

Vocational – Technical Education approach the alternative pathway to Art and Music Education curriculum development and reinforcement at secondary and tertiary level in Zimbabwe.

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Vocational – Technical Education approach: the alternative pathway to Art and Design and Music Education Curriculum Development at Secondary and Tertiary level in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe has for more than a decade gone through sharp microeconomic challenges which have left people concentrating on bread and butter issues only for survival. This economic situation is a hindrance to a meaningful curriculum development and reinforcement strategy that might be necessary in impacting Technical- Vocational Education and Training (TVET) approach in Zimbabwean secondary schools, and tertiary institutions. The education sector has suffered stranded growth while the world over technology is improving tremendously. Today any meaningful curriculum development should focus on the enhancement of skills that are valued in global and local economies. Therefore, due to technological advancement the Zimbabwean secondary and tertiary Art and Music should be aligned to global trends. World Bank Development Report (2007) emphasizes the importance of TVET in skilling young people both in and out of school for a productive livelihood and national economic growth. This qualitative research employed questionnaires, interviews, observation and document analysis as means to collect data. The study established that Zimbabwe has great potential in TVET curriculum development and reinforcement because it has established infrastructure though these lack up to date equipment and viable curricular. The study also revealed that there is no close communication and linkage between the education system and the private sector. The study recommends that the government may encourage strong collaborative curriculum development process between industry and the education sector. The study also recommends that there may be national economic development strategies that are linked to TVET for current and future skills needs of the nation.

Key words: *Art Education, Music Education, Curriculum development, Technical education, Teacher education, Music and dance, Art and Design*

Background to the study

Zimbabwe Education and Training development has undergone many changes. These changes were necessitated by the attainment of independence in 1980. The new Zimbabwean government embarked on a reform course designed to eliminate imbalances and inequalities that existed during the colonial era in education and training. The colonial era was characterized by policies of racial discrimination in education and society. There were glaring inequalities in the provision of education and training. The new government immediately democratized education. The democratization policy led to great expansive and extensive provision. The Zimbabwean government strongly believed that education was a privilege for a few but it should meet the needs of every citizen and the nation (Zvobgo, 1986).

There was great expansion in both enrolment and number of primary and secondary school. The main problem was that the curriculum was still British theoretic and academic in nature at the expense of vocational – technical skills. The great expansion put pressure on human, financial, infrastructural as well as teaching and learning resources. Most of the pupils who completed form iv could not be absorbed into either senior high school, teachers' colleges,

training institutions or the labour market. The majority of the pupils channeled out by Zimbabwean schools post-independence did not have relevant practical training skills since the curriculum was mainly academic and theoretical. The government tried to redress the situation through a Memorandum of the Working Party of the Cabinet (September, 1985). The memorandum stressed reform of the educational policy. The reform called among other things the modification of F1 (Academic subjects and considered superior during the colonial era and F2 (Mainly practical subjects and considered inferior during the colonial era and was designed for the less gifted students) into offering general education with compulsory technical practical component requiring each learner to do at least two technical subjects that are related to developmental needs of the nation. Unfortunately, this was not implemented. The problem of mismatch of what is taught in schools and the employment world led to the setting up of The Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training in 1998. This commission recommended that steps should be taken to ensure that infrastructure is developed to get rid of ‘hot sitting’ (Nziramasanga, 1999). The commission also recommended that there should be a genuine paradigm shift from being examination driven curriculum to one that anchors on experimental learning and develop desirable traits and competencies (Nziramasanga, 1999).

This paradigm shift has not taken place to the present day. In fact, little has been done as far as the development of vocational – technical education is concerned. As a result, this has urged researcher to carry out a research on vocational-technical education approach the alternative pathway to Art and technical subjects Curriculum development and reinforcement at secondary and tertiary level in Zimbabwe.

Conceptual Framework

Vocational –technical education enhances skills that are valued in global and local economic growth. Vocational –technical education is potentially one of the most important tools for national and regional development. Vocational – technical education is one of the most important vehicles for developing essential skills in young people in and outside schools. These skills are essential for employment and the nation’s economic growth and regional development (Middleton 1998). Despite the fact that TVET is a vehicle for skilling young people globally its implementation is problematic in art and Music, and other technical subjects. If this situation continues unabated the concept of Voc-Tech will not gain ground. (Mugochi,1988)

Vocational –Technical approach a robust curriculum development strategy for economic growth

Stranded economic growth in most developing countries is due to lack of skills that are valued in global economies. As a result, local industries remain stagnant. “Good demand driven Technical – Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is one of the most important tools in skilling young people in and out of school.” (<http://www.tvet-portal.net>) accessed 21 February 2015. Hence vocational –technical curriculum should play a critical role in preparing young people for a productive livelihood.

Vocational –technical education plays an important role in national economic development. International vocational-technical education is taken seriously for its role in the skilling of young people in and out of school. (Silatech, 2008). Since the mid 1990s vocational –technical education, internationally known as Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been gaining popularity along technical skills (TVSD) in East Asia. This is due to the roles the two approaches play in the economic growth of Korea, China, India, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia.

In developed countries vocational-technical TVET is designed in line with the national economic blueprint. Thus, each country in the developed countries takes a different approach to vocational-technical education. Middleton (1998) argues that most of their TVET or TVSD systems benefit from close communication and linkages with the private sector. That is the curriculum is designed by captains of industry and commerce in collaboration with educationists. There is substantial private sector investment in education and there are industry wide skills standards. Here skills taught in schools or thereafter should be in line with the chronological advancements of the time and national manpower developmental needs to bolster national economic development.

There is a strong collaboration process of curriculum development for learning at schools and workplace. There is deep rooted education, industry trade associations relations. Aring et al (1996) points out that Northern European countries perceive the term vocational –technical education differently from the Anglo-Saxon countries. The Anglo-Saxon are the British and their former colonies where the term has negative connotations. MacMillan et al (1992) argue that this negative point of view was transferred to most of the former British colonies including Zimbabwe. Most of these countries make up the developing world. Hence, in most of the former British Colonies Vocational-Technical education has a negative social status. As a result, there is sometimes little or no collaboration between employers and education, industry and education. It has been noted that very few developing countries have a solid and organized private sector. This is opposite to the developed Northern Europe and the Eastern Asia perception of vocational-technical education from secondary to tertiary level. In Germany for example vocational means *berufsausbildung* which means completing your education for your profession. This means vocational-technical education has a high status and is taken seriously because of its role in provision of skilled manpower for the countries' economies.

As such TVET and TVSD has gained significant popularity in East Asia particularly in China, Taiwan, India and South Korea. This is because of their roles in the economic development of these countries. In developing countries there are few if any intermediaries who can connect both education and employer effectively. (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/tvet/>). There are also very few resources available to purchase and maintain up to date equipment for learning globally competitive skills. TVET is a robust vehicle for empowerment of young citizen because they will be in possession of essential skill which are important for economic production.

USAID a non-governmental organization from the United States of America. Carried out a study in twenty developing and developed countries on the best practice in workforce development

(1995 – 1997) One of the countries studied was South Africa. The study had the following findings:

- There is often no economic growth strategy linked to vocational technical education. Curriculum often narrow or out of date. There are no skills standards that reflect a sector's current and future skills needs. This is the opposite of what happens in developed countries.
- Therefore, the vocational-technical approach can be best illustrated by the South Korea economy. South Korea restricted Japanese ownership of companies shares to 49% which ensured that intellectual capital remained in South Korea. South Korean schools and colleges were required to teach today and tomorrow's skills based on the country's economic growth export strategy. As such African countries need to align their economic development strategies with education at the same time forming strong public – private partnership which ensures sustainable financing for sustainable development. For example, an economic development policy that is strongly aligned to an education system that support Art and Music education result in the uplifting of the Art and Music industry. This policy was successfully implemented in the DRC in the 80s when Rhumba Music dominated the world music charts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find out the effectiveness of the vocational –technical approach as an alternative approach in developing a robust Art and Music education curriculum at secondary and tertiary level in Zimbabwe. The study paid attention to availability of resources and infrastructure. The reason being that for any technical and practical curriculum to effectively take place there should be a place where the work is done.

Research Objectives

The research was led by the following objectives;

1. To establish the extent to which the vocational technical approach has been utilized as an alternative pathway in developing curriculum in Art and Music Education at secondary and tertiary level in Zimbabwe.
2. To evaluate the feasibility of the vocational –technical education approach in Art and Music at secondary tertiary level in Zimbabwe.

Research Methodology

A qualitative approach was employed in this study. Leedy (2011) defines a qualitative approach as a naturalistic paradigm that helps to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as real world settings where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interests. Therefore, it allows the study of things in their natural setting.

Population and Sample

Population

Best and Khan (1993) describe a population as a large group which consists of all the defined members to be studied. In this case these are the Art and Music teachers at secondary level, Art and Music lecturers at tertiary institutions.

Sample Cooper (2003) defines a sample as a limited subset of the population being studied. The sample for this study comprised fifty teachers, from schools. Ten lecturers from institutions of higher learning and twenty instructors from vocational training centers constituted the population.

Sampling Procedure

Random sampling was used to come up with teachers who filled in questionnaires. Borg and Gall (1996) argue that randomization reduces the chances of research bias. Purposive sampling was used to select schools to be included in the study. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to include those schools believed to offer Art and Music up to 'A' level, and other technical subjects as well. Purposive sampling was also used to come up with institutions of higher learning and vocational technical training centers that offer Art and Music course and other technical areas.

Data Collection Instruments

1. Questionnaires which were filled in by teachers.
2. Interviews were used to solicit information from lecturers and instructors.
3. Documents such as syllabi, schemes, course outlines, records and any other relevant documents were analyzed.

Findings

Vocational- technical curriculum development at secondary schools.

Information from teachers' questionnaires revealed that 60% of the schools had Art and Music specialist rooms whilst 40% do not have proper specialist rooms. The study revealed that the schools did not have the capacity to buy up to date tools, equipment and text books required by all technical subjects. Robust technical – vocation curriculum development of Art and Music subjects at secondary and tertiary level is critically hampered by lack of funding, and involvement of all stakeholders as particularly the private sector.

Vocational – technical curriculum at higher and tertiary level

The study clearly showed that tertiary institution and vocational training institutions in Zimbabwe are struggling to buy up to date equipment, tool necessary for skilling the young people of this country. According to data gathered from lecturers' interviews, 65% of the lecturers are of the opinion that the current economic hardships are a hindrance to any meaningful vocational – technical curriculum development although there are some infrastructure at their institutions. Art and Music subjects instructors from vocational training centers revealed that nearly all their institutions have buildings where they could carry out different practical and technical activities. However, there are still serious shortages.

Nearly 75% of the instructor lamented on the steep shortages of up to date equipment, tools, teaching and learning materials. In most cases institutions are forced to resort to old machinery and tools to train students. The current economic slump force lecturers, instructors and teachers to resort to traditional skills in all areas which in turn produce an incompetent graduate who lacks hands on skills and up to date manipulative skills.

The other information gathered from lecturers and instructors' interviews indicated that Art and Music and other technical subjects curriculum development has been seldomly done. 90% of the lecturers and instructors indicated that there are few changes and innovation in their areas of specialization. In most cases new areas on the curriculum lack equipment tools and materials. As a result, they either teach the new areas theoretically or they completely avoid them.

Documents such as different syllabi old and new schemes of work, textbooks record books, school time table at secondary level. Course outlines, records, programme, books, regulations at higher and tertiary level were analyzed to get an impression of what was, and what is in view of vocational – technical curriculum development. 70 % of vocational training centers are following old regulations and syllabi whilst 30% have new curricular. Nearly all the tertiary institutions have developed curricular that are almost abreast with global trends, these lack funding. Nearly 80% of the lecturers interviewed indicated that their institutions lack equipment, tools, and materials to carry out all the practicals that are required.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that curriculum development in Art and Music, other technical subjects at secondary and tertiary levels is still problematic. This is due to the Zimbabwe economic slump. The vocational-technical curriculum development is hampered by poor funding, lack of resources infrastructure and equipment. There is also no collaboration between the educator sector and the private.

Recommendation

- There is need for close communication and linkages among the private sector government and education system in developing industry – wide skills standards.
- The government can involve other stakeholders and give them a chance in developing infrastructure and funding of education.
- A strong collaboration between commerce-industry and education is therefore necessary for the development of the vocational – technical curricular which reflect the nation’s current and future skills needs which are globally competitive.

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