

## The Place of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 Curriculum: Insights from Lecturers at a Selected Teachers' College in Harare

Rodwell Kumbirai Wuta

Belvedere Technical Teachers' College, Department of Educational Foundations

Email: [rodwellwuta@gmail.com](mailto:rodwellwuta@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*This hermeneutical study sought to estimate the value of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKSs) in Zimbabwe's higher and tertiary education. Thus, it assessed the interface of AIKSs and the country's higher and tertiary education curriculum, which, in essence, is the Education 5.0 curriculum. The study was informed by Gade's theory of 'narratives of return' and the Sankofa principle, cognate ideals that look into the past for solutions to problems currently vexing Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. This study employed the qualitative approach and adopted the case study design. Interviews were conducted with six lecturers purposively sampled from one selected teacher's college in Harare. The in-depth individual face-to-face interview was the chief data-generation instrument, buttressed by document analysis to permit the triangulation of findings for credibility and trustworthiness of results. It was discovered that participants (college lecturers) possess a sound understanding of the concept AIKSs, which presents a good starting point for integration of the same into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum. Participants communicated their appreciation of the benefits that come with integrating AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum. Thus, AIKSs contribute immensely to heritage-based problem-solving, creativity, innovation, industrialisation, and national development. However, some participants noted potential drawbacks of this integration agenda. Hence, they suggested, inter-alia, the involvement of indigenous communities, curriculum modification to foster respect for AIKSs, re-orientation of educators to the dictates of AIKSs, development of relevant text material, and integrating AIKSs into education starting from Early Childhood Development. Participants also suggested government support at policy level, and monitoring and evaluation. The study, therefore, recommends an elaborate, comprehensive, and progressive policy framework tailored to tweak and expedite implementation of the agenda for integrating AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum. This in the end fosters educational contextuality, instructional relevance, heritage-based creativity, indigenous-oriented innovation, and locally based but globally competitive industrialisation.*

**Keywords:** African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKSs), Education 5.0 curriculum, narratives of return, Sankofa

### Introduction

The current study centres on the interface of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKSs) and Zimbabwe's higher and tertiary education programmes (the Education 5.0 curriculum). AIKSs are an embodiment of African epistemology. Since epistemology is construed basically as the theory of knowledge (Chemhuru, 2011), AIKSs, therefore, can be understood as the African meaning-making or African ways of knowing or African

knowledge production. In other words, AIKSs constitute the African knowledge aspect. AIKSs also underpin *Chivanhu*, which, according to Makuvaza (2010), forms the bedrock of the home-grown *Ubuntu/Unhu* philosophy. AIKSs, thus, sustain the epistemological dimension of the *Ubuntu/Unhu* philosophy, which, in turn, forms the substratum of a holistic African existentiality. The operationalisation of Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum is traceable to as recent as 2019. Education 5.0, sometimes referred to as the Heritage-Based Education 5.0 abbreviated to HBE 5.0, comprises of five pillars namely teaching, research, community outreach, innovation, and industrialisation. These pillars harmonise with the National Development Strategies 1 & 2 (NDS 1 & 2), which are Zimbabwe's strategic economic development programmes of 2021-2025 and 2026-2030, respectively, towards Vision 2030 of achieving an upper middle-income status in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. This study, thus, estimates the benefits that accrue to Zimbabwe as a nation through integrating AIKSs into the country's Education 5.0 curriculum.

## **Background**

Zimbabwe's higher and tertiary education curriculum (Education 5.0 curriculum) is purportedly heritage-based. A heritage-based education, science, and technology development is delivered conscious of the environment it seeks to transform (Government of Zimbabwe/GoZ, 2018). This heritage-based aspect, therefore, accentuates the ideals of contextuality and functionality which command education to be culture-embedded. Likewise, GoZ (2018, p. 5) states, "Zimbabwe is adopting an education system that imparts knowledge, which is suitable for exploitation of locally available resources for its transformation to an industrialised and modernised economy." The 'locally available resources' alluded to in the foregoing sentence include the cultural, agricultural, climatological, and mineralogical heritage to be harnessed for indigenous-oriented national development. The heritage-based philosophy "supports the application of gained knowledge on the local environment in order to produce relevant goods and services" (Muzira & Bondai, 2020, p. 46). This ideal of relevance, as embedded in the heritage-based philosophy, is consistent with the agenda for Africanising education, which, in this context, speaks to the integration of AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum. It should, however, be noted that a great deal of debate surrounds the integration of AIKSs into education at all levels.

On the one hand, there is advocacy for the integration of AIKSs into the education system. Thus, for countries whose educational policies have embraced AIKSs, the result has been a phenomenological improvement in these countries' technological development and an improvement in their people's standards of living (Zengeya-Makuku, Kushure, Zengeya & Bhukuvhani, 2013). Examples of such countries include Kenya, India, and Australia. AIKSs, therefore, are considered of value to education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in

general and Zimbabwe in particular. It is upon this realisation that Tapfuma (2012) urges the incorporation of AIKSs into the education curriculum at all levels because they can be used as an alternative or complement to the conventional scientific methods and techniques for sustainable development especially in agriculture, health, and environmental management. Hence, AIKSs could be incorporated into the education curriculum as a matter of policy as they cover a wide spectrum of human endeavour inclusive of ecology, climate, crop cultivation, animal husbandry, botany, linguistics, medicine, clinical psychology, and craft skills (Wuta, 2020). Moreover, AIKSs have the potential to promote innovative thinking as they provide the basis for problem-solving strategies for the local communities. In view of the preceding, the Zimbabwe Environmental Education Policy demands the incorporation of AIKSs into the teaching of Environmental Education in schools, colleges, and universities (GoZ, as cited in Wuta, 2020).

It is clear that, “There is need to find a place for indigenous knowledge in the current Eurocentric curriculum” (Zengeya-Makuku *et al.*, 2013, p. 446). Therefore, any education system in Africa South of the Sahara which denigrates and sidelines AIKSs could be viewed as an extension of the colonial project. Indigenous knowledge provides a beacon of light within the tunnel of Eurocentric dogma, misinformation, and untruths (Emeagwali & Dei, 2014). Hence, the incorporation of AIKSs into African education is portrayed as the surest way of enhancing decolonial ideals, African renaissance, and empowerment. This Africanisation thesis (with a decolonial inclination) is endorsed by Mawere (2015, p. 62) who argues:

*With indigenous knowledge and conventional science in the curriculum, learners are, therefore, better empowered to shake-off the chains of imperial domination, make their own decisions, and chart their own destiny based on what they learn both at home and at school.*

The foregoing, therefore, demonstrates the decoloniality of AIKSs within local education.

On the other hand, AIKSs are not without criticism. Some Westernised Africans tend to dismiss indigenous knowledge as a manifestation of an anachronism. This intimates that AIKSs have been overtaken by events. To Mosweunyane (2013), critics of AIKSs are convinced that the African continent is immensely benefitting from the contemporary technological changes taking place in the world. Hence, Mosweunyane (2013, p. 56) submits,

*... it is self-evident that all knowledge is comprised of concepts and propositions, including concepts and propositions that deal with learning strategies and methods of conducting inquiries. It has to be noted that not only education but social reality has become schooled or institutionalised.*

In view of the foregoing, learning is what happens in school (the Western-oriented four walls mentality) and all epistemology is couched in concepts and propositions which are of a Western origin. Critics of AIKSs, therefore, are of the conviction that the modern Euro-Oriental instructional institutions (which nurture Western epistemology) guide life and worldview, and define what is legitimate and what is not. This delegitimises AIKSs, which on the whole are acquired from home and community.

SSA cannot take the risk of reverting to its precolonial knowledge systems (Mosweunyane, 2013). Thus, with constant developments in Science and Technology, with the new means of communication such as Radio and Television, “any person who does not keep up-to-date with these changes is condemned to be overtaken” (Mosweunyane, 2013, p. 56). The preceding expresses the anachronism allegedly characterising AIKSs. This thesis of anachronism affirms the view that it is difficult or almost impossible for Africa to revive its AIKSs, some of which have been lost over time (Mosweunyane, 2013), lost possibly due to the absence of proper and reliable documentation. It, therefore, becomes indisputable that Africa benefits and continues to benefit immensely from the Euro-Oriental meaning-making. However, the said anachronism could be a misunderstanding of AIKSs by those who think that the indigenous African epistemology is stagnant.

In some enclaves of African society, AIKSs are dismissed as pseudoscience. Hence, “many teachers are hesitant to incorporate indigenous knowledge in the classroom out of fear of infecting classroom teaching with pseudoscience” (Shizha, 2010, p. 44). AIKSs, therefore, are believed to lack scientific validity. Thus, Mosweunyane (2013, p. 57) declares:

*African continent is part of the ‘global village’ and cannot in its current economic, social and political situation afford to function in isolation. This means the technological advancement that is so far realised will remain attractive to Africans, which will further compound the problem of indigenisation.*

This casts aspersions on the agenda for Africanising education herein construed as the hybridisation of AIKSs and Western Knowledge Systems (WKSs) in Sub-Saharan education.

With the foregoing debates, therefore, the inquirer was caught on the horns of dilemma trying to determine the extent to which the integration of AIKS into Zimbabwe’s Education 5.0 curriculum brings value to the nation. It is this uncertainty which perturbed the inquirer and compelled him to embark on this study with a view to weighing the evidence.

## Problem Context

The author is perturbed by the contending views on the relevance of AIKSs to contemporary education in SSA in general and Zimbabwe in particular. On the one hand, AIKSs are construed as a decolonial force in the current Eurocentric curricula (Zengeya-Makuku *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, AIKSs are dismissed as manifestations of an anachronism and propagation of pseudoscience (Wuta & Zivurawa, 2024), to such an extent that local educators are hesitant to incorporate indigenous knowledge in class out of fear of infecting instruction with pseudoscience (De Beer & Whitlock, as cited in Wuta, 2020). This portends the practical uncertainty that lecturers face in integrating AIKSs due to the conflicting discourses. The current inquiry, therefore, sought to ascertain the value of AIKSs in Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum. This hermeneutical study, thus, estimated the contribution that the AIKSs could bring to creativity, innovation, industrialisation, and national development.

## Stimulus Questions

1. What do you understand about AIKSs?
2. How far does the integration of AIKSs into the Education 5.0 curriculum benefit Zimbabwe as a nation?
3. What do you suggest for tweaking this agenda for integrating AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum?

## Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by Gade's theory of 'narratives of return' (Makuvaza, 2017). "Narratives of return is taken to mean embodiments of postcolonial critical 'consciousnesses' or 'voices' expressed in the form of political ideologies, philosophies and 'protest writings' by postcolonial statesmen, intellectuals as well as academics" (Gade, cited in Makuvaza, 2017, p. 351). Gade's 'narratives of return' theory, therefore, is in close propinquity with critical theory; a pedagogy which is suffused with a strong change agenda for liberating the downtrodden from the circumstances that enslave them. "These political ideologies, pronouncements as well as protest writings originate from discontentment and resentment of the *status quo* in postcolonial states where they are located" (Gade, cited in Makuvaza, 2017, p. 351). Thus, Gade's 'narratives of return' are also a reaction to the forces of neo-colonialism which undertake to legitimise Western epistemologies thereby denigrating and downplaying the indigenous meaning-making in the postcolonial dispensation.

As one scholar observes, "The major statement behind 'narratives of return' is a desire or yearning to 'return' to the past for possible solutions to challenges and problems associated with the postcolonial dispensation" (Makuvaza, 2017, p. 351). Gade's theory



of 'narratives of return', thus, concurs with the Africanisation agenda which is bent on hybridising the AIKSs with the neo-liberal WKSs in local education, since the AIKSs are perceived to have vast potential to complement the WKSs in terms of development within virtually all domains of human endeavour. The preceding is endorsed by Meylahn (as cited in Dreyer, Dreyer, Foley & Nel, Undated) who proclaims categorically that the different narratives of return all made a call for Africanisation.

According to Hankela (2014, p. 48), "these narratives (of return) have in common the sense that for the sake of a good future, society needs to *return to something African* rooted in pre-colonial times." *Returning to something African* concurs with the *Sankofa* principle. According to Woodson (2020), *Sankofa* is an Akan word from the Akan-Adinkera ethnic group in Ghana. The literal translation of the word and the symbol is 'it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind'. The term is derived from the words *San* meaning 'return', *ko* meaning 'go' and *fa* meaning 'fetch, seek and take' (Slater, 2019, p. 1). After having been interpreted and re-interpreted in several different ways, it was established that *Sankofa* symbolises the Akan people's quest for knowledge based on critical reasoning-examination, intelligent, and patient investigation of the past (Woodson, 2020; Slater, 2019). "Visually and symbolically, '*Sankofa*' is expressed as a mythic bird that flies forward while looking backward with an egg (symbolising the future) in its mouth" (Slater, 2019, p. 2). This ties with the motto, 'In order to understand one's present and ensure one's future, one must know their past'. To the Akan, therefore, it is this wisdom in learning from the past which ensures a strong future (Slater, 2019). Consequently, both Gade's 'narratives of return' theory and *Sankofa* principle coincide with Msila's (2009) notion of African renaissance, which, in turn, dovetails with the agenda for Africanising education in SSA in general, and Zimbabwe in particular.

### **Indigenous Knowledge and African Indigenous Knowledge Systems Unravelled**

The word 'indigenous' is derived from the Latin word '*indigena*' whose English equivalent is 'indigene', which is usually taken to mean 'native'. Indigenous, thus, refers to "the root of things; as something that is natural and in-born to a specific context or culture" (Msila, 2009, p. 311). Indigenous knowledge, therefore, depicts the kind of meaning-making or knowledge production or epistemology which is peculiar to any given locale. The above is endorsed by Zengeya-Makuku *et al.* (2013, p. 447), who view indigenous knowledge as "knowledge that people in a given community developed, and continue to develop over time and is based on experience often tested over centuries of use, adapted to the local culture and environment which is ever-changing and dynamic". Indigenous knowledge, therefore, is home-grown but amenable to change. Mawere (2015, p. 61) also views indigenous knowledge as "a set of ideas, beliefs and practices of a specific locale that has been used by its people to interact with their environment and other people over a long period of time." Thus, indigenous knowledge is the 'traditional', 'native', 'local'

epistemology embedded in the history and culture of any people, including their civilisation.

Indigenous knowledge systems in general have been defined as “the sum total of the knowledge and skills which people in a particular geographical area possess” (Shizha, 2010, p. 32). AIKSs, therefore, comprise the meaning-making process (epistemology) deemed idiosyncratic to SSA. They incorporate combinations of epistemologies encompassing the technological, philosophical, social, economic, educational, legal, and governance systems of Africans (Msila, 2009). AIKSs are sometimes called the African people’s science, ethno-science, folk-ecology, village science, or local science as they cover ecology, climate, agriculture, animal husbandry, botany, linguistics, medicine, clinical psychology, and craft skills, *inter-alia* (Mapira & Mazambara, 2013). Mapira and Mazambara (2013) also maintain that AIKSs are home-grown, cultural, perennialistic (mainly through oral history), geared towards problem-solving, and dynamic/versatile/adaptable to changes/events taking place.

## Review of Related Literature

In the various communities of the world, there exist indigenous epistemological (meaning-making) systems that can be meaningfully integrated into the pro-Western school curricula (Kaino, 2013). WKSs and AIKSs, therefore, can coexist and complement each other in the education curricula. Hence, Kante (as cited in Murwira & Wuta, 2023) asserts that the integration of AIKSs at all levels of education in Africa is beneficial to students because it enhances the relevance and effectiveness of instruction since it consequently provides an education that adheres to students’ own inherent aspirations, perceptions, experiences, language, and customs. Kante’s assertion pertains to the whole world, which manifests a geographical gap in literature. The current inquiry, therefore, sought to narrow down to issues of a similar nature at a local level, *id est*, in Zimbabwe.

The African continent has its own knowledge systems (AIKSs) which have been utilised by its inhabitants for an extended period of time. To Mohamedbhai (2013), there is rich indigenous knowledge embodied in Africa’s cultural and ecological diversities, and African people have drawn on this knowledge for hundreds of years to solve specific developmental and environmental problems. Likewise, Odora-Hoppers (2004, p. 8) writes:

*Today, indigenous knowledge is marginalised, even denigrated, but it lives and sustains millions of people economically, socially and spiritually as a living framework for continuing creativity and innovation in most fields of technology. It is a source of wealth, both as an economic asset and as cultural patrimony.*

AIKSs, therefore, constitute the African heritage and it is the aforementioned creative and innovative potential of AIKSs which justifies their fusion into the higher and tertiary

education curricula within SSA. Mohamedbhai's (2013) and Odora-Hoppers's (2004) contributions are above board. However, they exhibit a geographical gap as they tend to be applied to the Sub-Saharan region in general, which constitutes a simplistic generalisation. The current study, therefore, sought to fill this gap by conducting a study of a similar nature locally (in Zimbabwe) in order to gather a more nuanced picture of the phenomenon under review.

As emerged from a study conducted locally in Zimbabwe by Zengeya-Makuku *et al.* (2013), AIKSs serve to contextualise instruction, enhance learner understanding of the concepts under study, and foster scientific-technological development leading to the betterment of people's standards of living. Although Zengeya-Makuku *et al.*'s contributions are in the local context and are deemed valuable, they manifest a population or sample gap in the sense that they were gathered from secondary school teachers only, which excluded lecturers. The current inquiry, therefore, sought to bridge this gap by gleaning relevant insights from teachers' college lecturers.

Ndhlovu and Musuku (2004), however, report that the Zimbabwean education system is conspicuous for its disregard of AIKSs, which, according to Kaya (2014), are perceived in some quotas of the African society as inferior, primitive, superstitious, unscientific, and improper sources for social theory and research development. It is against this critique and denigration of AIKSs that the current study seeks to weigh the evidence and, in the process, estimate the value of African epistemology in Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum.

According to Muchenje and Goronga (2013) and Mapara (2009), numerous studies were conducted covering (a) AIKSs and sustainable development, (b) AIKSs and their integration into primary and secondary school, (c) AIKSs and science, and (d) contributions of universities to the renaissance of AIKSs. The above-named authorities on the whole conclude that AIKSs are a valuable instructional resource. Notwithstanding the value of the aforementioned research efforts, the researcher noted a paucity of literature particularly on AIKSs and their place in Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum.

## **Research Methodology**

The current study was informed by interpretivism, sometimes called hermeneutics, a research philosophy in which the researcher "seeks to understand situations through the eyes of the participants ... and (is) premised on the view that reality is socially constructed" (Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2007, p. 27). The inquirer, thus, sought to understand human-social phenomena from the perspective of the speaking and acting participants. Through hermeneutics, the inquirer undertook data interpretation focusing on the meanings and value systems expressed by lecturers.



This hermeneutical study took the qualitative approach, which, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), is more successful when dealing with human-social phenomena. Qualitative research seeks to probe deeply into the study settings to obtain an in-depth understanding of the way things are, why they are that way, and how participants in that context perceive them (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2011). Thus, the current inductive and naturalistic inquiry was concerned with the depth, not breadth of information on human-social phenomena, which, in this case, was teachers' college lecturers' perceptions on the place of AIKSs in Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum. The current inquiry was a case study by design, which focused on one selected teachers' college in Harare.

The purposive sampling technique was preferred since it gave the inquirer the convenience to pick on information-rich interviewees who furnished him with relevant in-depth information that gave the whole inquiry the quality of being qualitative. The small sample size of six lecturers was determined by the purposive nature of participant selection within the specific context of teachers' colleges. The fact that data saturation was achieved provides further justification for the small sample size of six.

In terms of instrumentation, the current study employed the use of in-depth individual face-to-face interviews and analysis of documentary evidence (document analysis) because the two data-generation tools were deemed compatible with the qualitative research approach and case study design (Tshuma & Mafa, 2013). Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with the six purposively sampled lecturers from the selected teachers' college to obtain in-depth information on issues to do with the interface of AIKSs and the Education 5.0 curriculum. The researcher also employed document analysis as a buttress research instrument in order to allow for triangulation, which guaranteed the credibility and trustworthiness of findings. Peer debriefing and active reflexivity were also employed to further enhance the rigour, credibility, and trustworthiness of findings. In document analysis, private records, books, reports, periodicals, bulletins, and syllabi may be used as sources of data (Best & Kahn, 2006). The current study, thus, reviewed related literature as contained in journals and analysed in particular the *University of Zimbabwe Vice Chancellor's (2022) Teacher Education Transformation Programme* as some kind of a bulletin to gather baseline information pertaining to the interface between AIKS and Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum.

### **Presentation and Analysis of Findings**

Findings were presented verbatim in order to give a qualitative feel to the study and ensure that the readership catches the original flavour of participants' contributions. This presentation and analysis of findings was configured in accordance with the stimulus questions, meaning that the 'sub-headings' under this 'findings section' derive from their

respective stimulus questions stated earlier. Research participants are coded CL which stands for College Lecturers.

### **Understanding African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKSs)**

Participants' definitions of AIKSs were as follows:

**CL1.** *AIKSs refer to the unique knowledge, practices, and beliefs of the indigenes of Africa. They constitute a holistic approach that encompasses cultural practices, spiritual connections, as well as environmental, medicinal, agricultural, social, cultural, and traditional knowledge.*

**CL2.** *AIKSs constitute local knowledge systems which emanate from people's existential circumstances and are not borrowed from other exotic knowledge systems. Indigenous knowledge encompasses traditional knowledge which has been passed from generation to generation. African indigenous knowledge permeates aspects of societal life such as agriculture, medicine, and food production, and conservation, etcetera.*

**CL3.** *These are cultural and traditional practices, beliefs, customs, norms, and values that separate Africans from other races. Africans are identified by these practices, which make them unique as a people. These practices are passed from generation to generation through African narratives, observations, and imitation.*

**CL4.** *AIKSs refer to the body of knowledge built since time immemorial by successive generations of Africans. It is an acknowledgement and affirmation that a holistic body of knowledge that covered all the domains of human life existed on the African continent and speaks to the ingenuity and lore of the continent's early inhabitants which must be preserved and passed to posterity. AIKSs capture human existence in its totality because the evidence that can be adduced so far points to Africa as the cradle of human race, and given that human knowledge started with human evolution there is no doubt whatsoever that AIKSs constitute the basis of all forms of all knowledge as they exist today, never mind the new dynamism. AIKSs are first of a political nature, that is, the art of governance from the family set up to the village head, chiefs, and kings. AIKSs are of an economic nature because economic production on the land was associated with the fortunes prescribed by nature. Good seasons followed pious human conduct while tragedies attended human error. The social aspect of AIKSs is the most enriching as it encompasses medicine, divination, rain-making, fertility, pre- and post-natal therapy, puberty rites, parenting, nutrition, communalism, Unhu/Ubuntu, and many more.*

**CL5.** *AIKSs denote the system of knowledge that is inherent in the lives of Africans. It is passed from one generation to another. It recognises the knowledge ingrained*

*in African culture. It is a way of explaining natural and spiritual thoughts, beliefs, and feelings which are the cornerstones of African existence. AIKSs have long been dwarfed by Eurocentric and colonial philosophies which trivialised the African knowledge systems. Nevertheless, AIKSs continue to embrace the relevant principles and schools of thought through which Africans explain phenomena. Although AIKSs tend to evolve with time, whatever elders know about the maze of issues like disease, diet, life skills, farming, marriage, etcetera, is critical in understanding and solving problems. For example, some behaviours of animals and/or plants can be used to forecast the weather whilst herbs are useful in curing diseases, averting disease outbreaks and related disasters.*

**CL<sub>6</sub>.** *AIKSs are the unique traditional form of knowledge and practices of Africa's different and diverse cultures.*

Participants on the whole converged on the understanding that AIKSs constitute the unique African traditional knowledge, practices, customs, norms, values, and beliefs. As understood by participants, this African traditional epistemology encompasses the cultural, spiritual, social, environmental, medical, and agricultural knowledge which is perennialistic and holistic. Participants also stressed that this peculiarly African traditional knowledge was built since time immemorial; it is geared towards problem-solving and demonstrates the intelligence and traditions of Africans. The fact that the interviewed teachers' college lecturers have a sound conceptual understanding of AIKSs presents a good grounding and starting point for the integration of these AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum, making it a genuinely decolonised and heritage-based training programme.

### ***Integration of AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum: Benefits and drawbacks***

Participants' views are as follows:

**CL<sub>1</sub>.** *Zimbabwe can preserve its/her cultural heritage and identity by including AIKSs in the curriculum at all levels. AIKSs, thus, inform agricultural practices such as crop management, grain storage, and livestock management which can then improve food security. AIKSs promote cultural diversity, inclusivity, and heritage preservation, which enhances the relevant learning outcomes and cognitive development among students. The integration of AIKSs into pro-Western education serves to empower local communities so that they take ownership of their own development and conservation efforts promoting community-led initiatives and sustainable resource management. Potential drawbacks of AIKSs include limited recognition and support, inadequate literature, and cultural suppression.*

**CL<sub>2</sub>.** *The integration of AIKSs into the country's Education 5.0 curriculum fosters understanding of the diversity of local natural resources which can be utilised in creativity, innovation, and production of goods and services. It equips and empowers students with local knowledge and skills which help them solve local community problems. It brings about the element of affordability and easy access to resources, which usually come free or at a low cost because the resources are locally available.*

**CL<sub>3</sub>.** *Integration of AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum fosters critical thinking and heritage-based innovation. In the end, it breeds industrialists who are capable of using their locally available natural resources to produce goods and services thereby transforming society and industry, id est, promoting endogenous but globally relevant socio-economic development.*

**CL<sub>4</sub>.** *With this integration, we stand up to tap into the rich culture of our forebears and this improves our present paradigms in the political, economic, and social domains of life. Previous development levels and strategies should be strategic to our present thrust. We cannot start from scratch when our forebears have done the spadework for us. We must take from where they left, for instance, 'vocationalisation' was their invention and 'on-the-hands apprenticeship' was their brainchild. This, we must take stock of, detail by detail so that we do not miss this rich tapestry from the past.*

**CL<sub>5</sub>.** *Zimbabwe stands to benefit from AIKSs although the process of their integration into the Education 5.0 curriculum is still lacklustre, piecemeal, and selective. The production and use of indigenous herbs to manage illness, for instance, Zumbani, Cannabis, and Gavakava in the treatment of Cancer, High Blood Pressure, Sexually Transmitted Infections, Covid-19, and related Flues demonstrates the value of AIKSs. There are factories that are making foodstuffs, drinks, and medicines from locally available resources using community/family support systems grounded in AIKSs. Regrettably, consumerism is defying the conservation of locally available resources.*

**CL<sub>6</sub>.** *The integration of AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum helps to promote and preserve Zimbabwe's rich and diverse cultural heritage. It makes learning more relevant and contextual.*

Participants seem to concur that AIKSs promote cultural identity, cultural diversity, cultural heritage, sustainable agricultural development, community empowerment, community-led conservation efforts, and sustainable resource management. As emerged from participants, AIKSs also foster heritage-based creativity and innovation, indigenous-oriented production of goods and services, problem-solving, and low-cost learning based

on locally available resources. Above all, AIKSs were found to nurture critical thinking, indigenisation of thought, vocationalisation of learning, indigenous medicine, instructional contextuality and functionality. However, some drawbacks were noted which include limited recognition and support, inadequate literature resources, cultural suppression, consumerism which continues to defy conservation efforts, and above all the integration effort which is still lacklustre, piecemeal, and selective. Nevertheless, the finding that the interviewed college lecturers appreciate the value of AIKSs in Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum intimates that educators on the whole view the integration project in positive and benevolent terms. Hence, the chances are high that they are forthcoming and proactive in the implementation process.

### ***Tweaking the process of integrating AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum***

Participants tendered the following suggestions:

**CL<sub>1</sub>.** *I suggest, inter-alia, the involvement of indigenous communities to ensure that their knowledge and perspectives are respected and adopted (stakeholder engagement); curriculum modification - developing a culturally relevant curriculum grounded in Zimbabwe's cultural heritage and AIKSs; capacity building through re-orientating educators, id est, further training and support for educators to effectively integrate AIKSs into the curriculum; development of resources such as textbooks and teaching materials that incorporate AIKSs; supportive policies that enhance the integration of AIKSs into the curriculum; effective and consistent policy implementation; regular monitoring to check progress and effective evaluation of the integration project; fostering community ownership and participation in the development and implementation of the curriculum; and prioritisation of indigenous knowledge in the curriculum development process so as to cultivate respect for it.*

**CL<sub>2</sub>.** *I suggest the sponsoring of further research on the heritage-based curriculum and particular AIKSs. I also urge staff development on the heritage-based curriculum and its envisaged benefits. There could be need to promote the creation of more innovation hubs, which innovate in the processing of local resources. I encourage more documentation and preservation of AIKSs as these are usually undocumented and transmitted orally.*

**CL<sub>3</sub>.** *I suggest that the curriculum be inclusive of AIKSs starting from the foundational grades, that is, from Early Childhood Development (ECD) thereby catching them young. This will foster a sense of belonging and appreciation. Thus, children begin to appreciate their cultural heritage from a tender age. Hence, they grow up acquiring the heritage-based skills needed in local industry and, in the*



*process, become the vanguards of the agenda for turning around the country's economy basing on locally available resources.*

**CL4.** *Amidst the neo-colonial forces currently wreaking havoc in SSA in general and Zimbabwe in particular, we be our own king makers by using our own languages to develop African ingenuity. This should be our starting point. We cannot use English to preserve and develop African tradition. That is a contradistinction which we must eradicate. Let us take on board the custodians of African culture so that they partake in our search for African urgency. We need to understand this premise, 'The master's tools cannot be used to dismantle the master's house'. A complete paradigm shift, therefore, is necessary.*

**CL5.** *I suggest the following: involvement of the surrounding especially rural communities, monitoring and evaluation of the integration process against the background of evolving policies and geopolitics, funding the AIKSs initiative at all levels of education, deliberate formation of a department under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development (MoHTEISTD) that sponsors and conducts research targeted at developing AIKSs.*

**CL6.** *AIKSs could be taught from ECD level through the primary and secondary cycles up to higher and tertiary education. The relevance and essence of fusing AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum should be clearly spelt out before operationalisation on the ground.*

Key suggestions, thus, include indigenous community engagement, curriculum modification for heritage preservation and cultural relevance, re-orientation of educators (capacity-building and/or staff development), and production of more literature on AIKSs. Participants also suggested consistent formulation and promulgation of more policies to effectively enforce implementation. They urge curriculum monitoring and evaluation to check progress of the integration agenda. Participants advocate for the promotion of AIKSs in the curriculum to instil respect for indigenous epistemology, further research on Education 5.0 and AIKSs, more indigenous-oriented innovation hubs, and increased documentation and preservation of AIKSs. Participants also support the incorporation of AIKSs into education as from ECD in order to catch them young. Above all, participants encourage the use of indigenous languages to articulate AIKSs, they encourage the funding of AIKSs initiatives at all levels of education, deliberate formation of a department under the MoHTEISTD to spearhead the integration agenda, and awareness raising. These suggestions have the transformative potential to guarantee success of the integration project rendering Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum more heritage-based and functional, which is what defines quality education.

## Discussion of Findings

The fact that participants (college lecturers) of the current study have exhibited a sound conceptual understanding of AIKSs mirrors the finding by Zengeya-Makuku *et al.* (2013) that secondary school teachers in Zimbabwe possess a sound and common conceptual understanding of indigenous knowledge (AIKSs). In fact, what is applicable to secondary school teachers can as well be transferrable to college lecturers because they are fellow educators though at different levels. College lecturers' sound conceptual understanding of AIKSs finds confirmation and substantiation in Murwira and Wuta's (2023) study, which also established that educators appreciate the value of AIKSs in teacher education. This presents a good grounding and starting point for the integration of AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum. Lecturers' views, thus, align with Mawere's (2015) Africanisation (integration) thesis, which is consistent with Gade's 'narratives of return' theory and the *Sankofa* principle, cognate ideals that enjoin Afro-Zimbabweans to revert to their precolonial past in search of what could have been forgotten or left behind which could be of value in addressing problems of today. This integration project, therefore, has the vast potential to magnify and amplify the heritage-base of Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 philosophy, which is an exigency for sustainable indigenous-oriented development.

The fact that participants on the whole viewed the agenda for integrating AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum in positive and benevolent terms also affirms Mawere's (2015) Africanisation thesis and challenges the pseudoscience and anachronism critiques. The above finding reveals lecturers' willingness to participate in the implementation process and that the whole reform idea is worthwhile. This worthwhileness of AIKSs is affirmed by Murwira and Wuta, who, in their 2023 study, discovered that AIKSs are of value to Zimbabwe's teacher education curriculum and the nation as a whole. The preceding is further confirmed by Muchenje and Goronga (2013) and Mapara (2009), who, in the review of related literature, ennobled AIKSs. Lecturers on the whole advance the Afrocentric and decolonial ideals in the context of Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum, which is tailored to assume a heritage-based outlook in its thrust of indigenous-oriented development.

Drawbacks raised by some participants paint a gloomy picture about the future of Mawere's (2015) Africanisation-integration project, thereby manifesting skepticism about AIKSs - negativity which seems to have crept into some educators and students alike in Zimbabwe. This skepticism finds expression in the sentiments of De Beer and Whitlock (as cited in Shizha, 2010), according to whom, some educators are hesitant to incorporate AIKSs into teaching due to fear of infecting instruction with pseudoscience *viz* fake village science. Such skepticism harmonises with the fact that AIKSs are seen in some quarters of the Afro-Zimbabwean society as manifestations of anachronism, *id est*, as having been overtaken by events (Mosweunyane, as cited in Murwira & Wuta, 2023). Some lecturers

(participants), therefore, challenge the relevance-applicability of Gade's 'narratives of return' theory, *Sankofa* principle, and Mawere's (2015) thesis of Africanisation. However, with this self-negating mind-set, Afro-Zimbabweans could be losing what could be of value to them.

Despite the critique of AIKSs and Africanisation in the foregoing, participants on the whole tendered suggestions that have the potential to tweak the integration project, thereby rendering Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum more heritage-based, indigenous-oriented, and functional, which is what education and training should be. Participants' suggestions, thus, align with Mawere's (2015) Africanisation (integration) thesis, Gade's 'narratives of return', and *Sankofa*. Participants' suggestions also affirm Shizha's (2010) advocacy for the hybridisation of AIKSs and WKSs in the education curriculum with the former occupying a larger portion. Above all, participants reiterate Murwira and Wuta's (2023) chief recommendation that academics could continuously research and publish on AIKSs and in the process keep the interface between AIKSs and Education 5.0 vibrant within an immortal conversation.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The finding that college lecturers appreciate the concept of AIKSs presents a good grounding and starting point for the integration agenda. This integration project has the vast potential to magnify and amplify the heritage-base of Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 philosophy. Participants' appreciation of the benefits that come with integrating AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum, thus, intimates the availability of a proactive task force at the disposal of the MoHTEISTD for the successful implementation of this integration project. However, potential drawbacks of this integration agenda were noted as well, which warrants the conclusion that a lot still needs to be done in terms of tweaking the whole integration process. To the MoHTEISTD, the study recommends formulation of an elaborate, comprehensive, and progressive policy framework tailored to expedite and tweak implementation of this agenda for integrating AIKSs into Zimbabwe's Education 5.0 curriculum. This is envisaged to foster instructional contextuality and relevance leading to heritage-based creativity, indigenous-oriented innovation, and locally based but still globally competitive industrialisation.

## **References**

- Best, J. W. & Kahn, V. J. (2006). *Research in Education*, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed. Chicago: Allyn and Bacon.
- Catherine, A., & Hoppers, O. (2004). Culture, indigenous knowledge and development: The role of the university. CEPD.

- Chemhuru, O. T. (2011). *Philosophy of education: Its relevance to teacher education*. Gweru: Booklove Publishers.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: Routledge.
- Dreyer, J., Dreyer, Y., Foley, E. & Nel, M. (undated), *Practicing Ubuntu: Practical theological perspectives on injustice, personhood and human dignity*. Accessed 25/06/2020 from <https://books.google.co.zw/>
- Emeagwali, G. & Dei, G. J. S. (Eds) (2014). *Anti-colonial educational perspectives for transformative change: African indigenous knowledge and the disciplines*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E. & Airasian, P. W. (2011). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston: Pearson Educational International.
- Government of Zimbabwe (2018). *Education 5.0 doctrine for the modernisation and industrialisation of Zimbabwe through education, science and technology development to achieve vision 2030*. Harare: MoHTEISTD.
- Hankela, E. (2014). *Ubuntu, migration and Ministry: Being human in a Johannesburg Church*, Boston: Brill.
- Kaino, L. M. (2013). Traditional knowledge in curricula designs: Embracing indigenous mathematics in the classroom. *Stud Tribes Tribal*, 11(1), 83-88.
- Kaya, O. H. & Seleti, Y. N. (2013). African Indigenous Knowledge Systems and relevance of higher education in South Africa. *The international Education Journal*, 12(1), 30-44.
- Makuvaza, N. (2010). Philosophical reflections on the Nziramasanga Commission on education and training of 1999 with special reference to Chapter 4 *Hunhu/Ubuntu* (Holistic) education. *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research*, 22(3), 357-365.
- Makuvaza, N. (2017). Old People's Homes (OPHs) and intergenerational cultural transfer discontinuity in Zimbabwe. In P. Ngulube (Ed), *Handbook of Research and Social, Cultural and Educational Considerations of Indigenous Knowledge in Developing Countries*, pp.346-368. IGI Global 2016. Accessed 24/06/2020 from <https://books.google.co.zw/>
- Mapara, J. (2009). Indigenous knowledge systems in Zimbabwe: Juxtaposing postcolonial theory. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3(1), 135-155.

- Mapira, J. & Mazambara, P. (2013). Indigenous Knowledge Systems and their implications for sustainable development in Zimbabwe. *Journal for Sustainable Development in Africa*, 15(5), 90-106.
- Mawere, M. (2015). Indigenous knowledge and education in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Africa Spectrum*, 50(2), 57-71.
- Mohamedbhai, G. (2013). Indigenous knowledge must be harvested for Development. *University World News*, 262.
- Mosweunyane, D. (2013). The African educational evolution: From traditional training to formal education. *Higher Education Studies*, 3(4), 50-59.
- Msila, V. (2009). Africanisation of education and the search for relevance and context. *Academic Journals Educational Research and Review*, 4(6), 310-315.
- Muchenje, F. & Goronga, P. (2013). Education and the revitalisation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Africa: A paradigm shift in curriculum content. *International Journal of Social Science and Education*, 3(4), 886-894.
- Murwira, S. & Wuta, R. K. (2023). Possibilities of integrating African Indigenous Knowledge Systems into theory of education: A case of a selected teachers' college in Harare, Zimbabwe. *Zimbabwe Journal of Teacher Education*, 17(2), 179-198.
- Muzira, D. R. & Bondai, B. M. (2020). Perception of educators towards the adoption of Education 5.0: A case of a State University in Zimbabwe. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences* 1(2), 43-53.
- Ndhlovu, F. & Masuku, J. (2004). *Mainstreaming African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in higher and tertiary education: The Case of Zimbabwe*. Pretoria: UNISA Press.
- Shizha, E. (2010). The interface of neo-liberal globalisation, science education and indigenous African knowledges in Africa. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, 2(1), 27-58.
- Slater, J. (2019). Sankofa – the need to return back to move forward: Addressing reconstruction challenges that face Africa and South Africa today. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 45(1), 1-24.
- Tapfuma, M. M. (2012). *Protection and preservation of indigenous knowledge: Towards the creation of a national database*. Harare: Science Engineering and Technology (SET) Presentation.



Tshuma, R., & Mafa, O. (2013). Research designs. In M. S. Tichapondwa (Ed.), *Preparing your dissertation at a distance: A research guide* (pp. 114-137). Vancouver: VUSSC.

University of Zimbabwe Vice-Chancellor (2022). *Teacher Education Transformation Programme*. Harare: Faculty of Education.

Woodson, C. G. (2020). *The power of Sankofa: Know history*, Berea: Berea College.

Wuta, R. K. (2020). *The role of indigenous education in contemporary times: A search for a holistic education in Zimbabwe* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). Masvingo: Great Zimbabwe University Library.

Wuta, R. K. & Zivurawa, V. (2024). Africanising secondary education in a postcolonial and globalising Zimbabwe: A worthwhile undertaking or manifestation of anachronism and propagation of pseudoscience? *Journal of African Education [JAE]*, 5(2), 61-77.

Zengeya-Makuku, V., Kushure, L., Zengeya, A. & Bhukuvhani, C. E. (2013). Secondary school teachers' conceptions of indigenous knowledge: A basis for its inclusion into the curriculum. *An International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 2(8), 446-451.