The Promotion of Unhu/Ubuntu/ Vumunhu through the Teaching of Heritage Education in ECD Classrooms of Zimbabwe

Agnes Pakombwele (PhD)[1], Professor Tichaona Mapolisa[2]

Lecturer – Baisago University[1]

Director – Research, Innovation and Technology Transfer Full Professor and DPhil in Educational Management[2]

ABSTRACT

Globally, heritage education is seen as a model which can be implemented to provide a holistic education that incorporates spiritual, cultural, and moral values to all citizens. In Zimbabwe, the education is underpinned by a philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* which nurtures humanness, human interdependence and the sense of community in learners. In addition, early childhood proponents underscore the teaching of socio-cultural knowledge to young children during their early stages of learning. The newly introduced Zimbabwe Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022) includes family and heritage studies as one of the curriculum areas to be taught from early childhood development (ECD) to tertiary level. The framework emphasises continuous development of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* from ECD to the point of exiting secondary education. Against this background, the study examined how teachers are instilling *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* values in ECD learners through heritage education. The study further explored the alignment of the curriculum demands to ECD teachers' practices in teaching heritage studies. An explorative qualitative case study informed by the socio-constructivism was adopted. Data was gathered from three teachers through semi-structured interviews and analysis of teacher artifacts. The study revealed that there is a gap between the curriculum demands and teachers' classroom practices on the teaching of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* culture at early childhood development. Teachers lack adequate content knowledge on heritage education and continue to use traditional methods of teaching in ECD. The paper concludes by suggesting a culturally-based model of classroom practice that is oriented towards inculcating *unhu* values in learners.

Key words: classroom practice, unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu, heritage studies, heritage education, culture

INTRODUCTION

In most countries, heritage education aims at teaching young children to understand their own cultures from the past to the present, and to trace the development of their cultural heritage to the present (Hao, 2022). Cultural heritage education, which is part of heritage education, is concerned with the way people lived in the past and in the present, their traditions, beliefs, values, and achievements. Cultural heritage is both tangible and intangible. Tangible or material heritage refers to that which is physically touchable, such as monuments, buildings, paintings, and objects. Intangible heritage, on the other hand, is immaterial, such as music, dance, literature, religious ceremonies. Cultural and natural heritage is the legacy of human ancestors transmitted across time and is available to be passed on to the future. Heritage education involves the integration of new materials into an existing curriculum aiming to produce people who are acceptable in that particular community (Castro-Calviño et al., 2020). Therefore, preserving this national heritage through

education forms the backbone of this study.

Heritage is a unique and irreplaceable resource that tells us how groups of people lived in the past, their values, and how various groups were related to and interacted with one another. Heritage, therefore, is a fundamental part of the process of making meaning out of our lives. It is an essential component of our social identity, and a resource for establishing peace and understanding among people. However, the aim of heritage education is not simply to increase students' knowledge of historic sites and objects, but to inculcate a sense of ownership over these historic objects and traditions; thus, making them actively responsible for the conservation of that heritage

(Castro-Calviño et al., 2020; López-Facal, 2019). Heritage education helps learners to understand where they have come from and serves as a guide for where they might go in the future.

It is emphasised in various studies in the literature that education is important for cultural heritage and people can be informed through heritage education in schools. Therefore, children should be aware of the historical environmental awareness through appropriate teachings, lessons and activities in primary school education and even pre-school period (Polat, 2018; Castro-Calviño et al., 2020). In this respect, knowledge of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* as an example of cultural heritage should be one of the important elements of conservation culture and conservation education (Viriri &Viriri, 2018). In recent years, studies in the field of protecting *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* and transferring it to future generations have attracted great interest. Besides *unhu*, other examples include cultural heritage items, historical cities, living spaces, and culturally specific spiritual values reflect the unique character of societies (Ashworth & Tumbridge, 2000; Bondai & Kaputa, 2018).

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) defines cultural heritage as a collection of artistic and symbolic signs that the past bestows on every culture. As an important part of the formation and change of cultural identities and the common product of people (Zhabykbayeva, 2021), *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* becomes an important treasure that presents the peculiarities of a place through human experiences. Therefore, emphasising and protecting the importance of heritage is an indispensable policy for cultures (Tugba, 2021). *Unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* is therefore the link between the past and the future, enabling people to establish a link between present and previous lifestyles; and carries traces of the present to future generations (Zhabykbayeva et al., 2021).

In Zimbabwe, the Presidential Commission of Enquiry into Education and Training (CIET, 1999) underscored the need for the education system to be underpinned by a philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu*. Consequently, such a system should offer learners' experiences and opportunities that nurture self-actualisation, promote a sense of community and patriotism. In 2015, the Zimbabwe Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) introduced the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (ZCF 2015) (2015-2022), a competency-based curriculum for both primary and secondary schools. The ZCF 2015 endeavoured to address the teaching of family and heritage studies (FHS) as a subject from early childhood development (ECD) through primary school education. The argument is that heritage, history, culture and traditions make Zimbabwe unique as a country in the region, and in African and global contexts hence the need to introduce the discipline as early as ECD. The concept of family is included in the teaching of heritage studies and it emphasises that individual values originate from the family as well as society and culture (ZCF, 2015); hence, families play an important role in developing young children's identities (Castro-Calviño & López-Facal, 2019; Hao, 2022). Through the teaching of FHS, the ZCF 2015 states that learners should learn concepts such as family, relationships, gender, culture, beliefs, values, morals and being responsible as well as instilling values such as citizenry, entrepreneurship and patriotism. The art in heritage studies allows for culturally relevant teaching (CRT) which allows learners not only to grasp concepts better, but also to connect learning to their cultural background (Mandova & Chingombe, 2013). The introduction of FHS in the curriculum was noble because it aims to

transmit knowledge and appreciation for cultural heritage to the present and future generations. The basic idea of heritage education is to offer learners opportunities to engage in experiences, and to learn new concepts and skills. This is in line with the major goals of ECD, namely skill development and learning.

Every new curriculum reform introduced in any country comes with its unique demands for classroom practices. The ZCF 2015 recommends *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* as one of the cross-cutting themes to be taught at ECD. The same document stipulates that teachers inculcate learners with *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* through teaching FHS. The recommendation raises two pertinent questions: How aligned are the ECD teachers' teaching to the promotion of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* in learners through FHS? If not aligned, what are their challenges and how can these challenges be alleviated to harness the benefit of FHS in full? Research on heritage studies inculcating *unhu/ubuntu* at ECD level in particular is rare. Furthermore, empirical studies on inculcating *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* philosophy at ECD is a neglected area across educational levels in Zimbabwe. Overall, there is a gap concerning whether or/and how FHS teachers are implementing ZCF 2015recommendations. This study, hence sought to address the following questions:

- What are the ZCF 2015 recommendations on the teaching of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* through heritagestudies?
- How aligned are the ECD teachers' heritage studies teaching practices to the *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* philosophy recommendations?
- Are there any challenges being faced by teachers in the teaching of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* through heritage studies?

HERITAGE EDUCATION

The concept of heritage education was first launched in 1994 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as a Special Project officially called 'Young People's Participation in World Heritage Preservation and Promotion' (UNESCO, 2013). The programme sought to encourage and enable young children to participate in heritage conservation and to respond to the continuing threats facing world heritage sites. In the programme, young people learn about world heritage sites, the history and traditions of their own and other cultures, ecology and the importance of protecting biodiversity. The programme gave young people an opportunity to voice their concerns and to become involved in the protection of common cultural and natural heritage (Grever et al., 2012; Soininen, 2017). Through the programme, young people become aware of the threats facing the sites and learnt share ideas of preserving the heritage sites cherished by the international community as a whole. Most importantly, they discover how they could contribute to heritage conservation and make themselves heard (World Heritage Education Programme Brochure, 2013).

Heritage education, which is part of FHS in the ZCF 2015, refers to the pedagogical process of learning about and preserving cultural heritage. It is a polysemic concept via which people can learn about heritage assets in both formal and non-formal learning contexts (Monteagudo-Fernández, 2021). Cultural heritage, a concept/topic taught in FHS, includes tangible elements such as artifacts, buildings, and landscapes, as well as intangible elements like traditions, language and customs. Learners are taught the importance of preserving and protecting cultural heritage from deterioration, destruction or loss. The concept of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* is taught under heritage education.

UNHU/UBUNTU/VUMUNHU PHILOSOPHY

The *unhu /ubuntu/vumunhu* is a social philosophy which embodies virtues that celebrate the mutual social responsibility, mutual assistance, trust, sharing, unselfishness, self-reliance, caring and respect for others, among other ethical values (Mandova & Chingombe, 2013). Thus, *ubuntu/unhu* philosophy advocates a

holistic approach to education in which human character is developed and fine-tuned for sustainable life style (Bondai & Kaputa, 2018). The philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* places premium on human life and promotes the dictum, *Munhu navanhu* (ChiShona) or *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (IsiNdebele/IsiZulu) (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha, 2013). The philosophy of *unhu* further appeals to us because it cherishes values and attitudes that are already cherished by other cultures and are described as virtues. Such virtues include hospitality, fraternity, courtesy, self-sacrifice for the benefit of family and community, kindness, humility, consideration, gentleness, fairness, responsibility, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, hard work and integrity and above all tolerance (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha, 2013). These virtues are regarded as fundamental to being human. Thus, *unhu* presents communally set socio-cultural standards which people are expected to uphold. Among the Shona, *unhu* means the quality or attribute of being truly human or well-cultured (Mandova & Chingombe, 2013).

The teaching of *unhu/ubuntu* in the primary and secondary school curriculum in Zimbabwe was a response to the Nziramasanga Commission (1999) recommendations that the concept be taught to curb moral decay in the education sector (Viriri &Viriri, 2018). The inclusion of *unhu/ubuntu* in the both primary and secondary curriculum was introduced and effected in 2017 when the new ZCF 2015 was launched. This is a pointer to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's desire to produce cultured citizens who abide by the ethos and values expected of them in Zimbabwe, which was key in the African traditional education (Viriri & Viriri, 2018). This discussion guides the current study on how the teaching of heritage education in ECD classrooms can resuscitate the moral ethnic *ubuntu*.

METHODOLOGY

Paradigm and design

The study was informed by an interpretive paradigm, embracing the epistemological and ontological reality which is based on socially constructed meanings and understandings (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The interpretive paradigm claims that knowledge of the world is intentionally constructed through the person's lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The teaching of heritages studies at ECD level is a human activity in the classroom enterprise. Within this enterprise, teachers help students in the construction of knowledge. This makes the interpretive paradigm relevant for guiding this study.

A multiple-case design was adopted in order to explore the promotion of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* through the teaching of heritage studies at ECD level in its real-life classroom context. Two schools were involved so as to generate detailed in-depth data from two teachers' real-life experiences in heritage studies teaching (Yin, 2015). According to Algozzine and Hancock (2016), a multiple case garner evidence-based data that is strong, reliable and multi-faceted to understand the phenomena being studied. The two infant teachers were selected; one from each of the two schools in the Chitungwiza district of province in Zimbabwe participated in the study.

The schools introduced the teaching of heritage studies at ECD level when the new curriculum was introduced in 2016. Two participant infant teachers were recruited through purposive sampling from the two schools upon signing the written negotiated days and times for data collection visits. All participants were female and were teaching heritage studies at ECD level. The participants were qualified and experienced.

Data generated was triangulated through semi-structured interviews (SSI) and the analysis of curriculum documents was through a cross-case analysis which enabled views to be contrasted and compared (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Cross-case analysis is regarded as a critical component for qualitative case studies (Yin, 2017). Semi-structured interviewing assisted the study in gaining new, trustworthy, reliable and interesting information on infant teachers' insights, approaches and practices of heritage studies teaching (Yin, 2017).

Document analysis

To ensure critical and comprehensive data was gathered, the study employed document analysis (Tight, 2017). The documents included ZCF 16, family and heritage studies syllabus and the teachers' schemes of work. The syllabus provides the topics, concepts and key ideas of what is to be taught as well as the suggested pedagogy and the assessment to be done to determine achievement of both aims and objectives of the course. The ZCF 15 outlines the guidelines and expectations of heritage teaching. The schemes of work were analysed to examine whether teachers were scheming adhering to the guidelines and expectations of heritage studies teaching. The documents provided background information on *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* teaching and assisted in broad coverage of data on the content, pedagogy and methodology of heritage studies teaching in ECD classes.

Data analysis methods

Content analysis assisted in exploring large amounts of textual information from the schemes of work, syllabus and ZCF 2015 to determine trends and patterns of words used as well as their frequency, relationships and structures. Textual data from these documents was analysed and systematically coded. Content analysis assisted in selecting relevant codes that would finally fit in the themes and discard codes that did not have anything to do with the research questions. This article is therefore a reflection of the primary evidence generated from the identified documents interwoven with interpretation of the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2017).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the research are discussed under four main themes: the ZCF 2015 epistemic demands of teaching *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* in heritage studies, teaching *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* competencies, inquiry-based pedagogical approaches and content coverage. The discussions of the findings are aligned the research questions.

The epistemic demands of ZCF 2015 for teaching unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu in heritage studies

All curriculum documents have guidelines for educators teaching heritage education. The documents require teachers to draw their classroom practices from both the heritage studies and knowledge and practices *of unhu/ubuntu*. In this study, the use of the term paradigm relates to the educationist's "worldview" of heritage education. A worldview is a set of epistemic, ontological and methodological as well as axiological and lingual shared beliefs that informs the meaning or interpretation of any form of data (Chimbi & Jita 2022). It shapes how one sees the world, interprets phenomena and acts guided by this lens. This frame applies to education and classroom practices. The curriculum instruction to promote *unhu* in FHS teaching emerged from the data as presented in excerpts 1, 2 and 3 below:

Excerpt 1: Indigenous values-based teaching and learning

…the education system to be underpinned by a philosophy of *ubuntu/unhu/vumunhu*… which epitomizes sovereignty, interdependence, mutual support, respect, discipline, and readiness to help others (Curriculum Framework 2015-2022, p. 11 & 13).

Excerpt 2: Teaching and learning for good citizenry

The teaching and learning promote self-confidence, science ethics, *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* and children's rights as well as responsibilities…. (Family and Heritage Studies Syllabus 2015-2022).

Excerpt 3: Teaching for norms and values

Our syllabus is called "Family and Heritage Studies". It emphasises that we teach family norms and values. The curriculum documents and the syllabus demand that we teach learners good characters and behaviour of our society. In the topic like Cultural heritage, I teach norms and values which include: respect, rules, greetings, hospitality and discipline (ECD teacher).

The data illustrated in the above excerpts reveals that teaching *unhu* in heritage studies lessons is culturally responsive and relevant, accessible, value based and aims at nurturing learners into becoming good citizens. Thus, the heritage studies curriculum documents endeavour to promote *unhu* values, knowledge and practices in ECD learners, disciplinary knowledge and practices with those that are indigenous. Chimbi and Jita (2022) proffer the *unhu* paradigm as "a culturally, grounded set of interrelating ontological, epistemological, methodological, axiological, and lingual philosophies about the world which members of a specific community share". The Nziramasanga Commission (1999:62) further reiterates that *ubuntu/unhu* is a concept that denotes a good human being, a well behaved and morally upright person characterised by qualities such as responsibility, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, hard work, integrity, a cooperative spirit, solidarity, hospitality, devotion to family and the welfare of the community (Bondai & Kaputa, 2016; Chinyena, 2022).

As an extension of the home, the curriculum expects schools to instil in learners the same values that the family accentuates. Thus, by directing on the *unhu* based heritage studies teaching, the syllabus aims and objectives expect all ECD learners to understand and value, appreciate and apply indigenous heritages. The syllabus stresses that moulding the human character is the foundation of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* and should be taught at early years. Thus, family centred norms, values and practices are incorporated in the school curriculum through the teaching of heritage studies. The participant teachers expressed that this can only be accomplished through the teaching and learning of carefully planned family heritage studies lessons. The charts that were displayed in the classroom shows pictures of young children kneeling down while greeting elders. Heritage is inclusive of culture, language, knowledge and natural resources. The culture of the home, school peers and the larger community are all fused to bring about an individual who should fit in different cultural environments. According to one of the participants, their school head emphasised on developing *unhu* values during assembly time. It can therefore be argued that any education which does not respond to the needs of the community is, in fact, not education but rather mis-education. The teaching of *unhu* therefore connects the family, school and community.

Teaching unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu competencies

Unhu education endeavours to enable learners to acquire competencies that hold and apply in their individual discipline. The education also prepares learners for employment, entrepreneurship and citizenship (Tugba, 2021). As alluded to earlier, the ZFC 2015 emphasises on the development of these competencies from ECD level. In addition, the teaching of *unhu* at ECD level teaching lays a firm foundation for continuous learning and development of competencies. The main purpose of teaching FHS as well as other subjects, to ECD learners, is to underscore the attainment and mandate of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) to provide education for economic development. Furthermore, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MHTESTD) asserts that such an education system should be accessible, affordable and enable citizens to participate in the socio-economic transformation of the country. Similarly, the MoPSE's mission "to provide equitable, quality, inclusive and relevant infant junior and secondary education" can be accomplished through teaching and learning processes that are competence-based. The competencies that the early childhood development is directed to develop are emphasised by teachers and the curriculum documents that were studied as supported by excerpts 4 and 5 below.

Excerpt 4: Inclusive learning for socioeconomic transformation

In order to empower Zimbabweans for effective citizenry and employment for the 21st century, a great responsibility falls on the education system to educate well and to educate all. School institutions need to engage learners with renewed focus on *unhu* so that they can thrive in a knowledge-based economy and society. FHS empowers learners with the most important skills that they need in order to be productive citizens. Such skills include: critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration and leading with influence, agility and adaptability, taking initiative and being enterprising, effective oral and written communication skills, capability to access and analyse information. (MoPSE, 2015, p. 11).

Excerpt 5: Teaching and learning for skill development

I teach learners different skills which include sharing, cooperation, turn-taking and helping others, and being responsible citizens. The essential skills assist learners to be acceptable citizens in the society. (ECD teacher).

The above data support that there are competencies that are developed in learners which are cherished by the *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* philosophy. The competencies allow learners to fit well in the 21st era. The syllabus also advocates for the teaching of problem solving, critical thinking, leadership, communication, enterprise and technological skills (Family and Heritage Studies Primary School & Infant Syllabus (2015-2022). According to the syllabus heritage studies should be taught guided by cross-cutting themes. The themes are emerging issues which assist learners to acquire competencies for lifelong learning. The themes include gender equality, family unity, heritage studies and children's rights and responsibilities, among others.

Inquiry-based pedagogical approaches

The gathered data, like in excerpt 3, indicates that FHS teachers are expected to develop competencies in learners by employing an inquiry-based teaching approach. The approach helps learners to gain the desired competencies through knowledge construction processes. This approach is among others that the ZCF 2015-2022 recommends as depicted in excerpts 4 and 5 below.

Excerpt 6: Inquiry learning with fun

…Inquiry-based learning including discovery method, project-based, problem-based and design-based. …meaningful and problem-solving based, practical and fun (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2015).

Excerpt 7: Learning through play

I teach learners using the methods that are stipulated in the syllabus. These include experimentation, group-work, projects, song and dance, poems and rhymes, question and answer (ECD Teacher).

This inquiry-based learning harbours several strategies teachers can use independently or/and in combination to teach FHS. The family and heritage studies syllabus emphasises hands-on teaching methods "inclusive of problem-solving, discovery, experimentation, groupwork, projects, song and dance, poems and rhymes, questioning and answer, educational tours, imitation, discussion and investigation". According to the syllabus, the use of these methods cultivates in learners higher order thinking competencies such as problem-solving, innovativeness, confidence and self-actualisation, among others (Family and Heritage Studies Syllabus, p.2). The thinking capabilities or competencies are key to learners' development in all

spheres such as cognitive, social relations, as well as emotional and self–control (Bodrova & Leong, 2015; Nitecki & Chung, 2016). The same benefits are reaped when the *unhu* based pedagogies are adopted. Thus, the curriculum documents further direct teachers to develop these competencies through FHS teaching and learning as informed by provisions of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS).

In some previous studies, researchers have emphasised that inquiry-based learning has complete capacity to effectively develop *unhu* competencies in learners (Hapanyengwi, & Shizha 2012). By so doing, inquiry teaching promotes cognitive, and socio-emotional development of the learner. Literature supports the curriculum documents suggestion that learner-centred pedagogies, particularly design based learning, effectively makes the teaching for developing *unhu* competencies a possible mission to accomplish (Bozkurt Altan & Tan, 2021; Chinyena, 2022). For instance, Gwekwerere and Shumba (2021) suggest *ubuntu*-inspired pedagogies as key to connecting learners to their indigenous backgrounds.

Content coverage

The heritage studies content discipline covers skills, knowledge, national identity, values and attitudes and dispositions. The skills include technological, communication and leadership, critical thinking and problem-solving to enable learners to be productive, employable, and capacity to create employment (Curriculum Framework 2015-2022:18). The heritage studies aim at 'equipping learners with skills through discovery and problem-solving' (p.2). These skills, as Duruk *et al*. (2017) posits, are an inseparable part of heritage. Their acquisition enables learners to construct knowledge through solving real world problems. The skills are taught to learners for easy acquisition of scientific knowledge and ideas (Abungu *et al.,* 2018). In addition, Mugweni (2018) asserts that a child by nature is inquisitive, curious, energetic, and playful paving way for development of skills and competencies.

The Curriculum Framework (2015-2022) recommends that knowledge should expose learners to the promotion of *unhu* in learners. Such knowledge should enable learners to be 'fully literate, numerate and skills oriented' (p18). The knowledge includes cross-cutting themes such as civic education, financial literacy, enterprise education, digital literacy should encompass business and financial literacy, basic literacy and numeracy. Similarly, the goal of the heritage studies syllabus is to develop learners with 'most facets of everyday life and entrepreneurship skills' (p.2). In addition, Darling-Hammond *et al*. (2020) posit that learners need knowledge of basic scientific ideas which reflect a constructivist and collaboration approach.

Following the above discussion, it can be noted that heritage knowledge encompasses the skills, cross-cutting themes and the content enables learners to construct knowledge through interaction, sharing information and collaboration.

Furthermore, the curriculum documents instruct ECD teachers to adopt language sensitive medium of instructions. The ability to use good and acceptable language is regarded as part of *unhu* in Shona society. This emerged from the provision of the Constitution of Zimbabwe and The Education Act which respectively state that "children are encouraged to use of the language of their choice" (section 16, p.18) and "the mother tongue will be used as a medium of instruction at early child education" (p. 18). The curriculum framework provision that augments by stating that learner is "…to communicate in mother tongue and local language*"* (p. 18). Being able to speak mother tongue and or local language is part of realising *unhu/umuntu*. These curriculum provisions orient medium of instruction teaching of science to the mother tongue to minimise border crossing challenges.

Challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of Unhu through Heritage studies

Despite all the benefits of teaching *unhu* in heritage studies in ECD classrooms, teachers reported facing

challenges. The challenges included inadequate space, poor and inadequate infrastructure and inadequate time as depicted in excerpts 7, 8 and 9 below:

Excerpt 8: Inadequate space

The classroom is very small and children are overcrowded. I have 49 pupils in this classroom. The space is not enough to accommodate learning centres and learning space. Some of the learning materials are in the storeroom. Learners cannot work freely at the centres. They will be squeezing and pushing each other (ECD Teacher).

All the learning areas taught in ECD classrooms have learning centres displayed around the classroom. The study observed with concern that all the learning areas (heritage studies included) could not fit well in one classroom. There was limited space left and this hindered learners to move freely from one learning centre to another during hands-on activities thereby limiting social interaction. Learners were observed pushing and squeezing each other during activities at the learning centres. In addition, learners were heard scolding each other in the process of pushing and squeezing. The inadequate space made it difficult for teachers to cater for an individual child's interests and needs during lessons. The participants suggested heritage centre to be constructed outside the classroom in order to create enough space for learners to carry out assigned tasks. Teachers further suggested that all historical artefacts will then be stored in the heritage centre.

Literature suggests that broad-based learning centres that have materials and items capturing the whole spectrum of ECD content are recommended in ECD classes (Esau & Mpofu, 2017). It can be argued that the teaching and learning of heritage studies requires enough space for learners to actively participate and carry the activities freely. This resonates well with the views of Mugweni (2016) who found that inadequate play materials, lack of physical facilities such as classes, do not promote quality education. In research on the challenges and benefits of early childhood development education in the Zimbabwe education system, Bukalia and Mubika (2012) found that there was inadequate space and standard equipment at the play centres. One can therefore conclude that inadequate space in classroom and poor infrastructure may lead to poor quality educational practices and outcomes.

Excerpt 9: Poor and inadequate infrastructure

The table and chairs that learners are occupying and not age-appropriate. Besides being age-appropriate, they are not enough. Learners are squeezes on benches and high tables learners were squeezed and packed on benches, they failed to pay attention during the teaching and learning process. This leads to poor concentration.

The present study noted with concern that some of the ECD classrooms were equipped with poor and inadequate infrastructure. The infrastructure included the physical teaching and learning space, tables, and chairs as well as the learning equipment. In one classroom, the tables and chairs were inadequate for the thirty-three learners. Learners were scrambling for learning materials which were not relevant during a learning session. There were inadequate benches and the tables were not age appropriate. Participants were of the view that the heritage and family studies centre should be equipped with relevant age appropriate materials for the successful teaching and learning. Similar findings by Bukalia and Mubika (2012) confirmed that there were inadequate provision of appropriate infrastructure and furniture at most ECD centres. In addition, the same study also found out that most of ECD classrooms in Zimbabwe did not have proper infrastructure. The present study concluded that poor and inadequate infrastructure have detrimental effects on the teaching and learning of ECD learners. The study findings confirm that shortages of materials are challenges faced by ECD education in the country.

Excerpt 10: Inadequate time

Most of the Family and Heritage studies lessons are practical lessons and 20 minutes allocated is not enough to effectively teach. I feel that a double lesson would do. Learners need adequate time to move to learning centres, select the materials they want to use, carry out the activity, talk about the activity and finally agree on conclusions. Honestly speaking, this is not possible with 49 learners within 20 minutes.

The teaching and learning time for each lesson, as indicated on both the syllabus and the class time-table was 20 minutes. The lesson time involved moving to the learning centre, selecting relevant learning materials, carrying out the assigned activity and providing feedback. Considering the characteristics of learners, participants felt that twenty minutes was not enough. Due to overcrowding and learner characteristics, participants disclosed that much time was spent on lesson preparation and classroom control due to the large classes. As a result, teachers were not teaching all 5 lessons per week as stipulated by the syllabus and indicated on the time table displayed in the classroom. Maponga (2014) argues that ECD teachers should manage their time properly and pace the activities evenly if they are to produce quality outcomes. The findings in the study seem to indicate that bias towards the ECD science subjects, inadequate time, and lack of adequate knowledge could hinder the successful teaching of FMS in ECD classrooms. In addition, if teachers have a negative attitude towards the subject, they may give lame excuses for not teaching it.

CONCLUSIONS

Evidence reveals that the concept of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* is one of the cross-cutting themes in the FHS syllabus. The inclusion of the concept in the syllabus is a clear indication that curriculum requires the teaching of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu* from as early as early childhood development. The *unhu* traits such as mutual support, discipline, hospitality, integrity, interdependence are also indigenous values cherished by the Zimbabwean society. It is safe to conclude that heritage education, which encompasses the teaching of FHS, is an essential component for moulding a human character equipped with norms, values, beliefs and practices of the Zimbabwean society in the 21st century era. Some of the values and competencies for 21st era are problem-solving, critical thinking and innovativeness. The competencies are essential in preparing learners for employment, entrepreneurship, citizenship, as well as socio-economic transformation and good citizenry (Family and Heritage Studies Syllabus 2015-2022). Any education to be deemed relevant and meaningful must evolve from a particular people's philosophy of life and must seek to articulate and address the concrete existential circumstances and needs of the particular people (Chimbi & Jita, 2022). Thus, in pursuit of the desire to have graduates who are genuinely Zimbabweans, that is, *vanhu vane hunhu*, it is argued that early childhood teaching and learning practice in the education system should be informed by *hunhu / ubuntu* and *chivanhu* (Makuvaza & Gatsi, 2014). It is in this regard that this paper is reiterating that, if ECD is to succeed in that pivotal role, then it should be informed by philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu/vumunhu*.

The competencies are best taught using enquiry-based learning which include discovery, projects, and group-work, problem-solving, among others. These enquiry-based teaching approaches are child-centred methods that aims at the total development of the learner. The approaches expose learners to knowledge construction, solving real-life problems, collaboration and information sharing. These competencies and skills are relevant to the 21st century era.

Despite the challenges teachers were facing in implementing the ZCF 2015, they continued teaching FHS to ECD learners. Teachers were teaching heritage studies through story-telling, drama, rhymes and songs. These pedagogies are learner-centred and they encourage learners to construct knowledge and, in the process, turn knowledge into a negotiation between teachers and learners. Learner-centred pedagogy is a **constructivist approach** that places learners at the centre of the teaching-learning process.

REFERENCES

1. Abungu, H.E., Wanga, S.W., & Okere, M.I. 2014. *The effect of science process skills teaching approach on secondary school students' achievement in chemistry in Nyando District, Kenya.* Doi:10.5901/jesr.2014. v4n6p359.
2. Ashworth, B and Tunbridge. J.E. (2000). *Geography of heritage: Power, culture and economy* https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-7939.2000.tb01581.x
3. Bodrova, E. & Leong, D. 2015. Vygotskian and post-Vygotskian views on children's play. *American Journal of Play*, 7(3), 371-388.
4. Bondai, B. & Kaputa, T.M. (2018). *Reaffirming Ubuntu/Unhu mainstreaming in the Education curricula: Panacea for Sustainable Educational Change in Southern Africa*, 4(6), 37-47.
5. Bozkurt Altan, E., & Tan, S. (2021). Concepts of creativity in design-based learning in STEM education. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education* . https://doi.org/10.1007/s10798-020-09569-y.
6. Bukaliya, R. & Mubika, A.K. 2012. Assessing the benefits and challenges of the introduction of early childhood development education to the infant grade in the Zimbabwean education system. *Journal of Education and Instructional Studies in the World, 2*(4), 78-85.
7. Castro-Calviño L, López-Facal R (2019) Heritage education: Felt needs of the teachers of pre-school, primary and secondary education. *RIFOP, 33*(1), 97–114.
8. Castro-Calviño, L., Rodríguez-Medina, J., & López-Facal Ramón. (2020). Heritage education under evaluation: The usefulness, efficiency and effectiveness of heritage education programmes. *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications, 7*(1) doi:https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00639-z)
9. Chimbi, G. T., & Jita, L. C. (2022). Reforming the school curriculum for ubuntu (humanness): A critical discourse analysis. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science, 11*(5), 439-448. doi:https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v11i5.1862
10. Chinyena, E. (2022). Religious faith traditions tussle with rampant corruption toward sustainable development: Search for the missing links in light of ubuntu. *Acta Theologica, 42*(1), 15-27. doi:https://doi.org/10.18820/23099089/actat.v42i1.2
11. Cuenca-López, J.M.; Estepa-Giménez, J.; Cáceres, M.J.M. Heritage, education, identity and citizenship. Teachers and textbooks in compulsory education. *Rev. Educ.*, *375*, 136–159.
12. Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, D. 2020. Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development *Journal of Applied Developmental Science*, *24*(2), 97-140.
13. Duruk, U., Abuzer, A., Ceylan, D., & Fatma, G. 2017. Examining the learning outcomes included in the Turkish science curriculum in terms of science process skills: A document analysis with standards-based assessment. *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, *12*(2), 117-142.
14. Grever, M., de Bruijn, P., & van Boxtel, C. Negotiating historical distance: Or, how to deal with the past as a foreign country in heritage education. *Paedag. Histor.*, *48,* 873–887.
15. Gwekwerere, Y.N., & Shumba, O. (2021). A Call for transformative learning in Southern Africa. *Curriculum and Learning for Climate Action*. UNESCO, IBE 2021. DOI: 10.1163//9759004471515_011
16. Hao, N. (2022). Constructing cultural identity through heritage education: The case of central China. In W.O. Lee, P. Brown, A.L. Goodwin, A. Green (Eds.), *International handbook on education development in Asia-Pacific*. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-2327-1_154-1).
17. Hapanyengwi, O., & Shizha, E. (2012). Unhu/ubuntu and education for reconciliation in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education, 7*(2), 16–27
18. Makuvaza, N & Gatsi, R (2014). Early childhood development (ECD) and educatedness in an Afro–Zimbabwean context: The role of philosophy of hunhu /ubuntu, *International Journal on Social Sciences & Education,4*(2), 2223-49

19. Mandova, E & Chingombe, A, 2013. The Shona proverb as an expression of Unhu/ ubuntu. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*. DOI:10.6007/ijarped/v2-i1/9753

20. Maponga. S. 2014. *Early childhood development centres*. Harare: ZPH.

21. Mendoza, R., Baldiris, S., & Fabregat, R. Framework to heritage education using emerging technologies. *Proc. Comp. Sci.*, *75*, 239–249.

22. MoPSE (Zimbabwe). (2015). *Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015)*. Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education: Harare

23. Mugweni, R.M. 2016. Early childhood (ECD) teachers' conceptions and implementation of the child-centred approach to teaching science. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, *5(4)*, 2226-6348.

24. Nitecki, E. & Chung, M. 2016. Play as place: A safe place for young children to learn about the world. *The International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education*, *4*(1), 25-31.

25. Nziramasanga, C. (1999). Report of the presidential commission of inquiry into education andtraining (CIET). Government Printers.

26. Polat, S. (2018). The attitudes and awareness of the teacher candidates about cultural heritage. *World Journal of Education.*, *8*(5), doi:10.5430/wje. v8n5p49

27. Soininen, T. Adopt-a-monument: Preserving archaeological heritage for the people, with the people. *J. Commun. Archaeol. Herit.*, *4*, 131–137.

28. Tugba, K (2021). Cultural heritage in social studies curriculum and cultural heritage awareness of middle school students. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 17(2), 260-274.

29. Viriri, N.E. & Viriri, M. (2018). The teaching of Unhu/Ubuntu through Shona novels in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools: A case for Masvingo Urban. *Journal of African Studies and Development, 10*(8), 101-114.

30. Zhabykbayeva, D., Sanay, D., Bekish, A., Zhylkbekoa, G and Kasymbekov, Z. (2021). Teachers' views on the level of cultural heritage knowledge that can be improved through innovative technologies, *World Journal on Educational Technology: Current Issues, 13*(4), 1073-1087.