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**Rebranding Zimbabwe's Education System: Stakeholder Perspectives on the
Implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum.**

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Rebranding Zimbabwe's Education System: Stakeholder Perspectives on the Implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) as a rebranding strategy within Zimbabwe's Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, focusing on stakeholder perspectives. The HBC, introduced to align education with Zimbabwean cultural values, history, and indigenous knowledge systems, represents a significant shift from previous curricula. This research investigates how stakeholders including -educators, policymakers, parents, and students perceive this curriculum reform as a tool for rebranding the nation's education system. Using a qualitative approach, data was collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis to capture diverse viewpoints. Findings reveal that while many stakeholders view the HBC as a positive step toward reclaiming cultural identity and fostering national pride, challenges such as inadequate resources, teacher training gaps, and concerns about global competitiveness hinder its effective implementation. The study highlights the tension between preserving cultural heritage and meeting the demands of a globalised world. Stakeholders emphasised the need for a balanced approach that integrates heritage education with modern skills development. The research concludes that while the HBC has potential as a rebranding strategy, its success depends on addressing systemic challenges and fostering collaboration among all stakeholders. This study contributes to ongoing debates about curriculum reform in post-colonial contexts and offers insights for policymakers aiming to leverage education as a tool for cultural and national revitalisation.

Key words

Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC); Rebranding Strategy; Zimbabwe Education; Curriculum Reform; Cultural Identity; Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Introduction and Background

Education is a powerful tool for shaping national identity, cultural values and socio-economic development in every nation. In Zimbabwe, the introduction of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education marks a significant shift in the country's educational landscape. This curriculum reform, implemented as part of a broader rebranding strategy, seeks to align education with Zimbabwean cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge systems and historical narratives (Nziramasanga, 1999; Zvobgo, 1997). The HBC represents an attempt to decolonise education and foster a sense of national pride among learners, while addressing the legacy of colonial-era curricula that marginalised local cultures and traditions (Shizha, 2005).

The concept of rebranding through education is not unique to Zimbabwe. Globally, nations have used curriculum reforms to redefine their identities and promote cultural continuity. For instance,

South Africa's post-apartheid curriculum reforms emphasised inclusivity and African values (Jansen, 2002), while Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum integrates indigenous knowledge to promote cultural preservation (KICD, 2017). In Zimbabwe, the HBC aims to achieve similar goals by embedding local history, languages and traditions into the educational framework (Matsika, 2020). However, the success of such reforms depends heavily on stakeholder buy-in and the ability to address implementation challenges.

Stakeholders, including educators, parents, students and policymakers, play a critical role in shaping the outcomes of curriculum reforms. Their perspectives provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the HBC as a way of differentiating Zimbabwe's education system. While some stakeholders view the HBC as a necessary step toward reclaiming Zimbabwean identity, others express concerns about its practicality, resource requirements and alignment with global educational standards (Ndlovu, 2021; Mavhunga, 2022). This study seeks to explore these perspectives, focusing on how the HBC is perceived as a rebranding strategy and its implications for Zimbabwe's education system.

Objectives

- To explore stakeholder perceptions of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) as a tool for rebranding Zimbabwe's primary and secondary education system.
- To identify the cultural, historical and social values embedded in the Heritage-Based Curriculum in promoting national identity.
- To examine the challenges or opportunities associated with the implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum from the perspective of stakeholders.
- To assess the extent to which the Heritage-Based Curriculum balances cultural preservation with the demands of a globalised education system.

Literature Review

The introduction of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in Zimbabwe's primary and secondary education system represents a significant effort to rebrand the nation's education system by integrating cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge and historical values has sparked significant scholarly interest in recent years. This literature review is guided by the four qualitative objectives outlined earlier and is framed within the theoretical lens of Cultural Reproduction theory (Bourdieu, 1977) and the Decolonisation theory (WaThiong'o, 1986). These theories provide a framework for understanding how the HBC seeks to reclaim cultural identity and transform the education system in a post-colonial context.

The Heritage-Based Curriculum is an educational framework introduced in Zimbabwe that integrates the country's cultural heritage with modern educational demands. It aims to nurture well-rounded learners equipped with knowledge, skills, and values relevant to both local and global contexts (Mukanya 2024). The HBC focuses on innovation, creativity and practical skills development while emphasising a learner-centered approach and a deep connection to Zimbabwean heritage (OpenClass 2024). On the other hand, rebranding is defined by Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) as the creation of a new name, term, symbol, design, or a combination of

them for an established brand with the intention of developing a differentiated (new) position in the minds of stakeholders and competitors. It is a strategy that involves changing a company's corporate image or organisation by developing new visual assets like logos, symbols, and marketing materials to create a new and differentiated brand identity. Therefore adoption of the HBC results in a new education system for the country and thus rebranding.

Stakeholder Perceptions of the HBC as a Rebranding Tool

Stakeholder perspectives are critical in evaluating the success of curriculum reforms. According to Ndlovu (2021), educators and policymakers in Zimbabwe view the HBC as a transformative tool for decolonising education and fostering national identity. However, parents and students often express concerns about the curriculum's relevance in a globalised world (Mazambani & Tapfumaneyi 2025). Studies from other African countries, such as South Africa and Kenya, highlight similar tensions. These findings underscore the importance of stakeholder buy-in for the successful implementation of the HBC.

Recent studies have highlighted the diverse views of educators, parents, students, and policymakers regarding the HBC. Moyo and Ndlovu (2021) conducted a qualitative study exploring the perceptions of primary school teachers in Zimbabwe. They found that while educators appreciated the HBC's emphasis on local culture and history, they expressed concerns about the lack of adequate training and resources to effectively implement the curriculum. Similarly, parents have shown mixed reactions. According to Chikoko and Maphosa (2022), parents in urban areas were skeptical about the HBC's relevance in a globalised world, while those in rural areas viewed it as a means to reconnect their children with indigenous knowledge systems.

Students, on the other hand, have demonstrated a growing interest in the HBC. A study by Dube and Ncube (2023) revealed that secondary school students in Zimbabwe felt a stronger sense of identity and pride when learning about their heritage. However, some students expressed concerns about the curriculum's ability to prepare them for international opportunities. Policymakers, as reported by Nziramasanga and Mavunga (2020), have largely supported the HBC as a tool for decolonising education and fostering national unity. These findings underscore the need for a balanced approach that addresses stakeholder concerns while promoting the curriculum's objectives.

Cultural, Historical and Social Values in the HBC

The HBC is designed to embed Zimbabwean cultural values, history, and indigenous knowledge into the education system. Shizha (2005) argues that colonial education systems in Africa marginalised local cultures, creating a disconnection between education and cultural identity. The HBC aims to address this by incorporating local languages, traditions, and historical narratives (Matsika, 2020). This aligns with Bourdieu's (1977) cultural reproduction theory, which emphasises the role of education in transmitting cultural values. However, critics argue that the HBC risks oversimplifying Zimbabwe's diverse cultural heritage, potentially excluding minority groups (Nziramasanga, 1999).

Recent research has emphasised the significance of these values in promoting national identity. According to Mberi and Muzenda (2022), the HBC incorporates indigenous languages, traditional practices, and historical narratives that were previously marginalised in the colonial-era curriculum. This integration has been lauded for its potential to instill a sense of pride and belonging among learners.

Furthermore, the HBC's focus on Ubuntu philosophy - a concept emphasising communal values and mutual respect, -has been identified as a key component of its cultural framework. Ndlovu and Shumba (2021) argue that the inclusion of Ubuntu in the curriculum fosters social cohesion and ethical responsibility among students. However, critics have raised concerns about the potential for the HBC to perpetuate exclusionary narratives. The curriculum must be carefully designed to ensure that it represents the diversity of Zimbabwe's cultural heritage without marginalising minority groups.

Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing the HBC

The implementation of the HBC faces several challenges, including inadequate resources, insufficient teacher training, and resistance from stakeholders (Ndlovu, 2021). Mazambani & Tapfumaneyi (2025) highlights that many teachers lack the skills and resources to effectively deliver the HBC, leading to gaps in implementation. Conversely, the curriculum presents opportunities for fostering cultural pride and improving student engagement. This is evident in Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum that successfully integrated indigenous knowledge, demonstrating the potential for similar reforms in Zimbabwe (KICD, 2017). These insights suggest that addressing systemic challenges is crucial for the HBC's success.

Despite these challenges, the HBC presents several opportunities, for example, the curriculum has been praised for its potential to preserve Zimbabwe's cultural heritage. As highlighted by Marongwe and Maposa (2023), the HBC provides a platform for documenting and transmitting indigenous knowledge systems that are at risk of being lost. Moreover, the curriculum has been linked to increased student engagement. Dube and Ncube (2023) found that rural students were more motivated to learn when the content was relevant to their cultural context.

Balancing Cultural Preservation and Global Competitiveness

One of the key tensions in the HBC is balancing cultural preservation with the demands of a globalised education system. WaThiong'o (1986) emphasises the importance of decolonising education to reclaim cultural identity, but critics argue that overemphasising local heritage may limit students' global competitiveness (Zvobgo, 1997). Matsika (2020) suggests that a hybrid approach, which integrates global skills with local knowledge, could resolve this tension. This perspective aligns with the goals of the HBC, which seeks to prepare students for both local and global contexts.

One of the most debated aspects of the HBC is its ability to balance cultural preservation with the demands of a globalised education system. Recent studies have explored this tension from the perspective of stakeholders. Nziramasanga and Mavunga (2020) argue that the HBC must strike a delicate balance between fostering national identity and equipping students with skills that are

relevant in a global context. They suggest that the curriculum should incorporate elements of global citizenship education to prepare students for international opportunities. Similarly, Chirimuuta and Gwaravanda (2023) emphasise the importance of integrating science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education into the HBC. They argue that while cultural preservation is important, it should not come at the expense of technological advancement. This view is supported by Mberi and Muzenda (2022), who propose a hybrid approach that combines heritage-based content with globally competitive skills

Methodology

The study adopted an interpretivist research philosophy, which emphasises understanding the subjective meanings and experiences of individuals in their social contexts (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative research approach was employed in this study. Qualitative research is well-suited for exploring complex social phenomena, such as curriculum reforms, as it allows for the collection of rich, detailed data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The study used a case study research design, focusing on Zimbabwe's primary and secondary education system in the Midlands province. A purposive sample of 44 participants was used, to ensure a fair representation of variances within the participants, 4 policy makers were used which included District education officers from various districts in the Midlands Province, 11 educators in the form of teachers or facilitators from various schools, 12 parents were also interviewed in conjunction with 17 students. The sample size was deemed sufficient as it lies within the acceptable ranges according to Morse (1994) cited in (Bernard, 2013), who suggested at least 6 participants for phenomenological studies and Creswell (1998) supported ranges between 5 and 25 interviews for a phenomenological study and 20-30 for a grounded theory study. Primary data was collected through semi-structured Interviews which allowed for flexibility in exploring stakeholders' perspectives while ensuring that key themes are covered (Kvale, 2007). Interview guides were tailored for each stakeholder group. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with parents and students to facilitate group interactions and generate diverse viewpoints (Morgan, 1997). Lastly document analysis was employed which involved an analysis of policy documents, curriculum frameworks, and reports related to the HBC to provide context and support findings.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Stakeholder Perceptions of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) as a Tool for Rebranding the Education System

The introduction of a Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) has driven diverse debates among various stakeholders in the education sector especially policy makers, teachers or facilitators, students and parents. The perceptions showed mixed beliefs with some stakeholders showing positive perceptions while others showed negative resistant perceptions on the adoption and fruitful implementation of the HBC.

Positive perceptions

Most policy makers showed indebted positive affiliations towards the new HBC and believed that the rebranding of the curriculum was long overdue, with some noting that it was supposed to be

implemented just soon after independence to prevent the already lost cultural values, norms and beliefs. One educational policy representative noted that, *'the quality of the educational system in a country is measured by how effective it preserves the nation's identity'*.

Another respondent in the same position noted that *'the implementation of HBC in the ministry of primary and secondary education is a long overdue rebranding exercise that was supposed to be done way back when the country attained its independence to preserve the country identity and deliver local relevant education'*. Most policy makers also availed that the HBC rebranding is a most welcome initiative showing necessary transitions in the education field that align with the country's development goals.

Most parents noted that the positivity of the rebranded HBC is very relevant if our economy creates local employment in its sectors. The respondent noted that *'this HBC is very relevant in preparing our children for local employment in sectors such as cultural tourism, environmental conservation sectors and self-employment'*.

Few respondents from teachers noted that *'the HBC is very relevant in reducing Western centered theories in crafting local education to solve local problems'*. Another teacher noted that *'the HBC rebranding is ideal in enhancing in-depth survival skill to local students especially those that will advance their careers locally'*.

Negative perceptions

Most students who were embracing the new HBC noted with concern that the new HBC has vast learning areas that are difficult to fully comprehend and implement practically. One student noted *'the new HBC rebranding is confusing and too broad, full of massive home works and new concepts that are so difficult to comprehend'*. Another student noted that *'the new HBC rebranding has stolen our social time with too much content to master, if not in class, you are doing homework, no time to play'*.

On the perceptions by parents, many noted that the new curriculum has taken them back to school, numerous homework, more books needed, and more stationery requirements. Some thought it is a curriculum for urban parents with good internet to help their children with homework. Most in conjunction parents, teachers and students showed concern over the relevance of the new HBC in its competitiveness globally if more emphasis is local heritage knowledge, they also complained of increased work load.

Most policy makers showed concern that the new HBC lacked resources of effective implementation leading to fears of its relevance and value to many stakeholders especially parents, teachers and the students. The perceptions from various stakeholders showed a mix ball of perceptions and many advocated to balancing the HBC with the international competencies for it to remain relevant.

Cultural, Historical and Social Values Embedded in the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) and Their Significance in Promoting National Identity

The major aim of a Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) is to preserve the most valuable cultural, historical, and social values into education, ensuring a smooth transfer of knowledge about the country's identity between teachers, community and learners. The thrust of the HBC is to ensure that there is smooth transition between an existing curriculum to a new curriculum mainly shaping the student's perspectives towards his or her own country and preparing them for the ever - changing modern society.

Cultural Values Embedded in HBC

The respondents noted the following

Parent 1

'The HBC will help to kill the slang language and foreign dressings that have destroyed our ubuntu being'

Parent 2

'The HBC will help us to ensure transition of our country's unique customs and rituals to this generation and mostly go to the old days of bumper harvest after seeking for rains'

Parent 3

'The HBC is a savior in creating consensus in what we teach our children at home and what they learn at school. As parents we were now facing resistance from our children citing what they learnt at school'

Parent 4

'The HBC will aid in creating a more responsible generation that will accommodate being corrected without citing abuse'

Parent 5

'The HBC will help in ensuring the preservation of the land's norms and ethics with more emphasis to communal responsibility'

Most parents made positive remarks to the HBC noting that it will aid in ensuring the use of our native language without feeling inferior about our identity, instilling patriotism through retention of linguistic and cultural heritage.

On interviews conducted to education policy formulators the following responses were noted;

Education policy formulator 1

‘The HBC will help to ensure that our national identity does not die, ensuring inter-generational transfer of identity’

Education policy formulator 2

‘This was a well thought move in the education sector to preserve values, our traditional arts and unique crafts that were soon being eroded in the active population’

Most education policy reviewers articulated that, if the HBC is given more time it is bound to retain the lost precious values and nurture a sense of belonging, pride, and unity among citizens.

Historical Values Embedded in HBC

The findings on historical values embedded in HBC, respondents in consensus noted that the implementation of the HBC rebranding aids in ensuring that learners acknowledge and respect their roots of creation, understand and value past pre-colonial struggles to acknowledge the value of living in an independent state. They also note that giving learners a chance to understand traditional governance systems aids in crafting and implementation of modern governance systems without rebuking the power of ancestral consultations. They also apprehended the significance of learning HBC as a tool of creating responsible citizens that will contribute to national development strategies using their historical background and striving for a better Zimbabwe.

From the focus group discussion with parents, some parents indicated that, *‘our children must know who they are, they should know where they come from, before they can think about where they are going.’* This preservation of cultural identity aligns with the views of scholars (Ndlovu 2021) who advocate for the recognition of indigenous knowledge in education.

One participant asserted that, *‘we have so much knowledge from our elders. When our children learn these stories, they gain not just facts, but life lessons’*. The argument from this theme was that the adoption of HBC promoted intergenerational knowledge transfer. This theme resonates with the work of Mawere (2015) who assert that intergenerational learning is vital for the sustainability of cultural practices and values.

Social Values Embedded in HBC

Consultations from various stakeholders revealed that the rebranding of the HBC is the only significant tool that can regenerate the ubuntu philosophy, ensuring citizenry, co-living, humanity towards a fellow citizen, and communal living and working together. It was also noted however that, if not well articulated, it might bring back the long fought against gender inequalities and spearhead marginalization of some ethnic groups in the country. Some respondents also noted that the rebranding of HBC is hailed for ensuring citizens perform their civic duties and ensuring students are equipped to be responsible societal members. However, some respondents noted also that, students with strong cultural values are usually less competitive globally as they lack matching modern values.

From the FGDs, one participant highlighted that, *‘when children learn together about their culture and values, it brings us closer as a community’*. Most of the parents were concerned about social cohesion in their communities and they believed that the adoption of the HBC would promote community cohesion. This concurs with Ndlovu (2021) who argues that education plays a crucial role in fostering social cohesion in multicultural settings by promoting shared values and historical narratives. Moreover, the emphasis on collaborative learning and community participation aligns with the principles of Ubuntu, a philosophy that emphasizes communal relationships and mutual support.

Challenges and Opportunities Associated with the Implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) from the Perspective of Stakeholders

The implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) has elicited varied responses from key stakeholders, including educators, students, parents, policymakers, and community leaders. Their perspectives reveal both challenges and opportunities that influence the curriculum’s effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

Challenges in Implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum

Major challenges noted ranged from lack of resources such as teaching and learning material to implement the new HBC, also worsened by lack of teacher training in the new HBC and limited financial and infrastructural resources to effectively deliver the new content. It was noted that the new HBC requires re-visiting and rebuilding culture centers, touring museums, and even consultations with traditional leaders. Several participants highlighted that teachers lacked sufficient training to effectively deliver the HBC. As noted by Nziramasanga (2019), Zimbabwe’s education reforms often suffer from poor teacher capacity development, leading to inconsistent implementation.

One teacher stated, *“We were given the syllabus but not enough workshops on how to teach indigenous knowledge in subjects like science and mathematics.”*

A recurring theme was the lack of teaching and learning materials aligned with the HBC. Parents and educators expressed concerns over the absence of locally produced textbooks. This aligns with Maravanyika’s (2020) observation that curriculum reforms in Zimbabwe frequently face logistical and financial bottlenecks

Another challenge noted was resistance to change by various stakeholders, many noted that they were happy with the old curriculum and it has given them the careers and returns they dreamt of as a result, they cannot trust the new HBC which is solely local oriented limiting the way the learners are to view the world. Most parents showed concern on the curriculum being too grounded to local artifacts making students less competitive globally in a world with uprising technological changes. Many teachers feared to teach students what they never learnt as they do not possess the skill to integrated the cultural knowledge to the existing old curriculum. Some stakeholders, particularly in urban areas, viewed the HBC as a regression rather than progress.

A parent remarked, *“Our children need skills for the global job market, not just local traditions.”* This resistance reflects tensions between cultural revitalisation and perceived economic imperatives, as discussed by Shizha (2013).

Another noted challenge mainly from policy makers was the barometer that can be used to guarantee that the new curriculum balances local needs with also global needs into creating a learner that will be competitive locally and across borders. They noted that, ensuring HBC means embracing local values and marginalizing certain cultural values from the global world that might be needed by the learners in future.

Learners noted with concern that they now risk being taught outdated things all in the name of rebranding the curriculum. Some expressed concern of being forced to take outdated career paths because of the HBC based subject alignments. Teachers responded with fear that the assessment model is complex and makes them have mixed feelings on whether the curriculum will add any value to future learner careers.

Opportunities in Implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum

The major noted opportunities of the HBC from various stakeholders include instilling the lost citizen pride, preservation of indigenous knowledge systems, traditions and languages. Also noted was its value in ensuring students develop skills to solve their locally aligned problems through experiential learning. Some stakeholders appraised the HBC rebranding to ensuring economic development through promotion of arts, culture, tourism and local entrepreneurship. They noted with enthusiasm that new local based innovations are bound to be experienced from this curriculum. Finally, the curriculum is praised for ensuring that all stakeholders are active participants in teaching and learning creating a worth village of exchange of knowledge.

Many participants praised the HBC for promoting Zimbabwean languages, history, and values. A policymaker noted, *“This curriculum helps learners appreciate their heritage, which was eroded during colonialism.”* This aligns with Mavhunga’s (2021) argument that decolonizing education fosters national identity.

The HBC encourages collaboration with local elders and knowledge holders. A rural teacher shared, *“We now involve community members in teaching traditional crafts and oral history.”* Such participatory approaches are supported by Dei (2017), who advocates for indigenous knowledge integration in schooling.

Extent to Which the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) Balances Cultural Preservation with the Demands of a Globalised Education System

The Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) is designed to integrate indigenous knowledge, traditions, and values into the education system while preparing students for the realities of a globalised world. A qualitative analysis of findings reveals varying perspectives on how well HBC achieves this balance.

It was noted that many stakeholders appraise the curriculum for hope of promoting the preservation of language, tradition and culture through embracing old learning methods of folktales, crafts and

even listening to traditional music and emulating the dances of the ancient period. Parents and policy makers noted that the HBC fosters patriotism and cultural values progression. Most parents noted that the HBC opposes all the western knowledge systems yet the learners need those systems to survive and become relevant in the global village. Learners also pointed concern of decolonizing education reducing relevance of education between experienced lived and knowledge being learnt.

The views on whether the curriculum aligns with global demands were noted with diversity. Most parents noted that the HBC might fail to appreciate the need for imbalance in blending with modern technology, for example in agriculture, giving students yesteryear farming strategies is irrelevant in the changing climatic conditions.

Another parent noted that, the rebranding of HBC should have pride in accepting the need of digital literacy if it is to remain relevant in the changing economic environment. However, policy makers praised the HBC for its strength of allowing students to use cultural and modern skills in solving their day-to-day problems. Policy makers noted that, even though HBC values local languages, it still promotes global languages such as French and English in learning to create global competitive students. They also noted that subjects such as ICT, entrepreneurship and STEM related learning areas are taught in schools to meet the international job market requirements although these are selective to students' abilities.

Some students noted that, the curriculum ever emphasises indigenous knowledge and lack resources to embrace some modern knowledge in it especially in the Midlands rural sphere and regional expectations might devalue the educational ranking of Zimbabwean education. Parents noted that their children are being forced to accept HBC by policy makers whose children are learning a different curriculum in other developed countries, living them to wonder on the value of the new HBC. Stakeholders acknowledged that the HBC effectively incorporates Zimbabwean history, ethics, and environmental knowledge. As noted by Mawere (2015), African curricula must reclaim indigenous epistemologies to counter Western hegemony.

The emphasis on local languages (Shona, Ndebele, etc.) was seen as vital for cultural continuity. However, some participants feared marginalization of English, which remains crucial for global competitiveness (Nyika, 2016). Some educators argued that the HBC does not sufficiently prepare students for science and technology careers. A secondary teacher noted, *"While we teach traditional medicine, we must also strengthen modern scientific skills."* This echo concerns raised by Jansen (2019) about balancing tradition and modernity in African curricula.

Participants questioned whether international institutions would recognize HBC qualifications. A university lecturer stated, *"Will our degrees be competitive if too much focus is on local heritage?"* This tension mirrors global debates on decolonization versus standardisation (Hoppers, 2017). The Heritage-Based Curriculum seeks to balance cultural preservation with the demands of a globalised education system, but achieving this equilibrium presents both challenges and opportunities. While HBC successfully promotes national identity and indigenous knowledge, concerns remain regarding its ability to fully prepare students for global competitiveness.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) has sparked important debates regarding its role in preserving cultural heritage while ensuring students remain competitive in a globalised education system. The curriculum successfully promotes national identity, indigenous knowledge, and social cohesion, but challenges such as resource constraints, standardisation issues, and concerns over global competitiveness remain significant. Achieving a balance between cultural preservation and modern educational demands requires careful curriculum design, policy support, and stakeholder collaboration. HBC provides an opportunity to decolonise education by integrating traditional knowledge systems into mainstream learning. However, to maximise its benefits, it must incorporate STEM education, digital literacy, and global perspectives. While some stakeholders view the curriculum as a transformative tool for national development, others express concerns over its adaptability to international academic and professional standards. A strategic, hybrid approach is necessary to address these concerns.

Recommendations

- Increasing resource allocation in the implementation of the HBC and continuous training of teachers. This can be achieved through intensive Pre-Service and In-Service Training for teachers. Mandatory HBC Workshops for teachers is also important. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) should conduct compulsory training workshops for teachers on integrating indigenous knowledge into subjects like science, mathematics, and history.
- Equipping schools and educational centers with relevant infrastructure to roll out the curriculum effectively.
- Ensuring the HBC integrates science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) while at the same time promoting national identity.
- Multilingual education system should be the corner stone of the HBC if it is to yield fruits to all stakeholders concerned. Collaboration with Traditional Knowledge Holders, that is, partnering with community elders, cultural experts, and indigenous scholars to co-facilitate training sessions (Dei, 2017). Continuous Professional Development (CPD) can be established on HBC-specific programs to keep teachers updated on best practices.
- Developing a flexible curriculum that blends with regional and national demands as time changes, that is, allowing for continuous curriculum reviews when need arises.
- Embracing technology in curriculum implementation such as use of Artificial Intelligence, to ensure accreditation of the local curriculum with international bodies.
- Adopting a hybrid learning model that ensures project-based learning with bias to STEM subjects. Provide practical handbooks on how to teach heritage-based content alongside conventional subjects. Create an online repository of lesson plans, videos, and case studies for easy teacher access (Jansen, 2019)
- Enhancing international partnerships for enhancing curriculum exchange with other countries.

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