceptions of the services that are delivered to them. To close the service quality gap, a firm has to close the above-mentioned 5 gaps since the sixth gap is the accumulated outcome of these gaps (*ibid*: 2009).

According to Seth, Deshmukh, and Vrat (2005), the technical and functionality model involves three components which are technical quality, functional quality, and the image. The technical quality entails the quality of what the consumer receives as a result of their interaction with the service firm and is important for their evaluation of the service quality they experience with that firm (Seth et al: 2005). Functional quality involves how the customer gets the technical outcome and this is important for the former's view and evaluation of the service they experience from the firm. The image component is important to the service organisation and it can be expected to be built up from the technical and functional service quality.

Quality can be viewed in four different approaches which are the transcendent view, the manufacturing-based approach, the user-based approach, and the value-based approach. The transcendent view entails people learning to recognise quality through experience gained from being exposed to it. A manufacturing-based approach is a supplier-based approach that looks at quality from the operations perspective. It also focuses on meeting internally developed standards. The user-based approach is essentially based on the belief that quality is subjective since different customers have different needs and want thus different perceptions of quality. Lastly, the value-based approach defines quality in terms of value and price by considering the trade-off between the benefits the customer obtains and the price he/she pays. Quality is then defined as '*affordable excellence*' (Lovelock et al: 2009; 368).

According to Vinita, Kumar, and Vishal (2012), customer loyalty is revealed by repeated purchasing and referring a company to other customers thereby generating positive and measurable financial results. The same idea had been pointed out by Lovelock et al

(2009), who postulate that loyalty describes a customer's willingness to continue buying from a firm over the long term and recommending the firm's products to friends and associates. Caruan (2012) suggests that service loyalty is one of the most important constructs in services marketing. Loyal customers who make repeat purchases are the bedrock of any organisation. For Cimas, loyal customers are those members who stay with the society without switching to other providers.

Customer loyalty is often associated with repeated purchasing although loyal customers tend to make repeated purchases, those who purchase repetitively do not always necessarily do so out of loyalty.  In some cases, this may be due to a lack of an alternative offering. Customer loyalty is usually strengthened as a result of satisfaction with the product or service received from the seller and high customer loyalty is important for a seller's profitability (*ibid*: 2013). Lawfer (2004: 16) suggests that repeat customers are the only source of profit for any business and that it is not until a customer buy from the firm a second, third, or fourth time that any profit is earned. Companies with a loyal customer base enjoy greater profitability in good economic times and depend on their loyal customers to help them survive difficult financial conditions. The value of customer loyalty is not situational or temporary as customers are always valuable (*id*: 2010).

Lawfer (2010) argues that customers have no interest whatsoever in loyalty but they only buy products and services that satisfy their own needs. Customer loyalty is a response to how a business presents its products or service.

According to Khan and Fasih (2014), customers are not inherently loyal to an organisation. The organisation has to rather give its customers a reason to be loyal and this happens by satisfying them. An important way to satisfy customers in a service firm is by providing quality service. This is in agreement with Lovelock et al (2009: 313) and Vinita et al (2012) who suggest that quality service is one of the strategies to build a foundation for loyalty and that service quality and customer satisfaction are the pre-requisites of loyalty and that the later can determine the long-term success of a service organisation. Quality directly influences the performance of a product or service thus affecting customers' satisfaction and hence their loyalty.

## RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY

An explanatory research design was used in this study. A mixed approach of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches was applied. A quantitative approach was used in the sense that the researchers made use of numbers that represented the opinions of respondents through the use of Likert scales. Perceptions of customers on the impact of service quality on loyalty are subjective and based on their opinions hence the use of the qualitative approach.  For this reason, both open and close-ended questionnaires were used.

## POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The research was confined to a specific institution which is the Cimas Medical Aid Society as a case study.  The population targeted in the research were Cimas members at the University of Zimbabwe (U.Z) and these included both employees and students and both principal members and dependants were considered.

Convenience sampling was employed.  The sampling frame consisted of the Faculty of Commerce, Faculty of Arts, and Faculty of Social Studies. Simple random sampling was used by the researcher to select the respondents from these faculties. A sample size of 70 which included both UZ employees and students was considered convenient.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analysed through the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software package.

To ensure credibility and reliability of findings. the questionnaires were pilot tested on 5 respondents. Cranach's Alpha was applied to the results of the study and a result of 0.85 was obtained thus showing that the results were reliable.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**To assess Cimas' service quality as perceived by members of the Society**

This objective was achieved by the findings in the SERVQUAL attributes section of the questionnaire. The results obtained were analysed by using mean scores as shown below:

**Table 1: Perceived service quality- SERVQUAL dimensions n=58**

| Variable | Mean | Std. Deviation | Cranach's Alpha if an item deleted |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cimas is a reliable medical aid provider | 1.95 | 0.605 | 0.845 |
| Cimas staff members offer prompt responses to my needs and enquiries | 2.28 | 0.615 | 0.832 |
| I have trust and confidence in Cimas | 2.03 | 0.529 | 0.840 |
| Cimas staff members are caring and can give individualised attention to members | 2.24 | 0.823 | 0.816 |
| Cimas' physical facilities are up to standard | 1.81 | 0.576 | 0.870 |
| Cimas communicates well with its members | 2.19 | 0.760 | 0.855 |
| Cimas employees are well-skilled in their duties | 2.12 | 0.623 | 0.822 |
| **Overall Cranach's Alpha** | | | **0 .861** |

The research used a 4-point Likert scale of 1 representing strongly agree, 2- agree, 3- disagree and 4- strongly disagree hence the mid-point used by the researcher was: **1+2+3+4 =    10/4 = <u>2.5</u>.** Therefore, variables that score a mean of 2.5 and below mean that majority of the respondents were agreeing with those variables, and those variables that score more than 2.5 show that most of the respondents were disagreeing with them. The research, therefore, found that most members were positive about Cimas' servqual dimensions.

**To analyse whether Cimas members are satisfied with the Society's service quality.**
The findings on whether Cimas members are satisfied by the Society's level of service quality were presented in Table 2 as shown below:

**Table 2: Satisfaction of Cimas members**

| Satisfaction Variable | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Services offered by Cimas are exactly what I expect as a member | 9% | 59% | 27% | 5% |
| It is easy to get treatment using the Cimas card | 14% | 74% | 12% | - |
| Shortfalls are incurred when I get treatment using the Cimas card | 45% | 31% | 21% | 3% |
| Medical service providers demand cash upfront from Cimas cardholders | 19% | 28% | 34% | 19% |
| I get value for my money from the services offered by Cimas | 9% | 63% | 19% | 9% |
| Cimas should improve its services | 40% | 46% | 12% | 2% |

The research established that the majority of the Cimas members have their service expectations met by the organisation, it is easy for them to access treatment using their medical aid cards, they incur shortfalls, and they do not pay cash up front, they get value for their money and that they feel that Cimas should improve its services.

**To assess the ability and willingness of members to switch to other medical aid providers.**

To present the findings that answer this objective, the researcher made use of pie charts as shown in Figure 1 below:
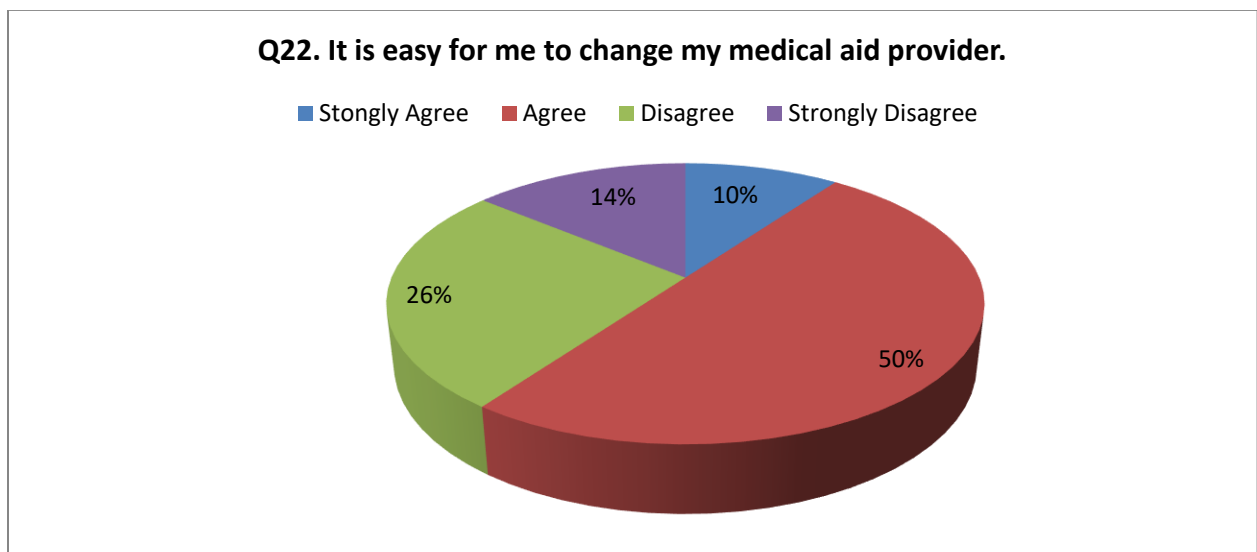


**Figure 1: Ability of members to switch to other medical services providers**

The study found that sixty percent of the members would not face difficulties in changing their medical aid provider. The rest indicated that it was not easy for them to switch to another medical aid services provider.

***The willingness of the members to switch to another medical aid provider***

The obtained results on the members' willingness to switch to other medical aid providers are shown in table 3 below:

**Table 3: Willingness of members to switch from Cimas**

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 9% |
| Agree | 10% |
| Disagree | 69% |
| Strongly Disagree | 12% |
| **Total** | **100%** |

The research found out that the majority of the Cimas members were reluctant to switch to another provider. However, nineteen percent of the respondents indicated that they are willing to switch from Cimas if the opportunity arises.

**To identify ways Cimas can improve its quality of services to meet its members' expectations.**

The researcher drew suggestions from Cimas members on how the Society can improve its services. These suggestions and the frequencies at which they were raised are presented in table 4 as shown below:

**Table 4: Suggestions on ways to improve services**

| Suggestion | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Cimas should eliminate shortfalls. | 26 |
| Cimas should reduce queues. | 11 |
| Cimas should increase its card acceptability by pharmacies | 9 |
| Cimas should extend its facilities to other small towns and rural areas | 8 |
| Cimas should establish more facilities in town and locations | 7 |
| Cimas should eliminate cash upfronts. | 7 |
| Cimas should improve its communication with clients. | 6 |
| Cimas should improve its services and customer care | 5 |
| Cimas should establish its hospital. | 5 |
| Cimas should offer cashback facilities. | 4 |
| Cimas should cover cosmetics. | 1 |

The research established that the main suggestions by Cimas members were that the organisation should eliminate shortfalls, reduces queues in its facilities, improve card acceptability by a variety of pharmacies, it should extend its services to smaller towns and rural areas, and should eliminate the aspect of members paying cash upfront to medical services providers. However, a smaller proportion of the respondents were of the view that Cimas should improve its communication with clients, improve its services and customer care, establish its hospital, offer cash-back facilities, and it should cover cosmetics.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Cimas' service quality as perceived by a majority of its members is generally good based on the SERVQUAL dimensions which are reliability, empathy, responsiveness, tangibles, and assurance. However, a few members tend to be dissatisfied with the way Cimas communicates with its members hence society has to improve on such an aspect.

2. Majority of the Cimas members appeared to be satisfied with the service quality Cimas offers based on how easy is it for them to acquire medical services when holding a Cimas card and getting value for their money. However, a significant number of the members showed that they incur shortfalls and are sometimes made to pay cash upfront by medical services providers when they seek medication and hence indicating that Cimas should improve its services in this area.

3. The findings showed that the majority of Cimas members at the UZ have freedom of choice at work as to which medical aid to join. However, most students cannot easily switch to other medical aid providers since they are only dependants. However, most of the members are not willing to switch from Cimas even if the opportunity arises. This, therefore, shows the loyalty of these members to Cimas. The loyalty, however, appear to be emanating from various reasons which include that Cimas is the best, Cimas is better than other (there are no other best

alternatives) as well as switching cost, particularly in the form of waiting periods that can affect the members if they move to another medical aid provider.

4. The majority of the Cimas members suggested that Cimas should eliminate shortfalls, reduce queues, and increase its card acceptability by more pharmacies. Quite a reasonable number of members suggested that Cimas should eliminate the issue of members having to pay cash upfronts to medical services providers and then claim later from Cimas. Cimas should extend its facilities to small towns and rural areas as well as expand the facilities in the CBD and locations to avoid congestion. A few members suggested that Cimas should improve its communication customer care to its members, should establish its hospitals, offer cash-back facilities as well as cover members' cosmetics.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above findings, the study makes the following recommendations

1. Cimas should, by all means, try and eliminate the issues of shortfalls and cash upfronts as shortfalls have been indicated by most of the Cimas members to be a major problem they are currently facing. If members are always made to pay shortfalls or cash upfronts, they can be dissatisfied or may even end up seeing the whole idea of joining a medical aid society as useless and hence may terminate membership or migrate to other providers where they are little or no shortfalls incurred. Cimas should therefore take measures to nip the problem of shortfalls in the bud to avoid the detrimental consequences in the future.

2. The society also has to improve its communication with its members as quite a number of the members indicated that Cimas does not communicate well with its members. Communication is essential and is the lifeblood of any organisation hence Cimas has to ensure that its members are always posted concerning any new developments, such as noticing medical services providers who are fully accepting the Cimas card and also on the benefits that the members are entitled to on their respective packages so that the members are well informed before making decisions.

3.   Cimas should offer prompt services to members thus reducing queues as it has been noted that some members were complaining about the issue of long queues at Cimas facilities.  To achieve this, the Society should expand its facilities, be it clinics or medical aid administration offices in town and other areas to minimise congestion.

4.   The society also has to ensure that its employees exercise utmost customer care as has been indicated by some members. Society can achieve this by properly training its employees on customer care skills. The right employees with the correct attitude and skills should always be placed at the front office.

5.   Cimas also has to create value for its members' money and ensure that members get value for their money. This can be achieved through offering excellent service quality. The society can also go a step further to offer cash-back facilities to those members who would not claim for a specified long period or it can at least engage in some loyalty programs as a way to reward its loyal customers.

6.   Cimas should consider sponsoring institutions like the UZ. This will enable the society to market itself by gaining publicity among the students just like what the CBZ bank does at the UZ. This helps in that when students leave college and get employed, they would be having positive perceptions about the organisation and hence may decide to join it.

**CONCLUSION**

The study established that service quality is of vital importance to an organisation to satisfy its customers and consequently, gain their loyalty. Customers can only become loyal if the service provider can provide them with a reason to be. However, the researcher has established that to some extent the brand image of an organisation can also contribute to loyalty by its customers. It is therefore wise for organisations like Cimas which already have strong brand images, to capitalise on that and complementarily offer quality services so that it can retain its existing customers and attract new ones, thus increasing its market share and becoming more competitive in the market.

This conclusion is in line with the research proposition which states that the level of service quality by an organisation affects customer loyalty to that organisation. The researcher can therefore accept the research proposition.

This conclusion is in line with the research proposition which states that the level of service quality by an organisation affects customer loyalty to that organisation. The researcher can therefore accept the research proposition.

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# Evaluation of the state and causes of ineffective leadership in Africa

**By**

**Nemashakwe Paul**

**Abstract**

*Even though Africa is the richest continent in terms of natural resources, it is arguably the poorest in terms of development. The protracted economic challenges experienced around the continent have sometimes led to social unrest which has unfortunately given birth to migration with sometimes unintended consequences such as xenophobic attacks and people drowning while trying to reach Europe. For some time now scholars and policymakers have been trying to unravel the quagmire of Africa's problems without palpable success. With over sixty years since the first African country gained independence, effective and sound leadership continues to be evasive around the continent with a few notable exceptions. The study sought to find out who was responsible for the dearth of leadership prevalent on the continent. A secondary (desk) research was conducted focusing on all the 54 countries on the continent. The study found that although the continent should shoulder much of the blame for poor leadership, colonialism, post-colonial exploitation, and white monopoly capital cannot be absolved. Africa requires leaders who are not afraid to speak their minds and take bold, difficult, and unpopular decisions. The continent should shed the unfortunate tag of being a net importer of leadership theory and practice by developing African leadership based on the principles of ubuntu.*

**Keywords**: *Leadership, Colonialism, Post-Colonial exploitation, Ubuntu*

**Introduction and Background**

Although Africa is the richest continent in terms of natural resources, it is, unfortunately, the poorest. The perception of African leadership is generally negative with labels such as "corruptocracies", "chaosocracies" or "terrorocracies" (Van Wyk, 2007) constantly used about failed African leadership. With six decades of independence, the debate currently focuses on leadership as the most plausible explanation of the continent's poverty and underdevelopment (Poncian and Mgaya, 2015).

Non-Western perspectives including African voices are silent in leadership and management theories (Jack & Westwood, 2009). According to Lyne de Ver (2009), many leadership conceptions found in the literature are Western-oriented, Universalist, or individualistic. In management textbooks, African leadership and management are largely invisible. House & Aditya (1997) cited in Nkomo (2011) argued that leadership theory originates primarily from the United States of America focusing on American leaders. Mkapa (2008) is of the view that there is no theory of leadership in postcolonial Africa except one of learning as we move forward, referred to as "muddling through". Although the scholarship shaped on African leadership is still limited, it is increasing at a swift pace.

Ebegbulem (2012) argued that the greatest obstacle to Africa's development is the leadership crisis and corruption. Moghalu (2017) asserts that African countries, with few exceptions, have been plagued by a calamity of leadership. With over fifty years of independence, Africa's poverty and underdevelopment can be explained in the context of its leadership (Poncian and Mgaya, 2015). Mills (2011) opined that Africa is poor today because its leaders have made the bad decision of choosing poverty over development.

Several scholars including Mangaliso (2001), Mbigi (2005), and Ngambi, (2004) have argued that the development of Africa will continue to be unsuccessful until management and leadership systems are established and institutionalized. Nkomo (2011) believed that to solve a myriad of developmental challenges bedeviling the continent, indigenous African leadership and management must be reclaimed and reinstitutionalised. To move Africa from the rancorous circle of pervasive problems, the continent demands new leaders and a leadership style that is predicated on vision, competence, honesty, and commitment (Mohiddin, 1998).

**Statement of the Problem**

The fact that African leadership does not inspire total confidence is undisputable. Several challenges that continue to bedevil the continent could have been history if sound leadership had been exercised. Several decisions that had the potential to extricate the continent from the quagmire of underdevelopment and poverty were not made, and in cases where they were eventually made, they were too late. The question that immediately comes to mind is whether Africans by nature are less capable when it comes to leadership or if certain exogenous forces militate against sound and effective leadership. Who is to blame for poor leadership generally exhibited around the continent?

**Purpose of the article**

The study sought to evaluate the state and causes of ineffective leadership prevalent in Africa.

**Study Questions**

To achieve its intended purpose, the study was guided by the following questions:

  i.   What are the causes of ineffective leadership in Africa?

  ii.  Who is to blame for the ineffective leadership in Africa?

**Literature Review**

Although leadership cannot be a panacea for everything, it is widely believed that it provides answers to the success of individuals, organisations, and nations (Bolden, 2004). Leadership is a process of influencing either an individual or a group of people towards the accomplishment of an objective. Hogan and Kaiser (2005) opined that leadership comprises persuading people to set aside, for a time, their selfish quests and work in support of the collective interest.

Schenk (1928) cited in Lyne de Ver (2009, p.5) stated that "leadership is the management of men by persuasion and inspiration rather than by the direct or implied threat of coercion." Kotter (1988) cited in Silva (2016, p.2) defined leadership as "the process of moving a group in some direction through mostly non-coercive means. Dwight

Eisenhower, the former United States of America President is quoted as having said that "You don't lead by hitting people over the head; that's assault, not leadership" (Axelrod, 2006, p. 120). In this context, Bolden (2004) argued that it becomes difficult to categorize characters such as Hitler, Stalin, and Hussein as leaders. To show the importance of leadership, Napoleon asserted that an army of lions commanded by a rabbit can easily be defeated by an army of rabbits commanded by a lion.

## Methodology

A desk (secondary) research was conducted focusing on all the 54 African countries recognized by the United Nations. A sample of articles published about different African countries was utilized for the research. To choose the articles purposive sampling and in particular, heterogeneous or maximum variation sampling were employed. This was necessitated by the desire to use judgment in selecting informative articles that enabled the research questions to be answered. Maximum variation sampling enabled the researcher to work with articles representing different African countries with diverse characteristics such that maximum variation was obtained in the data that was used for the research. This was necessary because Africa by nature is a diverse continent. In addition, this enabled the researcher to target articles that portrayed a positive picture of African leadership on one hand and those that portrayed a negative picture on the other hand so that a balanced view could be established.

## Discussion

Moghalu (2017) argues that while effective leaders in Africa are found in abundance in professions, entrepreneurship, and civil society, the same cannot be said when it comes to the regiment of political leadership. This is in agreement with the assertion of Jacobs and Versi (2013) who argued that Africa has produced more outstanding leaders in business than in politics. They went on to proffer the following names as a testament to remarkable business leadership around the continent; Strive Masiyiwa (chairman of Econet Wireless Global), Aliko Dangote (Dangote Group), Tony Elumelu (former CEO, UBA Group, CEO Heir Holdings), Manu Chandaria (chairman Comcraft Group), James

Mwangi (Equity Bank), Naguib Sawaris (founder Orascom Telecoms Holdings) and Arnold Ikpe (former CEO Ecobank Transnational). It is worth noting that this list is not exhaustive of leadership capability in business around Africa.

## Colonial and post-colonial exploitation as the cause of the dearth of effective African Leadership

Pre-colonial African leaders exhibited democratic leadership in the same mould as the contemporary Western-influenced democratic leadership style. Although leaders of that time had colossal powers, there were checks and balances in place as citizens were either directly or indirectly involved in the governance of their respective states (Ayittey, 1992, cited in Poncian and Mgaya, 2015, p. 111). If we take on board this school of thought, it can only mean that leadership problems in Africa started with the scramble for Africa which occurred in Berlin between November 1884 and February 1885. Some of the leadership problems we experience today as a continent can be traced back to how leaders were enlisted under the colonial system.

Although Africa as a continent is abundantly endowed with natural resources more than any other continent, it is arguably the poorest with its citizens who have not benefitted in any meaningful way. This is a quagmire that is difficult to fathom. To borrow the description of Africa from the words of the New African of February 2014; "the super-rich man who is yet poor, living in abject poverty, who, without the grace of alms liberally begged from abroad, cannot make ends meet". This is because most African nations are shortchanged by western corporations who demand between 95 and 97 percent of the proceeds from the continent's resources over so many years, and sometimes a couple of decades supposedly to recoup the investment they put into exploration, drilling, and production, leaving the owners of the resources with a paltry 3 to 5 percent royalty. Former Gambian president Yahya Jammeh believed that the panacea to getting a better deal for natural resources lies in African leadership (New African, 2014).

Despite their sins of omission and commission, several African leaders have been punished dearly by western companies with the support of their governments for refusing to aid and abet the looting of the continent's resources for a song. When Charles Taylor was President of Liberia, he refused to sanction a deal where an influential American oil

giant would exploit oil in exchange for giving Liberia 5 cents in every dollar. When Taylor was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in 2004 for supporting rebels, the company offered to protect him in exchange for permission to exploit oil (New African, 2014). Today Taylor is incarcerated in a British jail for fifty years because the oil giant refused to protect him. Those who decide to play ball are protected irrespective of the quality of their leadership, and in certain instances despite the despicable atrocities they might have committed.

When President Pascal Lissouba of Congo Brazzaville came to power in 1992, he renegotiated the royalties his country was getting from its oil resources from 15 percent to 33 percent. This angered one French oil giant which strongly lobbied the government of the then French President Jacques Chirac to force Lissouba to reverse his decision. After some maneuvers by the French president, which included trying to force the Congo Brazzaville president to appoint the ex-military ruler as vice president and head of the armed forces, Lissouba's government was overthrown in a matter of weeks and replaced by the ex-military leader (New African, 2014, p. 10). What a coincidence indeed? This is not the only time that the French have been accused of interfering in the internal affairs of an African country. Analysts believe that France supported the Seleka rebels who toppled Francois Bozize of the Central African Republic on 24 March 2014 with military material because they were not happy with the presence of the South African troops, who were in the country to protect the President (New African, 2014, p. 58).

France is not alone in these escapades, The United States of America has been accused of directly and indirectly supporting the ascendancy of Laurent Kabila in then Zaire, to replace longtime dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, whom they had supported for 32 years because he was no longer reliable as a business partner (New African, 2005, p. 26). In her investigative book *Glitter & Greed – The Secret World of the Diamond Cartel*, Janine Cartel alleges that "US Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft delivered tanks and other arms for the invasion army" (extract published in the New African, October 2005, p. 27). When Kabila proved not to be acquiescent to Western influence, fired the Tutsi head of the DRC army, and ordered all Tutsi forces to leave Congo because of the atrocities they were committing against the Hutu refugees, his government came under attack from the

Rwandan and Ugandan invaders, supported by the US Special Operations troops (New African, 2005, p. 27).

In a book titled *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, John Perkins narrates how the most powerful nation on earth, The U. S recruits men and women called Economic Hit Men (EHM) through the American intelligence community (NSA and CIA particularly), who go about "encouraging world leaders to become part of a vast network that promotes US commercial interests". This system is premised on the belief that the developing world is awash with corruptible leaders. If the EHM falters, *the jackal* – the CIA-sanctioned assassins – steps to the plate before the military steps in if they also fail. Perkins speculates that General Omar Torrijos, the late former president of Panama, and Jaime Roldos, the late former president of Ecuador were victims of such Machiavellian shenanigans. Torrijos' plane blew up and crashed into a mountain while Roldos' helicopter also blew up (New African, 2005, p. 51).

Despite the hullabaloo and trumpeting of the ideals of free speech by the Western world, some of them cannot stomach free speech that is not in line with what they believe in. Western donors who had religiously funded the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) are alleged to have threatened to stop funding the event because they were not happy with the list of speakers which included the editor of the New African, Baffour Ankomah. This militates against African leaders thinking for themselves and making decisions that benefit the continent and their fellow citizens rather than promoting the interests of outside forces that may not advance the interests of the continent.

Ekoriko (2005, p. 5) opines that "although Africa bears some responsibility for its state, developed countries have contributed to its travails". He goes on to give an example of the rich countries providing a haven for looted money from Africa. In 2017 Switzerland finally agreed to return to Nigeria US$321 million that had been looted from Nigeria by its late military strongman Sani Abacha following a series of negotiations and legal action. Analysts believe that between 1980 and 2009, Africa had lost between $1.2 trillion and $1.4 trillion, surpassing by far the amount of money it had received from outside over the same period. Former South African president Thabo Mbeki has alleged that the continent loses over $50bn dollars each year as a result of the illicit flow of funds.

Even though Africa as a block has the largest number of member states in the United Nations, it does not have a single permanent seat on the powerful Security Council, which clearly shows that as a continent its leadership is not taken seriously. The recent contest for the presidency of the World Bank showed flagrant contempt for African leadership by Western powers. Despite Africa having the best candidate in the form of Nigerian Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a trained economist with a protracted and eminent career at the World Bank, strongly supported by the Global South and beyond, the job was given to an American because of the long-standing arrangement where the top job at the World Bank is ceded to the US while Europe gets the top job at the International Monetary Fund (Ikpe, 2013).

There is a repugnant belief by most Western powers that Africa is a continent comprising of perpetual minors who always require guardianship in all matters. Nicky Oppenheimer the former De Beers chief once said that "there is a misguided assumption that when it comes to Africa, the West knows best" (NewsAfrica, 2005, p. 14).

On the eve of the 2013 Kenyan general elections, Western powers tried to influence the outcome of the elections by warning Kenyans that vote for Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, who were at that time facing prosecution for the 2007 post-election violence by the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague would have consequences, whatever they meant. Johnnie Carson, the former US assistant secretary of state for Africa is alleged to have remarked that "actions have consequences". Luckily Kenyans did not heed the warning and voted for candidates of their preference, handing Kenyatta and Ruto of the Jubilee Alliance a first-round victory. Whether Kenyatta or Ruto had orchestrated the dastardly violence that resulted in innocent lives being lost is not the point here, but trying to influence the democratic and constitutional right of Kenyans through the back door is shameful and reprehensible, and should be resisted by every right-thinking patriotic African.

Critics of the ICC accuse the institution of turning itself into an instrument of recolonization of the continent. African countries such as Rwanda have long dismissed the ICC as "a court of Western imperialism" (The Africa Report, 2013, p. 33). Their main argument is that the court's focus is exclusively on Africa, except in a few cases of what they call

Europe's Africa (Eastern Europe). Despite the fact that Africa as a block has the highest number of nations that have ratified the Rome statute that gave birth to the ICC, the court ignores the views of African leaders, whose countries are stakeholders but is too pleased to parrot the pronouncements of nations that are not even members. A case in point is the three permanent members of the UN Security Council namely the US, China, and Russia who hold veto powers over important global issues and have participated in cases that have been referred to the ICC by the Security Council yet they are not members of the court.

It is alleged that former UK Foreign Secretary Robin Cook once said that it was not a court that would call to account British premiers or US presidents. This gives credence to assertions that the court represents nothing more than the neo-imperialist justice of the white man. If it is a fair court, why is it that George W Bush, the 43rd US president was never prosecuted for invading Iraq and causing the deaths of many people under the false subterfuge that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, which by the way were never found? Recently former Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) vice president Jean Pierre Bemba was acquitted on appeal of war crimes after spending 10 years incarcerated at the ICC. While this argument does not seek to absolve Mr. Bemba and his former militia of any crimes that may have been committed, his reputation may have been irreparably tarnished and might find it difficult to assume any leadership position, especially in his native country DRC.

It should be noted that the ICC was formed with the critical role of ending global impunity through its mandate to intervene when a country lacks the capacity or is reluctant, to prosecute people accused of the gravest crimes such as genocide, and war crimes, and crimes against humanity. It is incontestable that the continent should end impunity and hold to account those who are found to have committed such crimes without fear or favour. The furore about the ICC should be blamed on the continent's leadership which has dismally failed to institute mechanisms to hold each other accountable for disgusting excesses.

What happened to the African Court of Human and People's rights? Despite the establishment of this noble institution in January 2004, only 30 African states have ratified

the protocol. Of the 30 nations, only 8 have made the declaration recognizing the competence of the Court to receive cases from NGOs and individuals. The Economist (2010) was spot on when it argued that African countries must strengthen national judicial systems so that they can do the ICC's job themselves. Since African leaders are unwilling to make difficult decisions that are necessary to end impunity on the continent, they unnecessarily leave the door wide open for the ICC to step in as a last resort, sometimes without the capacity of meeting the notions of justice as desired by Africans and without being sensitive to peace issues.

Scholars and analysts have accused the West of double standards in Africa and beyond. On one hand, they preach about democracy while on the other hand they support and sustain autocratic leaders. Before the Arab Spring uprisings, the US was a staunch ally of Hosni Mubarak, the former Egyptian strongman, despite his strong shortcomings when it comes to democracy. It was only when they had realized that there was absolutely nothing, they could do to save him that they grudgingly threw him under the bus.

To prove the West's double standards about democracy, they were quiet when the military-led by the current president Abdel Fatah el-Sisi overthrew the democratically elected former engineering professor Muhammad Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood and allegedly massacred over 800 pro-Morsi protesters at Rabaa in August 2013. Democracy works only when it is positively correlated with the interests of the powerful. Some scholars have argued that the West had long associated the Muslim Brotherhood with al Qaeda (Botha, 2011) such that it was inevitable they would have welcomed any measure aimed at shortening the political lifespan of the brotherhood. Others have concluded that there was a great fear of a repeat of the 1979 Iranian revolution – brought on by another popular uprising, which saw the fall of the Western-backed Shar of Iran.

**Africa should assume responsibility for the state of leadership on the continent**

Although notable scholars such as Bond (2006) and Amin (2014) strongly believe that the root cause of Africa's backwardness lies in its colonial and post-colonial exploitation by colonial powers and capitalist vices, African leadership cannot be relegated to the equation. The fact that colonial powers continue to influence events in most African countries and the fact that as a continent we continue to be beholden to these powers more than half a century after the first African nation attained independence is a great indictment of the leadership of the continent. Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, in an interview with the New African, asserted that "Africa should look beyond its colonial past to understand its current problems" (New African, 2014). Former Tanzanian President Benjamin William Mkapa in his article titled 'Leadership for Growth, Development, and Poverty Reduction: An African Viewpoint and Experience' asserted that "Africa cannot forever hold its history of slavery and colonialism responsible for its current poverty levels and economic woes." (p. 20).

Even though radical scholars have the propensity to blame African problems on external factors such as neo-colonialism, economic imperialism, and the international economic system, pragmatism calls for introspection, especially by African leaders. Mills (2011) argued that the external factors did not teach Omar Bongo, the late former President of Gabon to cling to power for over four decades and practice grave nepotism which saw him appointing his son Ali (the current President) minister of defense, Pascaline, his daughter to head the presidency and his son-in-law Paul Tongine the minister of foreign affairs.

The sad part is that this is not only peculiar to Gabon. In DRC Laurent Kabila was succeeded by his son Joseph who had been the head of the army; When Gnassingbé Eyadéma of Togo died in office in 2005 after 38 years in power he was succeeded by his son Faure Gnassingbé with the help of the military (Carbone, 2013). In Libya and Egypt, Muammar Gaddafi, who was affectionately known as Brother Leader, and Hosni Mubarak had been grooming their sons Seif al- Islam el- Gaddafi and Gamal Mubarak respectively before they were overthrown in the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011 (Swart, Van Wyk and Botha, 2014). In Zimbabwe, former President Robert Mugabe had nearly succeeded in

installing his wife Grace as his successor before his plans were thwarted by the military intervention of November 2017.

One challenge that continues to beset Africa in the context of leadership in succession. Very few leaders have managed to initiate and sustain systems that guarantee continuity after they exit the leadership stage. Many African leaders especially in the political arena believe that they are the only ones capable of providing effective leadership. Most African Presidents sincerely believe that the continent cannot produce effective leaders like them (Mawere, 2009). Former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, for many years genuinely believed that he was the only one intelligent and anointed to lead the country. It was not unusual to hear him assert that he was constantly postponing retirement from politics because there was no one capable of leading the country. Great leadership rests in the ability to make oneself irrelevant. As such going for a protracted period such as thirty-seven years without mentoring people capable of taking over is a sign of ineffective leadership.

Several African leaders have either succeeded or failed in amending their respective countries' constitutions to enable them to serve third terms. Those who succeeded include Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda, Chadian President Idriss Deby, Paul Kagame of Rwanda, and Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi. Those who have not been so lucky include Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Bakili Muluzi of Malawi, and Joseph Kabila of the DRC, despite strenuous attempts.

African leaders have been reluctant to take tough and unpopular decisions despite the trumpeting of African solutions to African problems mantra. This has resulted in some shameful episodes that could have been avoided. Approximately 800 000, mostly Tutsis were hacked to death with machetes by their Hutu brothers in an ethnic conflict in Rwanda in 1994 while African leaders watched on the sidelines. Somalia has not had a functioning government since 1991 when clan militias removed Mohamed Siad Barre from office. Twenty-eight years down the line, no meaningful solution has been found and the country continues to degenerate into a failed state. From 2003 the Darfur region in Western Sudan became an extension of hell when an army of tribal fighters from the Arab Baggara tribes – known as the Janjaweed (New African, 2012) unleashed indescribable suffering on the

populace, raping, killing, and burning down thousands of village homes, without any meaningful response from African leaders.

The response of the African Union (AU) in several situations has been lackluster. During the Arab Spring uprisings when Muammar Gaddafi was butchering protestors mercilessly, the continental body was very slow to respond leading some analysts to allege that the continental body had become the mouthpiece of Gaddafi (Souar'e, 2011). In arguing for the African Union to respond, analysts argued that it was important to respond otherwise Libya was likely to become hostile to the rest of the continent. Zounmenou (2011) argued that apart from appointing a panel of leaders to try and mediate in Libya, the AU did not exhibit any meaningful initiative to solve the problem or hold any extraordinary summit to deliberate on the uprisings in North Africa.

African leadership has been long associated with brutality, from the days of Shaka Zulu to the reign of Idi Amin, Foday Sankoh, and General Sani Abacha. Foday Sankoh, the former dictator of Sierra Leone founded and led Sierra Leone's rebel group Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in the 11-year-long Sierra Leone Civil War which resulted in the massacre of an estimated 50,000 people and the displacement of over 500,000. He encouraged his soldiers to loot by paying them irregularly. Recruits who comprised children as young as seven were sometimes required to murder their parents, which toughened them and made it hard for them to return home.

Idi Amin Dada's ruthless rule is estimated to have resulted in the massacre of not less than 80 000 and more likely around 300 000 civilians by the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva. Exile organisations with the assistance of Amnesty International estimated the number to be around 500 000. Amin ruled Uganda from 1971 to 1979. He also presided over the expulsion of Indian and Pakistan nationals from Uganda, alleging that it had been given to him in a dream.

Nigerian human rights organisations have alleged that more people were arrested in Sani Abacha's five and a half years in power than in the five decades of British rule (Kaufman, 1998). After a strike by oil workers, General Abacha's government arrested labour officials, journalists, politicians, and rights activists. Under his reign, preventive detention was allowed. After his administration alleged a coup attempt in March 1995, it is alleged

that within a month between 60 and 300 officers were executed along with 40 civilians (Kaufman, 1998).

However, other regions have also had their fair share of brutal leaders. Chile witnessed the brutal excesses of the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, who came to power after overthrowing the democratically elected government of President Salvador Allende Gossens in the notorious 11 September 1973 military putsch. Former Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic orchestrated 'ethnic cleansing' first in Bosnia in 1995 and then in Kosovo in 1999 before the intervention of NATO forced him to withdraw (Hinman, 2007).

The conduct of certain African leaders has not been encouraging to say the least. Although political leaders are elected to serve, Ebegbulem (2012) opines that the major problem engulfing Nigeria is the insincerity and insensitivity of her leaders to the needs of the citizens. Several leaders have been embroiled in scandals with their names closely associated with one scandal after the other such that people can be forgiven to think that scandal is their middle name. One such leader is former South African President Jacob Zuma. When High Court Judge Hilary Squires delivered his judgement in 2005 in the Schabir Shaik case, Zuma's former financial advisor, he claimed that the two had 'a generally corrupt relationship'. During the trial, it had been revealed that Shaik had made payments totaling $178 000 to Zuma, in contravention of anti-corruption regulations and that Zuma knew of his advisor's efforts to secure his bribes from a French arms dealer (NewsAfrica, 2005, p. 16).

Just before becoming president, Mr. Zuma was tried and acquitted on a charge of raping the HIV-positive daughter of his friend. Zuma, already married to more than one wife did not deny having sexual intercourse with the woman but claimed that it was consensual. During the trial, Zuma was shocked all and sundry when he alleged that he had taken a shower after intercourse to avoid contracting the virus. This is a country with the highest recorded statistics of rape and one of the highest HIV prevalence in the world leaving many people dumbfounded.

South Africa's then Public Protector Thuli Madonsela ruled in 2014 that Zuma had unduly benefited from the upgrades that were done at his rural home in Nkandla costing

taxpayers around 215 million rands. Although the constitutional court later ruled that 7.8 million rands ($587, 800) should be paid back to the government, Nkandlagate, as it became affectionately known, had devastating political effects on both Mr. Zuma and the ruling African National Congress (ANC).

Zuma has also been in hot soup over alleged influence-peddling involving the Gupta family. The family has been accused of unfairly securing government tenders and even influencing ministerial appointments. The family was also at the centre of a storm when their chartered commercial flight transporting family members for the wedding of Vega Gupta and Indian-born Aakash Jahajgarhia at Sun City landed at Waterkloof Air Force Base allegedly without the knowledge of the South African Defense Force (e NCA, 2013). It was also reported that the family members were escorted by South African Police Services (SAPS) VIP protection officers, who turned on their blue lights and sirens as they left the base. However, it is worth noting that the Guptas asserted that the air force base was used with full permission of the authorities to receive foreign dignitaries, including some ministers. In January 2018 the then President, Jacob Zuma announced the appointment of a commission of inquiry into state capture. This was after the Pretoria high court had ordered him to appoint a commission within 30 days to be presided over by a judge chosen by the Chief Justice. At the time of concluding the research, Mr. Zuma had given testimony before the Zondo Commission on state capture, chaired by South African deputy chief justice Raymond Zondo.

Weeks before Mr. Zuma was elected the president of South Africa by the country's Parliament, the world was skeptical of his leadership. This skepticism was echoed by the Economist magazine which stated that "That the revered Nelson Mandela's rainbow nation is now turning to a man of Mr. Zuma's stamp may sharpen prejudices about Africa. It is for Mr. Zuma to prove these doubters wrong" (The Economist, 2009, p. 13). Sadly, for all the years that Mr. Zuma was in office, he failed to prove the naysayers wrong and unfortunately became a caricature of African leadership. At the time of writing the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) had reinstated more than 700 charges of corruption, racketeering, money laundering, and fraud that had been abruptly withdrawn on the eve of the former president's ascendancy to power in April 2009.

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation established by Sudanese-born telecoms magnate Mohammed Ibrahim has failed on numerous occasions to award outstanding leadership excellence by a former African Head of State or Government. Since its establishment in 2006, the annual award has been given only five times; Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique (2007), Festus Mogae of Botswana (2008), Pedro Pires of Cape Verde (2011), Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia (2014), and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia (2017). Nelson Mandela was made the inaugural Honorary Laureate in 2007. Some scholars have argued that the fact that the selection committee has failed to find suitable laureates is a condemnation of the overall quality of African presidential leadership.

However, if the truth should be told, the continent has started seeing some rays of light, pointing to much light even before the end of the tunnel is reached. We have of late seen leaders losing elections and surrendering power without any incident. The following names easily come to mind; Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, John Kufuor and John Mahama of Ghana, Joyce Banda of Malawi, Rupiah Banda of Zambia, and Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria. Although the continent still makes headlines regarding leaders who after serving their constitutional terms cling to power by hook or crook, some have left without any incident. Quett Ketumile Joni Masire, Festus Mogae and Seretse Ian Khama of Botswana, Benjamin William Mkapa and Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania, Mwai Kibaki of Kenya, Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia are some of the leaders who have tried to set a good example in this regard.

We have had other notable luminaries and icons who have flown the continent's flag high when it comes to leadership excellence, to an extent that the entire world has celebrated and honoured them. Of note is the late Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. In 1998 Harvard University called a special assembly to award him an honorary doctorate. This was only the third time that the prestigious university had called such an assembly since its establishment 400 years back (Mancu, 2014). The first time was to honour the first US President George Washington while the second was to honour the former UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill. At that ceremony, the institution announced the establishment of a new programme – the Nelson Mandela Fellows – in honour of the African icon whom the Western world had branded a terrorist a couple of years back.

Eckert and Rweyongoza (2013) concluded that when it comes to West Africa, Southern Africa, and Egypt, leaders are good at three things; putting other people at ease, being fast and agile learners, and leading in diverse environments. They also found the leaders to "be resourceful, focused and good at problem-solving which demanded creativity" (African Business, 2013). In an interview with the African Business, academic Romie Littrell asserted that successful African leaders were experienced in balancing incompatible demands from varied constituents because of the training they receive from dealing with differing demands and expectations of family, clan, and tribe (African Business, 2013, p. 20).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

It is the writer's humble conclusion and submission that Africa is where it is today because of leadership. While other continents have managed to uplift their citizens from abject poverty, Africa has failed because of leadership deficiencies. Although the continent has a great capacity to grow and develop beyond its current state, the dearth of leadership has continued to hold it back. The paucity of sound and effective leadership cannot be solely blamed on the continent alone. Although the continent should shoulder much of the blame, especially six decades after the first African country gained independence, colonialism, post-colonial exploitation and the machinations of white monopoly capital cannot be absolved.

What Africa requires at the present moment are leaders who are not afraid to speak their minds and take bold, difficult, and unpopular decisions. Leaders have the spine to question their peers when they feel they are stepping out of the line. Without taking anything from quiet diplomacy, there are instances that requisite instances require to borrow from the film kiss of the dragon by legendary actor Jet Lee, 'there is a time for diplomacy and a time for action'. A lot of lives have been lost while leaders are engaged in diplomatic engagements that fail to yield any meaningful outcomes. African leaders for a long time have been wary of constructively criticizing each other fearing that they will also be criticised to an extent that their relationship has been described as "a trade union of mutual back-scratchers".

At one point after former Nigerian military ruler Sani Abacha had hanged Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni environmental activists on 21 November 1995, Mandela broke ranks and openly criticised Abacha, calling him a "brutal dictator", who had set up a kangaroo court to murder the activists. He went as far as committing an unforgivable sin in African corridors of power by "urging the Nigerian opposition to intensify their efforts to get rid of Abacha" (New African, 2014). Our prayer as Africans should be for God to raise many Mandelas around the continent.

Leaders are not leaders without followers. There is a Malawian proverb that says that "he who thinks is leading and has no one following him is only taking a walk". Leadership success involves taking followers from one level to another level. To do that, leaders need to listen to their followers and do everything in their best interest. Surely it should not take the self-immolation of young and promising citizens like what happened to Tunisian Mohamed Bouazizi on 17 December 2010 for leaders to see that the people they are leading are not happy. When leaders make mistakes, they should take responsibility graciously rather than pretend as if they are superhuman. Whether you are a king or a president, you are not a demigod; you put on your trousers one leg after another just like the rest of us, ordinary mortals. Unfortunately, the quagmire of bad leadership cannot be solely blamed on the leaders themselves. Followers should squarely shoulder part of the blame, especially in Africa where Poncian and Mgaya (2015) opined that they are passive when it comes to holding their leaders accountable.

When dealing with Africa, it is highly ineffective to make generalizations about the whole continent because it is not one place. Littrell opined that leadership strengths and weaknesses that you find in South Africa are not necessarily the same as you can find in Kenya or Tanzania (African Business, 2013). In the research done by Eckert and Rweyongoza (2013), the scholars found that whereas being straightforward and decisive were seen as strengths within Southern African countries, it was not the same in West Africa. This should come as a wake-up call to all those trying to push a one size fits all approach to Africa when it comes to leadership matters.

Poncian and Mgaya (2015) argued against continuously importing Western models that do not necessarily fit into the unique African features. They propose a journey back to the

pre-colonial era where good leadership lessons can be learnt and adopted. It is not that there are no models of effective leadership that we can learn as a continent from the pre-colonial past but as Du Preez (2011) succinctly asserts, Africans are hesitant to embrace leadership models from their past. There is a need of developing inimitable African leadership that is based on the principles of Ubuntu (Khoza, 2011). This is the only way of making sure that the continent sheds the unfortunate tag of being the net importer of leadership theory and practice (Nkomo, 2006).

Relying on the West exclusively, which has shown the propensity to always adopt a patriarchal approach where they see Africa as a perpetual minor in need of guidance and chastisement rather than engaging the continent as an equal partner might not be in the best interest of Africans. We need leaders in the mould of Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X, who are prepared to take the front seat in making black people proud of their race. In a world where black is silently despised, we need leaders who are not shy to shout at the top of their voices and through their impeccable deeds that black is beautiful.

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# Restorative discipline practices: an action research project in three Harare primary schools

**By**

**Geoff Harris**

**Abstract**

*Traditionally, Zimbabwe's teachers have used punitive measures to maintain discipline within schools. However, the global movement against human rights violations associated with corporal punishment caused the country's Ministry of Education to advocate non-punitive approaches but provided little by way of detail or support. In three primary schools in Harare, teachers were trained in two restorative justice alternatives - peacemaking circles and peer mediation – which they used with 9 to 10-year-old learners between March and October 2016. On average, the learners had bi-weekly opportunities through the circles to tell their peers and teachers what they were experiencing and feeling, and peer mediators had an opportunity to mediate in conflicts affecting their age mates. Outcomes were assessed using interviews with teachers before and after the intervention, and thematic content analysis was employed to analyse the data. In terms of outcomes, peacemaking circles enabled teachers to get to know their students and to respond pre-emptively to potential problems, while peer mediation led to a fall in the number and intensity of playground conflicts. The study shows that such restorative practices can be a promising way of addressing school discipline issues.*

**Keywords:** *school discipline, restorative justice, peacemaking circles, peer mediation, action research, Zimbabwe*

## 1. Introduction

Much has been said about disciplinary measures used in Zimbabwean schools, which are seen as necessary to produce controlled and productive learning environments (Chikwiri & Lemmer 2014). Most of the disciplinary measures used to date are punitive which, because they inflict pain on learners, have been increasingly condemned worldwide as violations of learners' human rights (Gershoff 2017; Zolotor *et al* 2011). Zimbabwe's *Constitution* (Section 53 of 2013) states that 'no person may be subjected to physical or psychological torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment', which effectively outlaws' corporal punishment, including that used by teachers.

At the same time, non-punitive methods are widely believed to have limited impact in terms of learner compliance with authority. As a result, two-thirds of children in Zimbabwe report that teachers use corporal punishment as a method of discipline (Gershoff 2017). Against this background, the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education has advocated the use of non-punitive disciplinary methods but has not provided specific suggestions for these, let alone training in their use.

Corporal punishment occurs within a context of wider violence in schools. Little has been published on school violence in Zimbabwe, except for gender-based violence, although Dunne, Humphreys & Leach (2006), Leach & Humphreys (2007), UNICEF (2006), Saito (2011), UNICEF (2012), and Gershoff (2017) give some insights on its nature and prevalence. (UNICEF 2006) found that 51 percent of female and 60 percent of male learners had experienced bullying, and 31 percent of females and 45 percent of male learners had engaged in fights at school. In a comparative study of school violence in primary schools in southern and eastern Africa (Saito 2011), Zimbabwean students were found to experience very high rates of bullying (94 percent, compared with a regional average of 83 percent) and pupil fights (96 percent, slightly above the region's average of 93 percent). The extent of harassment of female learners by male learners and teachers is very difficult to quantify but is widespread.

It is essential to understand that violence in schools occurs in the context of violence in wider society. Indeed, Chitiyo *et al* (2014) suggest that the reasons for continuing use of punitive discipline lie in the country's violent history which includes the liberation wars of the 1960s and 1970s, the *Gukurahundi* massacres during the 1980s, the clearance of urban shacks, and the eviction of informal traders (*Murambatsvina*) in 2005, widespread election violence since 1999 and the takeover of commercial farms beginning in 2000. It is perhaps not surprising that violence has come to be regarded as the normal way of dealing with the inevitable conflicts which life presents.

## 2. Restorative justice and restorative discipline practices

Traditionally, criminal justice systems have been concerned with retribution and punishment. When a crime is committed, the state takes over to bring alleged offenders before a court where, if they are determined to be guilty, they are subject to alternative forms of punishment, which may well include imprisonment. Society may feel a sense of satisfaction that the guilty parties have been punished and it is assumed that punishment will deter reoffending and send a message to others to avoid such behavior.

By contrast, restorative justice focuses on building a sense of self-worth and personal responsibility among offenders and often involves efforts to build or rebuild the relationship between offenders and their victims (Zehr 2015). This may occur through mediation sessions where stories can be told and heard, apologies made and forgiveness asked for and given. Restorative justice can occur within an essentially retributive justice framework for certain types of crimes and allows for sentencing options other than imprisonment e.g., mandatory participation in a victim-offender mediation process.

Many of the methods used by African communities to deal with anti-social behaviors involve strong elements of restorative justice. Individuals are asked to take responsibility for their behavior (e.g., by apologizing and possibly making reparations) and the community is asked to forgive and accept the offender. Overviews can be found in Issifu and Assante (2016), Kariuki (2015), and Kiyala (2016). These processes include *Mato oput,* as used by the Acholi of northern Uganda, the *Baraza* system operating across central Africa, the *Fambul tok* in Sierra Leone, the *Gacaca* traditional courts of Rwanda, and the Shona system of *Nhimbe* (Benyera 2015). Common features of these traditional

approaches are the involvement of all community members with an interest in the conflict to make their experiences and opinions known, the seeking of consensus concerning what actions should be undertaken by the offender, and the imperative of restoring social harmony.

Restorative justice has been applied in schools through a range of restorative practices, based on similar foundational principles to those used in criminal justice (Amstutz & Mullet 2005, McCluskey *et al* (2008), Thorsborne & Vinegrad 2009). Hendry (2009: 5) has defined restorative practice as the application of restorative principles in schools through various approaches which acknowledge the central importance of positive relationships. Restorative practices aim to promote accountability and responsibility among learners and thereby help to create a conducive learning environment. Restorative practices allow students to learn from their mistakes through encounters with their peers; as a result, friendships can be restored and new relationships created. Restorative language helps to improve emotional literacy for both teachers and pupils and nurtures respect, responsibility, and empathy within the members of the school community.

Restorative approaches can be applied by any teacher at any school to any group of children. These approaches are not a 'soft option' for offenders; they involve the difficult work of holding learners accountable for their actions and helping them to understand the impact of their behaviour (Hendry 2009, Liebmann 2010). Restorative practice can produce a calmer school environment where learners feel they have a voice. The present research utilized two restorative approaches – peer mediation and peacemaking circles - the first of which is discussed in greater detail.

Peer mediation is a process of conflict resolution facilitated by learners, with dialogue as its key tool. Previous studies (e.g., Stacey & Robinson 2008; Hendry 2009; Liebmann 2010, Sellman 2011, Baruch, Bush & Folger 2013; Mason *et al.* 2014) have found that peer mediation can be learned and practiced by learners as young as eight years. Typically, peer mediators work in pairs under the broad supervision of a teacher and handle conflicts that occur outside classrooms. They may wear identification badges when they are on duty. In the present study, outside instructors, and teachers in peer mediation philosophy and methods then trained the peer mediators, beginning with

conflict resolution in general and then moving to the skills involved in mediating various conflicts.

Peacemaking circles are common in traditional restorative justice practice. In school contexts, they can take the form of checking-in circles that allows the class to know any issue of concern before they start engaging with their day's activity, and/or they can be used to address matters of concern to members of the class, including conflicts.  In either case, each class member has the opportunity to make a contribution that the other participants treat with respect (Pranis 2005, 2013; Boyes-Watson 2005; Boyes-Watson & Pranis 2010). The circle process emphasizes the communal aspect of individual experiences and communal responsibility for decisions. It can develop active listening, empathy, cooperation, negotiation, and the appreciation of diversity (Morrison 2011: 38).

Given this background, the research project reported here aimed to introduce peer mediation and peacemaking circles into a sample of primary schools in Harare and to assess their outcomes.

## 3. Research methods

The study took place in three primary schools in Harare, one in a medium-density suburb,

one in a high-density suburb and one in a semi-urban settlement. The schools were selected using convenience sampling to keep costs under control but can be regarded as reasonably typical of schools in their locations. Two schools hosted two separate groups of learners a day (known as hot seating). Twelve teachers – two males and 10 females – volunteered to participate in the study. All held permanent posts and had, on average, more than 20 years of teaching experience in primary schools across the country. Ten were classroom teachers and two were non-teaching deputy heads who chaired their respective school discipline committees. The school names are pseudonyms and teachers are identified by a letter of the alphabet. In addition, there were many learner participants over the eight months, from March to October 2016. Thirty-five were trained as peer mediators and around 200 participated regularly in peacemaking circles. Our impression is that learners were almost all enthusiastic about both the circles and the

peer mediation. We chose to interview teachers because of their position of authority in introducing and overseeing restorative practices.

The selection of peer mediators was based on the parental support of the programme, and not on academic performance. The trained mediators were free to wear identification badges when they were on duty. Two trainers with postgraduate qualifications in peace studies helped to train teachers in peer mediation. The teachers, in turn, trained the peer mediators, beginning from conflict resolution in general to specific skills in addressing various scenarios. Mediation was carried out in the playground under the strict supervision of teachers. Cases of bullying and other instances they regarded as requiring higher-level attention were referred to teachers. Peer mediators met weekly for debriefing and to discuss any challenges.

Table 1. Profile of teachers in the experimental schools

| School/Teacher | Sex | Teaching experience | Teacher responsibilities |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Peace School** | | | |
| R | F | 28 years | Deputy head/ head of discipline |
| N | F | 22 years | Grade 2 /discipline committee member |
| K | M | 25 years | Grade 5 |
| P | F | 33 years | Grade 6 /discipline committee member |
| **Praiseworthy school** | | | |
| C | F | 27 years | Deputy head/ head of discipline |
| M | F | 27 years | Grade 4 |
| S | M | 30 years | Grade 4 |
| T | F | 25 years | Grade 4 |
| **Wellbeing School** | | | |
| G | F | 24 years | Discipline committee member |
| H | F | 26 years | Grade 4 |
| E | F | 23 years | Grade 4 |
| O | F | 25 years | Grade 4 |

Teachers were interviewed before the introduction of peer mediation and peacemaking circles, with a focus on traditional discipline methods, and at the end of the intervention, when the focus was on the operation and effectiveness of peer mediation and peacemaking circles. Each interview was conducted face to face, lasted from 30 minutes to one hour, and asked semi-structured questions. The research met the ethical guidelines of Durban University of Technology including confidentiality, voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, trust, and safety in participation. The

interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim and the data was analyzed thematically.

## 4. Results and discussion

### *Teachers' views on discipline*

The teacher interviews held before the intervention concerned ways of controlling children's behavior at home and school. According to teachers, parents and guardians required their children to behave well at home and corporal punishment was considered to be the only way to make sure this happened. Parents were in no doubt as to the effectiveness of corporal punishment and had no reservations about its use in school. They expected their children to work hard and behave well at school and wanted teachers to use corporal punishment to this end, irrespective of the law. All of the teachers spoke of the effectiveness of corporal punishment and manual labour as discipline tools in homes and schools. Teachers and parents agreed on this matter, as was noted by Makwanya *et al* (2012).

One interesting insight was a recognition, at least by one teacher, that children learned to be violent.

> *From my observation and from the way the pupils play, I think parents use corporal punishment all the time … [this explains why] most of our children are so violent. They fight … and they use all other physical violence even amongst themselves. They think 'If I do a physical, physical retaliation, I think I will have done better…' because at home what they know is the whip* (Teacher R).

Despite such an awareness, which might be expected from experienced educators, and official decrees against corporal punishment, almost all the teachers admitted that they used it regularly. In their view, the type of learner they had to teach average class sizes of over 50 in the three schools necessitated the use of harsh methods of discipline. That said, several teachers suggested that the counselling of problem learners could be expanded if punitive methods were to be more strongly condemned.

### Teachers' hopes for the project

In the schools included in this project, teachers reported experiencing problems that ranged from high numbers of learners per class to widespread misbehaviour during break times. They hoped that teaching learners' mediation skills would improve learner behavior and relieve them from some of their stress. They also hoped that the practice of peer mediation in schools would spread into the homes of these learners, especially those without adult heads.

The teachers understood that peer mediation stressed dialogue as a way of settling disputes between learners, with a focus on safety, confidentiality, and impartiality. While the mediators had no power to impose a resolution, learners involved in a conflict frequently used their assistance to find a solution. Several teachers suggested that learners often wanted a way out of the conflicts they found themselves in but could not see one; in consequence, they appreciated the intervention of peer mediators.

### Teacher perceptions of the project outcomes

During the post-intervention interviews, most teachers reported a small but noticeable improvement in the way learners interacted with each other. Playground conflicts, they said, were less likely to become violent and turn into long-running feuds. The intervention, even though directed at one grade, seemed to have injected something fresh into each school – a way of effectively dealing with the conflicts which are part of everyday school life.

Teachers also reported several more specific benefits to learners, which were often interrelated. The first was the status that peer mediators were given by other learners. They noted that at this age, learners want to be viewed as doing something important and consequently admired those selected as peer mediators.

> *Almost all kids like to be peer mediators. They like to lead. Some will feel jealous that someone was chosen instead of me so they will try and show good behaviour so that they can be the mediator next time* (Teacher G)

A second outcome was a growth in the self-confidence of peer mediators, who took their role seriously. Self-confidence seemed to be linked to their confidence in the power of mediation. Teachers who had peer mediators inside their classrooms reported that every peer mediator in their classrooms was very willing to handle conflicts. Some teachers reported that they had to counsel learners to concentrate on conflicts of some significance and avoid becoming obsessive about mediation at every turn. Some teachers noticed that the personal behavior of peer mediators improved, possibly because they felt they had principles to live up to. Several teachers also mentioned that the academic achievement of mediators improved.

A third outcome was the bonding of peer mediators across classes. Teachers indicated that by undergoing the training programme and working in collaboration, children developed relationships and bonded with each other. Some teachers noticed the development of 'strategic pairing' by peer mediators which resulted in better mediation results as well as providing mentorship to mediators who were still struggling. The benefits of building relationships across classes were noted in a study of peace clubs in South African secondary schools (Harris and Moyo 2019).

Another teacher observed that other learners observed the skills of mediation and would practice them on their own without the mediators, an indication of the perceived benefits of the practice and that more learners aspired to become peer mediators.

The teachers found that their involvement in peer mediation encouraged their reflection on other professional areas. Every teacher said that the project motivated them to reflect on other aspects of work where they were perhaps lacking and to think enthusiasm to come up with workable solutions. In other words, teacher involvement in this project led to an enhanced sense of their other professional duties and what could be accomplished. 'Some new conversations seem to have started', said Teacher P. The teachers admitted that they were used to a top-down system and this bottom-up process led by learners was, in the words of Teacher P, 'refreshing and inspirational'. It is worth noting that teachers continued to use corporal punishment during the project, such as the productive labour mentioned earlier.

Less positively perhaps, most teachers viewed peer mediators as another form of prefect or class monitor. For this reason, there was always a temptation to use them for classroom control duties inside the classroom when teachers were absent. This tendency was also apparent in the selection process where fast learners were more likely to be chosen.

**Peacemaking circles**

In the post-intervention interviews, teachers spoke very positively about peacemaking circles in their classrooms. Nine teachers indicated that they intended to make circles an ongoing part of their teaching. They appreciated how circles brought learners together and recognized how different the process was from the traditional teacher-dominated classroom; in particular, there was an opportunity for all voices to be heard. Teacher M noted that the process of talking in turns to speak and listening respectfully to each other helped some learners overcome a sense of isolation and encouraged the building of community. Teacher H observed that while 'some children are very comfortable to express their feelings, some of them are very shy initially … but as time goes on, they begin to open up.

Most teachers mentioned the value of hearing background information from learners as a major benefit of the circle process to them. This information helped them to prepare for the day ahead and to hear about issues that could be addressed later; these included reasons for non-punctuality, homework challenges, and cleanliness. In brief, circles allowed teachers to become better acquainted with their learners. Two teachers (N and H) found that the circles made them aware of home situations that were outside their job description or competence to handle.

The most commonly-mentioned challenge was the number of learners in each class. One response was to have several smaller circles operating at the same time in the classroom. The two schools with hot seating held their circles outdoors.

**5. Conclusion**

Both peer mediation and the peacemaking circles among the 9 to 10-year-olds in the three schools involved building the dialogue skills of learners; these are key components

in relationship building and conflict resolution. Teachers noted a small but noticeable improvement in learner interactions in the school. They pointed to the status which peers' mediation carried with it, the growth in self-confidence of peer mediators, and the bonding of mediators across classes as they engaged in a shared responsibility. They noticed that other learners were strongly attracted to mediation and practiced it.

The teachers were also positively influenced by their participation. Their experience with the circle process in particular encouraged them to reflect on issues they were dealing with in their profession, including the efficacy of teacher-dominated classrooms and corporal punishment. The circles helped them to know their learners better. A conversation was started, it seems, about alternative ways of carrying out their profession.

There were suggestions to scale up restorative practices. Teacher G proposed giving all learners peer mediation training and changing mediators regularly so that all would have a chance to practice the skill. This would move restorative discipline practices to a higher level, perhaps to the whole-school approach which, as Sellman et al (2014) have noted, is far more likely to move a school in a more peaceful direction.

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# IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES ON EMPLOYMENT CREATION: A CASE STUDY OF GWERU

## By

## Lawrence Dumisani Nyathi

## Abstract

*The government is struggling to look for solutions to the unemployment challenge and one approach has been the promotion of self-employment through entrepreneurship.  From 2000 onwards capacity utilization has been shrinking resulting in colossal retrenchments both in the private and public sectors. As a result, most of both skilled and unskilled labour in underperforming economies survive on informal sector activities. Therefore, the paper investigated the impact of entrepreneurship activities on employment creation, a case study of Gweru Central Business District. Descriptive design was employed to collect data using an open-ended questionnaire and it was supported by the purposive sampling technique. The sample consisted of 350 people out of the entrepreneurs in Gweru urban. Data was collected using an open-ended questionnaire. The study revealed that entrepreneurship activities create employment and contributed significantly to the development of the Zimbabwean economy. Nonetheless, entrepreneurs are constrained in their maneuvers because of a lack of financial support and infrastructure. Given their significance to the economy, the paper suggests that these businesses should be assisted by the relevant stakeholders to graduate from the informal to the formal sector. This will boost rapid economic growth.*

**Key:** *impact; entrepreneurship activities; employment*

## 1. Introduction

The Zimbabwean economy has been on a free-fall since 1997 with real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) having fallen by over 40% from 1997 to 2006 (Techfin Research, 2007), while inflation soared from around 20% in December 1997 to a record peak of 7 635% in July 2007 (Central Statistical Office, 2007). The stage for economic meltdown began in August 1997 when approximately 60 000 war veterans were granted ZWD50 000 each (approximately USD3 000 at the time) plus a monthly pension of approximately USD125 per month outside the budget (Chitiyo, 2000 as cited in Kairiza, n.d.). The payouts amounted to almost three percent of GDP at the time and this had the immediate effect of inflating the budget deficit at the end of 1997 by 55 percent from the 1996 levels. The World Bank and IMF responded by suspension and withdrawing credit lines from the country. The economic meltdown got worse when President Mugabe made a second populist decision in November 1997, announcing plans to compulsorily acquire white-owned commercial farms, again without elaboration on the financing side of the transaction. This had the immediate effect of giving investors a perception of an ensuing precarious fiscal position and consequently, there were spontaneous and concerted runs against the currency and from the money and capital markets.

The climax of these events was on 14 November 1997 when the Zimbabwean dollar crashed and lost 75 percent of its value against the USD on a single day, on what is now known as "Black Friday" in Zimbabwean economic history. The stock market also plummeted and the index was down by 46 percent by day end from the peak August levels. The central bank had to intervene and raise interest rates by six percentage points within that single month (Bond, 1998 as cited in Kairiza, n.d.). Thenceforward the exchange rate continued to depreciate uncontrollably, thus the 1997 financial and currency turbulence set the stage for a long and potentially long slump in the real economy. What mainly contributed to the downturn of the economy was the severe decline of the manufacturing sector as well as the total collapse of the vibrant agriculture sector (Confederation of Zimbabwe industries, 2006). This led to massive shedding of

jobs across the economy as industrial activity continues to slump downwards since 2010 unemployment levels have been soaring at alarming levels. As a result, the majority of people have turned to entrepreneurship activities for survival.

Entrepreneurship has a role to play in easing the unemployment problems in developing countries like Zimbabwe. Entrepreneurship has been labelled as an engine for economic growth, contributing positively to employment creation and income generation (Mahorera & Mahadea, 2014). According to Index Mundi, (2016) the formal unemployment levels have reached 90 % in Zimbabwe. With this widespread unemployment rate for the past decade on the back of collapsing industrial activity, the impact of the informal sector on the current Zimbabwe economy has been assessed by Chidoko, Makuyana, Matungamire & Bemani (2011), while Sibanda (2005) evaluates the contribution of Small and Medium Enterprises to the manufacturing sector in small towns like Bindura. Therefore, this current study will evaluate the impact of entrepreneurship activities on employment creation in the town of Gweru.

Mauchi et al., (2011) allude that the current state of the Zimbabwean economy is a cause for concern, especially for young people as they are confronted with the major problem of unemployment. Nyoni (2004) further puts it across that, "current investment levels are not sufficient to generate employment for the 300 000 school leavers on an annual basis" (as cited by Mauchi et al., 2011). This situation is worsened by the persistent closure of industries with the majority of the workforce condemned to informal businesses to make ends meet Chidoko (2013).

Chidoko (2013) defines entrepreneurship as the act of being an innovator to transform innovations into an economic good. This results in new organizations or maybe part of rejuvenating old firms in response to a prevailing economic environment. This entails starting a business venture. Entrepreneurship has a role to play in easing the youth unemployment problem in Zimbabwe, but the government is not creating conducive environments to promote youth entrepreneurship. Economic maladministration, corruption, and bad policies and programs continue to choke the entrepreneurial potential of many Zimbabweans.

The United States of America is a proper example of how entrepreneurship can move a country as its booming entrepreneurial sector is responsible for much of its present economic prosperity. The U.S is among the most "entrepreneurial" nation because Americans believe they have opportunities to start businesses and live in a culture that respects entrepreneurship as an occupation.

Kubatana.net (2013) further notes that there is a growing awareness in most African countries of the training of technical and vocational skills that are necessary to lessen the unemployment problem. Zimbabwe has taken adopted this initiative too through its Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenization and Empowerment as early as 2011 acknowledging that they are implementing comprehensive programmes for promoting and empowering the youth through availing loan capital to finance youth projects and accelerate youth-led employment creation enterprises, despite a failure of the programme due to bad governance.

For entrepreneurship to flourish, adequate infrastructure is needed, and financial support, as well as administrative structures, are needed. Regrettably, these factors are not adequately provided in Zimbabwe and the Youth Fund initiative established by the government has been accused of being partisan and only benefiting the politically connected individuals at the expense of the needed and marginalized young people. Entrepreneurship should not be seen as a form of corruption whereby access to scarce goods or such strategic factors of production as bank loans is determined by political patronage rather than by the interplay of market forces. Policies and programmes must also address the highly varied socio-cultural faces that make for success in entrepreneurship.

In the city of Gweru industrial activity is a thing of the past the formal workforce has been rendered to the informal sector for survival. The majority of the SMEs are involved in carpentry, steelworks, hairdressing, printing services, selling fruits and vegetables, car-selling, and farming. The other manufacturing activities included soft drink manufacturing, brickmaking, clothing manufacturing, and exercise book manufacturing.  The Small to

Medium Enterprises (SMEs) operational in the city are providing employment and generating income for household consumption. This shows the potential of SMEs to create much-needed employment. However, the sector requires a lot of infrastructural and financial support for it to reach its full potential. There is a need to promote networking in the SME sector so that enterprises can realize economies. Therefore, the paper seeks to measure the contribution of entrepreneurship activities to employment creation in the town, evaluate the major challenges faced by entrepreneurs in their operations and propose strategies for stimulating the growth of entrepreneurship activities in Gweru.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Study location

The aggregate of subjects regarding the inferences was made, was drawn using a concentration of entrepreneurs across the city of Gweru. The population was drawn from entrepreneurs in Mtapa industrial area, the Light industrial area, and Central Business District.

### 2.2 Sample size

The sample consisted of 350 people out of entrepreneurs in Gweru urban (100 businesses from Mtapa industrial area, 136 from the Light industrial area, and 114 from the Central Business District).

### 2.3 Data collection

A survey was conducted amongst entrepreneurs operating in the city of Gweru who were targeted as the respondents of the investigation. A descriptive survey design was used to come up with the respondents. This is because the major goal of the research was to measure the impact of entrepreneurship activities in the city of Gweru. Furthermore, it is also relevant to gather detailed information concerning the current status of the entrepreneurship activities taking place in the city. Data for the study was collected data using an open-ended questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from the City of Gweru,

SMEDCO, Ministry of Small to Medium Enterprise and Cooperative Development, and Gweru Informal Traders Association.

## 3. Results

**Figure 1: Concentration of SMEs in Gweru.**



**Source: Survey**

The study consisted of 350 entrepreneurs in Gweru urban (100 businesses from Mtapa industrial area, 136 from Light industrial area, and 114 from the Central Business District) as shown above in the pie-chart.
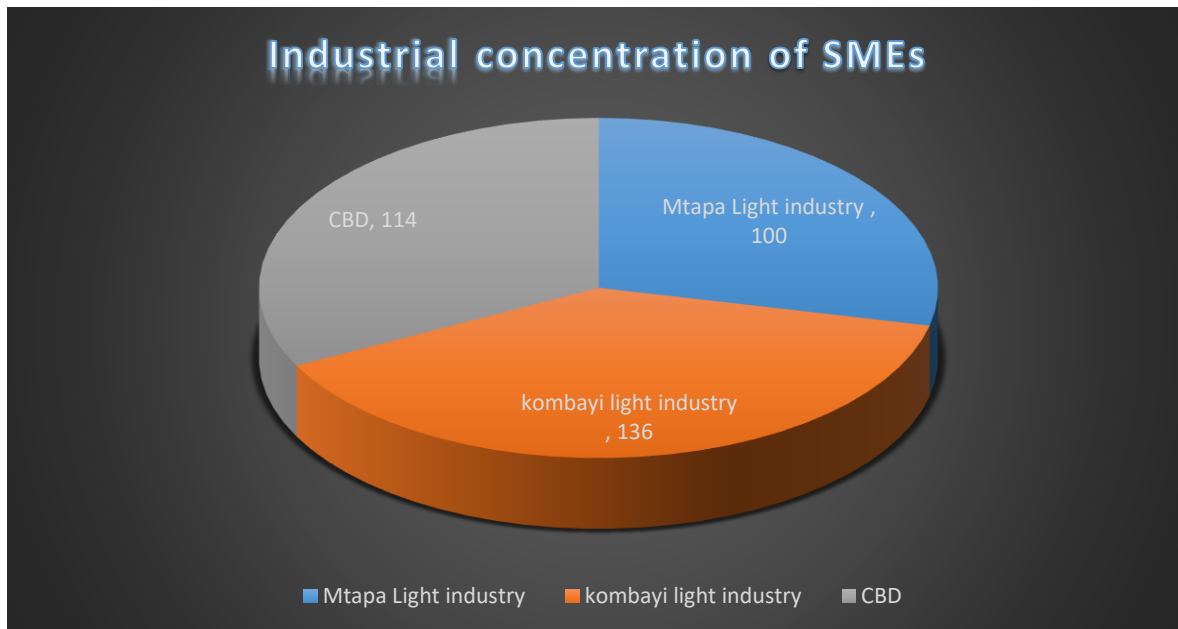
An interesting phenomenon arose during the analysis of the data. It emerged that Mtapa industrial park and Kombayi Light industry had the oldest entrepreneurs, whilst the Central Business District had few people in the 46-55 and above 56 years age groups. This can be a good indicator for the Central Business District because it means that the majority of the entrepreneurs were in their prime ages and were the most economically active. The age difference is very important because if entrepreneurs are in their prime age they tend to invest more and run their business more professionally than those who are older. (Osei *et al.*, 1993) states that the younger generation tends to invest in their

enterprises because they view SMEs as business whereas the older generation tends to venture into SMEs after retrenchment and view SMEs as a way of passing time.

The age distribution shows that nearly 72% of respondents in the survey are younger than 35 years of age. The survey has shown that SME entrepreneurs represent a population in the prime age. The possible explanation for this may be unemployment in the city of Gweru. Many people in the city are unemployed because the formal industries like ZimCast, ZimAlloys, and Bata have been retrenching and closing shop and thus many people tend to revert to the informal sector to start up their small businesses.

**Figure 2: Composition of Education Levels amongst Entrepreneurs.**
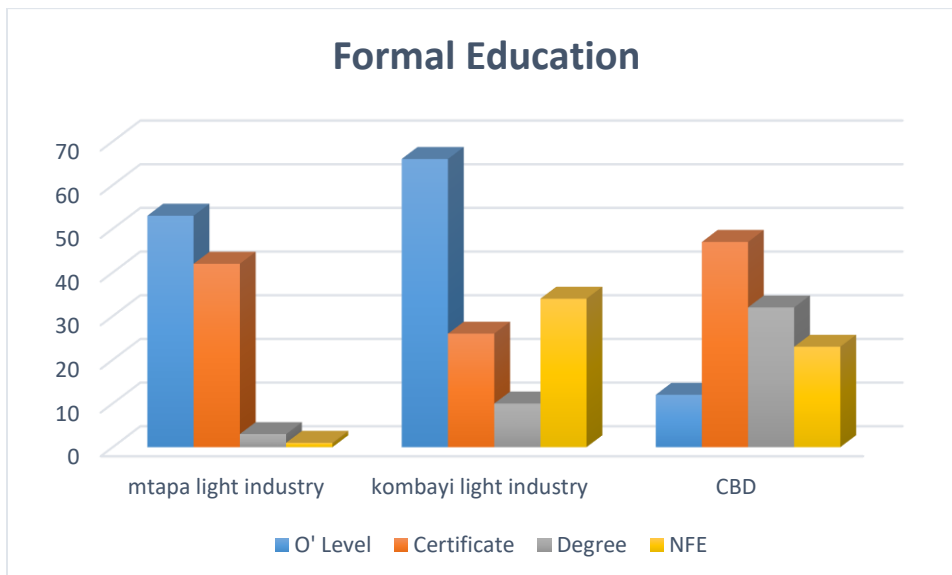


**Source: Survey, 2019**

The survey revealed that the majority of the entrepreneurs in the sample sites had at least attained formal education. At Mtapa Light Industry 53 respondents had an O' Level certificate, while 42 respondents had certificates from colleges. Meanwhile, 3 respondents said they had degrees and 1 respondent attained O'Level passes through non-formal education. The bulk of the entrepreneurs are 86% of them were in steel and iron engineering while 14% were involved in motor mechanics, firewood production, and juice making. In the Kombayi Light Industry area 66 claimed to have O'Level subjects, while 26 had certificates in various fields like engineering, wood technology, clothing, and

design among others, 10 had degrees and 34 respondents attained at least 2 or more O' Level passes through non-formal education. 55% (males) and 45% (females) of the entrepreneurs had secondary education. The majority of entrepreneurs had any technical education because they are either involved in manufacturing, carpentry or steelworks, production of wood and steel products such as furniture, and building material such as door and window frames. This line of business needs experience, which the aged have acquired over the years mostly after being retrenched from the formal sector.

Furthermore, in the Central Business District 12 respondents had O' Level, while 47 respondents agreed to have a certificate. The survey also revealed that 32 respondents were degree holders while 23 responded agreeing to non-formal education. Overall, 77% (males) and 43% (females) had secondary education, 20% (males) and 7% (females) had primary education, and 23% (males) had no formal education. Furthermore, the majority of the educated women were involved in typing and printing, beauty therapy as well as selling stationery. The more aged female groups are into food venting, selling cooked food, fresh cabbages, tomatoes, onions, and other farm produce. The uneducated males in the city center are into selling different electrical gadgets, phone accessories, selling clothes, airtime, selling car parts, motor mechanics, and hairdressing.

In a nutshell, Chidoko (2013) argues that the less the number of years in school, the more one is likely to enter into self-employment. However, this is contrary to the prevailing situation in the city of Gweru, university graduates, as well as retrenched workers from the formal sector, are resorting to the informal sector for survival.

## 3.1 Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that entrepreneurship activities create employment thus alleviating poverty levels amidst the deepening economic crisis in Zimbabwe. This result is similar to Chidoko et al. (2011) who found out that the growing informal sector is creating employment in the wake of deindustrialization. One of the interviewees from SMEDCO pointed out that entrepreneurship is a livelihood option in Gweru. The interviewee said,

"People do not go out into the streets for fun but it is because they want to earn a living". Henceforth, SMEs are not only critical for local economic development in Gweru or Zimbabwe but more so in other parts of the world.

The study also revealed that entrepreneurship activities in the city are generating income for household consumption and in so doing it is contributing positively to economic development. In Gweru major industries like Bata, ZimAlloys, ZimGlass, and Dairibord Zimbabwe Limited are underperforming and have since closed. Thus, the informal sector has kept the city alive amidst the total collapse of the industries in the city. These findings are similar to Sibanda (2005) who notes that Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can contribute positively to the economic growth of the economy. Despite creating employment in Bindura town, it was also noted that their presence has also led to the establishment of firms in different areas that have the potential to grow to large firms. While on the same note, Chidoko et al., (2011) allude that the informal sector contributed to Gross Domestic Product.

**Figure 3: Challenges faced by SMEs**
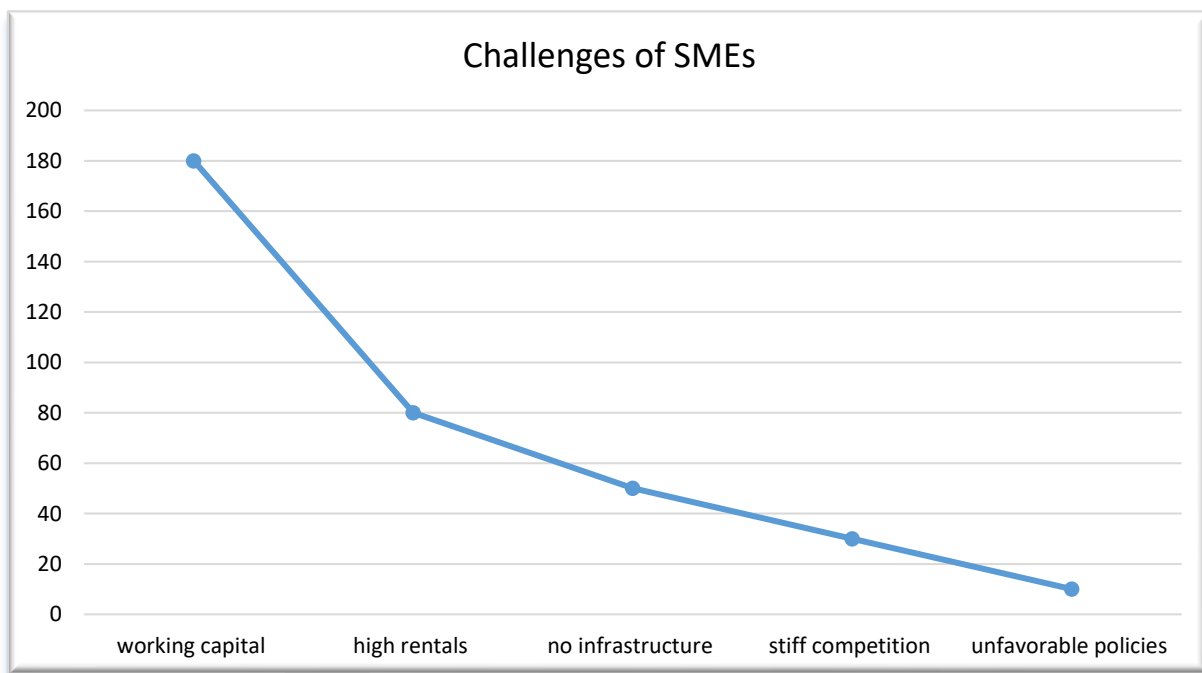
**Source: Survey, 2019**

The study revealed that entrepreneurship activities are facing a lot of challenges as depicted above such as lack of working capital, exorbitant rentals, no infrastructure, and stiff competition from cheap imported goods from neighboring countries like South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia among others. Moreso, most entrepreneurs lacked necessary skills e.g., accounting and managerial, and absence of marketing platforms. The results are similar to Chidoko et al., (2011) in their study to assess the impact of the informal sector in the Zimbabwean economy noted that entrepreneurs lack capital and collateral**, and l**ack necessary skills e.g., accounting and managerial, and limited life span. Most informal businesses have a short life span that does not go beyond the life span of the owner. The business can only thrive as long as the owner still has the will to remain in the business.

The economy of Zimbabwe is facing a lot of stress at the moment wherein in major cities of the country there is massive deindustrialization on the back of unfavorable policies, no clear-cut industrial policy to stimulate production, and a lack of financial support from global financiers such as IMF and World Bank. Since 2013 economic activity has scaled down where exports have been declining and imports increasing. This has led to most industries collapsing and most people who were in the formal sector forming a small busi in the informal sector. As the economic crisis is deepening in Zimbabwe the informal sector is filling the gap in the collapsed formal sector and they have shown potential signs of growing into big companies if well supported by government and non-governmental organizations concerned. Chidoko, Makuyana, Matungamire, and Bemani (2011), Sibanda (2005), and Mahorera and Mahadea (2014) all acknowledge that entrepreneurship activities need support from the government and private players on the back of their positive contribution to the economy.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The results show that entrepreneurship is the inspired act of spotting an economic gap and efficiently marshalling the available resources to move into that gap. It demonstrated that it leads to investment and job creation. There is a need for public-private partnerships

in support of entrepreneurship activities investing in technical and educational skills soneto stimulate production and hence output. Continual support from the public and private sectors for entrepreneurship activities will eventually lead to economic growth ultimately. Therefore, the following recommendations may be very useful considering the significance of entrepreneurship in job creation in Gweru and Zimbabwe as a whole. These are:

There is a need for strengthening Public-Private Partnerships so as solidify the foundations of the informal businesses in Gweru urban to make them strong firms and eventually graduate into formal businesses. This is healthy for the business owners and the economy as a whole. There is also a need for training for the participants for the businesses to continue in existence since they fill in the gap that is left vacant by most formal enterprises. Further, there is a need for the creation of financial support by accelerating the creation of a Small to Medium Enterprises Bank that would provide affordable loans to entrepreneurs.

Ensuring that there are marketing platforms where entrepreneurs would showcase their services and products so as quote local and international buyers. More so, strengthening the initiative of entrepreneurship in the school curriculum. School pupils should be taught entrepreneurship right from Early Child Development to Tertiary Education. The government of Zimbabwe should establish and strengthen Youth Funds that have been successful around the globe and beneficiaries should not be partisan.

Furthermore, allow for natural growth, not top-down solutions – Build from existing industries that have formed naturally within the region or country rather than seeking to generate new industries from greenfield sites. Ensure all industry sectors are considered not just high-tech – Encourage growth across all industry sectors including low, mid, and high-tech firms. Develop a policy that addresses the needs of both the business and its management team – Recognizes that small business policy is 'transactional' while entrepreneurship policy is 'relational' in nature.

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# ENHANCING INDUSTRIALISATION AND MODERNISATION IN UNIVERSITIES IN ZIMBABWE

**By**

**Hardson Kwandayi**

**Abstract**

*This paper outlines cardinal facets of industrialisation and modernisation which the Government of Zimbabwe launched as a higher education strategy for national development through institutions of higher learning. The paper recommends several strategies universities in Zimbabwe can use to advance industrialisation and modernisation. One of the key strategies is that universities should embrace other stakeholders that include schools and colleges as well as the private sector. As part of this process, local universities are also expected to modernise themselves by providing quality and relevant education.*

**Keywords**: *Education 5.0; Innovation; Industrialisation; modernization higher education*

**Introduction**

In 2019, the Ministry of *Higher and Tertiary Education*, *Science and Technology Development* (MHTESTD) pronounced a new philosophy of higher education coined Education 5.0. In this new philosophy, the MHTESTD expected institutions of higher education especially universities to extend their traditional functions by embracing innovation and industrialisation. Hence, in addition to teaching, research, and community, higher education institutions are now expected to put more emphasis on innovation and industrialisation to facilitate the production of goods and services. To spearhead the implementation of this new philosophy, the Zimbabwe University Vice Chancellors Association (ZUVCA) established a *Task Force* on *Transformation of Higher Education for Industrialisation* and Modernisation. This paper seeks to further advance the operationalization of this pragmatic strategy to accelerate the development and modernisation of the country. Specifically, the paper recommends several strategies universities in Zimbabwe can use to advance industrialisation and modernisation. The paper further urges universities to widen the scope of industrialisation and modernisation by engaging more stakeholders, especially schools and colleges given the multifaceted nature of the two related processes. Local universities are called upon to establish industrialisation and modernisation interdisciplinary teams as a strategy to further promote this noble agenda at both micro and macro levels. Lastly, the paper urges universities to implement the modernisation of the higher education system in Zimbabwe whereby universities are encouraged to enhance the quality and relevance of higher education consistent with the 21st-century global expectations.


**Higher education policy driving industrialisation and modernisation**

Industrialisation and modernisation are premised on the Government of Zimbabwe's higher education policy Education 5.0. This policy puts emphasis on innovation and industrialisation. The first three are the traditional functions of universities which are teaching, research, and community service. The remaining new functions of universities that were added by the Zimbabwean Government were innovation and industrialisation. The innovation component expects universities to be innovative and generate inventions

that support industries. It is hoped that the innovations would facilitate industrialisation in the country. The product of these innovations would be the production of goods and services. As a process toward innovation and industrialisation, universities are expected to establish innovation hubs and industrial parks. Innovation hubs or centres seek to develop universities' innovation skills in various ways such as developing new products which can compete in new markets, producing cheaper goods, promoting value addition of raw materials, or developing new tools to improve service delivery. Industrial parks are places established and organised to promote the setting up of industries within a university. Hence, industrial parks are offices and functional industries such as bakeries, soap factories, and timber processing plants. Education 5.0, therefore, expects universities to establish their productive industries. The government hopes that the industrialisation of the country would lead to the development and modernisation of the country.

**Concept of industrialisation**

The industry refers to the production or processing of goods while industrialisation is a process whereby more and more industries are being established. During the process, an economy of a country is transformed from primary industries to the manufacturing of goods and provision of services. The process should take place on a large scale. As the process takes place, mechanised mass production of goods usually and gradually replaces manual labor. As this takes place, assembly lines replace craftsmen. Key elements of industrialisation include the application of technological innovation to solve problems, more efficient division of labour, and economic growth. Given the important role of innovation and technology in the industrialisation process, the Zimbabwe Government expects colleges and universities to play a key role in the country's industrialisation process.

Before the role of higher education institutions in the industrialisation process is delineated, I outline four major types of industries as follows:

i. Primary industries (they extract raw materials from the environment, for example, from land and rivers).

ii.   Secondary industries (sometimes referred to as manufacturing industry- they produce processed goods such as producing sugar from sugar cane).

iii.  Tertiary industries (sometimes referred to as services industry- they provide services to other industries and people in general; e.g., tourism).

iv.   Quaternary industries: They use modern technology in research and development to train and provide information to other industries. Consultancy firms and information and communication technologies belong to this group of industries.

Universities in Zimbabwe are therefore expected to play a key role in the above industries, especially in the manufacturing industry sector which involves value addition. They should come up with industries that manufacture goods. This is why the MHTESTD puts emphasis on industrial hubs. Without industrialisation, Zimbabwe will continue to be poor as it will depend on exporting raw materials which are generally cheap on the global market. Focusing on exporting raw materials is the basis for the world-systems theory which explains the exploitation of developing or periphery countries by the developed or core countries (Sorinel, 2010). As part of the industrialisation process, new inventions and improved transportation are needed and universities are expected to provide the necessary innovation through research. The process of industrialisation is part of modernisation. A country cannot modernise and become a modern state without industries.

**Elements of industrialisation and the role of universities**
In this section, cardinal elements of industrialisation are delineated and then roles universities should play are suggested for each identified element.

i.   Industrialisation involves producing goods using machines - universities should design and produce these machines and then produce goods.

ii.  Most of the workforce in an industrialised country work in manufacturing – universities should be at the centre of production through their industrial hubs. For example, departments of production engineering in universities must play a key role in manufacturing.

iii.     Industrialised countries have large markets, marketing scholars in universities should research to find out how markets for emerging industries can be expanded.

iv.     Industrialisation is associated with accelerated high-tech innovations – Research and Innovation Centres in universities should spearhead accelerated innovation programmes.

v.      Industrialisation is accompanied by a development in countrywide transportation network – through research, university departments such as Geography Departments should advise the government on how the transport system in the country could be modernised.

vi.     Increased accumulation of capital for investment is a major feature of industrialisation –Economics Departments in universities should advise the government on how investment could be increased.

vii.    Industrialisation is usually positively associated with urbanization and a gradual increase in the number of large cities and conurbations- Departments of Rural and Urban Planning could assist in designing modern cities of the 21st century for the country.

The foregoing shows that all university departments have a role to play in the industrialisation process. In the next section, I delineate how universities can plan for industrialisation.

**Recommended strategies to enhance the implementation of industrialisation**

Industrialisation does not just happen. It is a well-thought-out process and takes time. A book by Bhagwati and Desai (1970) titled "India: Planning for Industrialisation" clearly shows that thoughtful planning is necessary since industrialisation planning requires a multi-sectoral approach. Therefore, universities in Zimbabwe should broaden their conceptualization of industrialisation if the initiative is to succeed. Guided by the MHTESTD's strategic plan which stresses innovation and industrialisation, universities should focus on priority areas that are delineated in this section:

i.      Universities should incorporate innovation and industrialisation agenda into their strategic plans whereby each Faculty has a clear work plan on how they will implement the innovation and industrialisation agenda.

ii.  An inter-faculty coordinating team should be established in each university to plan how research, innovation, and industrialisation are to be carried out. This will also include the teaching of innovation and industrialisation. For example, in the European Union, the University of Danube is offering a Master of Education degree in Research and Innovation. Universities cannot just implement innovation and industrialisation without some basic conceptual and theoretical understanding of these two terms. The importance of theory is stressed by Kurt Lewin, a renowned social psychologist who famously surmised that "There's nothing so practical as a good theory", mainly because a good theory guides effective action (Billig, 2015:1). This is critical in teaching the theoretical underpinnings of innovation. In fact, in some disciplines such as commerce innovation is taught. It helps learners and instructors to have a deeper understanding of related concepts such as imitative innovation and innovative imitation (Huang, Chou & Lee, 2010; Segerstrom, 1991).

iii.  For innovation and industrialisation to succeed, universities must provide high-quality and relevant higher education. Universities must therefore continuously assess the quality and relevance of their education. Concerning quality, universities in Zimbabwe can assess the quality of their education by using the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (HAQAA Initiative. (2019). This is important because only quality education can bring about successful research and innovation for industrialisation.

iv.  Universities in Zimbabwe should re-examine the adequacy of their curricula content for their research methods courses, especially at Masters Level where most institutions offer one research methods course. This is critical because in other countries, for example, the USA, graduate students usually take a minimum of 3 courses in the research methods component. The three separate courses usually focus on quantitative research methods, qualitative research methods, and generic research methodology courses. My view is that one course at the Masters Level covering all three components of research methods is inadequate. This is

important because the key to innovation in research and innovation is critical for industrialisation.

v.    Universities must enhance meaningful academia-public-private engagement as emphasised by the MHTESTD in its 2019-2023 strategic plan. Universities, businesses, and the public sector must be partners in innovation and industrialisation. Both the private sector and public sector must be aware of this new dimension and national priority.

vi.    While Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects are key to industrialisation, all disciplines must be fully involved in innovation and industrialisation. Most importantly, humanities and social sciences must play a key role in bringing about a conducive cultural environment for modernisation since modernisation is not just about industrialisation but a paradigm shift from traditionalism. Additionally, social sciences are critical for research and development as part of the quaternary industry.

vii.    Universities and other educational institutions including schools must work together with government departments to promote the new education thrust on industrialisation since industrialisation calls for collective effort and requires inter-sectoral linkages. Universities must therefore promote the concept of industrialisation to all learners and practitioners from school level to university.

**Concept of modernisation and proposed implementation strategy**

Modernisation is often viewed as the transformation from a traditional, rural, agriculture-based society to an urbanised, industrialised, and secular society. The following features are associated with modernisation:

i.    Modernised society is industrialised.

ii.    Modernised society is characterised by cultural, social, political, economic, and technological advancement.

iii.    It involves explaining and predicting events, processes, and phenomena based on scientific and technological knowledge.

iv.    Cultural transformation is a key component of modernisation whereby society gives up old ways and traditions and adopts contemporary ones.

v.    Democratic associations, increasing literacy, and a high level of urbanization are cardinal elements of modernisation.

vi.    Mass education through mass communication is an important facet of modernisation.

vii.    Modernisation is consistent with good governance which is associated with sharing of civic, political, and social rights, and resources.

viii.    Modernisation is a developmental and continuous process.

The foregoing shows that modernisation is complex and multifaceted. While the modernisation process can take a long time, it can also be accelerated through comprehensive planning. The MHTESTD's focus on innovation and industrialisation is largely aimed at accelerating modernisation through innovation and industrialisation in colleges and universities.

**Antecedents of modernisation**

Modernisation scholars have argued that several preconditions or antecedents should be in place for modernisation to take place. The most common explanation is based on the western school of thought that says that several impediments hamper development in developing countries and these obstacles are largely internal. In this regard, third-world countries are undeveloped because they have negative cultural values and practices that inhibit development from taking place. For example, Parsons (1964) was especially critical of the traditional values of developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. His main argument was that these countries were too attached to traditional practices,

values, rituals, and institutions, which Parsons argued were a barrier to development and modernisation.

Parsons (1964) further maintained that traditional values that acted as barriers to development included particularism – where people are given jobs based on personal or family relationships. For example, a Chief Executive Officer of a company may give his relative a job rather than employing someone competent or talented to do the job. In contrast, Parsons believed that western cultural values which promoted competition and economic growth were more developmental. Another developmental value cited by Parsons is universalism which involves applying the same standards to everyone, and judging everyone according to the same standards. This is the opposite of particularism, where people are judged differently based on their relationship to the person doing the assessment.

Achieved status and meritocracy is another progressive value that is associated with modernity where people can be successful based on their efforts. In a truly meritocratic society, the most talented and hardworking should rise to the top, and these should be the best people to drive economic and social development.

Moracco and Moracco (1978) writing in the late 1970s, observed contestations among scholars concerning modernisation or modernity. For example, they noted that religious leaders condemn the rise of secularization while traditionalists warn of problems that will follow the weakening of family ties and the disappearance of social structures. For modernity to take place, political scientists point to the need for governments to be efficient and responsible to the people. Moracco and Moracco further observed that as part of modernisation, psychologists claim that changes must take place within the individual before societies can change. The two scholars also gave great attention to the formation of personalities high in achievement motivation and low in authoritarianism which they saw as a barrier to modernisation.

Given the various explanations and contestations, universities in Zimbabwe need to examine various explanations and theories for modernisation, and then come up with possible models relevant to Zimbabwe. In addition, several explanations for development and underdevelopment should be included in the university curriculum. This will help

universities in Zimbabwe identify best practices for managing modernisation in the country.

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**Role of education in modernisation**

Since modernisation is about transforming society, it means that all forms of education should play a role in the transformation process. The change of values starts at the primary and secondary school levels. This means that the whole education system, from preschool to university must play a role. One strategy is to put emphasis on science at all education levels. While tradition is very important, it should be noted that too much emphasis on tradition can work against modernisation. It may take time to modernise if the country's value systems are fixated on traditionalism, for example, beliefs are *juju* to enhance business performance instead of investing in modern business management strategies.

Those who believe in traditionalism are more conservative while advocates of modernism are more amenable to change. Modernists are therefore more open to accepting new ways of life. They are also apt to adapt to new social trends. Traditionalists, however, show high regard for the old ways of doing things including staunch beliefs in traditional religious values. Given these contradictions, Zimbabwe cannot just modernise without tackling traditionalism. While progressive ideas in traditionalism should be upheld, the education system must also tackle traditional practices that might hamper modernisation. For example, while respecting ancestors is important as part of the tradition, hard work should also be encouraged rather than focusing on traditional charms as a means to success. Table 1 summarises the expected roles of education in modernisation.

**Table 1: Roles of education in modernisation and proposed educational institutions to play the respective roles**.

| Roles of education in modernisation | Proposed Institutions to play the roles |
|---|---|
| Eradicating mass illiteracy | Primary and secondary schools |
| Social and political socialization. | Schools, colleges, and universities |
| Promoting emotional and national integration | Schools, colleges, and universities |
| Promoting science and technology education | Schools, colleges, and universities |
| Promoting equal educational opportunities | Schools, colleges, and universities |
| Compulsory primary education | Primary schools |
| Nurturing positive attitudes and values toward the development | Schools, colleges, and universities |
| Expanding social education for good citizenship | Primary and secondary schools |
| Providing education for international understanding | Schools, colleges, and universities |
| Education for democratic values | Schools, colleges, and universities |
| Research and innovation | Colleges and universities |

Based on the foregoing analysis in Table 1, it is the proposition of this paper that all sectors of education should play a role in the country's modernisationd. The analysis clearly shows that primary and secondary schools have a key role to play. The same applies to colleges and universities, especially in the area of research and innovation. One area Zimbabwe's education system has tended to ignore is social, economic, and political education for nation-building. For example, high school students must study government and civics as well as basic public policy-making as part of education for good citizenship. Again, this should not be done in a partisan way. Modernised countries such as the UK and USA teach these basic topics at the school level. It helps the young people

to love their country irrespective of political affiliation. It also helps to build active and responsible citizenry which is required in a modernised society.

**Modernisation of higher education is a cardinal facet of the modernisation process**
In the literature of higher education, there is an aspect of modernisation that is specific to higher education focusing on universities. This is a new concept that has gained momentum in universities, especially in the European Union. Universities in Zimbabwe should not be left behind in this new thrust. Based on benchmarking with the European Union's (2011) Agenda for the Modernisation of Higher Education –2020 Strategy, universities in Zimbabwe should focus on the following:

1. Increasing access to higher education. In the context of Zimbabwe, this is being achieved through the massification of higher education. However, increasing numbers of university graduates alone are not enough. The quality of education must also become a priority, which takes us to the next focus area in the modernisation of higher education.

2. Improving the quality and relevance of education programmes as a strategy to increase graduate employability and to meet the demand for people with high-end skills. Universities in Zimbabwe must ensure that they provide quality and relevant education. This point is also emphasised in the MHTESTD's strategic plan. In this regard, universities in Zimbabwe should produce graduates with 21st-century skills for the 21st-century job market.

3. Universities in Zimbabwe must ensure that each graduate, whatever their discipline –has a good mix of sector-specific and cross-cutting skills to enable them to thrive in a labour market that now calls for multi-skilling.

4. As part of higher education modernisation, higher education institutions are expected to modernise their governance and funding models to enhance their performance. To achieve this expectation, Zimbabwean universities can refer to standards on good university governance which are outlined in the African *Standards and Guidelines* for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) in Higher Education (HAAQA Initiative, 2019).

5. Modernisation of higher education calls for colleges and universities to play a major role in supporting sustainable growth, in their regions and beyond. This resonates well with the MHTESTD's Education 5.0 delineated earlier. Hence, innovation and industrialisation efforts in colleges and universities should be scaled up.

**Summary and conclusion**

Research, innovation, Industrialisation, and modernisation are closely related concepts. In short, research in universities should the catalyst for innovation and industrialisation that produce goods and services. As outlined in this paper, the industrialisation process must encompass all types of industries especially manufacturing with an emphasis on value addition to reduce exploitation of the country by the developed world. Universities in Zimbabwe should be catalysts for industrialisation and modernisation. However, they cannot do it alone. They should embrace other stakeholders that include schools and colleges as well as the private sector and government departments.  As part of this process, local universities are also expected to modernise themselves by providing quality and relevant education. Local universities should be learning organizations (Senge, 1990) and scale up the higher education modernisation process by benchmarking their work against models of advanced organisations such as the EU's 2020 higher education modernisation strategy. Additionally, universities in Zimbabwe must set up professional learning communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998) that study and research to find better strategies and models of accelerating industrialisation and modernisation so that the country can catch up with other countries in the region and beyond.

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# Critical analysis of the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion as instituted in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

**By**

**Tauya Chinama** & **Edward Muzondo**

## Abstract

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the first instrument of the resort to address human rights and entitlements comprehensively. Other human rights instruments later adopted, cited it as a precedent. This paper uses an Interpretive Phenomenology Analysis (IPA); it is an approach to qualitative research with an idiographic focus and aims to offer insights into how a given person, in each context, makes sense of a given phenomenon. It has its theoretical origins in phenomenology and hermeneutics, and key ideas from Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. For the purposes of this paper, only literature sources were used to substantiate the argument. A key conclusion of this paper is that religious intolerance forms the basis of much other intolerance which could lead to human rights abuses, ideological polarization, lawlessness, homophobia, bigotry, tribalism, and hate speech.*

**Keywords:** Religious tolerance, intolerance, human rights

## 1. Introduction

It is worthwhile to note that this paper is largely inspired by article 18 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights,* which states "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his/her religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his/her religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance."

Therefore, in accordance with Sen (1999), the paper treats respect for human rights and dignity as the ultimate development. Without dignity, a human being is ever in perpetual poverty. That is contrary to the thought that; reducing the absence of poverty is economic growth or wellbeing (material goods) alone. Economic stability ought to be a bi-product of full enjoyment of dignity, freedoms, rights, and entitlements. The paper divulges the significance and applicability of religious tolerance to the respect of human rights. Lessons were further drawn from global, regional, and local synopsis. Current impediments against respect for human rights due to religious intolerance are examined and initiatives for improving religious tolerance and observance of human rights within and outside religious circles.

## 2. Religious Tolerance

David Robertson (2004) advances that religious freedom is one of the most complex matters in the whole of human rights law and practice, and it is not only an ancient concern but also presently debatable. It encompasses related civil liberties and claims and can be viewed from many perspectives. The perspectives include freedom from discrimination because of one's religion, freedom to practice a religion unconstrained, freedom from living in the social order that gives inclination to any one religion, and freedom to enjoy civic respect for one's religion. The definition of religious tolerance, in this case, is principally implied.

Kelly James Clark et al (2012) note that there is a familiar chronicle of religious-inspired violence claims along an uninterrupted chain from the distant past to the present due to intolerance on the part of religious groups, especially the Abrahamic religions, toward members of other religious groups. It is an account of violence, oppression, torture, and war. This highly selective narrative omits any of the good that religions have

brought to the world and is intensely caricatured. Sadly, because of its influence, it needs to be restated, reviewed, and reassessed. Caricature 1: the early Hebrews, under strict orders from their God, razed villages devoted to competing gods, destroying men, women, and children alike. Their subsequent oppression by virtually every other religious group and their forced sojourn from their home are well known. And the Holocaust is surely one of the worst atrocities in human history. But since their return to Israel, the oppressed have become the oppressors of the Palestinians who were forcibly prohibited from their homeland for more than 2,000 years and are treated as second-class citizens or worse. Any non-Jew who dares question Israeli policies is an enemy of Israel and an anti-Semite; Jews who dare question Israeli policies are self-loathing and self-hating. Caricature 2: although the Christian scriptures teach that love has no bounds, Christians throughout history have set narrow limits to their love. They have betrayed their own deepest commitments, often in the name of God and against practitioners of other religions. The institutionalization of Christianity by the Roman Empire set an apparently pacifistic religion on a path of violence. The Crusades sought unsuccessfully but at a great human expense to rid the holy lands of Muslim infidels. The atrocities and religious wars of the Reformation, committed and waged by all sides, caused the river Seine to run red with blood. Native Americans have been exploited and destroyed under the banner of God. Christopher Columbus brought the gospel and germs to the New World, taking back slaves and gold. In our day, we have witnessed the excesses of religious fundamentalists who kill in the name of God or in defense of fetuses. And American leaders have used Christian commitments to inspire the nation to new holy wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with careless disregard for human safety. Caricature3: (especially fashionable since 9/11), Islam is, by its very nature, a conquering religion. Although the Prophet Muhammad demanded hospitality to strangers inside one's tent, outside the tent plunder and pillage ruled the land. Islam spread by the sword from the tiny oasis of Medina to all of the Middle East, North Africa, and Spain, to create a huge earthly empire. Post-9/11, the term 'Muslim' has become synonymous with 'terrorist.' Israeli Jews fear that their Muslim neighbors cannot be trusted and are plotting their destruction as a nation. The frequent missile strikes from the Gaza Strip into nearby Israel are not reassuring. There is much to dispute in these highly selective and tendentious narratives. Jewish,

Muslim, and Christian beliefs have motivated deep and lasting good, maybe much better than evil. They have, indeed, been implicated in deep and disturbing evil that is hard to explain given their commitment to an All-Merciful God. But, some charge, religiously motivated violence is not so hard to explain when one fully understands the faith of Abraham's children.

In the words of Thomas Paine (1791), toleration is not the opposite of intolerance, but it is the counterfeit of it, both are despotisms. The one assumes to itself the right of withholding liberty of conscience and the other of granting it. In contrast, Anat Scolnicov (2011) states that while other and earlier philosophies embodied a principle of religious toleration, the idea of religious freedom as a right is most developed in liberal thought. It was first articulated under liberal philosophy as part of a set of rights. It is therefore especially relevant to understand the justifications for a right to religious freedom in liberal theory, and hence how this right should be coherently interpreted in law. From the liberal literature of the Enlightenment and the present-day debate, several important reasons for upholding freedom of religion emerged. While the basis for the right is individualistic, it is also related to a demand for the co-existence of religious groups. Furthermore, religions might claim group or institutional determinations to supersede individual autonomy. A vital constitutive part of many religions might be the ability of the group or its institutions to make binding determinations for its members, the group can stand in conflict not only with non-members but also with its members and its dissenting subgroups.

In his *Treatise on Tolerance* (1763), Voltaire observes, of course, that the Quakers of Pennsylvania are the most peaceful of men, and he describes with amazement the extreme tolerance practiced in Carolina, where you need only seven heads of families to establish a religion approved in law. Starting from these premises and bolstered by new travel narratives, nine years later, Voltaire thought it legitimate to generalize his observations by asserting that in all of English America, which amounts to approximately one-fourth of the known world of his time, complete freedom of conscience is established. And provided one believes in God, any religion is welcomed, in return for which commerce flourishes and the population increases. The best place to observe tolerance in action is the London Stock Exchange, of which Voltaire paints a memorable picture; Go into the Royal Exchange in London, a building more respectable than most courts; there you will

find deputies from every nation assembled simply to serve humankind. There, the Jew, the Mohammedan, and the Christian negotiate with one another as if they were all of the same religion, and the only heretics are those who declare bankruptcy; there the Presbyterian trusts the Anabaptist, the Anglican accepts the word of the Quaker. Leaving this peaceful and liberal assembly, some go to the synagogue, others go to drink; this one is baptized in a great font in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that one has his son circumcised while some Hebrew words that he does not understand are mumbled over him; still, others go to their church with their hats on their heads to await the inspiration of God, and all are content.

At times religious intolerance is manifested in limiting freedom of expression about religion, David Robertson (2004) argues that the offence of blasphemy, defaming God, or sacred things, is a concept that comes from monotheistic religions, predominantly Judaic, Christian, and Islamic. Strictly speaking, the offence is against God or the faith itself, but from a human rights perspective, blasphemy is treated as an offence against a religion's adherents. Legal controls against blasphemy, which still exist in some jurisdictions, can present problems for the doctrine of human rights. Inevitably, a law that places limits on freedom of expression on religious topics is a restriction on freedom of speech, leading to the polemical conclusion that the latter is not absolute freedom. Even if it is accepted that there can be legitimate restrictions on the freedom of expression, as, for example, libel laws, some argument is still required to show that religious beliefs deserve protection in the same way that a person's good name is protected by false allegations amounting to defamation. As late as 1979 a private prosecution for blasphemy was upheld by the House of Lords in the case of *Lemon v. Whitehouse,* which centered on the publication of an erotic homosexual poem about Christ published in *Gay Weekly*. The Lords upheld this conviction, even though the law had not been used since 1922, and, though it was a majority opinion, upheld it with a very strong version of liability. The decision was challenged before the *European Court of Human Rights* because such a crime breached the freedom of expression protections in Article 10 of the *European Convention on Human Rights*. The European Court ruled that the protection for religious freedom in Article 9 of the Convention was superior in this case to the Article 10 protections. The Court has given

similar rulings in other cases, and, for example, upheld the seizure by the Austrian government in 1994 of a film deemed likely to offend Catholics.

## 3. Human Rights

Emmanuel Karagiannis (2018) narrates the history of modern human rights as emanated from the Age of Enlightenment; *the English Bill of Rights (1689); the U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776),* and *the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, and the Citizen (1789)* included provisions for the protection of human rights. The cause of human rights was advanced further after the first half of the twentieth century because the two world wars resulted in enormous fatalities. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted by the *United Nations General Assembly in 1948*, is generally considered to be the founding document of the international human rights regime. Therefore, the document understandably did not have any religious connotations.

While Johannes A. van der Ven (2010) adds that it is easy to forget that human rights are by no means a new invention. Even though the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948* is rightly acclaimed for its deep-rooted, lucid formulation of the dignity, freedom, and equality to which every person is born, the roots of these rights go much further back. One finds noteworthy elements of them in all the major religions, from the Mesopotamian heritage among which the Epic of Gilgamesh and the *Code of Hammurabi*, the earliest Hindu and Buddhist texts, Confucian doctrine, the *Jewish Bible*, the *New Testament,* and the *Qur'an* to Christian patristics and scholasticism, which were deeply influenced by Greek and Roman philosophy.

In this postmodern era, Andrew Clapham (2015) exposes how different people currently see human rights in different ways. For some, invoking human rights is a profound, morally justified demand to rectify all sorts of injustice; for others, it is no more than a slogan to be treated with doubt or even hostility. Legal representatives sometimes consider that human rights epitomize almost a term of art, representing only those claims that have been or can be upheld as legal rights by a national or international court. Yet

the application of human rights law in court is almost always questioned, with both parties to a dispute demanding that human rights law be applied in their courtesy. Human rights law is special and popular as it often suggests that other law is derisory or applied partially. The language of human rights is positioned to criticize, defend, and reform all sorts of conduct. Human rights have a pedigree of a notable struggle against oppression and the promise of a reasonable future. Playing the 'human rights card' can be swaying, sometimes even conclusive, in contemporary decision making; this is one aspect of what makes the moral force of human rights so attractive; human rights help you to win arguments and, sometimes, to change the way things are done. Many who approach the subject of human rights turn to early religious and philosophical writings. In their vision of human rights, human beings are endowed, because of their humanity, with certain fundamental and inalienable rights. The historic development of the concept of human rights is often also associated with the evolution of Western philosophical and political principles; yet a different perspective could find reference to similar principles concerning mass education, self-fulfillment, respect for others, and the quest to contribute to others' well-being in Confucian, Hindu, or Buddhist traditions. Religious texts such as the *Bible* and the *Qur'an* can be read as creating not only duties but also rights. Recognition of the need to protect human freedom and human dignity is alluded to in some of the earliest codes, from *Hammurabi's Code* in ancient Babylon (around 1780 BCE), right through to the natural law traditions of the West, which were built on the Greek Stoics and the Roman law notion of *jus gentium* (law for all peoples). Common to each of these codes is the recognition of certain universally valid principles and standards of behavior.

In addition, there is a utopic view of human rights, Samuel Moyn (2010) notes that when people hear the phrase 'human rights,' they think of the highest moral precepts and political ideals. And they are right to do so. They have in mind a familiar set of indispensable liberal freedoms, and sometimes more extensive principles of social fortification. The phrase implies an agenda for improving the world and bringing about a new one in which the dignity of each individual will secures international protection. It is a visibly utopian program; for the political standards its champions and the emotional passion it inspires, this program draws on the image of a place that has not yet been called into being. It promises to infiltrate the impregnability of state borders, slowly

replacing them with the authority of international law. It prides itself on offering victims the world over the possibility of a better life. It pledges to do so by working in alliance with states when possible.

In relation to the above-alluded conception, Anat Scolnicov (2011) states that any determination in international law as to how states must accord the right to religious freedom restricts the state's ability to manifest its ideology and restricts its sovereignty. This is true regarding all international protection of human rights, but especially so with religious freedom, as the religious or secular; viewpoint is often an important part of the state's self-definition. Nevertheless, perhaps even more so because of this, it is a limit that must be made in order truly to accord religious freedom. Theoretically, group rights of religious freedom do not exist except as aggregates of individual rights. *The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights* includes, in Article 8, the right to freedom of religion. While other regional instruments allow the right to be qualified in certain conditions, the *African Charter* is the only such instrument to allow the right to be qualified under such a broad condition as 'subject to law and order'. The reason for this qualification in the *African Charter* was the insistence of the Islamic signatory states, to which this qualification was important. This gives considerable scope to the state to restrict religious freedom. However, it does not mean that Article 8 cannot be effective. For instance, the *African Human Rights Commission* found Zaire in violation of Article 8 in its harassment of Jehovah's Witnesses without proof that the practice of their religion 'threatens law and order'. Human rights' reasoning also lies at the heart of new demands for equal rights in new areas such as same-sex marriage. Even before any developments could be discerned in international human rights law, the *South African Constitutional Court* found in favor of two women who wanted to get married to each other. At one level, the case turns on the application of the Constitution; at another level, the decision is a logical extension of the philosophy of human rights. Writing for the whole Court, Justice Albie Sachs explained, 'A democratic, universalistic, caring and inspirationally egalitarian society embraces everyone and accepts people for who they are. To penalize people for being who and what they are is profoundly disrespectful of the human personality and violator of equality. Equality means equal concern and respect across differences. It does not presuppose the elimination or suppression of difference. Respect for human rights

requires the affirmation of self, not the denial of self. Around the world, although there are countries that allow same-sex marriage or something nearly equivalent, there are still more jurisdictions that have laws that criminalize private, consensual sexual conduct between adults of the same sex. Often such legislation is justified on religious or legal grounds, for example, the *Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013* section 78(3) on marriage rights explicitly states that "persons of the same sex are prohibited from marrying each other" but inspired by two Latin dictums; *necessitas non habetf legem;* and *non omne quod licet honestum est* loosely translated into English as necessity knows no law and not everything permissible or even lawful is honest and honorable; respectively. It can be simply deduced that It is also not a secret that the legality of an action doesn't necessarily constitute moral rightness or justice, let us pick some of the instances or scenarios once enjoyed legality but today we can all agree that those were always morally wrong and unjust; in Germany during Hitler's time holocaust was legal and hiding Jews was criminalized, in the 18th-century slavery was legal, especially in the United States of America and freeing slaves was criminalized, colonialism and segregation was legal protesting against it was criminalized, corporate ecocide is legal protesting against it is criminalized

## 4.  Most Affected Human Rights by Religious Intolerance

Kathleen. M. Sands et al (2007) argue that clarification is to be made on concerns of the relation between norms and social reality. Although a function of norms is to deny the existence of the prohibited, the reality is more often the opposite; the prohibition of a particular behavior should be taken as *prima facie* evidence of its existence. Religious norms, when they are understood to demarcate the highest ideals, are particularly counterfactual. Celibacy, the limitation of sex to procreative purposes, or the limitation of sex to heteroerotic forms; these are common. Yet (as in Buddhism), such sexual norms may be seen as ideals that apply only to the most spiritually advanced individuals or (as in Orthodox Judaism) that apply to the religious community but not necessarily to humans as such. In some cases, the common violation of the ideal may highlight the extraordinary character of total obedience. And, just as total obedience may seem extraordinary and therefore sacred, so can extreme transgression or deviation. Most religious traditions

include, particularly among their mystics, practices that are sacred precisely because they are unusual or even transgressive. The religious meanings and realities of homoeroticism, therefore, are rarely if ever fully visible. What is relatively clear, cross-culturally, is that homoeroticism, like celibacy, is extraordinary and as such partakes in spiritual power, whether of the positive or negative kind. Homoeroticism is especially susceptible to negative interpretation because as nonprocreative sex it stimulates what has sometimes been termed 'excessive' forms of pleasure, play, and intensity that are as dangerous as they are powerful. Whether felt to be supernatural or demonic, miraculous or monstrous, whether evoking fascination, abhorrence, or both, it partakes in both the ambiguity and the overflowing power of the sacred, hence at times affecting certain civil liberties.

### a) Freedom of Thought and Expression

David Robertson (2004) defines Freedom of expression as essentially another, and perhaps more accurate, way of referring to the composite of rights usually labelled freedom of speech. Some statutory documents do draw a distinction, or use it instead of the phrase freedom of speech; the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* provides, in Article 19, that 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression' and to 'impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. The only problem that arises in this distinction is that its greater width, though avoiding definitional problems about forms of media, does mean that all forms of expressive behavior may be thought to be protected. While this may be the intention, and maybe necessary, some do wish to distinguish formulated speech, either in writing or broadcast, and purely visual symbolism.

The *Social Contract* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau published in 1762 developed the idea that an individual may have a private will (*volonté particulière*) and that his private interest (*intérêt Particulier*) may dictate to him very differently from the common interest. Rousseau considered that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to it by the whole body; this only forces him/her to be free. For Rousseau; a human person loses by the social contract his/her natural liberty and an unlimited right to all which tempts him/her, and which he/she can obtain; in return acquires civil liberty and proprietorship of

all they possess. *The Social Contract* was a precursor to the French Revolution of 1789 and the ideas it expressed have had considerable influence around the world as people have sought to articulate the rights of the governors and the governed.

In the 19th century, natural rights became less relevant to political change, and thinkers such as Jeremy Bentham (1843) ridiculed the idea that 'All people are born free' as 'Absurd and miserable nonsense'. Bentham famously dismissed natural and imprescriptible rights as 'nonsense upon stilts, declaring that wanting something is not the same as having it. In Bentham's terms; 'hunger is not bread'. For Bentham, real rights were legal rights, and it was the role of lawmakers, and not natural rights advocates, to generate rights and determine their limits. Bentham considered that one was asking for trouble, inviting anarchy even, to suggest that government was constrained by natural rights.

The contemporary scholar Amartya Sen (1999) has recalled Bentham's influence and highlighted a validity critique whereby some see human rights as pre-legal moral claims that can hardly be seen as giving acceptable rights in courts and other institutions of execution, Sen warns against puzzling human rights with legislated legal rights. He also points to a further retort to human rights discourse; it has been claimed by some that human rights are alien to some cultures which may prefer to rank other principles, such as respect for authority, Sen calls this the *cultural critique*.

Karl Marx (1843) responded to the proclamation of rights in the Constitutions of Pennsylvania and New Hampshire and the *French Declaration* by ridiculing the idea that rights could be useful in creating a new political community. For Marx, these rights stressed the individual's egocentric fixations, rather than providing human freedom from religion, property, and law. Marx had an idea of an imminent community in which all needs would be gratified, and in which there would be no clashes of interests and, therefore, no role for enforcement of rights. Marx also highlighted the conundrum that if rights can be limited for the public good then the proclamation that the aim of political life is the protection of rights becomes complex.

In the United States, the *Supreme Court* refused in 2010 to find a violation of freedom of expression or association where a student organization, the Christian Legal Society, was excluded from receiving funding from a public sector university because the

organization operated a policy of applying their rules so that individuals were excluded where they engaged in unrepentant homosexual conduct or held religious beliefs different from those in the organization's Statement of Faith. The Justices in the preponderance seemed to be persuaded by the university's policy of bringing together individuals with different backgrounds and beliefs, which in turn could inspire tolerance, cooperation, and learning among students. In the words of Justice Kennedy, 'A vibrant dialogue is not possible if students wall themselves off from opposing points of view'.

### b) Freedom of Thought, Conscience, Belief/Religion

David Robertson (2004) notes that in the bills of rights clauses on freedom of conscience are frequently linked to religious freedom or freedom of thought, and the concept has several dimensions. Above all, freedom of conscience requisite is assurance that no one will be victimized against or maltreated for any belief he or she has and declares openly. There is little point to freedom of conscience if this has to be exercised in private, and public expression of one's beliefs is often explicitly, and always implicitly, guaranteed where the right is recognized at all. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* adopted on the 10th December 1948, states, in Article 18, that; "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to alteration of religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest religion or belief in instruction, practice, devotion, and observance".

### c) Rights of Women

The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* was premeditated to ensure women have equal access to political and public life as well as education, health, and employment. Under this Convention, which was affected into force in 1981, states are also obliged to take all applicable procedures; to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of chauvinism and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or stereotyped roles for men and women.

An example of institutional religious involvement in the formulation of international documents relating to the rights of women occurred when the Vatican was one of the most active participants in the *Cairo Conference*, objecting to all references to human rights of abortion and contraception. The Holy See stated in a reservation to the final document of the *Cairo Conference* that it understood that the document does not affirm a new international right to abortion. The Vatican also participated in the 1995 *UN Beijing Conference on Women* but lobbied China to ban reformist Catholic groups, which support women's equality, from participating in it. The influence of religious bodies on the formulation of international law affecting women's freedom of conscience and religion is evident also in the *Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court*. The statute includes several genders-specific offences. Important in its implication of religious attitudes is the offense of forced pregnancy, in Article 7(2f); 'Forced pregnancy means the unlawful confinement of a woman forcibly made pregnant, with the intent of affecting the ethnic composition of any population or carrying out other grave violations of international law. This definition shall not in any way be interpreted as affecting national laws relating to pregnancy.' The diction was contentious, as the inclusion of the limitation that the woman was forcibly made pregnant means that quarantine of a woman who is pregnant by consensual sex will not be a crime under the statute. The limitation was included at the request of the Vatican.

Mohammed Abed al-Jabri (2009) states that the Qur'an stipulates those two men, or a man and two women, are required to provide evidence; And get two witnesses, out of your men, and if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as you take for a witness so that if one of them get it wrong, the other can remind her (2, al-Baqarah, 282). The verse makes it clear that the only deliberation taken by the legislator in demanding two women instead of one man is the chance that one woman may err or fail to recall. Error and forgetfulness are not like women, but they are only due to the social and educational situation at the time. The interrogation now is; how would Islam decree on this issue, on the supposition that the condition of women has upgraded and has risen to a level on a par with that of men? The *Qur'an* specifies that a daughter has a half-share of the inheritance, while the son has a full share: 'Allah thus directs you as regards your

children's inheritance; to the male a portion equal to that of two females (4, al-Nisa, 11). As in the case of evidence, the *Qur'an* does not mention details for this discrepancy.

## 5. Strategies to improve Religious Tolerance

Jan Devor (2009) relates that more than ever before; families are now experiencing their pluralism projects as family members date or marry people of different religious backgrounds. The timeworn recommendation restricting courtship and marriage to members of one's faith tradition is less and less common. The consequence is from both interreligious partnerships and partnerships between nonreligious and religious people. The heart chooses as it will! So how do you work through the issues raised by such partnerships? What are the family implications of religiously diverse in-laws? How does a nonreligious person live with a faithfully religious partner? What happens when children come along?

## a) Interreligious Dialogue

The *Second Vatican Council* was a twentieth-century gathering of Catholic bishops from around the globe. Summoned by Pope John XXIII, it met for numerous hearings at Vatican City, Rome, from 1962 to 1965. It was during this highly significant Council that the Roman Catholic Church set its course for entry into the waters of interreligious dialogue. The decrees and documents of this Council that addressed relationships with other religions, and a new understanding of the place of those religions within the Catholic theological worldview, marked the opening up of the Roman Catholic Church to dialogue with peoples of other faiths. This advance took place in the background of a then innovative and encompassing task; the building of a dialogical church. Embracing dialogue as a relational modality was applied not only concerning an interaction with other religions; it was part of a wider-ranging ecclesial reform and development. So, it is to the Second Vatican Council, and its epoch-making documented outcomes that courtesy needs to be given as it laid the foundation for all that has followed, including the engagement of the Roman Catholic Church with Islam and Jews.

In October of 2007, an 'Open Letter and Call from Muslim Religious Leaders' was dispensed to the Christian Church. This seminal letter, signed by 138 Muslim clerics and academics, was addressed to Pope Benedict XVI; the Patriarch of Constantinople, His All-Holiness Bartholomew I, and a further 19 named heads of Eastern Orthodox Churches; together with the Archbishop of Canterbury and four heads of Western Churches including the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches and, indeed, leaders of Christian Churches, everywhere. Entitled '*A Common Word between Us and You'*, this is a significant epistle both with veneration for the mere fact that it happened, as well as for its substance and what it has since triggered in terms of response and allied activities.

Douglas Pratt (2017) relates that for centuries the Roman Catholic Church had lived, in effect, wholly within its worldview agenda; resistant to winds of change and slow to adjust. It had long been satisfied with the status quo of received tradition within which any alteration was carefully controlled. And in this context any acknowledgment of a religious other, even other Christian Churches was, at best, decidedly muted. To the extent that any encounter with another religion might be entertained, for whatever reason, the official response was one of considerable caution. No salvific significance was conferred to other religions, and the notion of establishing some kind of dialogical relationship with any religious other was a peripheral idea in the extreme. So it was that, before the *Second Vatican Council*, in respect of other faiths and any engagement with their followers, other than for purposes of evangelism, the attitude of the Catholic Church was usually one of prudence and hesitation. The feeling was widespread in the Church that it would be difficult to avoid forms of practical syncretism in such encounters, and that participation in multi-lateral organizations would in itself indicate an indifferentist or relativist approach to religion.

### b) World Council of Churches

Douglas Pratt (2017) argues that following World War II the western world engaged in reconstruction and recovery; the stalled ecumenical movement resumed its developmental trajectory. The *World Council of Churches* came into being soon after the war. Its foundational Assembly was held in Amsterdam in 1948. Theological reflection

and social action were viewed as the two areas of Christian life in regards to which the constituting Churches of this new canopy organization, the Council itself is a fellowship of churches that thought it was right for Christian churches to do as much together rather than continue to do apart. The stage was now set for significant new prospects for engagement in issues such as relationships with other religions. However, other than a report and recommendations on the *Christian Approach to the Jews*, the inaugural Assembly of the World Council of Churches did not address directly the matter of Christianity's relationship to other faiths; rather the presumption of evangelical witness dominated and was soon to be strengthened.

### c) Ecumenism

Gerard Mannion (2007) discusses that the Christian church itself already has, of course, many rich abstract resources at its disposal in the fight against globalization. That framework and science is, of course, ecumenism. The ancient world, in Greek, spoke of *oikoumene* meaning the entire world. Christians from early times saw a need to reinterpret this concept so that, instead of an imperial model, they developed a communitarian model whereby there could be unity with a tolerance of diversity among very different communities in very different places. Their understanding of *oikoumene* looked towards the formation of the kingdom of justice and righteousness which Christ called humanity. In turn, this called for them to share common values to fight what is unjust, dehumanizing, and evil.

Douglas Pratt (2017) records that the ecumenical movement, so far as the recent history of the Christian Church is concerned, has been one of the keys defining features of Christianity in the twentieth century. This movement commenced with the *1910 World Missionary Conference* held in Edinburgh, Scotland, which was itself an outcome of nineteenth-century antecedents. From 1910 onwards, ecumenical Christianity not only addressed internal issues about theology, self-understanding, and inter-church relations, but it also engaged with wider social issues and concerns including the question of the relationship with peoples of other faiths. Ecumenical engagement with Islam emerged with, and out of, this modern era turns of the Christian Church towards interreligious dialogue and interfaith relations.

## 6.  Non-Religiosity and Secularism

Nonreligious people opt for human rights, prefer direct, active, subjective rights that are rooted in the dignity of the human person in a democratic legal order in which the people are sovereign, and not an extramundane, sacred order with a divine sovereign at the top, represented, as they see it, by non-elected religious leaders that consider themselves entitled to dispense without any accountability to the people. They are also mistrustful of the moral claims of religions because of the way they easily tend to erase from their collective memory the many forms of bodily and mental violence, inquisition, and genocide perpetrated in their name in the course of history.

Johannes A. Van der Ven (2010) claims that *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948* broke with the tradition of religious foundations, however, watered down the references to God, natural law, or natural rights may have become over the years. The 1948 declaration contains no reference to God whatever, natural law or natural rights, or any worldview or even philosophy. The main reason was the altered scale on which that document was designed. A universal religious foundation of human rights could still be laid for 18th-century nation-states, the more so because the vast majority of the population was Christian, be it Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, Anglican, or Congregationalist in whatever variant form. But even at that time, religious minorities like Jews and Muslims posed a problem if only because bar the odd group here and they were unfamiliar with natural law and the natural rights embedded in it. For the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the national scale had to be extended to encompass the whole world, so religious pluralism inevitably became an obstacle to a universal foundation. Besides, the growing number of groups that had turned their backs on religion of any kind, including the elite of the radical Enlightenment, made a universal religious foundation problematic.  Furthermore, some have already emigrated inwardly without renouncing external religious membership. Others have tacitly elected to vote with their feet and have vacated the church. When one speaks about religion today, in this case, the Christian religion in Europe, one is speaking about a complex diversity of beliefs and rites and community and leadership forms in an ocean of growing agnosticism and pragmatic atheism.

However, neutrality towards religion is manifested differently in different legal systems; Obama in his inaugural speech adopted a middle way, a delicate balancing act; "We progressives . . . might recognize the overlapping values that both religious and secular people share when it comes to the moral and material direction of our country… We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and non-believers." Obama was expressing his adherence to a conception of the American nation as not strictly speaking Christian, but pluralist, open to all religions, whether or not monotheistic. Above all, it is inclusive enough to accept without restriction those who, because of atheism or indifference, reject any religion. Barack Obama is thus the first president in the history of the United States to acknowledge in an Inaugural Address that there are Americans who do not believe in God. In doing so, he puts nonbelievers on the same footing as religious Americans.  He also paid a remarkable homage to the religious indifference of his parents; to his father who was born and brought up as a Muslim but became an atheist as an adult; and to his mother, who was skeptical of organized religion.

Henk ten Have (2017) notes that philosopher and biologist Julian Huxley, the first Director-General of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization had a clear idea that scientific progress wants to contribute to peace, security, and human thriving, it is not only indispensable to cooperate, but also to know each other's cultures and traditions. It is furthermore vital to relate science to standards that are promoting the value of humanity. Huxley was the promoter of *evolutionary humanism*, the idea that human progress is primarily driven by cultural evolution. Education is of principal importance since it means learning from each other; science is equally significant since knowledge helps to better daily life for everybody. Recognizing variances is crucial but at the same time, it should lead to pinpointing what is fundamental for every human being.

Sumaia A. Al-Kohlani (2018) argues that feminism, in general, can be divided into secular and religious feminism. Secular feminism is typically energetic in modern societies, and religious feminism is found more in the traditional world. Western feminism is usually regarded as secular, although some western feminists can be religious. Redfern and Aune (2010) polled 1265 people who categorize themselves as feminists and found that two-thirds of them designate their religious views as agnostic, atheist, or no particular spirituality. Because of customary cultures' resistance to consent secular feminist views,

several types of religious feminism have been well-known. All of them still struggle to define their problems and objectives. They have rarely been mentioned in feminist literature since religion is considered an oxymoron to feminism. Religious feminists avoid being interesting and tend to accept most of society's norms. Redfern and Aune (2010) also found that religious feminists are usually subservient to the system of norms and laws limiting them. They discard liberal views and lean more toward patriarchy. Western feminism succeeded to isolate itself from religion and subsists outside a religious framework, yet religion has been vital to the feminism that has been constructed by Muslim and Buddhist women.

## 7. Religious influence in the Public Arena

Even though most constitutions in the 21st century ought to be secular, the *Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013* in the preamble has a clause that states that "Acknowledging the supremacy of Almighty God, in whose hands our future lies, resolve by the tenets of this constitution to commit ourselves to build a united, just and prosperous nation, founded on values of transparency, equality, freedom, fairness, honesty and the dignity of hard work. And imploring the guidance and support of almighty God …" The above-mentioned clause gives an impression that Zimbabwe is a quasi-theocratic state of the Christian persuasion, hence discriminating against nontheistic religions like Buddhism and the nonreligious (nones). Also, at public gatherings in Zimbabwe it is easier to say a Christian prayer disregarding religious plurality; for instance, in the 2018 harmonized elections both throne favorites referred to themselves as chosen ones by a Christian God, President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa who emerged as the winner used to say, "The voice of people is the voice God" while Nelson Chamisa the runner up and main opposition leader used also to say "#God Is in It". Furthermore, Christian gospel artists such as Charles Charamba doom indigenous traditional religion in their songs.  All this is predicated on the religious intolerance of some sought.

Mark R. Brown (2014) argues that the *First Amendment to the United States Constitution* pledges the free exercise of religion. By the middle part of the twentieth century, the Supreme Court concluded that the text applies to several states too. That

implies neither the national government nor state governments can constitutionally reduce the free exercise of religion. The born of contention in this constitutional limitation lies in its details. What does free exercise mean? Indeed, what is religion? For the most part, the Supreme Court has interpreted religion generally to include not only one's belief in and affiliation to a supreme being, but also ethical and moral considerations that guide one's life. In two cases addressing the space of the conscientious objector exemption to America's draft laws, for example, the *Supreme Court* interpreted the federal statute to protect atheists as well as moral and ethical objectors. Lower courts have read this to mean that even in the First Amendment context atheists can claim religious protection just like Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Novel religions, too, qualify for constitutional protection under the First Amendment. In a famous mail fraud case, where the defendant claimed he was acting under his religious principles, the Supreme Court explained that religious protection could not be neatly confined to longstanding, traditional beliefs that focus on a supreme being: people may believe what they cannot prove. Religious experiences which are as real as life to some may be incomprehensible to others. In a later case, the Supreme Court went so far as to identify several religions that qualify for protection under the First Amendment notwithstanding their lacking any singular deity in the conventional, American sense; Buddhism, Taoism, ethical culture, and secular humanism.

Bayefsky and Waldman (2007) argue that the religious discrimination in Canada's current education system arises from a framework of human rights protection that was designed for the nineteenth century. *Canada's Constitution Act 1867* recognizes the legal right of the minority Roman Catholics in Upper Canada (Ontario) to receive public subsidies for separate schools. This recognition was part of the historic compromise that gave the same right to minority Protestants in Lower Canada (Quebec). The historic compromise has been elucidated this way; "At the time of Confederation it was a matter of worry that the new Province of Ontario (formerly Canada West) would be controlled by a Protestant mainstream that might exercise its power over education to take away the rights of its Roman Catholic minority." There was a similar concern that the new Province of Quebec (formerly Canada East), controlled by a Roman Catholic majority, might not respect the rights of its Protestant minority. In that way, the existing denominational

school rights of the Catholic minority in Ontario were not impaired by the legislature; and the Protestant minority in Quebec was similarly protected. This is the reason guarantees denominational school rights in section 93 of the Canadian constitution.

Emmanuel Karagiannis (2018) notes that political Islam has often been regarded as stationary and monumental, however, it has changed significantly since the time of Ayatollah Khomeini's triumph in Iran in the late 1970s and the mujahidin resistance in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Although political Islam first appeared in the greater Middle East, it has now extended across the world. From Europe to Southeast Asia and from Russia to sub-Saharan Africa, Islamist parties and groups are on the rise. This is a *new* political Islam that is global in latitude and increasingly homegrown in action. Some Islamists favor activism, some participate in the democratic process, and fewer even advocate violence. The diversity of methods derives from different actualities and orientations. They all share the ideology of Islamism that advocates a greater public role for Islam, yet it is not a well-defined set of ideas but rather holds a very different meaning for different groups of people.

The philosopher and ethicist Alasdair MacIntyre (1989) has presented one resolution that allows for the expression of cultural diversity and yet avoids moral pluralism. Consequently, diverse moral traditions can provoke each other on equal footing. In this commitment to culture and traditions, it is possible to enter the exchange with intellectual honesty and maximal susceptibility without hiding one's shortcomings. In this painstaking, slow, and difficult process of soul searching, exchanges and comparisons would allow the rival traditions to see their weaknesses and strengths and realistically recognize their incoherence and the superiority of their rival, with the likelihood of relinquishment of their tradition.

## 8. Conclusion

The paper has presented an overview of the literature from the global, regional and local levels. The conceptualisation of the study has been articulated about the following rubrics; religious tolerance; human rights; most affected human rights by religious intolerance; freedom of thought and expression; freedom of conscience, belief, and religion; rights of women; strategies to improve religious tolerance; interreligious

dialogue; world council of churches; ecumenism; none religiosity and secularism; and religious influence in the public arena. To cement the argument of the inquiry that religious tolerance is key to the respect of human rights, an interpretive phenomenological qualitative approach has been maintained in its pure form of theoretical suspension of any action, belief, or judgment hence the concept of *epoche*. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that tapping from this study, countries such as Zimbabwe ought to be open to plurality in all spheres of life through formulating a tolerance act to guide the process, religious tolerance being the subject with many sections in that act.

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## Declarations, Charters, Codes, and Bills

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*Code of Hammurabi*

*English Bill of Rights (1689);*

*French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789)*

*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948

*U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776)*


## Councils, Conventions, Statutes, and Assemblies

*Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*

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*Lemon v. Whitehouse 1979*

*South African Constitutional Court*

*The United States*, the *Supreme Court*

**Religious Texts**

*Bible*

*Jewish Bible*

*Qur'an*

# The Usefulness of Indigenous Plants and Vegetables in contemporary Society.

**By**

**Tapiwa Musasa**

**Abstract**

*Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) is tacit knowledge available to local people of any community which can be used in all sectors of life and development. This knowledge is passed from generation to generation through oral tradition, song, and dance. The invasion of traditional societies through colonization, modernization, and globalization has threatened the resilience of IKS and some literature argues that it is being driven into extinction. This paper argues that Indigenous knowledge Systems are undeniably resistant and resilient as evidenced by the continuous inevitable use of indigenous plant varieties in Africa and the rest of the world during outbreaks of pandemics like COVID-19 and even use in the day-to-day treatment of humans and domestic animals. Using individual telephone interviews, a teleconference focus group with rural and urban key informants from Chirumanzu District, Gokwe District, and Harare North low-density residential area, the paper discovered twenty-four (24) indigenous plant varieties, 5 non-indigenous plants, and 5 indigenous vegetables which people are using to improve health systems and strengthens the lungs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The same plant varieties have been used in everyday life even before the outbreak of the current pandemic, indicating their undeniable usefulness in the lives of people. The paper, therefore, recommends that more research should be done and literature should be written on the role of these different plant varieties so that the knowledge is kept safe and readily available for future generations. Documentation is very critical as a migratory measure against the extinction of the crucial role of indigenous knowledge systems*

**Keywords**: *Resilience, Resistant, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Pandemic*

## 1.1 Introduction and Background

The use of indigenous plant varieties in the treatment of humans and animals is a practice embedded in a broader body of knowledge known as the Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) which was defined by scholars like Sithole (2014) as a community livelihood strategy used mainly in rural areas. Chiwanza et al (2013) defines it as a durable local knowledge that binds society. For scholars like Musasa (2019:164) it is "tacit knowledge which is inherent to the local people, which cannot be separated from the people's culture". By virtue of being a way of life, it cannot be alienated from essential survival techniques in security, food production, food security, flora and fauna classification and conservation strategies, water management, environmental conservation strategies, climate predictions, and many more. This wide range of usage was also detailed by Sithole (2016) who gives a detailed account of how indigenous plant varieties are being used in the Chimanimani district of Zimbabwe to treat domestic animals, increase food security as they are used in pest control, and post-harvest food preservation, as well as treatment of humans and animals. This paper posits that these indigenous plant varieties are still active and they are playing a critical role in Zimbabwe's rural and urban areas. People are using the indigenous plant varieties in the prevention of many diseases ranging from the current COVID-19 symptoms to common colds and flu since most clinics and hospitals are out of reach due to movement restrictions imposed by Governments to curb the spread of COVID -19. The paper made use of information provided by key informants from two districts: Chirumanzu district and Gokwe district both in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. The general aim was to find out to what extent indigenous plant varieties are still being used by people from different parts of the country to proffer solutions to contemporary quagmires of the 21st century for survival, to document the findings on how each traditional plant variety is being used. The information will therefore be of importance to young people and future generations who do not know the plant varieties in a bid to save human lives and promote sustainable development.

## 1.2 Literature Review

The role of indigenous plant varieties has been undermined for centuries, particularly in literature in post-colonial states where such information from Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) has been denigrated as backward, lacking scientific evidence, and undocumented. It has been swept aside and denigrated by colonialists as superstitious, denying it a chance to be full-fledged through practice and public recognition (Mapara 2009, Ngara and Mangizvo 2013 and Dombowski 2014). On the contrary, most traditional societies never stopped using traditional plant varieties because they are affordable and they are the ones they have known for generations and generations.

According to Aziz et al (2018) ethnoveterinary services is a term used in Pakistan to refer to the treatment of animals using indigenous plant varieties, and the role of such plants can never be undermined because there is a lot to study and discover in the benefit of animal husbandry. In the opinion of Luseba and Tshikhane (2013), more than 80% of people in Africa use traditional medicine which is mainly known by traditional herbalists who rarely disclose their knowledge freely because it is their source of livelihood. As a result, the knowledge is secretively revealed by word of mouth and risks extinction if not documented in literature across Africa (Musasa 2019). In concurrence is Iloka (2016) who posits that indigenous plants have been very critical for medicinal purposes to the extent that even the World Health Organization recognizes the critical role played by these plants and continuously encourages African countries to promote them. Western medicinal companies have always invested huge sums of money into botanical gardens where their traditional plants are grown and protected like the ones in Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The challenge remains that there is very little documentation of the plant varieties and their uses, (Maroyi 2013), the reason why this paper went out to research and document these plant varieties. According to Mahomoodally (2013), 90% of the population in Ethiopia use herbal remedies for their primary healthcare. In addition, surveys carried out in developed countries like Germany and Canada tend to show that at least 70% of their population have tried complimentary or alternative medication, particularly traditional medicines. It is also noted (ibid) that Africa is blessed with enormous biodiversity resources, and it is estimated to contain between 40 and 45,000

species of plant with a potential for development and out of which 5,000 species are used medicinally.

Many places across the world continue to recognize the importance of traditional medicines because they are readily available in primary healthcare since modern medicines are either expensive or far away from the rural people thus traditional medicines are the first alternative for many people. Morales et al (2016) aver that this continued recognition of traditional medicine is critical because it leads to more research and realisation of the need to conserve the plant varieties to avoid their extinction for the benefit of future generations as has been witnessed in the Andean region of Ecuador. The importance of these traditional medicines was also emphasised by Moshi et al (2012) who discovered 49 indigenous plant species used in Kikuku Village in Muleba district North-West of Tanzania, used in the treatment of illnesses such as malaria, bacterial infections, epilepsy, gynecological problems and many more. With such important uses, the argument remains that more research and documentation should continue for easy accessibility by everyone. Chebili et al (2020) gives a detailed account of the way traditional medicine has evolved over the years as recognition and acceptance gather momentum in Kenya. The importance of governance issues was presented as important, thus suitable legislation should be formulated and enacted to protect the users and practitioners of traditional medicines. The trade of traditional medicines coming from developing countries esp,ecially in Africa is hindered by the absence of scientific proof, lack of clear dosage, and instructions, and the high level of secrecy and suspicion, leaving patients questioning their efficacy and safety. The scholars just like the others discussed before, recommend documentation of the activity and efficacy of medicinal plants as a viable route towards formalization as opposed to the informal oral traditions since the oral traditions are prone to loss or distortion as the original traditional medical knowledge is passed from one generation to the next. In addition, most of the custodians of this knowledge die before passing on the knowledge to the younger generations. Cousins and Witkowski (2015) acknowledge the importance unending role of indigenous plant varieties in a wide range of activities ranging from environmental conservation to food preservation and recommend that these uses are fully documented and extended to urban areas rather than rural areas only. Abukutsa-onyango (2015) recommends further research into

commercial seed production for indigenous vegetables since they are a potential income generation source and nutritional source for rural people across Africa.

2.0 Methodology

The paper used Qualitative data gathering methods through the use of individual telephone interviews, and teleconference focus groups with rural and urban key informants from Chirumanzu District, Gokwe District, and Glenlorne, a Harare North low-density residential area. All participants voluntarily participated in the research since they were all adults after the researcher had explained the purpose of the information sought.

## 3.0 Findings

**Table 1: Indigenous Plants identified in Chirumanzu District**

| Herb/Plant Name | Uses | Application Method |
|---|---|---|
| Gavakava/Inhlaba/Aloe | General wounds, skin rashes, stomach aches -new castle in chickens. also used as a de-wormer Clears black spots and removes pimples, Heals wounds | Crush the thick leaves and apply them to the affected areas in case of wounds. Put the crushed leaves in water and give poultry |
| Mubvamaropa/Umvagazi/ Pterocarpus angolensis | Relieves stomach disorders, headaches, malaria | Crush the bark and drink the fluid. |
| Muchakata/Umkhuna/Pari nari curatellifolia | Cancerous wounds | Crush the leaves and apply them to the wounds |
| Muchecheni/Uphafa/Ziziph us mucronata, | Strengthens the lungs. Treats colds and flue | -Take the leaves and drink them as a tea Steam with the leaves in hot water |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mufandichimuka/Umafavuke/Myrothammus flabellifolia | -Strengthens the lungs Treats colds and flu | Drink as tea on a daily basis |
| Mukamba/Umkamba/Uhlene/Afzelia quanzensis | Wounds in animals | Crash the leaves and burn them apply to the affected area |
| Mukundanyoka/Zanthoxylum chalybeum/ | Treats malaria, Blood pressure, diabetes, and toothaches | Extracted from the trunk, grind it to dry. Grind into powder and use. It will also be easy to conserve and use later |
| Munhengeni/Umthunduluka/Ximenia caffra | Wounds in people and animals | Crush the leaves and apply them directly to wounds. You can use a bandage to hold them for longer on the wound. |
| Mupangara/Ugagu/Dichrostachys cinerea, | Used to treat toothache | -Take the roots, Grind, and keep them in the mouth as long as possible. Place directly above or beside the affected tooth. |
| Mupfura/Umganu/Sclerocarya birrea | Treats Diarrhea, and headaches, and prevents malaria. | Drink as a tonic for weakness and fatigue. Soak water for some time and drink |

The indigenous Plant varieties in Table 1 above were listed from the information provided by key informants in the Chirumanzu district. The respondents were very senior members above the age of 70 years. Two of the respondents indicated that they were traditional healers and would appreciate a token of appreciation presented as a

consultation fee to give the paper the required information. Great assistance was offered by these two elders since their knowledge was used to validate the information already gathered from other members of the district who were younger. In most cases, the information tallied well with what most families are practicing and what the traditional healers knew.

**Table 2: Indigenous plants identified in Gokwe District**

| Plant name | Uses | Method |
|---|---|---|
| Murumanyama/Isihaqa/Cassia abbreviata Oliv | -Treats stomach aches, Headaches, colds, and flues | -Extract the bark, grind, and put it into cold water. Drink when necessary for pain. It is bitter but it works. |
| Murunjurunju/Muvengahonye/Amadumbutshenene /Cissus quadrangularis | Deworming in animals | Crush the leaves and administer them orally to all animals |
| Mupfuti/Itshabela/Brachystegia boehmii | Eyes in animals. If an animal gets snake venom in the eyes, apply. | Crush the leaves and apply the juice to the eyes. Ensure clear juice gets into the eyes without residue from the leaves |
| Mushumha/Umdlauzo/Diospyros mespiliformis. | Treats ringworms, skin diseases | Burn the extract and apply it to the affected areas |
| Mususu/Umangwe/Terminalia sericea | Reduces and cures stomach pains | Crash the leaves, allow them to soak, and drink |
| Mutarara/Umvalasangwana/ Gardenia spatufolia. | Cures toothache strengthens teeth and gums | Extract from the tree bark, dry, and grind into powder. When needed, put into water for 30 minutes and keep longer in the mouth before swallowing |

| Mutsambatsi/Intakubomvu/ Lannea edulis | Treats flu, stomach aches, Treats eye problems, cures wounds | For external use, grind and apply directly to the wounds. For stomach aches grind or chew and swallow the juice |
|---|---|---|
| Mutohwe/Umxakuxaku/ Thespesia | Ear aches | Chop and crush roots extracts and place nicely into the ear without tempering with the inside of the ear |
| Mutondo/Umtshonkwe | -Treats stomach aches | -Chop the bark, crush and mix with water. Drink after some time to relieve stomach aches. |
| Nhundugwa/Intume/Solanum incanum | -Treats wounds in animals -Treats cancerous wounds in humans | -Take the roots and the fruits. -Burn them and apply them to wounds. |
| Ndorani/Ntolwani/Elephant orrhiza elephantina | -Cures ngubhani -heals hypertension and stomach upsets | -Take the roots, grind them, and drink them as tea/juice. Put into porridge for kids and adults to reduce the wind. |

In the Gokwe district elders were also consulted but 30 families were used to sharing their experiences with indigenous medicines as well as vegetables. The trees were also found to be similar to those found in the Chirumanzu district. Table 2 above only lists those trees which were different from the list obtained from Chirumanzu district interviews and discussions.

**Table 3: Indigenous Plants Common in Urban and Rural Areas**

| Name | Uses | Method |
|---|---|---|
| Mutsine/Umhlabangubo/Bidens Pisola | Treats swelling of tissue due to fluid accumulation, supports brain functioning, cures ulcers, treats diabetes | Boil leaves and drink for its wide spectrum of benefits -Also use as a vegetable |
| Tsangamidzi/Gihlu/Zingiber officinale Roscoe | Heals stomach pains help reduce high blood pressure -Treats boating in ruminants | -Boil the powder in water and drink the liquid -Boil the roots and drink them as tea -Sprinkle the powder on your food when eating |
| Zumbani/Umsuzwane/Lippia javanica | -Prevents the onset of degenerative diseases such as cancer stroke and diabetes -Lowers pain such as abdominal pain, menstrual pain backache, and chest pain -Lowers swelling Treats fevers, especially in the case of malaria influenza, and measles -Treats coughs, colds, and bronchial diseases -Helps prevents lung infections | Drink tea daily. You can also steam up with the leaves in the hot water to relieve congested chest |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | -Treats dysentery and diarrhea<br>-is caffeine-free<br>-Has vital minerals such as iron, copper, and zinc<br>-Low in tannin, much lower than robots, and far much lower than regular tea<br>- Boosts the immune system<br>-Has aphrodisiac properties<br>-Treats fertility problems<br>-Its antibacterial, antiviral and helps treat eczema, acne, dermatitis, and loss of hair<br>-Treats seizures and heart rhythm disturbances<br>-Fights prostate cancer and prostate enlargement | |

Source: Primary data

The information in Table 3 above was gathered from Harare North's low-density residential areas through interviews and observation. Families were observed picking up blackjack (mutsine) and Zumbani for immediate use in the prevention and alleviation of COVID-19 related symptoms. All families interviewed indicated that they owe their resistance and healing to Zumbani tea and steaming which they tended to practice two or three times daily especially during the level 3 and level 4 lockdown in Zimbabwe when clinics were not readily reachable. The plant varieties were also known and used by people in the two rural areas studied.

**Other Non-Indigenous Trees**

Table 4: Non-Indigenous Plant Varieties commonly used in Harare: Uses and Application Methods

| NAME | USES | METHOD |
|---|---|---|
| Avocado Tree | Boosts blood supply, Cures Blood Pressure, | Boil the leaves and drink the liquid -Grate or grind the seed, dry, and soak in water to drink. You can drink tea on a daily basis -The fruit can be used as a mask for facial problems. -make a smooth cream and apply it to your face. You can add lemon juice for improved results |
| Eucalyptus/Gum Tree | -Treats flu and chest pains | -Boil the water and drink the juice. Also, steam up the leaves in hot water |
| Guava Tree | -Treats flu and chest problems | -Boil the leaves and drink the juice. Also, steam with leaves in hot water |
| Lemon Tree | -Boosts the pulse rate. -Treats flu and chest problems | -Chew or boil the leaves and drink the juice -Drink tea made from lemon juice to ease chest pains |
| Mango Tree | -Cures Boils, alleviates skin conditions, and cures chest conditions. Reduces and cancels asthma, treats diarrhea, boosts blood quantities, | -Wash leaves thoroughly and chew. Swallow the juice and leaves -Drink the juice of boiled mango leaves |

| | treats incontinence (quick discharge if urine) | |
|---|---|---|
| Moringa plant | -Cures all kinds of diseases, stimulates the appetite, reduces viral loads, boosts the immune system | Boil the plant extracts and drink the fluid. Add the powder into porridge for children and adults as well |

Source: Primary data

Table 4 above, shows plant varieties that the people in urban areas are relying on as first options in case of illnesses. Elder people had better knowledge of the medicinal properties of these trees than the younger generation. This information was gathered from Harare North's low-density suburbs and the families indicated that they use the tree species on many occasions.

**Table 5: Indigenous Vegetables Common in Gokwe and Chirumanzu District**

| Name | Benefits | Suggested Preparation |
|---|---|---|
| Nyevhe/Munyovhi/ Ulude/Cleome gynandra | high in certain nutrients including antioxidants, amino acids, vitamins, and minerals, like calcium, magnesium, iron, beta-carotene, and vitamin C. | - Very hard vegetables especially the overgrown ones -Boil for an hour or 2 depending on freshness. -Season as desired and serve with sadza or any other starch |
| Muboora/Boora/Ibhobola/ Cucurbita moschata | -Contains vitamins A and C -Increases fib in the system | -Very soft vegetable -Boil water first. Add the vegetables and continue cooking until soft. |

| | -reduces cholesterol levels which good for the heart | -Can add oil or peanut butter<br>-Season and serve with sadza |
|---|---|---|
| Munyemba/ indumba/Vigna unguiculata | -Folic acid is good for the body vitamins such as provitamin A, folate, thiamin, riboflavin, and vitamin C, and minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, and iron | - a bit hard so boil for longer -Remove excess water and season as desired. Can add peanut butter. Best with sadza. |
| Derere/Gusha/ Derere rechipudzi/ Isileleda/Abelmoschus esculentus | -Helps with digestion<br>-a low cholesterol vegetable<br>-Helps the body shed excess water weight | -Fry and use as a side dish with other starches for derere rechipudzi.<br>-Boil with bicarbonate of soda when a thick creamy soup is required for both the leafy gusha and rechipudzi. Serve with Sadza |
| Mowa/Bowa/ imbuya/Amaranthus thunbergii, | -Very high in calcium, potassium, magnesium, copper, and zinc,<br>- mowa leaves can be made into a tea to treat headaches, sore throat, diarrhoea, heavy menstruation, and internal ulcers among other ailments. | -Very soft and takes about 30 minutes to cook.<br>-Cook in boiling water.<br>-Remove excess water and season to taste<br>-Serve with sadza |

Source: Primary Data

The vegetables were gathered from both Gokwe and Chirumanzu districts. Residents from Harare North also indicated their knowledge and love for the same vegetables due to their health benefits. The younger generation from all three areas of research did not show any interest in these vegetables as they said they are not aware of them.

## 4. Discussion of findings

The findings of the study include a wide range of indigenous plants used for medicinal purposes and vegetables with immense health benefits to people. The twenty-four (24) indigenous plants, 5 non-indigenous plants, and five (5) indigenous vegetables were identified as critical for health and food provision for the rural and urban people. While the plant species listed in Tables 1-3 are curative, the vegetables in table 5 are relish with nutritional benefits, full of essential nutrients required for a balanced diet like iron, copper, zinc, and many more. Table 4 presents 5 other non-indigenous plant species which were found to be critical by the study and the people in urban areas are largely making use of them. Along this line it can be observed that it is possible to promote both indigenous and non-indigenous species for the benefit of human and animal health since they are already being utilized. This knowledge will help in the provision of readily available plants in the proximity of both urban and rural areas.

Indigenous plant varieties have been useful in Chirumanzu and Gokwe districts since the pre-colonial era and they continue to be useful in day-to-day activities of the local people. The key informants indicated that every family in the rural areas is aware of some traditional medicines and vegetables which work better for them. Most of the prominent trees like Murumanyama (table 2), Mubvamaropa and Mukamba (table 1) are very common across families in the two districts. This has led to traditional leaders placing bans on the cutting down of these trees to protect them from continuous deforestation which may lead to extinction. The use of these trees if promoted and becomes shared knowledge, is very critical for soil conservation and reduction of land degradation. To preserve prominent trees for medicinal purposes for people and domestic animals, traditional leaders will be contributing immensely to environmental conservation strategies through indigenous knowledge systems, the reason why this paper believes the country should promote research and documentation of different uses of indigenous

plant species in medicine. Gavakava (Table 1) for example, has been used by local people in Chirumanzu and Gokwe districts to treat diseases in poultry, and the information continues to be passed on from generation to generation. However, the information is not readily available and may require the expertise of elder members of the community, thus in some cases, a token of appreciation is required since it is their source of livelihood. In addition, the elder members of these communities who are the main custodians of this essential knowledge may pass on without sharing the knowledge with youngsters, in line with the worries of Musasa (2019). If these plants and their benefits continue to be researched and documented, then it will be easier for people of all ages and origins to easily access them for survival and promotion of health.

People in urban areas were also found to know the benefits of indigenous plant varieties useful in the prevention and treatment of various types of diseases. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the study interviewed and witnessed several families in the Northern low-density suburbs of Harare harvesting mutsine, zumbani (table 3), and some non-indigenous tree species for the prevention and treatment of the disease. Tsangamidzi was also topping the list of the commonly used herbs in Harare. The families interviewed by this paper indicated that ginger is a must in all meals, especially as a tonic for throat infections. Even young people in their twenties and thirties were found to be aware of the benefits of Tsangamidzi (table 3). Most flu-like symptoms were prevented by steaming with the leaves from Mango, guava, eucalyptus (table 4), and many more placed in hot water. This clearly shows that traditional medicine is no longer the domain of rural people only but urban people are also included. If documentation, sensitization, and awareness increase, more people will benefit from the indigenous plant varieties.

The two districts used by the study (Gokwe and Chirumanzu) contained similar indigenous plants with common names and uses, although some differences occurred here and there. Even in the vegetable (Table 5), some varieties like derere were found to be different. In the Gokwe district, the Derere/Gusha variety used is a high-growing shrub producing very fine green soup taken well as a relish with sadza or alone as a soup. The variety found in the Chirumanzu district was a bit flat, exhibiting crawling plant characteristics and the key informants indicated that the gusha variety is still used in the

same way for relish. However, derere rechipodzi is becoming more popular since it can be grown by farmers for relish and cash. Further studies are therefore required to establish whether the traditional variety of gusha or derere cannot be planted in fields for large-scale production and commercial purposes, to be cooked fresh or dried for later use during times of scarcity. Nyevhe/Munyovhi/ varied slightly in the way the vegetable was pronounced but all referred to the same indigenous vegetable, the same as muboora (boora), mutsine/musine, and mowa (bowa). The same vegetables were also discussed by scholars like Mushita (2020), Maroyi (2011), and Teya (2016) as very valuable sources of nutrients which are being shunned by Zimbabweans, thus raising the need for further research, documentation, and promotion. In Harare urban, the families interviewed all had knowledge of these healthy vegetables and indicated that they often buy them from supermarkets in their fresh or dried form but tended to be expensive. The indication was also that due to covid-19, travel bans limited their trips to the rural areas where they normally fetch these vegetables when they visit families.

## 5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The paper concludes that indigenous plant varieties are very crucial in mitigating the effects of contemporary diseases in human and animal life through treatment, prevention of diseases as well as health benefits that make human bodies more resistant to many diseases. While there is a proliferation of health quagmires in the 21st century, indigenous plant varieties remain useful despite current challenges like modernization, urbanization, and deforestation. Modern medicine is failing in areas like the treatment of cancerous diseases, pandemics like COVID-19, and many more. Given a chance for research processing, packaging, and labeling, indigenous plant varieties will complement the shortcomings of modern medicine. The major outstanding challenge is the lack of organized and agreed methods of information storage and dissemination.

The paper makes the following recommendations:

- More research should be carried out on the indigenous plant species and the diseases they combat so that it becomes scientifically proven and well accepted by all.

- Documentation of the types, medicinal properties, health benefits, and methods of administering the traditional medicines and vegetables should gather momentum among researchers in different African countries.

- The traditional vegetables should be grown on a large scale, dried, and packaged for use during times of scarcity since most of them are seasonal, with a lot of awareness and sensitization of the whole population on the benefits.

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# The State of Children's Rights and Initiatives to Protect Them in Zimbabwe

By

**Annah Theresa Nyadombo & Ranga Zinyemba**

***And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these"*** **(Mark 10:13-16)**

## Abstract

*This paper argues that Zimbabwe has adequate legislation (local and international) to deliver and protect children's rights, but that what is lacking is putting such legislation into practice.*

**Keywords**: *Children's rights, legislation, government*

## The Child's Right to be heard

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC: Article 12)[45] requires governments who are signatories to the Convention, such as the Government of Zimbabwe, to ensure that any *"child who is capable of forming his or her views [has] the right to express those views freely."* Culture and tradition in Zimbabwe place children at the bottom of society's hierarchy and expect children to be "seen but not heard." A child who speaks his or her mind is considered disrespectful, rude, unmannered, or unruly. Children are socialised to

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[45] The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Article 12)

Article 12 of the Convention establishes the right of every child to freely express her or his views, in all matters affecting her or him, and the subsequent right for those views to be given due weight, according to the child's age and maturity.

accept whatever an adult person says or does to them, even when the child knows that it is wrong. As a result, children are abused in various ways, including through cultural practices, and they feel bound by tradition and culture to keep quiet about it.

Attempts to fulfil the child's right to be heard include the provision of the Child free-helpline 116 [46]and drop-in centres[47] where children can walk in and have their issues of violence and abuse heard by a trained and sympathetic adult. Childline Zimbabwe, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) provides free telephone helpline and drop-in centres for children to report cases of child abuse. UNICEF Zimbabwe has acknowledged these measures saying that it is the responsibility of duty bearers to ensure that children have a critical role to play in the realisation of their rights because they are the greatest advocates of issues affecting them. (UNCRC Zimbabwe Commemoration: Harare)[48]

## The Child's Right to an Identity and Citizenship

Article 7 of the CRC[49] advocates *the child's right to a name and a nationality from the moment of birth.* This right requires governments to register children at birth, certify that they have a name and nationality, and protect and support the family relationships that ensure their survival and healthy development.  The 2014 SOS Report on Alternative Care for Children in Zimbabwe Noted: "The Government of Zimbabwe's (GOZ) enactment of the Births and Deaths Registration Act, Chapter 5:02, was an important step in

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[46] Child free helpline 116 *Zimbabwe* works in partnership with the Government to STOP *child* abuse It is a nationwide *helpline* service dedicated to *children*. The free helpline runs 24 hours toll *free* and is reachable from any phone on any network in Zimbabwe.

[47] Childline *Zimbabwe* has an established network of *Drop-In Centres* in all 10 provinces of *Zimbabwe*. The *Drop-in Centres* operate normal working hours, from 8:30am till 4:30pm from Mondays to Fridays.

[48] UNCRC Zimbabwe Commemoration: Harare 12/04/2019)
More than a thousand children came together to celebrate the 30th *anniversary* of the U.N Convention on the Rights of the Child (*UNCRC*) in *Harare*

[49] *Article 7 of the UNCRC* says that all children and young people have the right to a name and nationality, which they should be granted at birth. It also says that they have a right to – as far as possible – know and be cared for by their parents.

establishing the legal framework for the registration of births in Zimbabwe. Despite the availability of this legal instrument, many children do not have birth certificates throughout the country. It is estimated that in 2009, 45% of children under five in urban areas and 70% in rural areas did not have birth certificates. This means that all these children did not have a legal name, nationality, or citizenship rights." The provision for registration of all children at birth in Zimbabwe is thus still a major challenge as evidenced by the long queues at the birth registration offices nationwide. As noted above, it has been estimated that in 2009, 45 percent of children under the age of five in urban areas and 70 percent in rural areas did not have birth certificates. [50] For a child to be registered for a birth certificate in Zimbabwe, among other bureaucratic hurdles, the father of the child or a relative bearing the same surname as the child is required to be present. On her own, the mother of the child cannot register her child for a birth certificate, even while in the maternity ward everyone can see that the infant is her child. Grown-ups too, even when they are above eighteen years of age, cannot register and obtain a birth certificate on their own.

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT)[51] has therefore recommended that Zimbabwe removes barriers and ensures access to birth certification and other civic status documentation, with particular emphasis on the most vulnerable children. *Mavambo*, translated into English as *Beginnings*, an NGO run by the Catholic Church, works to give children the right to identity at the "beginnings" of their lives by helping them work through the red tape that would otherwise prohibit them from getting registered for a birth certificate. Together with other NGOs such as the Legal Resources Foundation, *Mavambo* helps trace children's relatives for this purpose and advocates for less cumbersome birth registration procedures and the empowerment of mothers for the registration of children.

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[50] Zimbabwe Universal Periodic Review

[51] The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is an inter-agency body which consists of the representatives of 20 UN organisations working in the country. Under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, the UNCT provides overall leadership to the work of agencies in that country.

***The Child's Right to be Protected from Labour Exploitation***

Article 32[52] of the CRC provides for children's *rights to health and protection from abuse and exploitation.* Zimbabwe has also promulgated the Children Protection and Adoption Act (CPAA) which *prohibits the exposure of children to hazardous and harmful conditions and from using them for begging on the streets*. Notwithstanding the existence of such legislation, culture and tradition have made exploitative child labour an accepted norm. Zimbabwe's streets are strewn with children begging from motorists, either on their own or holding the hand of a blind adult. Such children are denied the opportunity to go to school, to play with other children, and in short, to grow up the way children should, just to be children. To counter the labour exploitation of children, research and advocacy have been employed to expose such practices and for Government and other institutions to take action for the protection of children. Chikwanha[53], as cited in the Sunday Mail Newspaper, does this by highlighting the prevalence of exploitative child labour on farms. Other researchers have done the same. The ILO Committee of Experts[54] has also expressed its deep concern at the large number of children under the age of 14 found to be working, especially in the agricultural sector and in households. Advocates are arguing that such practices defeat the need to end Child labour as identified in the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) of the ILO, and they call for change to protect children.

**The Child's Right to be Cared for, Respected, and Included,**
***Children's Right to Health (Article 24)***

Article 24,3 of the CRC requires governments to *ensure that the fundamental right to health and well-being of the child is recognised.* In Zimbabwe, efforts to recognise this are being made through the National Health Strategy which addresses issues on equity

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[52] *Article 34* of the UNCRC protects children and young people from *sexual abuse*. And exploitation

[53] Chikwanja, Happiness. Child labour thrives in farms; The Sunday Mail 25, 2017;

[54] ILO Committee of Experts, Individual Direct Request concerning Worst of Child Labour Convention. 1999 (No. 182) Zimbabwe (ratification 200 Published:2017)

and quality of health across all ages including children and ensures that health facilities are located within a 5km-8km radius. The government also provides free health services at public institutions to persons below 5 years through the Assisted Medical Treatment Orders (AMTOS) from social services. These aim at fulfilling the children's right to health. While such provisions are good on paper, the reality on the ground is different. Health services in Zimbabwe have all but collapsed with shortages of medicines and medical equipment. Doctors and nurses constantly embark on industrial action/strikes demanding that Government provides medicines, medical equipment, basic accessories including personal protective equipment (PPE), and a living wage to enable them to do their work. The government has responded in a heavy-handed manner by firing and re-hiring medical staff, and the impasse has persisted. Children are among the soft targets adversely affected by this deterioration in the provision of health services in the country. In addition, some parents or guardians use cultural, religious, or ideological beliefs to refuse life-saving treatment to children, even in situations where the child pleads with them. Dodzo, Mhloyi, Moyo, and Dodzo[55] concur with this citing as an example, Apostolic sect members who believe that only God can cure illness and thus deny their children medical treatment resulting in deaths, sometimes of whole families.

## Children's Right to Education

The Zimbabwean government also tried, especially in the first decade after independence, to enhance the right to education through compulsory primary education, Early Childhood Development, schools-fees assistance, and the establishment of schools within a 5km-8km radius, and satellite schools in rural areas. For instance, the government enhances the child's rights at Early Childhood Development to meet the U.N. Committee's General Comment No. 7 (GC-7) on Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood. George[56] acknowledges that even "the very youngest children" must be

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[55] Dodzo, MK, Mhloyi, M, Moyo, S and Dodzo,- Masawi, M (2016) Praying until death: Apostolicism, Delays and Martenal Mortality in Zimbabwe; Plots One, Journal

[56] George, S. (2009). *Too young for respect? Realising respect for young children in their everyday environments: A cross-cultural analysis* (Working Paper in Early Childhood No. 54).

"respected as persons…" Again, the reality on the ground is different. In the face of Zimbabwe's deteriorating economic situation, the massive gains achieved in the education of children in the 1980s are getting lost, especially with the re-introduction of school fees in primary school. Many children are dropping out of school. The Coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated the situation as schools in Zimbabwe remained closed for the entire academic year in 2020. The online learning that was encouraged benefitted only a few children from elite families. Even for them, internet connectivity, power outages, and the exorbitant cost of data bundles remained and continue to remain serious impediments to online learning.

In addition, cultural practices of early marriages deny the girl child an opportunity to pursue and fulfil the right to education. Welbourne and Dixon[57] agree with this saying that cultural practices like early marriages are detrimental to the girl child. In some cases, parents are influential in these early marriages as they force the girls under 18 to get married to get financial or material support. A report prepared by the Zimbabwe Youth Council (ZYC)[58] for 2014, provides empirical evidence that children in Zimbabwe are affected by these cultural practices, thus failing to heed the cry of the girl child. The UNCT concurs with this saying that the primacy of customary law as per section 23 of the Constitution perpetuates the marginalization and exclusion of children in some spheres of society. Several NGOs, such as Justice for Children Trust and Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), advocate against such injustice and in some cases, perpetrators, including conniving parents, have been prosecuted in the courts.

**The Rights of Children with Disabilities**

The rights of children with disabilities (Article 23 of the CRC) and as contained in document CRC/C/66 advocates for the priority to *ensure that they have equal*

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[57] Welbourne, P and Dixon, J (2015) Child protection and welfare cultures, policies, and practices; European Journal of Social Work Volume 19, 2016 Issue 6 (Article)

[58] Zimbabwe Youth Council (ZYC) Report (2014) *"Eliminating harmful social and cultural practices affecting children: our collective responsibility,"*

*opportunities to participate fully in education and community life, including the removal of barriers that impede the realization of their rights.* The Government of Zimbabwe attempts to meet this through the policy of inclusivity. Despite the government's efforts, the Zimbabwean culture does not fully embrace the disabled. Makamure (2017) concurs with this saying that the Zimbabwean culture marginalises the disabled in society. Some parents even prefer not to send the disabled child to school feeling that it might not be worth it, or they may prefer sending the child, if they can afford it, to the specialised schools which are expensive and segregated for persons with disability, thereby negating inclusivity. These decisions for disabled children are made unilaterally by the parents or guardians without any input from the affected children. Again, several NGOs advocate for the implementation of the Government's policy of inclusivity and the popularization of the dictum: *"disability is not inability."*

## Religious and Cultural Practices and Their Impact on the Girl Child's Rights

Welbourne and Dixon[59] argue that some traditional cultural practices place children at risk, especially the girl child, cultural practices such as *Chiramu* or sexual dalliance where the seemingly innocent verbal sexual banter between a married man and his wife's unmarried younger sisters is carried too far and the man ends up taking advantage of the innocent girl child. Mhlangeni[60] and Raman & Hodes[61] argue that cultural issues contribute to child maltreatment. Some religious practices also expose the girl child to exploitation by older men, especially among some Apostolic sects, practices such as private prayer or healing sessions where so-called religious healers ask to be left alone with the girl child. The Herald (27 April 2016)[62] states that girls also experience sexual

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[59] Welbourne, P and Dixon, J (2015) Child protection and welfare cultures, policies, and practices; European Journal of Social Work Volume 19, 2016 Issue 6 (Article)

[60] Mhlangeni, LS (2018) Developing a Strategy to curb gangsterism

[61] Raman, S. & Hodes, D. (2012) *Cultural issues in child maltreatment; Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health; PubMed*

[62] The Herald (27 April, 2016) Impact of some social, cultural practices on children in Zimbabwe

abuse and rape through religious practices in some Apostolic sects, leading to early marriages to old polygamous men in the church when the minor falls pregnant.

## Traditional Cultural Healing Practices Abusive to Child Rights

Shoko[63] argues that traditional healing practices such as the treatment of '*biripiri*'[64] (measles) which requires the child to stay indoors are malpractice leading to child abuse, especially for the girl child. Another example is the use of '*Kutemwa nyora*'[65] (incision) to treat children suffering from '*buka*'[66] (convulsions), leaving cicatrice marks on the face which the child carries for the rest of his/her life. The child is not consulted when all these practices are perpetrated on him/her, thus denying the child his/her rights. Several NGOs work with vulnerable children to address these traditional, religious, and cultural practices that deny children their rights. The SOS Villages concept in which "conventional family life" is practically re-enacted with foster parents to vulnerable children is an effective innovative approach to addressing children's right to shelter and family life in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children (ZNCWC) is the umbrella body that coordinates the child rights sector in Zimbabwe, which sector includes such organizations as the Girl Child Network, Childline Zimbabwe, Child Protection Society, Save the Children, UNICEF, the Zimbabwe Human rights NGO, Care International, Justice for Children Trust and others. These organizations work in various capacities to address aspects of child rights as discussed in this paper, ranging from issues of identity and citizenship at birth, education, protection from harmful traditional, cultural and religious practices, poverty leading to children living and working on the streets, HIV AIDS and health in general, to issues of justice for children. What these organizations need is multi-sectoral support from the Government of Zimbabwe and the international

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[63] Shoko, T (2007) Karanga Traditional Medicine and Healing

[64] In the Karanga Indigenous in Zimbabwe, measles is referred to as '*biripiri*. This Shona culture requires that any child whose symptoms have been interpreted as ''*biripiri*.' stays indoors as part of the treatment

[65] '*Kutemwa nyora*' is a Shona cultural practice referring to incisions or slight cuts on the surface of the skin especially on and then rubbing medicinal herbs on it. These incisions are believed to be an outlet for the illness.

[66] '*Buka*' is a Shona belief referring to medical convulsions or *"seizure*." During ''*buka*' a person has uncontrollable shaking that is rapid and rhythmic, with the muscles contracting and relaxing repeatedly.

community to create an environment that promotes the practice and actualisation of child rights as provided for in local and international legislation and conventions.

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Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

# Psychology of witchcraft among the Shona people Myth and Reality:

## *Case Study of witchcraft among the Shona people of Bikita District of Zimbabwe*.

**By**

**Andreas Zvaiwa**

### Abstract

*Bikita is one of the 59 districts in Zimbabwe. The district lies 80 km East of the town of Masvingo. It has a considerable number of ethnic groups, but the Shona are predominant. The Shona nowadays is no longer a single cultural group but a mixture of other cultural groups that have moved into the district. This study will be on the Psychology of Witchcraft among the Shona people in that district. It will be argued that witchcraft is a well-known practice across cultures in the history of mankind and that the practice can be explained through the Freudian and Jungian theories of the Psyche whereby witches operate in the unconscious area of the psyche. The paper rejects the idea that witchcraft is a moral issue and suggests that it is a psychological issue. Because of the current Covid -19 pandemic, it has been difficult to carry out on-the-spot interviews, so most of the information was collected through telephone interviews using a mobile phone. In a few instances, however, the researcher had the chance to witness activities that were deemed to be witchcraft.*

**Keywords**: *Witchcraft, witch doctor*

**Introduction**

The paper is not a legal reflection but an attempt to look at witchcraft in the context of African psychology as enriched by Freud and Jung. Reference will be made to some legal issues or acts but I am not interested in these except when they give relevance to my study. My interest is to look at how the two psychologists – Freud and Jung could be used to attempt an explanation of the dual forms of existence of those who practice witchcraft in Africa, especially in the Bikita District. My theoretical framework in this reflection is based on both Jung and Freud and their idea that we have three elements in our psyche that push us to behave in certain ways: the "id," the "ego" and the "superego".

**What is witchcraft?**

Witchcraft (also called witchery or spell craft) broadly means the practice of, and belief in, magical skills and abilities that can be exercised by individuals and certain social groups. Witchcraft is a complex concept that varies culturally and societally; therefore, it is difficult to define with precision and cross-cultural assumptions about the meaning or significance of the term and if defined it should be applied with caution. Witchcraft often occupies a religious, divinatory, or medicinal role, and is often present within societies and groups whose cultural frames of reference include a magical worldview. It is not a religion to be believed in. Its origin is as complex as its conceptualisation since people seem to accept the phenomena with some fear. Chief Chabata who was interviewed on this phenomenon said that to understand witchcraft one must be a witch. Some people think that its source is some supernatural powers given to certain individuals. The supernatural power, however, is divided into the power of Satan and the power of God. Although witchcraft can often share common ground with related concepts such as sorcery, the paranormal, magic, superstition, necromancy, possession, shamanism, healing, spiritualism, nature worship, and the occult, it is usually seen as distinct from these when examined by sociologists and anthropologists (JSTOR March 1994:253). Sociologists believe that witchcraft played a social role in society both negative and positive. It negatively brought fear to society but at the same time created order. In other words, the order came as an antithesis of chaos.

In psychology, witchcraft is unique because it gives dual existence to the person practicing it. The individual lives in both the conscious and the unconscious worlds as indicated by Freud's theory of the conscious and unconscious.

## The Problem

"A few studies of Shona beliefs and medicine have been produced. Some of these studies have been primarily concerned with traditional healers and their medicines, others have attempted to examine the place of religion in witchcraft" (Chavhunduka, 1978). (Chavunduka, 1998), defines witchcraft as the practice "*of people with psychic powers.*" He does not take a psychological view, but a sociological view of witchcraft. He seems to see the problem of witchcraft as emanating from the lack of acknowledgement of the craft by mainly western-influenced writers instead of looking at the commonality of its existence as a psychological phenomenon. This study attempts to demystify the social existence of witchcraft and looks at it from a psychological standpoint.

## The purpose of this study

This study attempts to demystify the mystery surrounding witchcraft among the Shona people by giving a psychological explanation of witchcraft among the Shona people of Bikita. The Shona people in Bikita form the largest ethnic group in that district. This district is in Masvingo Province and is bordered by Zaka to the South, Gutu to the North, and Masvingo Province in the West. It is popularly chanted by local artists as "*Bikita, Zaka rinopisa, makomo, varoyi, zvidhoma.*" This means in Bikita and the adjacent Zaka, goblins, and witchcraft are predominant. This has not just been prejudiced against the people of Bikita, but a common perception that is often based on a lack of fundamental research on both the culture and environment of the people. It however indicates the prevalence of such beliefs in and about the area. The question is, "Is witchcraft in Bikita a psychological machination or a conceptualised reality?" This question has been neglected by researchers in the past**.**

**Significance of the Study**

In the minds of the Shona people of Bikita witchcraft is real. It controls human life significantly and is even thought to explain some deaths (Bourdillon 1976:173). The people believe that the spirits protect them from anything even death. Death is often attributed to the failure of the spirits to protect them from witchcraft and other causes. Ancestral spirits have been weakened by the witch, hence succumbing to death or calamity. It is hoped that the current study will help make the people see the naturalness of death and avoid witch-hunting in the community. The study could help people live in greater harmony as the practice has also created tensions and animosity between families and neighbours. People could learn that witchery is a psychological phenomenon and death is not necessarily caused by witchcraft. This is contrary to the Shakespearean view uttered by Caesar that death is a necessary end, and it comes when it wills. (Shakespeare *Julius Caesar*)

**Limitations**

Witchcraft is shrouded in myth and the researcher was limited because he was considered an intruder by the people into their mysterious world of the powers of the unknown. Witchcraft being part of this mystery remains unknown in terms of its real origin.  The concept of witchcraft could be considered an international rather than a parochial practice. Unfortunately, it has been associated with what Michael Tournier calls the practice of "the civilised savage." Among the Scottish people, it is observed in the Shakespearean Macbeth. These people believed in witchcraft and the power of the witches to foretell the future. "Hail Macbeth thou shall be king hereafter" divined the witches showing the essence of the power of the unknown given to an individual. Witchery or witchcraft is the supernatural power that the individual has and can use to control others. The source of this power limits this study from delving into the origins of witchcraft since its source is given to the select. The researcher tried to investigate the source of this power but was limited.

**BANQUO**

How far is it called to Forres? What are these
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her chappy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so. *The witches disappear*

That takes the reason prisoner?

Banquo echoes the dual existence of witches when he says:
'So, wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,

So, wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught'

That man may question? You seem to understand me or have we eaten
on the insane root

There is a clear outline of the witches. They live on this earth and yet they do not belong to the human world. The witches are not terrestrial and yet they live with us. St Paul said "he who is of flesh belongs to the flesh and he who is of the spirit belongs to the spirit." (Col.2:13) Where do the witches belong? The witches belong to the spiritual world which can only be understood by someone who lives in that world.

If the Freudian and Jungian ideas are applied, these witches operate from the *id*. It is a world hidden from the ordinary "inhabitants of this world." My argument in this study is that the witches have a dual psychological existence who's geographical "Thereness" is controlled by a rather unknown or mysterious existence. They have a dual existence. The witches can have an earthly human existence and mingle with other people during the day but take upon another realm which the ordinary person cannot penetrate. It is this secrecy of their operations that makes empirical research difficult. What one can only say is that it is psychological, and it is the whole idea of this study to posit that witchcraft is psychological and may be based on powers yet unknown to humanity.

Among the Greeks, the *Theban Plays* manifest conceptual psychology of the dual existence of the women in that play. These women live a normal life during the day but live yet another life at night, - the life of the witches. They operate in the realm of the unconscious and I think this is the whole psychology of witchcraft throughout the world in the sense that the witch does not know what is happening. Once this is unknown to the outsider, the mystery remains personal. Although the phenomenon may differ from culture to culture, the mysterious aspect of witchcraft is universal. Bourdillon (1976), states that the world of the witches remains unknown because showing knowledge of it warrants someone to be a witch. I asked two religious' nuns to explain the possibility of the dual existence of witches and they shrunk away saying "it is too terrifying and we should not talk about it." Witchcraft remains a feared area of human life.

## How Witchery is Acquired

Among the Shona people witches do not give birth to fellow witches. Witchcraft is an art learned from erstwhile or experienced witches. I was told of how young girls become witches. The old witches observe the young girls who can keep secrets and usually invite them to their house during the day. This begins just like a social encounter but as time goes on the witch cooks food with some meat and gives the girl. This is human meat that has been dried. The girl eats the human meat and the friendship develops further. Bourdillon (1976) says that the witch believes that human meat has some potent which makes them resist fear and stigmatisation. The meat is meant to make the girl resilient, and it appears to work. The girl is gradually introduced to the midnight hunt

and once she succeeds, she becomes a witch and goes with other witches during the night. What is of interest is that this girl is feared by others in the village, and she generally does not play with her age mates, she does not smile unnecessarily, and she is taken as being serious in her behaviour. Like any other witch, she has two lives, which I could derive from the Freudian idea of "psychic domination". This, I think, is the existence of any witch. The witch exists in the "id" jumps to the "ego" and exists in the "superego" of consciousness.
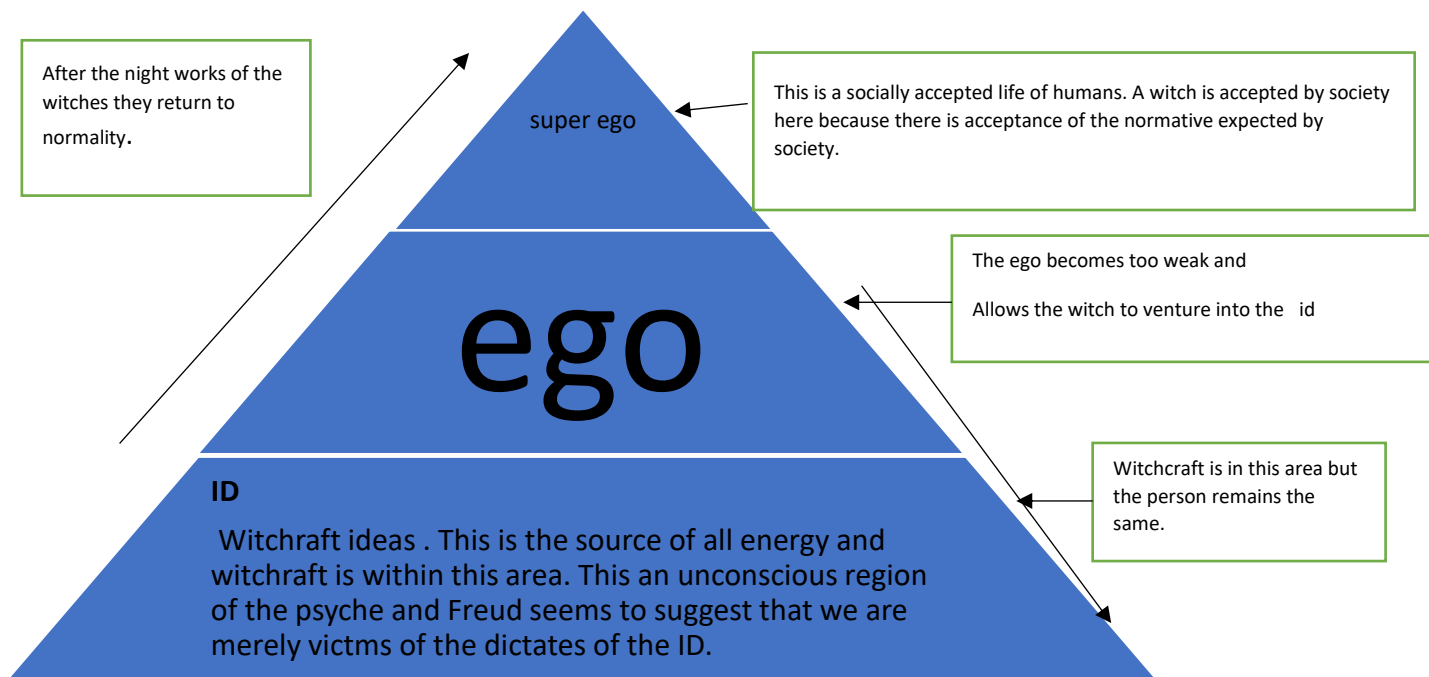
## Witchcraft and the Human Psyche

It is now an internationally recognised psychological characteristic within the realm of the Freudian description of the operations of the psyche.  Jung defines the psyche as the spirit or the soul but modern psychology takes the psyche as the mind and it is this latter definition that this reflection will take and attempt to relate to the mind of the witch and the psychology surrounding the practice of this phenomenon. There is a need to relate witchcraft to the operations of the human psyche and its dynamics.  The existence of the psyche is determined by the operations of the *id, ego,* and *superego.* This paper limits itself to the contribution of these three to the practice of witchcraft. If this is accepted, then it will be clear how the three elements of the psyche share their energies and are dependent on each other. The id is the source of this shared energy, and it passes it on to the "ego" which accepts or rejects the demands of the "id" or superego. At the times the "ego" gets inundated with the demands of the "id". In the case of a witch, the ego finds it very strenuous to prevent the movement of energy from the "superego" and unwillingly permits the witch to pass through to the "id" and this is where the witch gets the energy since the "id" is the source of all the energy of the "psyche". The person with a weak ego succumbs to the demands of the id and this seems to be what happens to the operations of the psyche of the witch. The ego of the witch becomes too weak and allows the mind to succumb to the desires of the id.

As indicated in Figure 1, the witches have a dual existence; one in the superego (The conscious) and the other in the id (unconscious). I am positing that while the ego is generally called the preconscious, in the mind of the witches this should also be called the *pre-unconscious* because the movement of life shifts from one structure to another.

The personality of an individual is then determined by the dominance of either of the three elements of the psyche. One is inclined to say that witchcraft as a psychological process cannot be easily condemned and stigmatized apart from calling it misdirected energy from the "id" and because of the weakness the "id" is only allowed to temporarily operate. I am not suggesting that witchcraft is normal but as a psychological system, it has neither moral nor ethical identity until it is executed by the user. I am arguing that witchcraft is within the operation of the *unconscious* part of the psyche therefore, its morality or lack thereof seems very marginal. Could it be equated to dreams which dwell in the id and the person is not aware of it unless it is executed to do something immoral or unethical?  Have we not dismissed a rich area of research by stigmatising it as primitive, unethical, immoral, etc.? Is witchcraft a mental disorder or an orientation of the mind? The American DST-IV-TR does not give this phenomenon a code even in its axial analysis, so the whole practice seems mysterious. Probably the missionaries and religious personnel were the only ones who talked about witchcraft but from the desire to convert rather than from psychological perspectives.

Hunter (2007), attributes witchcraft and all actions related to the phenomena to the power of Satan. It seems he does not attempt to look at the psychology that lies behind witchcraft. This is probably where the confusion on the definition of witchcraft comes in. It became equated to both ethical and moral principles. Most of the missionaries and colonial agents looked at witchcraft with fear and equated it to human moral decay and condemned it. What is of interest is that witchcraft was condemned in the west and when the colonialists came to Africa, they used the same instrument to condemn what they did not know in terms of its operations in this culture. Most of the writers who wrote about witchcraft did so as a justification for western thoughts and civilisation. No psychological analysis was attempted because everything was considered primitive and unwanted behaviour that was to be replaced with western civilisation. Writers like Bourdillon (1998) Gilfand (1964) Aschwanden(1982) and those who authored the *Zambezi Missionary Journal* wrote to show those "back home' how backward the Africans were and not about how his psychology operated.

During the day witches are aware of their responsibility as required by the social demands of the superego.  According to Freud, humans operate mostly in the superego using all the faculties that have been cleared by the ego. I would like to suggest that the witches operate in the superego during the day when they are aware of what is going on. This process is immediately sent to the unconscious id at night when they go for their witchcraft activities. They are not aware of what they are doing. I already mentioned the women in *The Bacchae* plays of Euripides, who practiced witchcraft, and Aguae the mother of Pentheus, the king is only aware that she is holding the head of her son when she arrives home, and the "superego" takes over from the "id." It is only when she goes back to the social "ego" that she is aware the boot she received or claimed was her son's head. It was the propensity of the "id" that led her to claim the head and that of the "superego" that gave her some remorse. The latter is the social conscience.



After the night works of the witches they return to normality.

super ego

This is a socially accepted life of humans. A witch is accepted by society here because there is acceptance of the normative expected by society.

ego

The ego becomes too weak and
Allows the witch to venture into the  id

ID

 Witchraft ideas . This is the source of all energy and witchraft is within this area. This an unconscious region of the psyche and Freud seems to suggest that we are merely victms of the dictates of the ID.

Witchcraft is in this area but the person remains the same.

**Figure 1: The Operations of the Psyche of the interpretation of Freud's activities of** the Psyche.

The unconscious behaviour of the witch is in the id part of the psyche

It seems while the ego allows a witch to return to the superego and be a social being, it has no power to prevent the operations of the id in the witch, in this case, I would like to believe that people with a weak ego are easily taken into witchcraft whereas those with a strong ego will tend to resist.

## CASES

### Case 1

A novice witch (name supplied by a young man and villager) in Bikita was found naked in the middle of a village in the early hours of the morning. When he was asked why he was there he manifested ignorance of his presence. The people who knew about witchcraft indicated that he was late to return to his house after the witchcraft involvement with other witches who had already returned to their homes. Here is an example of the operations of the conscious and that of the unconscious. Was this somnambulism? There seems to be a clear dichotomy of the psyche system operating at different consciousness levels.

### Case 2

A group of witches agreed to eat their children. (Area of Growth point suppled). They killed and ate two children belonging to the other two witches. When it was the turn of the other witch to supply the boot, she refused to say her child was plumper than the others they had eaten. At the time of writing the case was at the chief's court. The chief had expressed disgust over the incident.

### Case 3

A woman was found walking naked in the streets of Mutare in April 2020. When she was questioned why she did that, she expressed ignorance of her whereabouts. The explanation was that she was left by other witches who had returned to their homes where they were normal again.

What is essential in all these operations is the proclamation of ignorance. When a witch is caught there is always a question, he or she asks the people, *ndiripi* - where am I. This is not a mere rhetorical question but a question of the conscious and the unconsciousness. The id (the unconscious) has stopped operating and there is an attempt by the superego to be with the rest of the social system but is confused and therefore the question "where am I" comes forth. Most witches who are caught tend to be ignorant of what they have been doing. There is an association between reality and dreams when a witch feels that it was a mere dream. Freud believes dreams are an expression of the unreal and Jung takes this as the shadow or the other side of ourselves. Could witchcraft be equated to a dream? If so, then there is a moral dilemma because society does not hold anybody accountable for actions that take place during a dream. This is a complex phenomenon because the same society that does not see dreams as reality often condemns witchcraft. A dream lies in the unconscious area of the psyche and so do the operations of the witch.

According to J.M. Brown (1926) in *Traditional Basotho, London, Seeley &Co.,* witchcraft was part of society's fabric among the Bantu, and it was more feared than respected. People knew the role of the witch. The ceremonies held were religious and the person who was a witch was considered a doctor, "di ngaka, and among the Bantu nomads, they protected the chief and always stood behind him. These according to Brown (1926) were not only priest doctors but were women who were involved in witchcraft, sorcery, and divination. They were also rainmakers; therefore, the whole clan was under their control. This was a profession that was handed over from one generation to the next within the family (Brown 1926). The future witch had to go through an apprenticeship and be paid a fee to be a witch. The skills learned included: throwing bones and interpreting their meaning, knowledge of the herbs, and witchcraft. It was after acquiring the skills that the future doctor or witch was allowed to wear a mantle made of baboon skin and allowed to sit on a hyena skin. Basotho do not make a distinction between a witch, a healer, and a diviner; therefore, the art of witchcraft seemed more acceptable because of those functions. The Shona on the other hand seems to look at the functions separately. The diviner seems to depend on the witch whom he or she consults, and the diviner can flash out witches in a village and clean homesteads of malicious evil forces.

Amongst the Sotho today, witches are men, but mostly women, who have acquired supernatural powers which are not given to just everyone (Ashton (1956) *The Basuto* Oxford, University Press). They behave only as witches at night. During the day they are just ordinary people, this makes them have a dual existence controlled by the conscious and unconscious which are psychological dual personality systems. The unconscious seems to play a dominant role. This is the basis of my argument that witchcraft is a psychological phenomenon that has not been explained or researched fully in Africa. Most of the witches have special powers, the Basuto witches gather naked at night in secluded dongas and sing waiting for their friends who ride on the backs of fleas and fly. In this, they are like Western witches who ride on brooms and fly (Ashton 1952). In one case, they visited a village and put the whole population to sleep while they slaughtered an ox and had a celebration. These midnight feasts were generally not seen by ordinary people - if they did, they are believed to fall sick. They fed on human flesh which they gleaned from badly constructed graves; The Basotho witches had the power to change humans into small people called *Tokoloshes* who became a menace to the community.

Among the Lake People of Malawi, David Livingstone described the witches as people who were possessed by hidden powers and their objective was to bring disaster to the tribe. Livingstone (From Murray's, and *Livingston's Lake People*) indicated that some of these witches were ignorant of their power or its origin. This seems to agree with the Freudian concept of the unconscious which overtakes human rationality. Are the witches then responsible for their actions or it is merely attributed to the unconscious which lies within the area of the id?

Among the Shona people, witchcraft is considered real, and witches are respected and feared (Bourdillion 1976). People are discouraged from taking food from strangers because of the fear of witchcraft. It is ingrained in the people's psyche that these supernaturally powered people do exist and that their power cannot be controlled. Recently, I got a message from a university graduate now living in the UK who said; "I cannot come back to Africa, I am afraid of witchcraft.' (22 April 2020). The concept of witchcraft is a code of ethics amongst the people because

one cannot just pick up anything in case it was dropped by a witch. Such culturally pervasive notions and fears have protected animals, fruits, and even money from being stolen. Is this fear merely psychological or it is a reality? People fear wandering around at night because the witches do their business at night, people cannot take non-frequented paths because they fear witches.

It would seem to me that witchcraft is not a mere practice of the civilized savage as some western writers like Michael Tourneur envisaged it. Recently I spent some time in Bikita and at night an owl came and perched on the roof of my dwelling and started hooting. I wanted to record the hooting sound of the owl, but my tablet would not open. When I told the people the following day, they asked me to switch it on which I did and it responded fast. They laughed at me saying the owls were not just ordinary birds, but they were there to remind the witches to return to their homes after their night hunt. They explained that my machine had been disabled by the power of the witches. This indicated what is in the psyche of the people and one cannot convince them that witchery does not exist.

The concept of the dual existence of good and evil is illustrated by Freud in his perception of the shadow which has a dangerous and valuable existence. Jung explains witchcraft in terms of the existence of the anima and the animus in humans. He recognises the anima as the female element in a male psyche and this is generally recognised as a witch. These are people who have a connection with the unconscious and the underworld. I would like to think that witchcraft as I already mentioned operates in the subconscious where it has dominated the preconscious and the conscious part of the human psyche. These two have been made subservient to the dictates of the id whose main idea is to maximize its pleasure and minimise pain. With due respect for the dynamic of the feminine world, one tends to agree with Jung that women have greater touch with the unknown world but unfortunately during the witchcraft activities, the men consider this demonic and evil. It is true psychological existence that needs understanding rather than condemnation. To me condemning witchcraft is a denial of the composition and dynamic of the psyche and a denial of the psychological component of humanity. This does not canonize the concept of witchcraft in humanity,

but rather tries to give it a psychological explanation instead of a stigma. It is a cultural practice that requires a relative perspective.

**Witchcraft as Conceptualised by Different people**

It seems that individuals view witchcraft differently (Figure 2. Below)

| Gender | Education | Residence | Occupation | Answer to the question: Do witches and witchcraft exist? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. F | Diploma | Rural | Teacher | Gave a detailed account and connections she has with diviners. |
| 2. M | Post Grad | Urban | Admin | There is no witchcraft, but African science. |
| 3. M | Graduate | Urban | Teacher | There are witches and they are real. |
| 4. M | Graduate | Urban | Teacher | It is people's imagination, there is no witchcraft. |
| 5. M | Graduate | Se Urban | Bus Manager | Witches are there, recently they caught someone walking naked in the streets of Mutare. |
| 6. F | Graduate | Urban | Housewife | Not committed |
| 7. F | Nurse | Urban | Nurse | Yes, I do/ ask me I was once bewitched. We need to sit down and talk about this. Detailed how she was bewitched. |
| 8. F | Graduate | Urban | Teacher | Not committed |
| 9. F | O level | urban | Sweeper | Not interested |
| 10. F | Dip | Rural | Teacher | I do not believe in witches or witchcraft, and they do not exist in our area. |
| 11. F | Grade 7 | Rural | housewife | No witchcraft |
| 12. M | Graduate | Urban | teacher | I don't know. |

| 13.F | Graduate | Rural | Teacher | Yes, I do. I lost both my parent's nations to witchcraft. The witches are associated with old people. |
|------|----------|-------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Figure 3: Summary: Responses to the Question "Is there witchcraft?"

| Yes | 5 | 38.46% |
|-----|---|--------|
| No | 3 | 23.0% |
| Don't know | 1 | 7.9% |
| Not committed | 2 | 15% |
| Indifferent | 1 | 7.9% |
| Scientists, not witches | 1 | 7.9% |

Witchcraft among the Shona people in Bikita


'*Bikita, Zaka, makomo, varoyi, zvidhoma.*' This is a slogan one generally hears. Why do people create such labels for this area? A few years ago, a man was asked by the missionaries at Silveira Mission to dig a furrow from the Zizhou River to the mission and he did and until recently this furrow supplied water to the whole mission and its gardens. This man was known for his witchcraft and magical practices, and it is believed he used lightning to dig the furrow. This furrow now is disused, and the man is dead. He used to do a lot of magical operations which people never understood but this has been dismissed by others as a combination of witchcraft and magic.  In schools in this district, there were girls called "Tondekeni". If such girls pointed a finger at you in anger, then you were cursed. These girls possessed extra powers whose sources were unknown. The missionaries with all good intentions tried to perform exorcism rituals on the girls to get rid of their powers which they perceived to have come from evil spirits. Were the girls aware of what was going on or were they victims of the dictatorship of the id?

**Witchcraft and *Tsikamunda***

'Tsikamutanda' comes from the concept of a dead person's wife who at the *magadziro* ceremony was meant to jump across the walking stick left by her husband. She worked forward and backward and if she did not stumble over the stick, then, she was clean, but if she did then she had to confess to the elders on infidelity following the death of her husband before cleansing rituals were carried out.

Chavunduka. (1998), defines witchcraft as the practice "of people with psychic powers." Unfortunately, he does not take a psychological view but a social view of witchcraft. This probably is the psychological approach taken by a group of "witch hunters" called *Tsikamutanda* who do witch hunts and work with the social psychology of the people. These individuals ask the chief to call the whole village and tell the people that the village has evil individuals and there is a need for cleansing. Socially each village has some people who are suspected to be practicing witchcraft. These are people who generally are well to do and often get better harvests than others. They are suspected of possessing special medicine called *divisi*. They are the first culprits for the *tsikamutanda*. I came across a young woman who was a border jumper and had over twenty-nine head of cattle and her brothers accused her of having a *chikwambo*. A *chikwambo* is a goblin that feeds on special food. The *tsikamutanda* came and indicated that the goblin was feeding on the human liver from the woman's relatives who had died. The *Tsikamutanda* asked the woman to take a chicken, cut its neck off, and burn it. She did. It was claimed the goblin was gone and the *tsikamutanda* was given five heads of cattle and he disappeared towards the east. A year later he was dead. From my findings a senior *Tsikamutanda* was not happy with the exorbitant payment demanded by the junior Tsikamtanda, so he bewitched him and retained the cattle.

**The Psychology and Methodology of Tsikamutanda**

As I was gathering material for this study, I was told that the Tsikamutandas are very clever born psychologists who play with peoples' fears. When there is death, the Tsikamutanda sends his scouts to attend the funeral and collect information and then disappear while another stays behind telling the bereaved family of a prophet somewhere who can put things in order. He then refers them to the master Tsikamutanda. The Tsikamutanda comes armed with the report from one of the scouts

and he is now the owner of the information which the people believe in the collects lots of animals after he reveals the calamities of the family. The Tsikamutanda induces fear in the people and even the chiefs are afraid of him. The Tsikamutanda uses the psychology of fear and intimidation  One of the newspaper reporters in Bikita found that:

1. Villagers in Masvingo Province's Bikita district heaved a sigh of relief when two witch-hunters, known as tsikamutandas, were dragged to the courts.
2. The witch-hunters had been terrorising the area east of Masvingo town since late 2020, taking away cattle worth thousands of dollars, allegedly as payment for "exorcising" goblins and other items.
3. They had camped in Bikita for close to a month, traversing the length and breadth of the district, "flushing out" goblins and snakes while taking away cattle, goats, sheep, hens, and cash as payment.



Figure 4 The two tsikamutanda asking an old person to confess her witchcraft.

**Female and Male witchcraft**

Among the Shona people of Bikita witchcraft "Uroyi" is a prerogative of women. Men had their type of witchcraft called: *chitsinga,* and *muposo.* Chitsinga is equated to what we call "gout".  A person gets it from a man and the legs get rheumatically affected because muposo or chitsinga has been case onto him. The word seems to be derived from "tsinga" meaning 'nerve' or 'vein' that when infected is believed to make it difficult for a person to walk. The ailment is believed to be 'removable' by the person who sent it in the first place. The removal is called "*kuombonora.*" A man deliberately operates this and can even boast at beer parties that he can fix people who annoy him. He is much feared in the village. He usually moves about alone and this is the sign to people take as the source of his power. He would be aware of his powers, but I have not been able to establish if he knows the source of his power. *Chitsinga* is very painful and those affected go a long way to pay for its removal they at times are forced to confess their evil actions to be relieved.

*Muposo* is nearly like chitsinga, it is a remotely controlled type of witchcraft that can be sent from remote places to the victim. The person affected by this can collapse at a beer party and get paralysed until the man who sent it removes it. It is a very complex system of witchcraft whose origin is believed to be in the Chipinge and Birchenough Bridge area to the east of Zimbabwe near the border with Mozambique. This kind of witchcraft was at times used to fix the parents of a woman who had failed to honour their contract. In Bikita when there are droughts people give their daughters to rich people and in turn get food in form of maize and other forms grains. With the situation today a girl may refuse to go and the man sends a *muposo* to the whole family. A lot of calamities could happen which cannot be explained. It could be lightning striking the homestead or the man himself.

**Origins of Witchcraft (Interview with Chief Chabata)**

*Uroyi hwokukamba or kutenga*

This is a very sensitive type of witchcraft because the witch must be very careful in approaching the individual. It is based on a very close relationship and carefulness not to break the traditional law of "*kupumha"* to accuse someone of witchery is tricky in this

situation. An example of this is *mubobobo* which means having sex with someone far away from you. This is considered witchcraft and the person needs to be very careful to get to the person. In these situations, one could be sued if a careful approach is not observed. In this category belong the witchcraft element of *chitsinga, muposo* and *muchehiwa*. These can be sent to the victim by the remote system using the power of the witch.

*Uroyi hwokutememerwa*

*Kutemerwa* in the Shona language means to have some incision on your body. The incision is made with some medicated powder called *mbanda* in a very secret part of the body. The powder will gradually circulate in the body and the person becomes a witch. The witches in the village may wish to leave their practice with a young woman. The girl is invited for a meal and first time it is just an ordinary meal. Eventually, the meal is served with meat and this is human flesh because it is believed that "human flesh is the most powerful of the witch's medicines" (Bourdillon1976:175). The young woman becomes a witch and as a novice goes around with the older witch. The girl is generally feared by other girls and she stays alone most of the time.

*Uroyi hwedzinza*

Some families are known for their witchcraft activities. The children born in these families automatically become witches because they inherit this from their parents. It is a very complex psychological experience for the family. I was told that the names of children indicate the whole process of this type of witchcraft.

Vhomorai…….....remove this

Chenesai……...Make my family clean

Tutsirai………give us more of this witchcraft.

*Uroyi hwekurotswa*

It is believed that one way of being a witch is through dreams. The dream is only privy to the witch and this leaves the other people out of the world of the witch. This then goes back to the Freudian and Jungian interpretations of dreams.

Freud also believed that our dreams can access be repressed or anxiety-provoking thoughts (mainly sexually repressed desires) that cannot be entertained directly for fear

of anxiety and embarrassment. Thus, defense mechanisms allow a desire or thought to slip through into our dreams in a disguised, symbolic form – for example, someone dreaming of a large stick in Freud's view would be dreaming of a penis. It was the job of the analyst to interpret these dreams considering their true meaning.

Jung Position: Like Freud, Jung believed that dream analysis allowed for a window into the unconscious mind. But unlike Freud, Jung did not believe that the content of all dreams was necessarily sexual or that they disguised their true meaning. Instead, Jung's depiction of dreams concentrated more on symbolic imagery. he believed dreams could have many different meanings according to the dreamer's associations.

Jung was against the idea of a 'dream dictionary' where dreams are interpreted by fixed meanings. He claimed dreams speak in a distinctive language of symbols, images, and metaphors and that they portray both the external world (i.e., individuals and places in a person's day-to-day life), as well as the person's internal world (feelings, thoughts, and emotions).

Jung agreed that dreams could be retrospective and reflect events in childhood, but he also felt that they could anticipate future events and could be great sources of creativity. Jung criticised Freud for focusing purely on the external and objective aspects of a person's dream rather than looking at both objective and subjective content. Finally, one of the more distinctive aspects of Jung's dream theory was that dreams could express personal, as well as collective or universal contents. This universal or collective content was displayed through what Jung termed 'Archetypes'.

This kind of witchcraft comes to a person in the dream. The person is told which bushes or animals to use. If he or she reveals the dream the power of witchcraft is taken away and he or she may die. It is a secret from either the ancestors or some witches. This involves the acceptance of the unnatural powers of the witches. This is the kind of witchcraft to which the person is the only one privy to the unnatural powers.

In psychology one is not responsible for actions that happen in dreams. Where is the morality of witchcraft in this case? Are the subsequence actions to the individual moral or immoral? Ethical or not ethical?

**The Bewitched**

Among the Shona people, there is no natural illness or death. All death and ailment are caused. The question is "who causes them." The Shona always attribute death to witchcraft. A person falls from a tree in the village and dies. It cannot be, because this man has been climbing up trees in the past, why should he fall and die today, of all days? The person must have been neglected by the ancestors who allowed a witch to cause the death. A witch is not talked about in public. It is an individual who does evil performances secretly at night.  The fact that it is a nocturnal act makes it psychologically very complex. These witches are supposed to meet at night when they perform their acts naked and in darkness.

**Conclusive Remarks**

As early as the 1890s, the colonial government looked at the practice of witchcraft with fear and suspicion but did not attempt to follow the whole psychology of the phenomenon, they never took psychological measures to deal with it. 'Witchcraft is arguably a subject that has created a lot of controversies in both colonial and postcolonial Zimbabwe, as well as in many parts of the world (Sibanda, 2017). Witchcraft in Zimbabwe is defined as "the use of harmful medicines, harmful charm, and harmful magic and any other means or devices in causing any illness, misfortune or death in any person or animal or in causing any injury to any person or animal or property". This is a recognition of the reality and existence of witchcraft, and it cannot be dealt with by suppressing it. One does not suppress a belief out of existence. To me, people must go back to the drawing board and look at these phenomena from a psychological point of view and not merely from a political, economic, or moral perspective. In this reflection, I feel the attitude toward witchcraft is based on colonial stereotypes instead of predicting it on psychology. Once the psychological view is taken, then the whole phenomenon of witchcraft shines out for what it is - universal. Some of the actions attributed to the witches are imaginary. These

include flying to distant places on a broom or in a winnowing basket or riding on various animals at night.

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# Gender-based violence in *Things Fall Apart*

## By

## Majahana Lunga

## Abstract

*A cursory reading of Things Falls Apart has resulted in some analysists labelling this novel sexist. The main purpose of this article is to argue that, on the contrary, a close reading of Things Fall Apart shows that women are depicted as revered stakeholders with significant religious, economic, cultural, and political roles. This is despite the patrilineal and patriarchal stratification of the traditional pre-colonial and colonial village life portrayed in this novel. The feminine principle is in firm control of the entire social fabric. Agbala, the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves is undoubtedly the most potent god, but he is only a messenger of Ani, the Earth Goddess, the owner of the land, and the ultimate judge of all morality. Chika and Chielo, Agbala's priestesses, are also immensely powerful women. Okonkwo, the flawed hero of the novel, is a conceited, single-minded man whose excesses do not represent Igbo values. The crimes he commits are most offensive to Ani. Things Fall Apart is thus exonerated from being sexist.*

**Key Words**: *Achebe, Things Fall Apart, close reading, gender-based violence, sexism*

## Introduction

Cobham (2009, pp. 510 – 511) recounts an incident that once occurred in a literature lesson where one student is said to have burst out: 'This is a sexist novel!' Efforts by the lecturer to explain that this is not the case proved fruitless. In the end,

the class had degenerated into a slanging match between those who felt texts like *Things Fall Apart* should be expurgated from the syllabus, and those who wanted to tell the censorship group what they would like Okonkwo to do to them if he were a member of the class.

The indictment of *Things Fall Apart* as a sexist novel could be attributed to what Achebe calls 'colonialist criticism' (Achebe, 1988, pp. 46 – 61). This is the kind of criticism where the 'colonialist' mindset says since the novel is set in the past, it is about 'Africa's

mindless, inglorious times. On the contrary, the opposite is true: Achebe intends to demonstrate that Europe did not bring 'civilization' to 'savages' (Wren, 2009, p. 528).

No full understanding of a literary text is possible without a thorough analysis of its context.  Jeffares (2010, p. x) affirms this point:

The study of literature requires knowledge of contexts as well as of texts.
What kind of person wrote the poem, the play, the novel, the essay? What was the historical, political, philosophical, economic, the cultural background?  Was the writer accepting or rejecting the literary conventions of the time, developing them, or creating entirely new kinds of literary expressions?    … Such questions stress the need for students to go beyond the reading of set texts, to extend their knowledge by developing a sense of chronology, of action and reaction, and the varying relationships between writers and society.

Accordingly, this introductory section of the article provides what Belcher (2009, p. 180) refers to as a vivid context, answering the 'who', 'what', 'why', 'where', and 'when' questions regarding, firstly, the Research Design and Methodology of this article, and secondly regarding Chinua Achebe himself, and *Things Fall Apart*, his first novel, and for which he is most highly regarded.

## Research Design and Methodology

The design classification of this article is textual analysis. As stated in the abstract, the main purpose of the paper is to subject *Things Fall Apart* to thorough analysis in order to understand the meaning of this text. Naturally, this literary analysis is hermeneutical, and Close Reading will inform the interpretation of the novel.

**Close Reading**

It is worth noting that there is no critical appreciation without close reading, really. But in this article, Close Reading should be understood to be an offshoot of New Criticism as propounded by exponents such as Cleanth Brooks and Allen Tate who argue, quite convincingly, that literature contains universal truths that can only be extracted by a close analysis of its literary language (Dowling, 2006, p. 19). Notwithstanding the fact that historically New Criticism, having been birthed by formalist predecessors such as Russian Formalism, focused on poetry, there is no denying the fact that literary theory is a pluralistic discipline. As such, the close reading that the founders of New Criticism wanted to be applied only to poetry will be applied to the novel, *Things Fall Apart*. Therefore, close reading must be understood to mean the type of reading that is undertaken by what Emenyonu calls the perceptive reader (Rutherford and Petersen, 2009, p. 87). It is only through close reading that one will notice typographical mistakes such as writing 'bear', instead of 'hear' in the second line of 'The Second Coming in the 1958 and subsequent editions of *Things Fall Apart*: 'The falcon cannot **bear** the falconer', instead of 'The falcon cannot **hear** the falconer'. It is only through close reading that one can spot mistakes made by some critics such as Cobham who wrongly spell some Igbo names; Cobham talks of Enzima, instead of Ezinma. Again, Cobham fails to distinguish between Chielo and Agbala (Cobham, 2009, pp. 517, 519). It is these kinds of mistakes that lead to a misinterpretation of *Things Fall Apart*.

Close reading is differentiated from reading for pleasure; instead, it is synonymous with study reading, which is variously known as critical, or interactive reading and demands scrutiny (Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker, 2005, p. 25). In study reading, one reads slowly and carefully. One reads to understand, remember, and be critical. Close reading requires that the reader interacts with the text. One reads with a pencil in one's hand, and occasionally takes notes, highlighting certain aspects in the text that must be revisited or that need further attention (Cleary, 2010, p. 65).

**Research Questions**

Who is Chinua Achebe?

Why did he decide to become a writer, and why did he write *Things Fall Apart*?

What have other literary artists and critics said about Chinua Achebe?

What value does this article add to Literary Criticism?

**Chinua Achebeand *Things Fall Apart***

Arguably Nigeria's best-known novelist and probably the most famous creative literary artist from black Africa (Killam, 1969, p. 1), Chinua Achebe was born on 16 November 1930 in Ogidi, some miles to the north-east of Onitsha. He was baptized as Albert Chinualumogu, but later dropped 'Albert', and also decided to cut his other name into two, keeping only the first part, 'Chinua'. Achebe himself explains that 'Chinualumogu' was just too long, and he had to shorten it to 'Chinua' to make it more businesslike, without, he hoped, losing the general drift of its meaning, since, among the Igbo, names are philosophical statements, (Achebe, 1988, p. 22). The point about the meanings of Igbo names is also mentioned in *No Longer at Ease* during a conversation between Obi and John, a young white man Obi has just met onboard a boat back home to Nigeria after finishing his studies in England. John says he has been told that all African names mean something, to which Obi says, 'Well, I don't know about *African* names – Ibo names, yes. They are often long sentences. Like that Prophet in the Bible who called his son, the Remnant Shall Return,' (Achebe, 1960, p.23).

Achebe's father was a church agent, which meant that he taught at the mission school on weekdays and was responsible for the village church at the same time. The Achebe children attended this mission school from which Achebe gained admission to Government College, in 1944. He then joined University College, Ibadan, where he graduated after studying English, History, and Religious Studies. After graduation, he joined the Nigerian Broadcasting Service, where he eventually became the Director of

External Services. His marriage was blessed with four children, and over the years Achebe travelled extensively all over the world (Achebe, 1958, p. vii).

Primarily a novelist, Achebe was also a short story writer, a poet, a literary theorist and critic, a university lecturer and professor, an editor, a politician, and a social commentator. One could say he was everything a person could be in literature, except a playwright.

Achebe's fame rests mainly on his achievements as a novelist, especially on account of *Things Fall Apart* (1958), which was followed by four other novels, *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987).

His childhood fiction includes *Chike and the River* (1966), *How the Leopard Got His Claws* (1972), *The Flute* (1975), and *The Drum* (1978).

As a short story writer, Achebe published *The Sacrificial Egg and Other Stories* (1962), *The Insider: Stories of Peace and War from* Nigeria (1971), and *Girls at War and Other Stories* (1973).

*Beware, Soul Brother and Other Poems* (1971), *Christmas in Biafra and Other Poems* (1971), *Don't Let Him Die: An Anthology of Memorial Poems for Christopher Okigbo* (1978), *Aka Weta: An Anthology of Igbo Poetry* (1982), *Another Africa* (1998) and *Collected Poems* (2005) is Achebe's poetry anthologies.

Achebe's literary eclecticism is further demonstrated in his polemical works, in which he emerges not just as a literary critic, but also as an uncompromising social commentator. Some of his essays on various topics have appeared in publications such as *Morning Yet On Creation Day* (1975), *An Image of Africa and The Trouble With Nigeria* (1977), *Hopes and Impediments* (1988), *Beyond Hunger in Africa: Conventional Wisdom and an African Vision* (1991), *Home and Exile* (2000), and *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (2009).

Achebe's memoir, *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* was published in 2012, a few months before his unexpected death on March 21, 2013.

Achebe's political views are discernible from reading some of his polemical texts, and in some instances, he is as forthright as possible; for example, when he states:

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. … The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are hallmarks of true leadership. (Achebe, 1983, p. 1)

His first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, was published when many African countries were still under colonial rule, and in 1964, this novel became the first text by an African writer to be included in the syllabus for African secondary schools throughout the English-speaking parts of Africa (except South Africa) (Walder, 1999, p. 11). Since its publication in 1958, *Things Fall Apart* has sold millions of copies, and it has been translated into several languages, German, Italian, Spanish, Slovene, Hebrew, French, Czech, and Hungarian. In 2002, *Things Fall Apart* came top of the list of Africa's 100 Best Books of the 20th Century (ZIBF, 2002).

The three words which form the title of the novel, 'Things fall apart' are taken from Line 3 of W. B. Yeats' poem, 'The Second Coming':

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.
>
> Surely some revelation is at hand;
> Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
> The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
> When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
> Troubles my sight: somewhere in the sands of the desert
> A shape with a lion body and the head of a man,
> A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
> Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
> Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
> The darkness drops again, but now I know

> That twenty centuries of stony sleep
> Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
> And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
> Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

'The Second Coming' is a 22-line poem that takes a dim view of the future. Yeats' focus is Europe, with its tradition of Christian civilization that has stretched two thousand years. This civilization is now collapsing, and the poem's prophecy is that this Christian civilization is to be replaced by something that does not even have a name (Stock, 2009, p. 260).

Achebe is not interested in the prophecy, nor is he primarily concerned about Europe; instead he sees things from the standpoint of Umuofia, to whom the western world is the'shape with lion body and the head of a man' (Line 14), the 'rough beast' (Line 21),(Stock, 2009, p. 260).

In the novel itself, it is Obierika, Okonkwo's long-time friend and 'the voice of reason and sobriety' (Obiechina, 2009, p. 522) who uses words that echo the title of the novel when he sums up the situation soon after Okonkwo's return to Umuofia from seven years' exile in Mbanta; the white man has divided the clan which can no longer act like one.

'Does the white man understand our custom about land?'

'How can he when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says that our customs are bad, and our brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our brothers have turned against us? The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion.  We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart,' (Achebe, 1958, pp. 124 – 125).

In simple terms, Achebe's novel is a fictive account of the breakdown of traditional Igbo society under the weight of European colonialism.

There are many occasions when Achebe has explained why he decided to become a writer, and specifically why he decided to write *Things Fall Apart*. It is easy to understand

his theory of literature, which can be said to have its roots in Classical Literary Theory. Plato's philosophy of life – the common good – is espoused in his treatise *The Republic*. According to Plato, literature must serve society, even if it means that it should be heavily censored, starting with stories for the young, whose age makes them easy to manipulate.

[Child minders] must be persuaded to tell only stories that have a good formative influence on the children. … That is why every care has to be taken that the first stories should be about the noblest things, and should be such as to encourage them in virtuous ways. (Boyd, 1962, pp. 39 – 40)

Plato's theory of literature has been adopted by many literary personalities, stretching as far back as four centuries ago.  These include neo-classic literary icons such as Dr. Johnson, who has been conflated with the dictum 'literature serves a pragmatic purpose: to teach by delighting,'(Gray, 1984, p. 58). Achebe is a firm believer in the utilitarian value of literature, and he 'has articulated the responsibility of the writer as an essentially pedagogical one in which the writer, in addition to writing about the issues of his day also has to assume the role of "teacher'' and guardian of his society,' (Amuta, 1989, p. 114).

In the early 1970s, Achebe categorically stated: 'Art for art's sake is just another piece of deodorized dog-shit,' (1971, p. 80). And shortly after that, he announced that although he was quite prepared to modify his language, he would

still insist that art is, and was always, in the service of man. Our ancestors created their myths and legends and told their stories for a human purpose (including no doubt, the excitation of wonder and pure delight); they made their sculptors in wood and terra-cotta, stone, and bronze to serve the needs of their times. Their artists lived and moved and had their being in society and created their works for the good of that society. (Achebe, 1973, p. 617)

It is clear, therefore, that for Achebe literature must serve society. Interestingly, Achebe is not the only literary artist to articulate such thinking: Soyinka, as far back as the mid-1970s once talked of one of the social functions of literature: 'the visionary reconstruction of the past for the purposes of a social direction,' (Soyinka, 1976, p. 106). And then, in

the early 1990s, Soyinka castigated African writers for doing nothing to condemn human failures and declared:

It seems to me that the time has now come when the African writer must now have the courage to determine what alone can be salvaged from the current cycle of human stupidity. … [The African writer must act] as the record of mores and experience of his society and as the voice of vision in his own time. (Soyinka, 1993, pp. 20 – 21)

Ngara corroborates the above-mentioned stance:

Literature, theatre, and cinema have an important role to play … because art shapes and sharpens our consciousness and our perception of the world around us. … Writers are cultural workers and as such one of their functions is to help in the building of a democratic culture.  (Petersen, 1988, p. 137)

And finally, for the purposes of this article, Ngugi wa Thiong'o also shares the same sentiments, and even goes to the extent of declaring that every writer is a writer in politics, (1997, p. xvi). His stance is based on the premise that there is a strong link between literature and society. Ngugi firmly believes that literature results from conscious acts of men and women in society, and that literature is a product of people's intellectual and imaginative activity; it is thoroughly social. Ultimately, Ngugi argues, 'A writer after all comes from a particular class, gender, race, and nation. … A writer tries to persuade his readers, to make them not only view a certain reality but also from a certain angle of vision,' (Ngugi, 1997, p. 4).

Some critics believe that African literature emerged out of the need to counter early European texts that depict the African as a creature devoid of any dignity (Lunga, 2012, p. 3). Achebe has always argued that Africans should not expect other people to tell their (Africans') stories.

The telling of the story of black people in our time, and for a considerable period before, has been the self-appointed responsibility of white people, and they have mostly done it to suit a white purpose, naturally. That must change, and is indeed beginning to change, but not without resistance or even hostility. So much psychological, political, and economic interest is vested in the negative image.  The reason is simple. If you are going to enslave or colonize somebody, you are not going to write a glowing report about him either before or after. Rather you will uncover or invent terrible stories about him so that your act of brigandage will become easy for you to live with. (Achebe, 2009, p. 61)

The above quotation explains why Achebe decided to be not only a writer but also why he decided to write *Things Fall Apart.* Achebe first explains that while in secondary school he and his counterparts read books that had nothing to do with Africa but had everything to do with England … *Treasure Island*, *Tom Brown's School Days, The Prisoner of Zenda, David Copperfield*, etc.

These books were not about us, or people like us. Even stories like John Buchan's, in which heroic white men battled and worsted repulsive natives, did not trouble us unduly at first. But it all added up to a wonderful preparation for the day we would be old enough to read between the lines and ask questions. (Achebe, 2009, p. 21)

This means that while he was still mentally young, Achebe saw nothing wrong with the literature that he was reading. He says that even when he read books by Buchan and Haggard, where Africans are depicted in a bad light, he did not see himself as an African. 'I took sides with the white men against the savages. … The white man was good and reasonable and intelligent and courageous.  The savages arrayed against him were sinister and stupid or, at the most, cunning,' (Achebe, 1990, p. 7).

But after maturing mentally, Achebe realized that 'stories are not innocent; that they can be used to put you in the wrong crowd, in the party of the man who has come to dispossess you,' (Achebe, 1990, p. 7). Again, in his own words, Achebe states:

At the university I read some appalling novels about Africa (including Joyce Carey's much-praised *Mister Johnson*) and decided that the story we had to tell could not be told for us by anyone else no matter how gifted or well-intentioned.  Although I did not set about it consciously in that solemn way, I now know that my first book, *Things Fall Apart*, was an act of atonement for my past, the ritual return, and homage of a prodigal son. (Achebe, 1988, p. 25)

Clearly, then, Achebe's main reason for writing books such as *Things Fall Apart* was to correct the bad image of Africa and Africans that had been propagated by European colonial racist literature that tended to concentrate only on the negative aspects of Africa and Africans. That is why Achebe's writing is said to be didactic; it is designed to teach readers something that they did not know. Asked why he wrote *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe's reply was: 'to set the record straight about my ancestors,' (Achebe, 1988, p. 26).

Achebe unequivocally states his views on the educative role of a writer in an essay that was published as far back as 1965, 'The Novelist as a Teacher'. These are his words:

The writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration that must be done.  In fact, he should march right in front. For he is after all … the sensitive point of his community.  …  I for one would not wish to be excused. I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past – *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*) did no more than teach my readers that their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans, acting on God's behalf, delivered them. (Achebe, 1965, p. 30)

Achebe's reasons for becoming a writer in general, and in particular for writing *Things Fall Apart* can be summed up in his famous quotations. Firstly, he wanted 'to help [his] society regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement,' (Achebe, 1965, p. 29). Secondly, he wanted to prove that

African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans, that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and above all, they had dignity.  It is this dignity that many African people all but lost during the colonial period and it is this that they must now regain. (Achebe, 1973, p. 8)

Achebe, therefore, believes that art must interpret all human experiences, (Achebe, 1988, p. 44), and that good art should aim to change things, (2009, p. 2009).

Having provided the context to *Things Fall Apart*, in which an attempt was made to answer questions such as who wrote the novel, why, what the novel is about, the setting of the novel, among other things, the article now moves on to produce evidence that supports the argument that this novel is neither sexist nor misogynist. Readers must bear in mind, all the time, that the key motivation for producing African literature, in general, was to restore the moral integrity and cultural autonomy of the Africans in the age of decolonization (Gikandi, 2007, p. 56).  In other words, if critics start looking for phenomena such as gender issues in *Things Fall Apart*, as we understand these topics in the modern, western, sophisticated urban industrialized world of the 21$^{st}$ century, critics are bound to come up with an interpretation that the author never had in mind. This is the interpretation that Cobham foists on *Things Fall Apart* (Cobham, 2009, pp. 518 – 520). This kind of interpretation is anachronistic. *Things Fall Apart* should be read with an understanding and appreciation of its time and place (Wren, 2009, p. 528), late 19$^{th}$-century pre-colonial and colonial rural Igboland, when man/woman dynamics were so different from what they are like today, even among the Igbo themselves.

**Textual Analysis:** Patriarchy in *Things Fall Apart*

It is not in dispute that the pre-colonial and colonial traditional life depicted throughout *Things Fall Apart* is both patrilineal and patriarchal. Among the Igbo, a person's lineage is traced through the person's male descendants. Early in the novel, some clansmen engage in a leisurely discussion in which they compare their customs with those of their

neighbours. Someone remarks that what is good in one place is bad in another place, and Okonkwo himself acknowledges that the world is large (Achebe, 1958, p. 51). However, it is unimaginable for Okonkwo and those who think like him that in some tribes a man's children belong to his wife and her family. Such a situation, according to a participant in the discussion, is as good as saying that the woman lies on top of the man when they are making the children.

The patrilineal nature of their society is clearly explained by Okonkwo's uncle, Uchendu, when he says, 'A child belongs to its father and his family and not its mother and her family. A man belongs to his fatherland and not to his motherland,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 94). As one of the respected elders among his people, Uchendu's explanation ought to be taken seriously.  He is speaking on behalf of the entire community. Having clarified the patrilineality of his Igbo people, Uchendu also acknowledges the fact that societies differ. In his words, 'The world has no end, and what is good among one people is an abomination with others,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 99).

The patrilineal nature of the Igbo society does not, nor should it in any way imply that women are inferior among the Igbo. Again, this comes out quite clearly when Okonkwo is in exile in Mbanta. On discovering that his nephew is full of sorrow because he has been forced to come and live in his motherland for a few years, his uncle, Uchendu, directly asks Okonkwo why, despite the patrilineal and patriarchal nature of their society, they give their children the name Nneka, which means 'Mother is supreme'.

When Okonkwo expresses ignorance, his uncle poses another question: 'Why is it that when a woman dies she is taken home to be buried with her kinsmen,' (Achebe, 1958, p.94)? When it becomes clear that nobody in the gathering knows why this is so, Uchendu explains:

A child indeed belongs to its father. But when a father beats his child, it seeks sympathy in its mother's hut.  A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good, and life is sweet.  But when there is sorrow and bitterness, he finds refuge in his motherland.  Your

mother is there to protect you.  She is buried there. That is why we say the mother is supreme. (Achebe, 1958, p. 94)

Uchendu's explanation makes it crystal clear that the patrilineal nature of their society does not relegate women to an inferior status. His explanation brings out the connotative meaning of the word 'mother', and in that way, he demonstrates that women are an integral part of everyone's life; they are needed for the softer side of people's lives; they represent the humane aspect which is characterized by gentleness, protection, care, warmth, and so forth.

It is worth noting that Igbo cosmology recognizes the contributions of women and men to be complementary (Jell-Bahlsen, 1998, p. 103). The Igbo live-and-let-live philosophy is enshrined in the proverb of the perching of the eagle and the hawk. According to Nwankwo (1998, p. 394), Igbo traditional society is a democratic haven; the retarded citizen and the village idiot enjoy equal speaking time and space with the high and mighty. There is mutual respect for all and sundry. According to Uchendu (2009, p. 234), the Igbo world is based on an equalitarian principle, what Achebe himself calls 'the fierce egalitarianism which was such a marked feature of Igbo political organization,' (Achebe, 2009, p. 164).

There is abundant evidence of the man/woman dialectic in *Things Fall Apart*. For example, only men are eligible to take titles; only men can be members of the *egwugwu*, the administrators of justice in the society (or masqueraders who impersonate ancestral spirits of the village). Yam is said to be the king of crops, a man's crop, and stands for manliness, whilst crops such as coco-yams, beans, and cassava are 'women's crops' (Achebe, 1958, p. 16, p. 23).

Okonkwo adopts this two-dimensional arrangement of Igbo society to satisfy his ego. Possessed by the fear of his father's contemptible life, Okonkwo makes it an act of faith to be 'ruled by one passion – to hate everything that his father Unoka had loved. One of these things was gentleness and another was idleness,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 10). It is for

this reason that 'Okonkwo never show[s] any emotion openly unless it is the emotion of anger. To show emotion [is] a sign of weakness; the only thing worth demonstrating [is] strength,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 20). Okonkwo, therefore, imprisons himself in this veneer of a hard man, when in fact he has a soft side too, as exhibited in the wrestling match during the New Yam celebrations. When one of the wrestlers so expertly throws his opponent on his back, Okonkwo springs to his feet but quickly sits down again (Achebe, 1958, p. 34). During Ikemefuna's killing, Okonkwo looks away as the killer's matchet is raised. Indeed, the narrator hints that perhaps deep down in his heart Okonkwo is not a cruel man.

And so, Okonkwo wants to inculcate 'manliness' in his eldest son, Nwoye, and he does this by being harsh towards him. For example, when Okonkwo is preparing his seed yams, he (Okonkwo) always finds fault with Nwoye's effort, and so threatens to break his jaw, reminding him that he (Nwoye) is no longer a child and that he (Okonkwo) began to own a farm at Nwoye's age. Ikemefuna too receives the same harsh treatment.

The narrator indicates that Okonkwo knows that what he is doing and saying to the boys is unfair because they are still too young to understand fully the difficult art of preparing seed yams. However, Okonkwo explains that he wants his son to grow into a 'real man', one who in the fulness of time '[will] be able to control his women-folk. No matter how prosperous a man [is], if he [is] unable to rule his women and his children (and especially his women) he [is] not really a man,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 37).

Nwoye therefore soon learns that it is right to be masculine and violent and that it serves him well to appear to be growing into the 'man' his father wants him to become. To that end, he relishes the prospect of being sent to do 'one of those difficult and masculine tasks in the home, like splitting wood, or pounding food,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 37). The indoctrination sessions into Okonkwo's version of patriarchy mean that Nwoye must sit in Okonkwo's *obi*, listening to 'stories of the land – masculine stories of violence and bloodshed,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 37). But inwardly, Nwoye still prefers the stories of tortoise and his wily ways, what Okonkwo now calls stories for 'foolish women and children ...And

so, [Nwoye] feigns that he no longer cares for women's stories,' (Achebe, 1958, pp. 37 - 38).

It is only a matter of time before the deep difference in temperament between the father and son leads to a split when the latter leaves the former to join the new religion. Nwoye is by nature very gentle, like his grandfather, Unoka. Predictably, Okonkwo will not accept that, and so he moans throughout the novel that Ezinma should have been a boy (Achebe, 1958, pp. 44, 45, 46, 122). He unfairly compares Nwoye, who is still only twelve, to Maduka, Obierika's sixteen-year-old son.

If I had a son like him, I should be happy. I am worried about Nwoye. A bowl of pounded yam can throw him in a wrestling match. His two younger brothers are more promising. … If Ezinma had been a boy I would have been happier. She has the right spirit. … I have done my best to make Nwoye grow into a man, but there is too much of his mother in him. (Achebe, 1958, p. 46)

It should be obvious by now that Okonkwo's understanding of 'manliness' is warped, and differs from that of other people, including even that of his best friend, Obierika.To Okonkwo, showing affection to someone, your spouse or child, is a sign of weakness; it is 'unmanly'. But to other people such as the revered Ogbuefi Ezeudu and Obierika, it is unthinkable for a man to kill his son, no matter the circumstances. That is why Ezeudu warns Okonkwo to have no hand in the killing of Ikemefuna.

That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death. … They will take him outside Umuofia as is the custom and kill him there. But I want you to have nothing to do with it. He calls you father. (Achebe, 1958, p. 40)

And true enough, the last words from Ikemefuna are, 'My father, they have killed me!' as he runs towards Okonkwo. Dazed with fear, and afraid of being thought weak, Okonkwo cuts him down (Achebe, 1958, p. 43).

The fact that Okonkwo can neither eat any food nor sleep for two days after killing Ikemefuna is a clear testimony that his manliness is fake. Ikemefuna's death has a devastating effect on him, as the narrator graphically states: 'He trie[s] not to think about Ikemefuna, but the more he trie[s] the more he [thinks] about him. … [H]e is so weak that his legs [can] hardly carry him.  He [feels] like a drunken giant walking with the limbs of a mosquito,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 44).

The conversation with Obierika in which Okonkwo tries to exonerate his troubled conscience should send a clear signal to Okonkwo that he has overstepped the mark, that he has transgressed. Once again, the narrator states, with a touch of sarcasm, how Okonkwo expels the thought of his father's weakness and failure by thinking about his strength and success, and his mind goes to his latest show of manliness (Achebe, 1958, p. 46). As a true friend, Obierika sends a chilling warning to Okonkwo, this after dismissing Okonkwo's explanation for participating in the killing of Ikemefuna. Okonkwo explains that he was merely following the orders of the Oracle, but Obierika rebuffs that argument by showing Okonkwo that killing Ikemefuna was as good as killing his son. 'If I were you, I would have stayed at home. What you have done will not please the Earth.  It is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole families,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 46).

Clearly, Okonkwo lives in his own world, because to him even the display of affection between Ogbuefi Ndulue and his wife Ozoemena is a sign that Ndulue was a weak man. Ndulue and Ozoemena die of old age within minutes of each other, and it is said that during his entire married life, Ndulue could not do anything without consulting his wife. Okonkwo takes this to be a sign of weakness, but first, Ofoedu says Ndulue was a strong man in his youth, and then Obierika follows up with a further compliment that indeed Ndulue was a brave man who even led Umuofia to war in his youth.

It should be clear by now that Okonkwo completely misunderstands his society's values, especially as they apply to gender issues. Igbo society is certainly patrilineal and patriarchal, but it is not anti-woman; it is not sexist. Okonkwo's 'monochromatic view' of what it takes to be a man determines his actions and attitudes (Iyasere, 2009, p.380).  It

is this one-sided concept of his society that sets Okonkwo on a collision course with everybody.  Ultimately his warped view drives a wedge between him and his society and makes him commit violent acts against his family, against his society, and finally against himself.

**Textual Analysis:** Gender-based Violence in *Things Fall Apart*

Okonkwo's conceptualization of manliness, it should be born in mind, stems from his abhorrence of his father, Unoka's weakness and failure in life. As a little boy, Okonkwo was deeply hurt when a playmate told him that his father was *agbala*. Okonkwo learnt for the first time that '*agbala* was not only another name for a woman, it could also mean a man who had taken no title,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 10). This incident shapes, and sharpens Okonkwo's psyche, and drives him to be the uncompromising, inflexible character who must 'never [show] any emotion openly, unless it is the emotion of anger.  To show affection [is] a sign of weakness; the only thing worth demonstrating [is] strength,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 20).

Okonkwo is an abusive husband and father, as the narrator states: 'Okonkwo rule[s] his household with a heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, [live] in perpetual fear of his fiery temper, and so [do] his little children,' (Achebe, 1958, p.9). On the first day of Ikemefuna's arrival at Okonkwo's home, his most senior wife to whom the boy has been handed over asks whether the lad will be staying with the family for long. Instead of a simple 'Yes' or 'No', Okonkwo thunders, 'Do what you are told, woman. … When did you become one of the *ndichie* of Umuofia,' (Achebe, 1958, pp. 10 – 11)? This type of response from Okonkwo is hurtful to his wife, not least because she is the most senior wife and deserves to be treated more respectfully than anybody in the household; he humiliates her in front of everybody, including the new arrival. This is verbal abuse, and it is psychologically damaging to the recipient. Nothing in the senior wife's question suggests disobedience to her husband, or that she is questioning the wisdom of the *ndichie* of Umuofia. It is worth noting that Okonkwo's reaction is nuanced with sexism. Okonkwo wants everyone to understand that as a woman, his wife should not exchange

words with him, a man. To Okonkwo, such behaviour from a woman is a sign of disrespect to him, the lord of the household. Secondly, as a woman, she should not even think of questioning the decision of the *ndichie* (elders,) of Umuofia. These elders are men, not women, and their decisions must not be questioned, least of all by a woman. But there is nothing really in the senior wife's words that justify Okonkwo's angry reaction. She has asked a simple, straightforward question that requires a simple, straightforward answer. Instead, the most senior wife is verbally abused. It hurts.

Okonkwo's humiliation of his most senior wife is juxtaposed with Nwakibie's dignified treatment of his own senior wife (in a flashback). Anasi is the first of Nwakibie's nine wives, and during the occasion when Okonkwo has come to borrow seed yams from Nwakibie, there is some wine-drinking that must take place. The men drink first, and when the turn for the women to partake in the drinking comes, the junior wives cannot drink before Anasi. The narrator introduces Anasi as tall and strongly built. There [is] authority in her bearing and she [looks] every inch the ruler of the womenfolk in [this] large and prosperous family, (Achebe, 1958, p. 14 -15). After Anasi has drunk a little, she rises, calls her husband by his name, and then goes back to her hut. The other wives then partake in the drinking, 'in their proper order,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 15).

As if the unkind words directed at the most senior wife (Nwoye's mother) are not enough to cause emotional trauma, she experiences vicarious suffering each time any member of the family is tormented by Okonkwo. The 'constant nagging and beating' of Nwoye by Okonkwo, which results in Nwoye 'developing into a sad-faced youth' (Achebe, 1958, p. 10) is undoubtedly traumatic for the boy himself as he experiences both physical and emotional pain, but it must be even more emotionally unbearable for Nwoye's mother. As soon as Ikemefuna joins the family, Nwoye's mother is very kind to him and treats him as one of her own children. On hearing that Ikemefuna will not eat any food, Okonkwo comes along, with a big stick in his hand, and forces Ikemefuna to swallow his yams, trembling. Afterward, the boy vomits all the food, painfully. The effect of the cruel treatment that Okonkwo metes towards Ikemefuna in this incident is transferred to Nwoye's mother, but

all she can do is suffer in silence. She tries to console Ikemefuna by placing her hands on his chest and on his back.

When Okonkwo breaks the Week of Peace by beating Ojiugo, his youngest wife, for not preparing his afternoon meal, again the other two senior wives also experience abuse, but to them, it is emotional abuse, whereas Ojiugo undergoes both emotional and physical abuse. Any reasonable person would excuse Ojiugo for not preparing Okonkwo's afternoon meal.  She is still young, after all, and is still learning the ropes, as it were.  It is not as if Okonkwo will not have anything to eat for lunch, because the other two wives will certainly prepare something for him and Ojiugo's children. A strong warning to the 'erring' wife should suffice.  But Okonkwo beats Ojiugoso heavily that she cries, in the process drawing the attention of neighbours, some of whom come to see for themselves what is happening.

When it comes to wife-battering, there are no sacred cows as far as Okonkwo is concerned. The turn for him to abuse Ekwefi, his second wife, comes during the New Yam Festival. As in the cases involving the other two wives, the reason for the abuse is flimsy. This time, Okonkwo has been walking about aimlessly in his compound in suppressed anger. He accuses Ekwefi of killing a banana tree.  The narrator makes it clear that as a matter of fact the tree is very much alive. Ekwefi has merely cut a few leaves off it to wrap some food. For this offence, Okonkwo gives her 'a sound beating', leaving her and her only daughter weeping, (Achebe, 1958, p. 27). For good measure, Okonkwo aims his loaded gun at Ekwefi and presses the trigger after hearing her murmur something about guns that never shoot.  Fortunately, he misses her.

It is worth noting, once again, that while for the main target of abuse, Ekwefi this time, the abuse is both physical and emotional, for the other members of the family, the abuse is emotional. Ekwefi's only daughter, Ezinma weeps, not because she too has been soundly beaten.  She feels the pain vicariously. She is emotionally hurt.  The other two wives too empathise with their colleague and plead with Okonkwo to stop beating her.  Of course, they do all this from a safe distance, in case they are caught in the crossfire. The loud,

explosive sound of the gun sets the entire family wailing. A more frightening example of an abusive husband and father cannot be found.

Ekwefi, it should be remembered, has suffered much in her life, having borne ten children, nine of whom have died in infancy. Ezinma, *an ogbanje*, is now ten years old, but it is not clear whether she has come to stay forever or not.  It is for this reason that one would expect Okonkwo to treat Ekwefi and Ezinma differently from the way he treats other members of his household. 'Ezinma' means 'My compound (or household) is beautiful'. Ezinma's beauty and affection, which the diminutive suffix 'nma' connotes are extended to her entire family (Irele, 2009, p. 25).  Despite all this, Okonkwo does not treat Ekwefi and Ezinma differently. When a medicine-man comes to dig up Ezinma's *iyi-uwa,* Okonkwo displays his gift for violence with words.  He roars at Ezinma, threatens to beat sense into her, and even goes to the extent of insulting her: 'And why did you not say so, you wicked daughter of Akalogoli,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 58)?

During the preparation of the medicine to be used in the treatment of Ezinma when she is down with *iba*, Okonkwo also verbally abuses Ekwefi. As she receives instructions from Okonkwo who has selected the best ingredients from a large bundle of grasses, leaves, roots and barks of medicinal trees and shrubs, and after pouring some water in the pot, she asks whether the amount she has poured is enough.

"A little more … I said *a little*. Are you deaf?" Okonkwo [roars] at her, (Achebe, 1958, p. 60).

As in the incident with the senior wife, this is yet another example of gender-based violence by Okonkwo on both his wife Ekwefi and his daughter, Ezinma. Roaring at Ezinma, threatening to beat sense into her, and calling her 'wicked daughter of Akalogoli'must induce a sense of trauma in the ten-year-old girl. She must wonder in what way she is 'wicked' since she has not chosen to be an *ogbanje*. As for being called 'daughter of Akalogoli', Ezinma must be left wondering why her mother is called by such a pejorative epithet. ('Akalogoli' means 'good for nothing' (Irele, 2009, p.50)). Ekwefi, who

has all along thought of herself as Okonkwo's favourite, is now a 'good-for-nothing' wife. Okonkwo is an abusive husband, as nasty as they come.

Having been insulted as 'Akalogoli', Ekwefi endures further verbal abuse when she is accused of being deaf. Without a calibrated measuring instrument, how is she to gauge how much 'a little more' is? The rhetorical question 'Are you deaf?' obviously implies that Ekwefi is so dumb that she cannot follow simple instructions.

Okonkwo's abuse of his wives and children does not have the approval of his community, it must be noted. After hearing that Nwoye has been attending church meetings, he seizes a heavy stick and hits him with two or three savage blows.  It takes his uncle Uchendu to stop Okonkwo, after reprimanding him, rhetorically asking, 'Are you mad?' (Achebe, 1958, p. 107).

 Okonkwo is a member of the infamous (greatest of all time) team of abusive husbands in literary texts, such as Mr. Morel in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, Mr Vlassov in Gorky's *Mother*, and Mr. Grimes in Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, to mention only three examples. Mr Morel is a hard-drinking miner who is hated by his entire family for the simple reason that he is abusive to both his wife and children. On one occasion, when his sickly wife is highly expectant, he shuts her out of the house for more than three hours during a bitterly cold night. On another occasion he beats his wife, leaving her with a swollen and discoloured eye. During their numerous quarrels, he calls his wife names, such as 'liar', and 'you nasty little bitch', (Lawrence, 1913, pp. 66 – 67).  All these things he does and says before his young children. Mikhail Vlassov behaves like Mr. Morel. His favourite epithet is 'son of a bitch', and he always calls his wife 'bitch'.  Pelagea, his wife, narrates that her husband used to beat her as if it was not his wife he was beating. She has a scar on her forehead as a result of her husband's brutality, (Gorky, 1906, pp. 11, 25, 93). Mr. Gabriel Grimes, (note the irony in the forename), is a preacher and is called 'Reverend', or 'Deacon' by his fellow worshippers. He calls himself 'the Lord's anointed, (Baldwin, 1952, p. 252).  It takes his sister, Florence, to undress Gabriel, when she tells him to his face that all his life, he has been masquerading as a holy man. During that

time, there is no one he has met whom he has not made 'to drink a cup of sorrow,' (Baldwin, 1952, p. 252).  Those people include his wife and children. One time, in a fit of rage after being challenged by his wife during an altercation concerning their wayward son, 'with all his might, he [reaches] out and [slaps] her across the face.  She [crumples] at once, hiding her face with one thin hand …,' (Baldwin, 1952, p. 49). The same wayward son calls him a 'black bastard' because he cannot stand the way his mother has been treated by his father. At this point, Mr. Grimes unleashes further violence on his son, using a leather belt that falls with a whistling sound on the boy, again and again, (Baldwin, 1952, p. 50).

In *Things Fall Apart* Okonkwo is in the same category as Uzowulu, the serial wife batterer whose case is heard by the *egwugwu*. Uzowulu is the complainant in the case. His in-laws came to his house, beat him up, and then took away his wife and children. According to Uzowulu, his wife's brothers have not been willing to return her bride price. The in-laws defend themselves by providing evidence that Uzowulu, their in-law, is a beast. For the past nine years, no single day has passed without him beating the woman. After carefully listening to both sides, the *egwugwu* decide that Uzowulu should go to his in-laws, apologise and beg his wife to return to him.

The most important lesson to be learnt from this case is that the law of the land forbids the beating of women.  It is summed up in the words of Evil Forest, the leader of the *egwugwu:* 'It is not bravery when a man fights with a woman,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 66).  It is not surprising that the same message is transmitted in a similar case in *Arrow of God*, a sequel to *Things Fall Apart*, and in which the geographical setting is the same as that in the earlier novel. This time the verdict is passed by Ezeulu whose daughter has been a victim of physical abuse from a man who calls himself her husband. Before he concludes the matter, Ezeulu checks from his daughter whether she wants to return to her husband, and she says yes.  Then Ezeulu closes the meeting with these words:

When she comes treat her well.  It is not bravery for a man to beat his wife. I know a man and his wife must quarrel; there is no abomination in that.  Even brothers and sisters from

the same womb do disagree; how much more do two strangers. No, you may quarrel, but let it not end in fighting. (Achebe, 1964, p. 63)

The fact that Okonkwo is an abusive father and wife batterer must not make readers conclude that Okonkwo represents all men. Achebe himself has categorically stated that Okonkwo is not 'Everyman'; he is not even Every-Igbo-Man (Achebe, 2009, p 127). Okonkwo is Okonkwo, a man bound to violence. The tragedy of his life lies in his nurturing of what are warped ideas of manhood, and his failure to recognize that his society is based on an equalitarian principle (Uchendu, 2009, p. 234). Okonkwo's excessively warped expression of the male principle leads him to antagonize and repress the female principle, both at the social level against 'woman' and the spiritual level against Ani, the Earth Goddess (Traore, 1997, p. 51). In the end, the female principle prevails, and Okonkwo loses his fruitless battle against *agbala*.

**Textual Analysis:** The supremacy of women in *Things Fall Apart*

The pre-colonial and colonial Igbo society of *Things Fall Apart* shows that 'the male and female principles are bound by an operative notion of balance and complementarity,' (Traore, 1997, p. 53). In other words, there exists in the society the understanding that there is interdependence between the female and male clusters; neither group is dominant over the other, nor is the other inferior, despite the patriarchal stratification in the clan. This dialectic is based on Igbo ontology which recognized the fact that '[w]omen controlled certain spheres of community life, just as men controlled other spheres. Women were perceived to possess superior spiritual well-being and headed many of the traditional cults and shrines,' (Ohadike, 2009, p. 241).

This is the duality that Okonkwo attempts to subvert, but he fails dismally because he is waging a futile battle against a behemoth, a system that has been entrenched ever since the clan was founded. The tragedy is that Okonkwo is a conceited man; he knows the rules but he ignores them. He ignores advice from his best friend, Obierika, from deep

fountains of wisdom such as the revered Ogbuefi Ezeudu, and his uncle Uchendu. Achebe notes: 'The obvious curtailment of a man's power to walk alone and do as he will is provided by another force – the will of his community,' (Achebe, 2009, p. 164). Okonkwo sets himself up for ignominious failure.

One of the first incidents in this novel is the threat of a war between Umuofia with Mbaino. The entire clan is mobilized, and about ten thousand men gather to deliberate on the matter which concerns the murder of a **daughter** (my emphasis) of Umuofia at Mbaino. Mbaino must choose between the war on the one hand and on the other the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation. The point to note from this case is this: Umuofia will not fold its arms when one of its citizens has been wronged, and this time it is a **female** (again, my emphasis) member of the society.  The second point to note is that this **single** woman must be paid for by **two** people. The third point to note is the anger that the murder has engendered in the clan, and this anger is detectable in the words of the main speaker: 'Those sons of wild animals have dared to murder a daughter of Umuofia,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 8).

To Umuofians, then, an injury to one is an injury to all, regardless of sex. But this case serves to demonstrate the supremacy of women in Igbo culture. The main reason why the people of Mbaino opt for a peaceful settlement is that Umuofia is feared by all its neighbours because of its power in war and magic. The active principle in that medicine is an old woman, and the medicine itself is called *agadi-nwayi*, or old woman, (Achebe, 1958, p. 9).  In simple terms, Umuofia's most potent war medicine is as old as the clan itself, and it is a woman.

As if the *agadi-nwayi* example is not illustrative enough of the supremacy of women in *Things Fall Apart*, the concept of Agbala, the Oracle of the Hills and Caves, further corroborates this idea. Just as the Ancient Greeks refer to Zeus as their supreme god, and Apollo as the prophetic god at Delphi, the traditional Igbo refer to Chukwu as their supreme god, and Agbala is the equivalent of Apollo. The mighty Agbala (Achebe, 1958,

p. 71) has many names – the owner of the future, the messenger of earth, the god who cut(s) a man down when his life (i)s sweetest to him (Achebe, 1958, p. 75).

A priestess, a greatly feared woman, full of the power of her god serves Agbala. During Okonkwo's boyhood, Chika was the priestess, and during his adulthood it is Chielo. According to Irele (2009, p. 12) 'Chika' is a variant form of 'Chukwuka', which means 'God is supreme', and 'Chielo', or 'Chinelo' means 'God is mindful of us. Agbala's priestess is also a prophetess who 'prophes[ies] when the spirit of her god [is] upon her,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 35).

Although Agbala is a very potent god, it should be noted that he is only a messenger of the Earth Goddess, Ani. Ani is the source of all fertility. Ani plays a greater part in the life of people than any other god. She is the ultimate judge of morality and conduct. And what is more, she is in close communion with the departed fathers of the clan whose bodies have been committed to earth (Achebe, 1958, p. 26).  She is the 'supreme expression of the female principle,' (Irele, 2009, p. 12).  Ani is served by a male priest Ezeani.

Quite clearly, then, the female principle is in full control of the entire fabric of Igbo life, social, political, cultural, religious, and economic.  It is this formidable labyrinthine that Okonkwo pits himself against: he hates anything '*agbala*', and in his warped conception of manliness commits sins that most offend the Earth Goddess. The first of these offences is the breaking of the Week of Peace when Okonkwo beats his youngest wife, Ojiugo. Although the narrator says, 'In his anger [Okonkwo] had forgotten that it was the Week of Peace,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 21), it is clear that no one can absolve Okonkwo from committing this crime. Ezeani, the priest of the Earth Goddess, reprimands Okonkwo, accusing him of not showing respect for the clan's gods and ancestors. This is the first time in the novel that someone warns Okonkwo about the danger that he is courting: 'The evil you have done can ruin the whole clan. The earth goddess whom you have insulted may refuse to give us her increase, and we shall all perish,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 22).

After insulting the Earth Goddess by breaking the Week of Peace, Okonkwo's next act of disrespect is during the Feast of the New Yam, an occasion for giving thanks to Ani, the source of all fertility. When everyone is in a festive mood, Okonkwo walks aimlessly in his compound in suppressed anger. He soon finds an outlet to satisfy his anger by soundly beating his second wife for 'killing' a banana tree. For good measure, he aims a loaded gun and pulls the trigger, almost shooting his wife. Any reasonable person who respects the gods and the ancestral spirits would not behave the way Okonkwo does during this holy festival.

Not satisfied with insulting the Earth Goddess by breaking the Week of Peace and spoiling the mood of the New Yam Festival, Okonkwo turns a deaf ear to the advice from Ogbuefi Ezeudu. This is one of the oldest men in Umuofia, a great and fearless warrior in his time, and a highly respected man in all the clan. The Oracle of the Hills and Caves has pronounced that Ikemefuna must be killed, but Ezeudu warns Okonkwo not to have anything to do with it, for the simple reason that Ikemefuna calls Okonkwo 'father'. Killing Ikemefuna would be as good as killing his son, and this would be breaking one of the rules of the clan. Indeed, Obierika belatedly tells Okonkwo: 'What you have done will not please the Earth. It is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole families,' (Achebe, 1958, p. 46).

Okonkwo's defiance of Ogbuefi Ezeudu is yet another act of misconduct that flies in the face of the Earth Goddess. It is in the funeral wake of the great Ezeudu that Okonkwo commits perhaps the worst offence against the Earth Goddess, shooting the dead man's sixteen-year-old son (inadvertently, though). The warning against taking part in the killing of Ikemefuna has earlier come to Okonkwo's mind. As if shedding Ikemefuna's blood was not bad enough, Okonkwo's killing of Ezeudu's son has no parallel in the tradition of Umuofia. Nothing like this has ever happened (Achebe, 1958, p. 87). Okonkwo has committed a crime against the Earth Goddess by killing a clansman, and therefore he must flee from the land.

Obierika's warning that Okonkwo's killing of Ikemefuna was the kind of crime for which the Earth Goddess could wipe out whole families is fulfilled because early the next morning a large crowd of men storm Okonkwo's compound, set fire to his houses, kill his animals and destroy his barns. Okonkwo has broken so many of the rules of the clan and it must be remembered that the Earth Goddess is the ultimate judge of all morality and conduct. Okonkwo's greatest friend Obierika is among the warriors exacting the justice of the Earth Goddess.  These men are merely cleansing the land which Okonkwo has polluted with the blood of a clansman, (Achebe, 1958, p. 87).

Once Okonkwo is exiled, he is finished as far as influencing events in the clan is concerned. By the time he returns to Umuofia after seven years in Mbanta, the clan has been fundamentally transformed. He cannot understand why Umuofia will not join him in a fight against the new dispensation, but his friend Obierika explains that it is too late; the white man has put a knife on what used to hold them together and things have fallen apart. After committing so many evils against the Earth Goddess throughout his life, Okonkwo still commits one for the last time – killing himself. Again, it takes his friend Obierika to explain to the District Commissioner why his clansmen cannot touch his body:

It is an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offence against the Earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansmen.  His body is evil, and only strangers may touch it.  That is why we ask your people to bring him down because you are strangers. (Achebe, 1958, p. 147)

Such then is the end of Okonkwo, who is defeated, figuratively and literally by the '*agbada*' principle.  It is for this reason that this article talks about the supremacy of women in *Things Fall Apart.*

**Summary:** How all subjects, discoveries, and arguments relate

Okonkwo chooses a code of conduct that contradicts the Umuofian unwritten constitution. He crafts a mindset that is based on his background, particularly his father's contemptible life and shameful death. Taking advantage of the clan's culture which says that a person

is judged according to his worth and not according to the worth of his father, Okonkwo strives to change the law of the land. According to him, because he has risen from dire poverty to be one of the lords of the clan, and because he is physically strong and warlike, anyone else who exhibits the opposite characteristics is a failure. He thus equates "*agbala*", "*agadi-nwayi*", 'woman', 'the feminine force' to weakness. Okonkwo's reconstruction of the Umuofian way of life is warped, because, even if this is a patrilineal and patriarchal society, it recognizes the complementary role of the female structures in the society. Umuofian society does not relegate 'woman' to an inferior status. Using his ill-conceived conception of patriarchy, Okonkwo embarks on an orgy of crimes in which he demonstrates his 'manliness'. In the process, he offends the most powerful custodian of Igbo culture, Ani, the Earth Goddess. She is the ultimate judge of all morality and conduct. Okonkwo's tragic end is self-inflicted because he knows that his behaviour is based on extremism, and 'all extremism is abhorrent to the Igbo sensibility (Achebe, 1988, p. 43). He is like a Supreme Court judge in modern society who knows all the laws of the land but still breaks them as and when he likes. His shameful death is thus unavoidable. The Earth Goddess, the ultimate judge of all morality and conduct, punishes him, deservedly, although this is sad.

**Conclusion:** Why these discoveries are fascinating, and why this article is a contribution to scholarly debate,

Thousands of critics have commented on *Things Fall Apart* since the novel was published in 1958. Over the years the focus of the analysis of the novel has been on various themes, mainly political, but certainly also socio-cultural. This time, the analysis approaches old evidence in a new way (Belcher, 2009, p.52). The evidence that has been produced in this article has always been in *Things Fall Apart*. Therefore, the article does not introduce new data. Instead, the article develops a new way of explaining the old data. This new way of analysis is close reading. Through this approach, the article concludes that even if Umuofian society is both patrilineal and patriarchal, Okonkwo's 'manliness' is a distorted conception of Umuofian culture. He does not represent all Igbo men or all men for that matter. Umuofia does not condone gender-based violence. Moreover, even if Umuofian

society is built around the two gendered principles of Chukwu (the Sky God) and Ani (or Ala) the Earth Goddess which are complementary, it is the latter principle that is in firm control of Igbo society.  After all, the earth is the mother of all crops, since she produces all the food that mankind eats (Traore, 2009, p. 54). This means that really, the female principle is supreme. The ultimate judge of all morality and conduct has the final say about everyone's life, including Okonkwo's.

Even as this article is being drafted, (May 2020) during the period of COVID19, 'gender-based violence' has been appearing regularly in news items in both the print and electronic media, especially in South Africa. The historical setting of *Things Fall Apart* is in the last half of the 19th century, and we are in the first quarter of the 21st century. This proves the timelessness of literature. It reminds us of one of Achebe's reasons why he decided to write *Things Fall Apart* – namely to set the record straight, to demonstrate that African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans, that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, and that African people had dignity (Achebe, 1973, p. 8).

In recent years, there has been a frenzy about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), particularly in the SADC region.  Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, for example, went all out to establish universities of science and technology: BIUST (Botswana International University of Science and Technology), NUST (Namibia University of Science and Technology,) NUST (National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe), and so on.  While no one doubts the importance of science and technology as engines of national development, one always felt that the Humanities and Social Sciences are being marginalized.  Indeed, in Zimbabwe, there has been a move by powerful government officials to abolish the Department of Sociology at the country's universities.

Such a move ignores the important role Humanities and Social Sciences play in tackling societal challenges. In fact, such a move ignores the meaning of 'Humanities'. 'Humanities' is derived from 'Humanitas', a Latin word which means 'human nature, or 'the act of being a human being, as opposed to being other things, such as animals.' 'The Arts' are also known as 'Liberal Arts', wherein 'liberal' refers to the 'liberation' of the

human imagination from bonds of narrowness and ignorance. The study of subjects in the Humanities such as Literature should make one, among other things, humane. Literature helps people learn about human nature in all its manifestations. Literature is important for the full growth of human beings.  It is no small consolation that Literature is one of the six Nobel Prizes awarded each year, alongside excellent achievements in Medicine, Physics, Chemistry, Economics and work towards World Peace (Lunga, 2014, p. 395). It is in this light that texts such as *Things Fall Apart* should be analysed. These literary texts grapple with serious, real-life issues, and these are issues that will be found in all societies, of all ages. STEM cannot address these kinds of challenges.

Achebe records an encounter he had with a white child in the United States of America, and this child had studied *Things Fall Apart* in his school. This white child told Achebe that Okonkwo was like his father.  As if that was not enough, James Baldwin, one of the most distinguished African American literary icons also once said to Achebe, 'That book was about my father,' (Achebe, 2009, p. 127). Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain* may be an autobiographical novel in which the brutal Gabriel Grimes is an African American version of Okonkwo.

Finally, *Things Fall Apart* is not a sexist novel. Evidence gathered from the text shows that Okonkwo is indeed both a sexist as well as a misogynist who is bent on crushing the '*agbala*', '*agadi-nwayi*'(woman) principle throughout his entire life. But the article has proved that Okonkwo does not represent all men, or every Igbo man for that matter. His attempt to subvert Umuofian culture ends in total failure because he loses the contest to the Earth Goddess, the ultimate judge of all morality and conduct.

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