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The Teaching of Ubuntu through Ndebele Taboos to O-Level Learners in Gwanda North District

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the teaching of Ubuntu through Ndebele Taboos to O-level learners in Gwanda North district. To this end, the study employed the interpretivist paradigm under the qualitative research whereby semi structured interviews and questionnaires were conducted with purposively sampled O-Level Ndebele language teachers and school heads in Gwanda North district. The study established that both teachers and school heads are in unison on the importance of taboos in the counselling of children with character which exhibits Ubuntu. The challenges of not teaching taboos in Ndebele language were identified as the degeneration of Ubuntu standards, the uncontrolled growth of youths without proper counselling and the treatment of taboos as history with no value to the present. Different strategies which can be employed to effectively teach Ubuntu through taboos were highlighted and these include among others the teaching of Ndebele language by teachers who are predominantly Ndebele people by socialisation, the drafting of modern taboos which leaners can relate to, the teaching of taboos as a subject and examining taboos at ZIMSEC O-Level. This study therefore recommends a relook in terms of staffing of Ndebele language teachers who will be able transmit taboos and a culture which they are well versed in. Also, the provisions of the national syllabus should be specific on the teaching of Ubuntu using taboos. Other recommendations include an overhaul in terms of examinations, teacher training and capacitation, reference material on taboos and collaborations with experts.

Key terms: Ubuntu, taboos, counselling

BACKGROUND

This paper argues for the inclusion of relevant traditional socialisation methods in the teaching of Ubuntu. Ubuntu which is primarily nested in Africa can best be transmitted using its tried and tested indigenous knowledge systems. It will be argued that taboos which for decades were used in grooming and grounding new members of society in the African philosophy of Ubuntu are still relevant. Embedded in taboos is a culture which can be used to transmit principles of Ubuntu. African culture is rich in methods which were used to inform new members of the society of dangers in life which should be avoided. One such method is the use of taboos used to enlighten the African on do's and don'ts which ultimately shape character and way of life. The paper is also informed by the need for home grown solutions as mandated by the current educational philosophy in Zimbabwe which is heritage based. It is hoped that the location of taboos in the teaching of Ubuntu will work towards achieving the nation's goals of an upper middle income economy by year 2030. This cannot be achieved if the society does not have Ubuntu which will shape the citizenry able to collaborate, respect each other and shy away from corruption.

It is evident that the arrival of a new culture through colonialism affected the African way of teaching new members of the society. Through the western paradigms forced on the African, the traditional culture of counselling children with values of Ubuntu was lost. The criticism of lack of Ubuntu led to the commission of inquiry into education and training (CIET) in 1999 to conclude that the education system needed to be transformed so that it is able to churn out learners who exhibit traits of Ubuntu.

The CIET 1999 recommendations are also included in the updated curriculum of 2015 to 2022 and the Heritage based curriculum of 2023. The updated curriculum advocates for the inclusion of Ubuntu as a cross cutting theme in the syllabus. It is premised on the fact that if Ubuntu is included across the curriculum then the graduates from the education sector will also exhibit Ubuntu and hence co-exist in their environment. In this case, doctors with Ubuntu will respect human life and treat patients with dignity, law enforcement authorities with Ubuntu will enforce the law without taking bribes whilst children with Ubuntu will be respectful. The general public outcry on moral decadence is an indicator that taboos can be used in teaching Ubuntu to O-Level leaners such that they become good citizens with good character.

Taboos are part of oral literature used in moulding and building good human attributes. They carry within them a culture of Ubuntu which makes an individual complete. Chigidi (2009) explains how taboos work in making an individual avoid problems. He argues that, "they instilled fear in would-be deviants that if they misbehaved misfortunes such as illnesses, deformities or death would befall them".

One of the aims of the O-Level Ndebele syllabus is that of teaching Ubuntu and culture, however, it fails to clarity on which aspects to teach. It only gives examples of cultural aspects and listing of taboos. It does show how these have to be taught. It therefore suggests that on the ground teachers do not teach taboos separately to counsel learners on Ubuntu but as a small component of language and culture.

The researcher also identified a possible problem after a discussion with other Ndebele language teachers who indicated that they do not teach taboos as the ZIMSEC O-Level Ndebele examinations rarely ask questions on taboos. It therefore suggests that the shaping up of learners to become citizens with Ubuntu is being neglected.

The textbooks used the teaching of O-Level Ndebele do not have taboos. Therefore, if reference material does not have taboos it suggests that even the teachers won't give value to taboos as history has shown that teachers mainly focus on published material in their teaching.

The other talking point is that Ndebele language teachers are not Ndebele by birth or socialisation posing questions on how they will be able to teach lessons on a culture which they are not well versed in. The trends at teachers training colleges which allows all student teachers to teach any language which might not necessarily be their mother tongue. The trend posits challenges on how they will transmit a culture which they don't know. These premises suggest that taboos are currently not given prominence in the teaching of Ubuntu. This paper will interrogate the place of taboos in the teaching of Ubuntu which is crucial in shaping good citizens.

Research questions

The main reasons for this study is that of locating taboos in the teaching of Ubuntu to O-Level leaners. Questions guiding the study were as follows:

1. State the role of taboos in shaping learners.

2. Which problems are associated with the non-teaching of taboos to Ndebele language learners?

3. What teaching strategies can be employed by teachers in the teaching of Ubuntu using Ndebele taboos?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of taboos in shaping learners

According to Ndlovu, Ndlovu and Ncube (1995) taboos are instructions which should not be treated as lies but directions which would allow children to adapt to a way of life which exhibits good character and respect. Taboos enable learners to have a good background on morality from an early age. Ubuntu becomes a part of their daily routine which they are expected to exhibit as they live in their environment which demands that they have Ubuntu.

One of the roles of taboos in teaching, especially on cultural aspects which learners should adhere to, is that of being learning aids. Shaw and M'Raiji (2017) argue that they can be incorporated into the school curriculum to break the current trend of delinquent behaviour exhibited in schools and societies. Thus, taboos have an inherent power of dissuading children from partaking in activities which might lead them into a pathway which does not exhibit Ubuntu. It means that taboos can be an effective way of teaching Ubuntu.

Majoni and Chinyanganyi (2014) second the use of taboos in learning as learning becomes familiar and more meaningful to the learners. They foster humane people with moral norms and virtues such as kindness, generosity and compassion.

Mpofu (1988) reiterates the importance of taboos as a deterrent to bad behaviour by stating the ripple effect of taboos in that they encompass important aspects of life where most of them are instructions designed to alert a person on the consequences of bad actions. If one is deterred from bad actions then it follows necessarily they become people with Ubuntu or good nurtured.

Taboos are part and parcel of religion which makes people give them importance and hence follow them. Ndlovu and Manjeru (2014) state that taboos binding such that one must strongly believe certain values, symbols and beliefs. It means that taboos can be useful as an avenue of teaching Ubuntu since those who adhere to them won't compromise their religion.

Ibagere (2014) gives one of the uses of taboos as that of instituting a well ordered society in which one is compelled to be concerned about the welfare of his neighbour. Such kind of action leads to Ubuntu as one considers behaviour which will leave them at peace in their environment making taboos help achieve sustainability.

Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza (2014) argue for knowledge which should be worthwile and resulting in some desirable state of mind. This is reiterated by Ndlovu and Manjeru (2014) who state that worthwhile knowledge in the Ndebele culture involves the transfer of the rituals and taboos to the next generation as a way of conserving their natural resources. It therefore shows the importance of taboos as a genuine avenue of propagating Ubuntu beyond the current generation.

According to CPS, IsiNdebele soqobo (2017) taboos play an integral part in the upbringing and nurturing of children such they become socially acceptable. This suggests that if they are not given the proper guidance then they will become unacceptable and hence labelled people without Ubuntu.

Problems associated with the non-teaching of taboos

Majoni and Chinyanganya (2014) assert what is at the heart of the problems associated with non-teaching or counselling of children when they state that the lack of initiation rites in modern communities causes a lot of confusion among the youths. They further argue that young people have difficulties in

finding themselves because they have not been taught. Given these premises, it suggests that what is lacking in youths or children is teaching which will give them good grounding with a good moral compass.

Also, Mawere (2010) takes note of the folly in not teaching using indigenous ways in that high crime rates, serious moral decadence and other calamities are because of maginalization and labelling attached to African indigenous knowledge systems. This implies that the continued isolation of readily available ways of counselling new members of the society like taboos will invariably lead to the continuation of complaints on youths lacking Ubuntu.

An indicator of disregarding Ubuntu which can be taught using taboos according to Sigauke (2016) is the problems in schools such as vandalism, violence and indiscipline. It is a result of lack of values, relevant ethics, and morals. It reflects that Ubuntu is lacking in society and the formal education process.

Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza (2014) state the dangers of allowing western informed education which they state would mean that the theories of knowledge, values and beliefs reflect deep seated mental colonisation. Therefore, authenticity can be reclaimed through the indigenous Zimbabwean philosophy of Ubuntu.

They further argue that in education, at secondary and tertiary levels, it appears fine to exploit students, to ask for sexual favours for marks and in hospitals you die if you do not pay the specialists a bribe. The continual side-lining of Ubuntu and local pedagogies in teaching Ubuntu would lead to deterioration of moral standards in a country.

Ibagere (2014) suggests that the non-teaching of taboos in counselling children would somehow stifle development. The suggestion is such that the adoption of taboos would stem the ravaging corruption and ensure a better society that would support development placing the nation the right pedestal in global issues.

Chigidi (2009) laments the dangers of disregarding taboos as the society would fail to find a way of assisting children develop an innate ability to mould them to become good citizens. The suggestion made is that every society has means of training and of social control that are brought to bear on each person, making it difficult for individuals to act or even think in ways that deviate too far from the groups values and norms. In that way learners who have not been taught taboos won't be able to be led to a way which would allow them to be self-reliant.

Chigidi (2009) further narrates the problems between parents and children if taboos are not given prominence. Children may no longer share the same perceptions with their elders who are the custodians of society's values and norms.

Teaching strategies that can be employed by teachers in the teaching of Ubuntu

The different research work alluded to in this paper explains how Ubuntu can be taught but does not show how taboos can be used to teach Ubuntu. This paper is preoccupied with showing how taboos can be integrated in the teaching of Ubuntu to O-Level learners.

Many authors advocate for the teaching of Ubuntu but do not specify how it should be done in terms of pedagogy. However, what is clear is that taboos are an avenue for instilling Ubuntu values. CPS text, isiNdebele soqobo elucidates this by stating the major role of taboos as a method of teaching a person how they should behave as well as a deterrent to bad things which might cause harm to someone.

Researchers are in unison in terms of the teaching of cultural aspects which they contend should not be different from the learner's culture. Majoni and Chinyanganyi (2014) state that the methods are related to the culture and traditions of the children's ethnic group such as folktales. It suggests that the authentic methods of teaching Ubuntu are those ways which are part of the life of the learner. Thus, oral literature like taboos, folktales and proverbs can be used as learning aids in teaching Ubuntu as they are part and parcel of cultural material.

Mawere (2015) argues that in instilling discipline in learners punishment is an inseparable tool of education and acts an effective way of inculcating values that are desirable to the student. Therefore, if taboos are used in teaching they are able to inculcate Ubuntu since they are part of education which brings punishment to offenders.

Viriri (2017) suggests that for effective teaching of Ubuntu and culture there should be a stand-alone subject which focuses on those aspects. He quotes observations made by the commission of inquiry into education and training in Zimbabwe in 1999 which established that in Korea, ethics was a subject taught in the primary, middle, high school and the teacher training programmes. It means that for Ubuntu to be taught effectively to have lessons which specifically focuses on the subject.

Bondai (2016) advocates for a curricula that should be designed in such a way that Ubuntu values are inculcated in learners in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, social and work ethics. On that regard, if taboos are to be used as learning method in teaching Ubuntu then they should be part of the curriculum taught to O-Level learners.

Majoni and Chinyanganyi (2014) also say that for education to be able to counsel learners properly then norms and values of the community should become an integral part of primary education to inculcate such values as honesty, loyalty, bravery, leadership, responsibility and accountability. Thus, taboos which carry within them a code of conduct should be selected carefully to teach Ubuntu. It is clear that taboos and Ubuntu are intertwined such that there aspects of Ubuntu within taboos which should be passed on to the children.

Masote (2016) takes note that lessons on culture are not taught separately or are not explicitly clear in the national curriculum in the case of South Africa but referred to as being part of the hidden curriculum, learned alongside a planned curriculum. This scenario suggests that if culture is taught this way, Ubuntu is not given priority since there are no specific learning programmes of teaching it using taboos.

Mpofu (2002) identifies that the main agents of transmitting education were the parents and elderly people who taught children rules and regulations that revealed Ubuntu to children for generations and generations. It suggests that aspects of Ubuntu can only be taught by older people who can counsel the young people as they have had experience in life. The role of the teacher in teaching taboos is questioned in this instance.

Masengwe and Machingura (2014) state that the culture of the people must manifest in the education offered at primary up to university level in order for its products to become responsible citizens who are prepared to transform and better their societies. This suggests that if taboos are to be used as a teaching method then they should be included in the curriculum from early childhood learning up to tertiary level.

Also, of note is that taboos are readily available traditional learning aids which should be used in teaching Ubuntu. Shaw and M'Raiji (2017) elaborate by saying that taboos are good teaching aids and could still be very helpful if they can be adopted and incorporated into the school curriculum to break the current trend of delinquent behaviour exhibited in schools and societies. Thus education which will give priority to the use of taboos in teaching Ubuntu will automatically lead to a better end result.

Further to that Shaw and M'Raiji (2017) state that through their preservation by way of indigenous languages and customs, taboos help preserve harmony in society by erecting codes of conduct. This also suggests that the teaching of these taboos should make use of the local languages which carry within them the culture which should be transmitted.

Viriri (2017) also suggests that modern education should learn to involve children in real life situations from traditional education which grew out of the immediate physical and social environments with children learning by doing and were prepared to live and work on the land and specialised occupations. It implies that taboos are able to place the learner in real life situations not abstract or alien setting.

Chivasa and Mukono (2017) suggest that the taboo system can be blended with contemporary systems in order to create a morally virtuous community in Zimbabwe. Thus, curriculum developers should draft them into the syllabus or curriculum whether as subjects or learning aids.

Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza (2014) stress that the focus on education should be on imparting knowledge related to African culture and developing attitudes that are socially accepted. Therefore, they suggest that Ubuntu education should be taught as it is authentically African unlike westernised forms of education.

Shizha (2007) alludes to the importance of teaching based on culture by saying learners need empowerment through knowledge that is relevant to their social and cultural realities: knowledge that they can easily identify with and can make use of to develop themselves and their communities. It reiterates the need for Ubuntu to be taught using familiar ways to the African like taboos.

In his evaluation of the recommendations of the commission of inquiry into education and training in Zimbabwe of 1999, Makuvaza (2010) explains that the aim of education according to the Commission, unlike in the past when pupils simply went to school because they had reached the right age and teachers simply taught to make students pass, the aim now is to produce a person with Ubuntu. It gives the impetus for the use of all the strategies in teaching like taboos which will assist in developing learners who will be grounded Ubuntu.

Shizha (2007) suggests an overhaul in education by stating that in the case of Zimbabwe education should shift from the prevalent and pervasive influence of foreign cultures and needs measures to strengthen the bases of local knowledge. If education is influenced by local knowledge systems it would become easier for taboos to be synchronised into the teaching of Ubuntu.

Makuvaza (2010) further reiterates on the importance of those who would assist in teaching Ubuntu by stating that what the Nziramasanga Commission needs are cadres who are committed not only to implementing Ubuntu but also committed to Afrocentrism not for pedagogical and financial reasons but for existential ones. This suggests that the facilitators should be people who see the philosophy as a way of life.

Ndawi and Maravanyika (2011) state that the choice of what children learn is, according to Lawton, a selection from culture. A curriculum plan is, thus, an embodiment of those aspects of a people's culture that are so important to them that their transmission from one generation to the next cannot be left to chance but deliberately planned for, through a school system. Thus taboos are part of Ndebele culture and curriculum developers should select incorporate them as they carry within them a culture, particularly Ubuntu, which should be transmitted to next generation.

 Ndawi and Maravanyika (2011) further argue the impact of the facilitator in the learning process by saying that the teacher has his/her own philosophical, psychological and sociological ideas, which guide him/her as he/she makes the selection of content from culture. It suggests that the teacher who can effectively teach Ubuntu using taboos can only be one who is from the culture being transmitted or one who has also been socialised into that culture. The teacher would have duty of carefully identifying and transmitting important aspects of culture which will entrench Ubuntu in learners.

Yagi (1995) emphasizes the importance of the teacher by stating that people belonging to the same cultural community share similar beliefs, values and attitudes, and transmit these from generation to generation. The teacher who can be able to use taboos in teaching Ubuntu can only be done by one who is from that culture by birth or upbringing as he or she would also been brought up using those aspects. A facilitator from another culture might not value the use of taboos in transmitting Ubuntu.

Viriri (2017) further elaborates the role of the teacher by stating that although some syllabuses clearly pointed out that different aspects of culture should be taught, some teachers choose not to include them when teaching and some do not have that cultural knowledge. For taboos to be employed in teaching Ubuntu there is need for facilitators to adhere to the demands of the syllabus as well as have cultural knowledge of the Ndebele people.

Viriri (2017) also suggests that the teaching of culture needs specialist teachers who are knowledgeable in the field of culture. This suggests that not everyone can teach Ubuntu using taboos as a teaching method carefully selected individuals who meet the criteria just as it was done in the yester years where the role was largely dedicated to the uncles from the maternal side, aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers.

It is evident that literature suggests that the teaching of Ubuntu using taboos cannot be done by anyone without prior knowledge of the culture being transmitted. These cultural aspects should be taught by facilitators who believe and respect the culture and overally taught in the language of that culture.

Theoretical framework

This study used the Afrocentrism theory to examine how taboos can be employed in the teaching of Ubuntu to O-Level Ndebele learners. It is a theory which according to Pellebon (2007) is a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate. It places the African people in the centre of any analysis of African phenomena. This implies that relevant ways of examining African phenomena are essentially from Africa and not from the western.

It is further argued by Asante (2009) that Afrocentricity is a revolutionary idea because it studies ideas, concepts, events, personalities, and political and economic processes from a standpoint of black people as subjects and not as objects. The theory allows for inclusion of African knowledge which was previously marginalized. It also asserts that before colonisation and the advent of global west education the African people had ways of transmitting essential knowledge like taboos which helped in the moulding of children.

Afrocentrism revolves around the use of essentially African ideas in interrogating African phenomena. The Afrocentrist according to Milam (1992) seeks to uncover and use codes, paradigms, symbols, motifs, myths, and circles of discussion that reinforce the centrality of African ideals and values as a valid frame of reference for acquiring and examining data. It becomes possible to explore the idea of teaching Ubuntu using African methods of knowledge transmission such as taboos.

Afrocentrism was selected for this study as it is likely bring out credible and authentic results as it allows for the consideration of which originates from Africa. Its use was also considered as it is a theory which seeks to revolutionise or bring change by showing the importance of an African culture which western education despised.

Methodology

The study used the interpretivist paradigm under the qualitative research. It focused on teachers and school heads in their natural setting so that we learn from them about what they are thinking. Its selection was considered as it would allow teachers to give their views, which might vary from teacher to teacher, on the incorporation of taboos in teaching Ubuntu to O-Level learners. The study focused on schools in Gwanda North district which is hub of Ndebele language, giving the study a chance for authentic results.

Population and Sampling

Participants in this study were purposively selected O-Level Ndebele language teachers and school heads from Matabeleland South where Ndebele language is taught to O-Level Ndebele language learners. It was hoped that Ndebele language teachers would be in better position to respond meaningfully to the research questions on incorporation of taboos in teaching Ubuntu as they directly involved in teaching and interpretation of the syllabus. Secondly, the participants who were selected are qualified teachers with a minimum of five years' experience teaching Ndebele language to O-Level learners as it was believed that they would give genuine responses on the use of taboos in teaching Ubuntu.

Instruments

The research used semi structured interviews which were conducted with purposively sampled O-Level Ndebele language teachers in Gwanda North district. These participants were interviewed to ascertain the effective use of taboos in the teaching of Ubuntu to O-Level Ndebele learners. The study also used questionnaires to selected school heads where O-Level Ndebele language is taught to allow them to respond to the research questions without boundaries in their environment. The interviews allowed for the researcher to be in a better condition to study the attitudes, motivations, and opinions of the respondents (Muchenje, 2014).

Validity and reliability

This study employed a mixed method approach on data collection to ensure triangulation of data. The questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used concurrently with O-Level Ndebele language teachers and school heads to get their views on the teaching of Ubuntu using taboos to O-Level Ndebele language learners.

Ethical considerations

The research was conducted after getting clearance from the Ministry of primary and secondary education through its provincial offices in Matabeleland South. The research participants were notified in advance on the purpose of the study so that they give their consent. Participants voluntarily participated, they were not coerced. The research maintained strict adherence to confidentiality and anonymity.

Results and Discussion

This section presents results in relation to the research questions. Results are presented using charts and narratives. It starts by presenting the demographics of the participants. It then presents conclusions and recommendations.

Results from the questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to O-Level Ndebele language subject teachers on the teaching of Ubuntu using taboos to O-Level Ndebele language learners in Gwanda North district. It was important administer the questionnaire to the subject teachers since they play a big role in the interpretation and implementation of the national syllabus in their respective subjects at school level.

Graph on O-Level Ndebele language teachers

Chart 1: Gender

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	3	30%
Female	7	70%
Total	10	100%

The chart presents data on the composition of the participants who are teachers in the selected schools in Gwanda North district. The number of female teachers is higher than male teachers. From the 10 teachers who were selected, seven were female representing 70% whilst three were male representing 30%. These results show that most O-Level Ndebele language teachers in Gwanda North are female and this can be alluded to the ministry's position on staffing female teachers in the urban areas and peripheries in close proximity to their spouses. It could also be because few males take up teaching courses in colleges.

Chart II: Age of participants

Age group	Number	Percentage
16 - 25	0	0%
26 - 35	5	50%
36 - 45	3	30%
46 - 55	2	20%
56 and above	0	0%
Total	10	100%

From the information on the ages of the participants, no teacher was between 16-25 years representing 0%. Most teachers are older as they are between 26-35 years representing 50%. Teachers who were between 36 and 45 years were three representing 30%. Those between 46-55 years were two representing 20%. No teacher was found to be above 56 years representing 0%. What is notable from age ranges of teachers is that most O-Level Ndebele teachers are older and possibly were socialised using Ndebele taboos even if they don't see their importance in moulding learner's character.

Chart III: Tertiary Education Qualification

Level of Education	Number	Percentage
Ordinary level	0	0%
Advanced level	5	50%
Bachelor of Arts degree	5	50%
Master of Arts	0	0%
Total	10	100%

The collected data shows that Ndebele language teachers 'educational qualifications falls into two categories. Five teachers who represent 50% have Advanced level qualifications. The remaining 5 teachers, representing 50% have Bachelor of Arts degree. The above information indicates that most O-Level Ndebele language teachers do have tertiary education which suggests that they have the good background on the teaching of language and culture to O-Level Ndebele language learners.

Chart IV: Teacher Education Courses

Teacher Education programme	Number	Percentage
Certificate in Education	2	20%
Diploma in Education	5	50%
Bachelor of Education Degree	1	10%
Post Graduate Diploma in Education	2	20%
Master of Education	0	0%
Total	10	100%

The chart indicates that the majority of O-Level Ndebele language teachers have a Diploma in Education qualification with five teachers representing 50%. Two teachers, who represent 20% were found to be in possession of a post graduate diploma in Education. Teachers with a Certificate in Education were two, representing 20%. There was one teacher, representing 10% who had a Bachelor of Education degree. No teacher had a Master of Education degree, representing 0%. These results indicate that most teachers have a diploma in Education diploma which is a pre-requisite in teaching O-Level learners. The information suggests that despite possessing the requisite skills in teaching, teachers might not be using taboos in teaching Ubuntu because of lack of knowledge. However, the lack of teachers with Bachelor of Education and Master of Education degrees might also point to the reasons behind the non-teaching of some important aspects because teachers lack knowledge at that level.

Chart V: Teaching experience

Number of years	Number	Percentage %
0 - 5	0	0
6 -10	5	50%
11 - 15	2	20%
16 - 20	1	10%
21 - 25	1	10%
26 and above	1	10%
Total	100	100%

The above chart that most teachers do not have enough teaching experience. No teacher was found in the 0-5 year's category representing 0%. The bulk of teachers were found in the 6-10 year category where 5 teachers were found representing 50%. Two teachers with 11-15 years teaching experience were found representing 20%. The other categories each got a single teacher representing 10% for each of the categories respectively. The results indicate that most O-Level Ndebele language teachers do not have much teaching experience which could suggest that they are not yeat able to teach Ubuntu using taboos since they might be still concentrating on some aspects especially the pass rate and examinations.

Findings on research questions

All the 10 participants, representing 100% defined taboos in the same way as traditions which force one to conform and are a method of pre-counselling children on good behaviour which leads them to avoid dangers which might befall those who don't conform. They stressed that taboos help in safeguarding Ubuntu. What is evident from the responses is that teachers can identify taboos as playing a role in the socialisation of children.

On the role of taboos in shaping learners who will exhibit Ubuntu, participants gave three responses. Four teachers, representing 40%, stated that taboos are important as they are part of traditional religion which was used inculcate Ubuntu. They stated that aspects of Ubuntu which include respect are gained by the children. Ubuntu was said to be inculcated as consciously and subconsciously as fear of going against tradition will be instilled. Three teachers representing 30% said that taboos are important as they build the character of the child. They stated that it is rare for a child brought up using taboos to be a deviant and in most cases they avoid dangers in life. The third group of three teachers representing 30% said that taboos are important as a way of raising awareness to the children on dangers. Of note is that the participants are cognisant of the important role taboos play in teaching Ubuntu to O-Level Ndebele language learners. Embedded in taboos is Ubuntu which should be transmitted to the learners.

On problems associated with the non-teaching of taboos to Ndebele language learners, the participants identified several challenges. The biggest challenge identified by four teachers, representing 40% was that of a loss in terms of Ubuntu, culture and history. Two teachers representing 20% said that the non-

teaching of taboos also results in teachers who are also ignorant or who lack knowledge as there would be no literature where they can infer. The other two teachers representing 20% also highlighted the berating of taboos by some teachers who cannot relate the significance of taboos with everyday life leading to taboos being relegated to lies. The last two participants, who also represented 20% stated that if taboos are not used in teaching Ubuntu to O-Level Ndebele language learners then the youth grow up without a mentor who would keep watch over them. What is evident from the responses is that the non-teaching of Ubuntu through taboos poses a great danger of degenerating Ubuntu standards and culture.

On the final research question on strategies which be employed in the teaching Ubuntu using Ndebele taboos to O-Level Ndebele language learners, the participants gave wide responses. Three teachers, 30% of the participants suggested that an overhaul of the structure of the examination paper by the examining body, ZIMSEC, whereby the O-Level Ndebele language paper should have a compulsory, exclusive section dedicated to taboos and Ubuntu. The second strategy of drafting taboos into the O-Level Ndebele language syllabus was suggested by three teachers who represented 30% of the participants. The third strategy suggested by one teacher who represented 10% of the participants was that of educational trips to cultural centres like Sizindeni cultural centre and cultural experts like Phathisa Nyathi so that the learners can be properly counselled. One person, representing 10% encouraged the invitation of old people to come into school as resources persons to teach on taboos during lessons. The other suggestion given by one teacher who represented 10% was that experts should compile books on taboos. Another teacher, representing 10% of the participants did not render any suggestion on strategies which could be used in teaching Ubuntu using taboos to O-Level Ndebele learners. The suggestions given by the participants on the teaching of Ubuntu through Ndebele Taboos to O-level learners in Gwanda North district indicates that this role is not exclusive teachers only as it shows the impact of the examinations, syllabuses and teachers who do not view themselves as qualified to do so.

Results from interviews

The interviews were conducted with the heads of school on the teaching of Ubuntu using taboos to O-Level Ndebele language learners in Gwanda North district. It was important to interview the heads of school since they play a supervisory role in the interpretation and implementation of the curriculum in their respective schools.

Chart VI: Gender on Heads of schools

Sex	Number	Percentage %
Male	5	100%
Female	0	0%
total	5	100%

From the five schools all the five heads of school who represent 100% were male. The lack of a single female head of school might suggest that they could have been disinterested in the roles and also points to challenges in the counselling of the girl child.

Chart VII: Heads of school Age

Age group	Number	Percentage %
16 - 25	0	0%
26 - 35	0	0%
36 - 45	4	80%
46 - 55	1	20%
56 and above	0	0%
Total	5	100%

The collected data on the age of schools heads indicates that those in the age range 36 – 45 years are four representing 80%. One head of school who represents 20% was found in 46-55 year age range. The two age ranges indicate that the school heads are not too old and would suggest that lessons on culture and socialisation of children might be prioritised in school.

Chart VIII: Tertiary Education Qualification

Level of education	Number	Percentage
Ordinary level	0	0%
Advanced level	2	40%
Bachelor of Arts degree	3	60%

Master of Arts	0	0%
Total	5	100%

It is evident from the chart that the level of education for schools falls into two categories only. Two school heads who represent 40% have an Advanced level qualification. Three heads representing 60% have a Bachelor of Arts degree. The data indicates that all the heads of school have tertiary education suggesting that they know what should be taught to learners at Ordinary level.

Chart IX: Teacher Education Courses

Teacher Education Programme	Number	Percentage %
Certificate in Education	0	0%
Diploma in Education	0	0%
Bachelor of Education Degree	2	40%
Post Graduate Diploma in Education	3	60%
Master of Education	0	0%
Total	10	100%

The chart indicates that the teacher education courses for heads of school falls into two categories. Two heads of school who represent 40% have a Bachelor of Education degree. Three heads who represent 60% have a post graduate diploma in Education. What is suggested by the above data is that school heads have adequate qualifications for them to head secondary schools with O-Level learners.

Chart X: Teaching experience

Number of years	Numbers	Percentages %
0 - 5	0	0
6 - 10	0	0%
11 -15	0	0%
16 - 20	1	20%
21 - 25	3	60%
26 and above	1	20%
Total	100	100%

The above chart shows data on the teaching experience held by school heads which falls into three categories. One school head representing 20% has 16 – 20 years' teaching experience. Three heads of school representing 60% have 21 – 25 years teaching experience. There is one head representing 20% who has 26 and above years teaching experience. The above data shows that school heads have adequate teaching experience suggesting that they also have the requisite skills in administration. However, this does not dismiss the claim that because of work burnout and being used to the job they might be neglecting follow ups on what is actually transpiring in the classroom particularly on lessons to do with culture.

Findings on research questions

The section covers and analyses responses from the interviews held with school heads in relation to the research questions. It was crucial for school heads to give their opinions on the teaching of Ubuntu using taboos to O-Level Ndebele learners as they are the ones entrusted with supervision on the implementation of the curriculum.

The participants were able to define taboos. They were defined as a way of directing a way of life of any given people. Four school heads said that taboos are a way of causing fear to children which would necessarily lead to good behaviour. The responses buttress the claim that taboos are a necessity in teaching children on good behaviour. It also serves to show that taboos should be used to teach Ubuntu to O-Level Ndebele language learners as they have not yet been well groomed.

On the research question in relation to the role of taboos in the teaching, the participants stated that taboos have power of maintaining good character within children. Two school heads, stated that taboos are a repository where Ubuntu character can be tapped from. These views suggest that taboos are a way of counselling people so that they have a good character or moral compass. It is evident that taboos give warning, give advice, give counsel and store Ubuntu traits within them and as such should be given their rightful position in teaching.

In responding to the dangers associated with non-teaching of taboos to O-Level Ndebele language learners, the five school heads stated that the biggest challenge is that of lack of respect of culture by learners. It was observed that without them Ubuntu standards fall and youths lose a sense of belonging. The responses gives suggestions that the abandoning of the readily available method of teaching Ubuntu is tantamount to neglecting children as they will fail to find a way which will inculcate Ubuntu from their own culture. In that sense taboos should be part of the lessons so that youths are not deprived of Ubuntu which is part of their culture.

In presenting their views on the strategies which can be employed in teaching Ubuntu using taboos to O-Level Ndebele language learners the participants gave different responses. One of participants suggested that those who teach O-Level Ndebele language should be from the Ndebele people by birth or socialisation and not because they studied the language at college. The argument is that teachers who were socialised into the Ndebele culture will use taboos effectively because they were also brought up using them and they also believe that they work. It was further elaborated by the head that the language of instruction in teaching Ubuntu through taboos should be the Ndebele language as aspects of Ubuntu are closely related with the way of life of the Ndebele people which is already in existence. One of the school heads suggested that since there are new Ndebele proverbs, similarly there should be new taboos which relate to this era such that learners do not identify taboos as Stone Age material. Another school head suggested that taboos should an exclusive textbook where examination material and item writing should be drawn from. It was further highlighted by one of the school heads that taboos should be included in the curriculum as a subject so that curriculum implementers will give it the kind of respect it deserves. The other school head suggested that the government should have a special day on the calendar where cultural aspects like taboos will be given prominence and perhaps teachers can start treating them like other parts of the curriculum. What is evident from the responses from the school heads is that the current strategies are not adequate in teaching Ubuntu. Also of note is that school heads are not content on O-Level Ndebele language teachers teaching Ubuntu using taboos. They are suggesting that they need experts to complete that task. Their suggestions are valid and can be employed to reduce the current challenges in the teaching of Ubuntu to learners.

Conclusions

The conclusions herein are made as responses to the research questions. It is evident that both teachers and school heads have some knowledge on taboos and can identify their important role in the counselling of children with character which exhibits Ubuntu. The challenges of not teaching taboos in Ndebele language include the degeneration of Ubuntu standards, the uncontrolled growth of youths without proper counselling and the treatment of taboos as history with no value to the present. Different strategies which can be employed to effectively teach Ubuntu through taboos were highlighted and these include: the teaching of Ndebele language by teachers who are from the Ndebele people by socialisation, the drafting of modern taboos which leaners can relate to, the teaching of taboos as a subject, dedicating a day on the calendar to celebrate taboos and other cultural aspects, dedicating a section in the ZIMSEC O-Level Ndebele language examination paper where questions on taboos are itemised and lastly the educational trips to cultural experts like Phathisa Nyathi.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations which might assist in the teaching of Ubuntu through Ndebele Taboos to O-level learners:

- The examining body, ZIMSEC, is advised to itemise taboos into the O-Level Ndebele language paper so that taboos are given the status which falls to them in the moulding of good character.

- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education are encouraged to staff teachers are not only trained in teaching Ndebele language at O-Level but also those socialised and brought up in the Ndebele culture so that they will be able transmit taboos and a culture which they are well versed in.

- Teachers colleges and universities are advised to equip student teachers with adequate knowledge on culture and taboos so that they become useful counsellors in teaching Ubuntu using taboos.

- The department of education is encouraged to spell out clearly in the national syllabus what should be taught and avoid giving mere topics which include taboos.

- Ndebele language teachers encouraged to collaborate with experts who have the knowledge on taboos so that leaners are counselled properly on Ubuntu.

- Publishers and the curriculum development unit are advised to develop textbooks and literature which includes taboos which will act as reference material which teachers will use in their lesson preparations.

- School heads and heads of department are encouraged to have staff development programmes where teachers will be equipped with different strategies on teaching Ubuntu using taboos to O-Level Ndebele language learners.

- Teachers are also advised to find resource persons who are not too old so as to remove the stigma of associating taboos with the elderly like grandmothers. The use of young people who were socialised using taboos helps locate taboos in the modern era and not as historical remnants.

- Ndebele language should continue to be used as a medium of instruction in teaching Ubuntu as embedded in it is the Ndebele culture which should be transmitted from one generation to the other.

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ACRONYMNS

CIET- commission of inquiry into education and training

ZIMSEC- Zimbabwe schools examinations council