

An Evaluation of Inclusivity Through Multicultural Education in Tertiary Education: A Case Study of One Tertiary Institution in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe.

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ABSTRACT

This article sought to evaluate the promotion of inclusivity through multicultural education in tertiary institutions. Multicultural education is concerned with the acknowledgement that students are different in their cultural approach to education and lecturers are expected to take cognisance of the differences in a manner, which increase tolerance and diversity. The article evaluated the promotion of inclusivity through the practice of multicultural education in teacher's colleges. Since the focus of this study is also concerned with the opinions, attitudes and beliefs held by student teachers, a case study design was used. Structured interview schedules and focus group discussions were utilised in the data collection process to ensure data triangulation. A sample of twenty students who are representative of the five ethnic groups in the college and five lecturers were used as participants to the research study. The five ethnic groups which the research focused on are Ndebele, Tonga, Kalanga, Nambya and Shona. The researchers found out that most participants understood the different curriculum activities that celebrated the diverse cultures of students in tertiary institutions. The research study further revealed that whilst the different cultures are given prominence in the different curriculum activities more inclusion of cultural activities involving the formerly marginalised languages like Chi Tonga, Chi Nambya and Chi Kalanga is needed. The research study recommended that tertiary institutions need to establish robust initiatives that celebrate the different cultures that define the student population. This study is helpful to tertiary institutions and the community as it provides information on practices that promote acceptance and acknowledgement of cultural diversity.

Keywords: inclusivity, cultural diversity, multicultural education, tertiary education, tertiary institutions

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Multicultural education is a field of study and an emerging discipline whose major aim is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social class, and cultural groups (Banks, 2020). Thus, it is an inclusive educational approach that values and affirms the cultural identities and experiences of students from different backgrounds and aims to create an equitable and just learning environment for all. Multicultural education involves recognizing and addressing the various forms of oppression and discrimination that can arise from cultural differences (Gay, 2018). Thus, it encourages critical thinking, open dialogue, and the exchange of diverse perspectives to promote cultural understanding and social justice. Thus, it encourages critical thinking, open dialogue, and the exchange of diverse perspectives to promote cultural understanding and social justice. This approach to education can be implemented at all levels, from primary to higher education, and can involve a range of strategies and activities, such as incorporating multicultural content into the curriculum, promoting diversity in hiring and admissions, and providing training and support for teachers to address cultural differences in the classroom. The goal of multicultural education is to prepare students to become active and responsible citizens in a diverse and complex world (Banks and

Banks, 2001).

One of the important goals of multicultural education as argued by Banks (2001) is to help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate and communicate with people from diverse groups in order to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good. Studies have revealed multicultural education as being well intentioned in enhancing tolerance among learners and reducing stigma, prejudice, and discrimination (Mda, 1999). For instance, the United Nations (2016) argues that higher education institutions should be united in the promise to guarantee equitable and inclusive education as well as to support constant learning opportunities for individuals from different backgrounds. In support of the view, Feldman et al. (2018) posit that higher education institutions have the daunting task to accommodate and integrate social and cultural diversities to ensure thoughtful cultural approaches are embedded in their practices. In the same vein most of the tertiary institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe need to be multicultural in the sense that students who constitute them speak different languages and have been socialised in different cultures. Problems arise when the practice of institutions of higher learning seem to promote the identity of a particular ethnic group or groups at the expense of other ethnic groups represented within them. Abicioglu (2023) points out that an exclusive focus on differences can lead to feelings of alienation and the harmful practice of ‘othering’ ultimately promoting negativity and hatred. Similarly, most of the tertiary institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe need to be multicultural in the sense that students who constitute them speak different languages and have been socialised in different cultures. Problems arise when the practice of institutions of higher learning seem to promote the identity of a particular ethnic group or groups at the expense of other ethnic groups represented within them.

Whilst English is the official language used in teaching various subjects at tertiary level, cultural activities that celebrate the existence of different ethnic groups may not be fully representative. Multicultural education may not necessarily be taught as a stand-alone discipline, but the practices and ethos of tertiary institutions must be such that the values of every ethnic group, which constitute their population, are fully celebrated.

The nexus between multicultural education and inclusivity requires that tertiary institutions pursue that noble dimension of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners (UNESCO, 2009). It therefore follows that the level of inclusivity of tertiary institutions can best be measured through its implementation of the values of multicultural education. UNESCO (2009) further stresses the need to address and respond to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education. Tertiary institutions can therefore promote the philosophy of inclusion through acknowledgement of the different cultures that define the student population within them.

Research on multicultural education at the tertiary level in Zimbabwe is scarce. Research has shown that many African countries, including Zimbabwe, have educational systems historically influenced by colonial legacies, which often emphasize a dominant culture while neglecting indigenous and minority cultures. This is particularly evident at the tertiary level where curricula may not reflect the multicultural and multi-ethnic nature of the student body. Shizha and Kariwo (2011) reiterated that the education system in Zimbabwe still grapples with the colonial legacy that marginalizes indigenous knowledge systems and languages. Furthermore, Ndlovu and Sibanda (2013) highlighted that tertiary education in Zimbabwe often fails to integrate multicultural perspectives into the curriculum. This lack of integration means that the cultural and ethnic diversity of the student population is not adequately reflected in the educational content, leading to a form of cultural dominance where certain ethnic groups' histories, languages, and perspectives are prioritized over others.

Many tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe lack explicit policies that promote multicultural education. As noted by Mlambo and Mabvurira (2019), without deliberate policies and practices to incorporate multicultural education, there is a risk of reinforcing existing social inequalities and ethnic hierarchies within the educational environment. The absence of a multicultural curriculum can have significant implications for students from marginalized ethnic groups. It can affect their sense of belonging, academic performance, and overall educational experience. Studies have shown that when students see their own cultures and identities reflected

in the curriculum, it enhances their engagement and success (Banks, 2008). The current gap in multicultural education research and implementation could indeed lead to the marginalisation of certain ethnic groups, thereby compromising the equitable representation and celebration of the country's diverse cultural heritage.

Despite the adoption of a national language policy in Zimbabwe that encourages the promotion of all indigenous languages, the invisibility of cultures of minority groups in tertiary institutions leaves a lot to be desired. This scenario does not promote multiculturalism especially in tertiary institutions where students come from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This article evaluated the implementation of multicultural education in tertiary institutions to promote inclusivity. It also attempted to establish whether the entire staff and student teachers understand multicultural education with a view to recommend suggestions that can promote tolerance and diversity. Finally, the article established the visibility of minority ethnic cultures in the programmes and practices of tertiary institutions. It attempted to unpack the above, the article answered the following questions:

- How do students perceive multicultural education?
- In what ways do college programs and practices embrace multiculturalism?
- Which strategies can be used to improve implementation of multicultural education?

Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by the social constructivism perspective. Social constructivism is a theory which asserts that learning is a process of constructing meaning (Richardson, 2003; Schunk, 2020). Social constructivism is a theory in social psychology and sociology that suggests that individuals and groups actively construct and shape their own reality through their interactions with each other and with their environment (Andrews, 2012; Gergen, 2021). According to this theory, social reality is not fixed or objective, but rather is created and sustained through shared meanings, language, culture, and social norms. Social constructivists argue that social reality is not determined solely by individual perceptions and beliefs, but rather is shaped by social and cultural factors that influence and shape individual perceptions and beliefs (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2015; Gergen, 2015).

Social constructivism has been influential in a wide range of fields, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, education, and political science. It has been used to study a variety of phenomena, including gender roles, cultural norms, and social inequality (Gee, 2014). The theory has also been applied to understand the ways in which individuals and groups perceive, understand, and make sense of their social world (Gergen, 2015). Social constructivist theory or socio-culturalism encourages the learners' version of the truth that is influenced by his or her background, culture, or knowledge. This explanation provides the rationale for the implementation of multicultural education in tertiary institutions. Brophy (2002) argues that from the social constructivist viewpoint that it is important to take into consideration the background and culture of the learner during the learning process. One of the elements in this theory is the belief in language as the most essential system through which humans construct reality (Abdullah, 2022). Different ethnic groups that define the student population in tertiary institutions should be given opportunities to fully showcase their cultures through dance, music, poetry and drama. Multicultural education in the same vein is a reform movement whose emphasis is the celebration of the uniqueness of every ethnic group represented in each social entity. The tertiary curricula should therefore promote the diverse cultural experiences of students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Multicultural education

Multiculturalism is the acceptance of multiple cultures coexisting in a society by providing equitable status to distinct ethnic groups. Multicultural education focuses on the transmission of the educational process to promote the best possibility of democracy in a diverse society (Mapuranga & Bukaliya 2014). This implies an educational process that focuses on the appreciation of cultural diversity where differences are taken as strengths and not as weaknesses. Banks and Banks (2001) define multicultural education as an idea, an educational reform movement and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational

institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students and students who are members of diverse races, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school. It is further explained that the term multicultural education describes a wide variety of programmes and practices related to educational equity, women, ethnic group minorities, low-income groups and people with disabilities.

Multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning that is based on democratic values that affirm cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies in an interdependent world (Duhon et.al, 2002 & Haworth, 2015). Wilson (2012) explained multicultural education as the type of education that relates to education and instruction designed for the cultures of several different races in an educational system. Furthermore, Wilson (2012) agrees that this approach to teaching and learning is based upon consensus building, respect, and fostering cultural pluralism within racial societies. This implies that multicultural education is designed to teach that there are differences among cultures hence teaching should be designed so that the emphasis on respecting one another's culture is apparent.

Practices of multicultural education

It is imperative to note that cultures and education are intrinsically connected, culture shapes education and education subsequently shapes culture. By understanding the relationship between the two, institutions can improve culture-based education, reflect and promote different cultures. Institutions should come up with institution cultures which consist of shared values and beliefs as well as shared meaning of cohesive unit (Wilson, 2012). Producing a more inclusive curriculum, which reflect the backgrounds of the students help learners share and celebrate their diverse backgrounds and experience by being inclusive and particularistic. When culture-based materials and content are incorporated into the curriculum students not only learn their culture but the diverse cultures around them.

Students take the role of social change agents and are given opportunities to learn about the problems of social inequities and the resultant oppression and marginalisation of minority groups so that they may come up with strategies to change the status quo and create a multicultural society (Mapuranga & Bukaliya, 2014). Haworth (2015) indicates that studies have revealed multicultural education as being well intentioned in enhancing tolerance among learners and reducing stigma, prejudice and discrimination. Multicultural education paves way for minority groups to contribute to the mainstream culture while maintaining their own uniqueness. According to Athiemoolam and Vermaak (2021), multiculturalism enhances equal educational opportunities, develops the ability to identify with and relate to other groups, reduces racial discrimination, inculcates core values and promotes effective relationships between home and school.

Multicultural education should increase productivity since a variety of mental resources are available from different cultures to complete the same tasks thus promoting cognitive and moral growth among all people. On the other hand, multicultural education should enhance creative problem-solving skills through different perspectives that are applied to same problems to reach solutions and to increase positive relationships through achievement of common goals, respect, appreciation, and commitment to equality among the intellectuals at institutions of higher education (Mapuranga & Bukaliya, 2014). Multicultural education should renew vitality of society through the richness of the different cultures of its members and fosters development of a broader and more sophisticated view of the world (Tabatadze, 2015).

Meaningful practices of multicultural education should strive for an integrated curriculum, social activities, administrative support, and staff training. Wilson (2012) asserts that multicultural education should help to eliminate the crux of stereotyping, prejudice, racism, and bigotry. On the same note Hilliard and Pine (1990) indicate that multicultural education is a potential tool to bringing all races together. This implies that best practices of multicultural education do away with segregation, reduces racial tension, and increases ethnic minority retention and academic performance of students in tertiary institutions. Hence it is important to encourage students to share about their religious experiences and celebrate all forms of cultural diversity.

Strategies of implementing multicultural education

Athiemoolam and Vermaak (2021) observe that classrooms are a mix of many different languages hence the need for teachers to have an idea of the native languages of their students. Celebrating differences among

students is a good way of creating a multicultural environment in the classroom. Similarly, such strategies are essential at tertiary level where lecture rooms are composed of students speaking different languages. It is further observed that while classrooms are a melting pot of many different ethnicities, it is important for teachers to respect students for who they are not where they come from. Mapuranga and Bukaliya (2014) noted that for multicultural education to succeed, teachers should essentially want to teach every child according to her needs in a politically correct focus based on educationally sound principles. Mapuranga and Bukaliya (2013) further suggest that multicultural education does have implications for the adaptation and modifications in teacher education programs and curriculum. It therefore follows that the approaches to teaching at tertiary level should reflect the desire to acknowledge the existence of varying cultures and languages that define the student population. Tabatadze(2015) pointed out that multiculturalism is not only the basis for rearranging the content of education but also the development of tolerance. Tolerance is key to successful co-existence of students from varying cultural backgrounds and therefore the adoption of multicultural education is of paramount importance in tertiary institutions.

Embracing multicultural education in different tertiary programmes and practices

According to Joseph and Johnson (2019), the global perspective of multicultural education is derived from four major interactive dimensions which include multicultural competence, equity pedagogy, curriculum reform and teaching for social justice. For the purpose of this research, equity pedagogy could be relevant in view of embracing multiculturalism in tertiary institutions. Joseph and Johnson (2019) observe that equity pedagogy aims at achieving fair and equal educational opportunities for all learners. It requires that educators develop an understanding of the different learning styles students develop from their own cultural upbringing so that alternative instructional strategies can be employed. In the case of tertiary institutions this entails tailor making instructional strategies so as to meet the needs of students from varying cultural and language backgrounds. Multiculturalism could be embraced in all spheres of tertiary programs. This may entail the inclusion of multicultural education in cultural activities, graduation ceremonies, assemblies, and any other official tertiary programmes.

Research context

The study was conducted at a teacher training college that specialises in the training of primary school teachers. This specific teachers' college was intentionally chosen because the student and lecturer population comes from distinct diverse backgrounds. The teachers' college is located in Bulawayo, which is the second largest city of Zimbabwe. The city being the second largest in the country boasts of people who speak different languages like Ndebele, Shona, Chi Tonga, Chi Kalanga, Chi Nambya, TshiVenda and Sign Language.

METHODOLOGY

The research was guided by interpretivism research paradigm that focuses on understanding the subjective experiences and meanings of individuals or groups. It assumes that reality is socially constructed and that qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and ethnography, are more appropriate for studying complex human phenomena (Biedenbach & Müller, 2011).

In the context of the topic, an interpretivist approach helped to explore how students and faculty members experience and understand inclusivity and multicultural education in tertiary education. This approach involved gathering qualitative data from participants about their perceptions of inclusive practices, how they define multicultural education, and how they experience diversity in their learning and teaching environments. An interpretivist approach would also allow for a more holistic and contextualized understanding of inclusivity in tertiary education. It would acknowledge the complexity of the topic and the importance of subjective experiences in shaping the meaning and effectiveness of inclusive practices.

Research Approach and Design

The study used the qualitative research approach. A case study design was used in this study. Schoch

(2020,p.3) points out that , “ the case study provides a comprehensive understanding of a bounded unit and it helps the reader to understand that case in order to learn from it”. This research study therefore focused on trying to understand the lived experiences of lecturers and students with regards to inclusivity through multicultural education.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all the students that were in their final third year studying the Diploma in Education Course. Lecturers also constituted the population of the study.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

The study used purposive sampling which involved selecting participants who were representing the different ethnic groups amongst the student population. Purposive sampling constitutes selecting the sample in relation to some criterion which is significant for a particular study (Wani,2019). Lecturers were randomly selected from the four departments namely the Humanities, Science, Inclusive and Special Education and Education based on their depth of experience as lecturers in the institution. Five lecturers who had more than ten years lecturing experience from the different departments responded to the invitation to participate. A sample of twenty students who are representative of the five ethnic groups in the college were used as respondents to the research study during the designated week. The five ethnic groups which the research focused on are Ndebele, Tonga, Kalanga, Nambya and Shona. To select the participants Structured interview schedules and focus group discussions were used in the data collection process to ensure data triangulation.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data in this study was analysed thematically.de Rincon (2024) posits that thematic analysis which is specific to qualitative data offers actionable insights pertaining to participant perspectives. Boyatzis (1998) as cited in Stevens (2023) points out that thematic analysis involves observing, encoding and interpreting meaningful patterns within the dataset, measuring theme frequency, clustering themes and detecting relationships among them. In this study participant views were clustered according to themes. In the process of data collection, overlooking certain key patterns of data might have occurred. Stevens (2023) argues that drawbacks involve limitations on capturing complex narratives, overlooking data contexts.

Data Collection Methods

This study employed structured interviews with the lecturers and focus group discussions with the students to generate data on experiences in inclusivity through multicultural education in a selected teachers' college. Interviews were conducted with selected lecturers and Focus Group Discussions were conducted with students on the concept of multiculturalism, practice of multicultural education, concept of code switching and improvement on proficiency in other languages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following key themes emerged:

- Concept of multiculturalism
- Practice of multicultural education
- Events that promote multicultural education
- Benefits of code switching to student teachers
- Concept of Code Switching
- Improvement on proficiency in other languages
- Social networking

The results, guided by these themes are presented and discussed. Participants were given pseudonyms, and these are going to be used to present data.

Concept of multiculturalism

Probed on their understanding of multicultural education participants gave varying responses.

S1 remarked: When talking about multicultural education, it is about education within a given. Environment must encourage people learn to appreciate the different languages and cultures.

Similarly, N1 commented: Multicultural education is about learning the different languages and cultures different from yours.

N1 almost had a similar view with S1 and remarked the following: Multiculturalism means the understanding that there are many cultures and languages used by people in the same environment.

The participants indicated that they understood what multicultural education entails. The respondents demonstrated an understanding of the concept as evidenced by their explanations. They viewed it as embracing of various languages and cultures with the aim of addressing diverse needs. Some respondents viewed multicultural education as the availability of cultures and how they are instilled from generation to generation across societies. Other respondents viewed multicultural education as a system which incorporated learners who come from diverse backgrounds in terms of ethnicity. The definitions concur with the definition by Mapuranga and Bukaliya (2014) who indicate that multiculturalism is the acceptance of multiple cultures coexisting in a society by providing equitable status to distinct ethnic groups. Furthermore, Duhon, Mundy, Leder, LeBert and Ameny-Dixon (2012) agrees that multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning that is based on democratic values that affirm cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies in an interdependent world.

Practice of Multicultural Education

Events that promote multicultural education

S1 was doubtful on events that promote multicultural education in the college opining that he had no idea.

K1 explained: For events done in the college, there is one specific one called the Culture Day. Though you cannot actually tell whether this is specifically Ndebele culture or Tonga culture or Shona culture in the way the activities are presented.

N1 remarked: We are practising our culture especially the Culture Day as the former speaker rightly said.

Alternatively,

T1 explained: I saw one event where cultures were demonstrated during a PE lesson. The students presented the way they did rhythmic movements which was symbolic of their culture. Concerning whether the National Anthem is sung in all languages that reflect the student community in the college.

K1 had this to say: It is only sung in Ndebele, Shona and Sign language which is not good. Priority given to languages spoken in the college'. With regards to whether languages spoken in the college are given equal prominence.

S1 remarked: It's a bit difficult. They are given equal prominence in the sense that they are taught in different areas as specialisations. However, you find that other languages become a minority. You may find that Shona and Ndebele are spoken more than other languages.

K1 reiterated: They are given equal prominence. There are PSB subjects where students go to learn their mother languages in detail.

In agreement,

T1 explained that: All languages spoken in the college are given equal respect. We attend lectures for our L1, so everyone attends these to learn more about their mother languages’

The findings presented here indicate that the institution has events and initiatives that aim to promote multicultural education and celebrate the diversity of languages and cultures among its student community. Overall, the institution is trying to promote multicultural education and celebrate linguistic diversity through events like Culture Day and cultural demonstrations. However, the discussion also highlights the importance of further inclusivity, such as incorporating more languages into the singing of the National Anthem and ensuring that all languages receive equal attention and recognition within the college's educational framework. In some instances, the participants pointed out that it was difficult to tell whether some cultural dressing was symbolising a specific cultural group or not. This implies that there was no visibility of specific cultural groups in the displays. They further indicated that prizes were given to those who would have performed very well. Respondents also indicated that seasoned adjudicators are hired to adjudicate on the presentations by different cultural groups. Having a lot of activities in an institution which reflect the backgrounds of the students help them share and celebrate their diverse backgrounds and experience. Hilliard and Pine (1990) point out that multicultural education is a potential tool to bringing all races together. In addition, Haworth (2015) states that multiculturalism enhances equal educational opportunities while it also develops the ability to identify with and relate to other groups, reduces racial discrimination, inculcates core values and promotes effective relationships between home and school.

Concept of Code Switching

S1 explained: Yaa, they code switch most of the time. The lecturers code switch from English to their mother languages not to other languages. You find one who is Ndebele speaking code switches to Ndebele while one who is Shona speaking code. switches to Shona.

In agreement,

N1 remarked: The lecturers code switch from English to their mother languages.

Benefits of code switching to student teachers

N1 opined that: Yaa, I believe its beneficial because in a multicultural college even though I may not be familiar with Ndebele, one may not be able to speak but you can pick one or two words.

In disagreement K1 posited that: No, I tend to disagree. It benefits one who understands the language because if I am not Shona speaking and the lecturer code switches to Shona, I will fail to follow the explanations.

On a different note,

T1 explained: Its beneficial. For me I couldn't express myself in other languages other than My own language, Tonga. Now I have improved a bit in Shona, Ndebele and Kalanga.

The findings suggest that code-switching can have both positive and negative implications for student teachers in a multicultural college setting. It can be beneficial for some students, as it exposes them to different languages and cultures, fostering language learning and cultural appreciation. However, it can also present challenges for students who are not familiar with the switched language, potentially hindering their understanding of the lecture content.

To create an inclusive and effective learning environment, colleges and lecturers should consider striking a balance in their code-switching practices. Being mindful of students' language backgrounds and providing clear explanations can help ensure that code-switching is used in a way that benefits the majority of the students and promotes language learning for all. This may relate to the need for change of attitudes and training lecturers in multicultural education through workshops and seminars. Wilson (2012) argued that there should be equitable policies for multicultural education which would include the need for attitude change and the inclusion of all stakeholders in coming up with a blue print on multicultural education.

Improvement on proficiency in other languages

S1 opined: Aaaah for me I now find myself being able to at least say something in Ndebele Tonga, Kalanga and Nambya.

K1 remarked that: Before I came to college, I was poor in many local languages but now because of my interaction with fellow students who speak Shona, Tonga and Kalanga, I have now improved.

The findings presented suggest a positive improvement in proficiency in various local languages among the participants which is critical for societal cohesion. It shows that students who engage in interactions with peers from different linguistic backgrounds tend to demonstrate higher language gains over time. The findings support the notion that the college environment can positively influence language proficiency through increased linguistic exposure (Zyngier & Catarina de Macedo, 2019). Interacting with speakers of other languages and being exposed to diverse linguistic environments can lead not only to significant enhancements in language skills, but also to peace building. These improvements are particularly evident in college settings where students from various linguistic backgrounds come together. Language proficiency can be significantly improved through immersion, practical use, and exposure to diverse linguistic environments. Encouraging language learning and facilitating interactions between individuals speaking different languages can contribute to a more linguistically diverse and interconnected society.

Social networking

Probed on how that has improved their social networking with students that speak a different language.

S1 argued that: Personally, I love languages, so when I meet students who speak Tonga for example, I ask them to speak to me in Tonga and that way I have improved so much and made more friends.

K1 explained that: Because of my interaction with students who speak a different language, I can freely socialise.

N1 remarked that: It is important to be in an environment where many languages are spoken because in my case, I have made friends.

T1 noted that: A multicultural environment is so good. When I came here I did not even know how to express myself in any language other than my mother language.

The findings imply that social networking has been positively impacted by the interaction with students who speak a different language. Social networking in a multilingual context can have several positive outcomes. Zyngier and Catarina de Macedo (2019) agreed that engaging with students who speak different languages can lead to improved language skills, increased socialization opportunities, the formation of friendships, and a greater appreciation for linguistic and cultural diversity. It underscores the importance of creating inclusive environments that celebrate and embrace different languages and cultures, as they can foster more meaningful and diverse social interactions.

CONCLUSIONS

With regards to the findings made, it is concluded that lecturers and students have a reasonable understanding of multicultural education. Most of the participants indicated that multicultural education entails the

acknowledgement of many cultures in a given social setting. It is also concluded that participants were cognisant of the different college curriculum activities that are embedded in multiculturalism like the Culture Day, Assembly and the coverage of indigenous languages like Chi Shona, IsiNdebele, Chi Tonga, Chi Kalanga, and Chi Nambya as examinable subjects. It is also concluded that the different cultural dance movements are highlighted during Mass Displays activities where students from different cultural backgrounds are given opportunities to show case them. It is further concluded that while participants indicated that the five languages are given prominence during Culture Days, more needs to be done to ensure that the formerly marginalised languages like Chi Tonga, Chi Nambya and Chi Kalanga are used when singing the National Anthem. It is also concluded that the code switching by lecturers in their presentation of lectures were viewed with a mixed lens. Some students felt they became excluded when lecturers code switched to their mother languages while others saw that as an opportunity to learn the other language which was not their mother language.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The research recommends that tertiary institutions come up with more initiatives that educate the diverse cultures that define the student population.
- There is need to staff develop lecturers so that they can articulate their lectures in ways that promote inclusivity of the diverse cultural backgrounds of students they teach.
- Legislation should be enacted to make it compulsory for all stakeholders in Higher education to consider embracing inclusivity through multicultural education in tertiary education.

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