

AFROCENTRIC EPISTEMIC SYSTEMS AND HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM. THE CASE OF A UNIVERSITY IN ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

African Afrocentric epistemic systems have impacted upon the existence and practices of African communities throughout the ages. These epistemic systems have influenced the enactment of how Africans have lived in their communities and how they have sustained and used their resources. However, these epistemic systems encountered an existential problem in the promulgation of Eurocentric epistemic systems which marginalized the significance and centrality of Afrocentric epistemic systems in Zimbabwe's higher education curriculum. This article concerns itself specifically with the higher education curriculum in Zimbabwe in terms of an Afrocentric perspective and investigates ways in which lecturers' and students' perceptions towards Afrocentric epistemic systems can be changed considering the problem of the colonization of the Zimbabwe's higher education curriculum by Eurocentric epistemic systems. This article, therefore, argues for the incorporation of Afrocentric epistemic systems in bringing about a distinctly Afrocentric perspective in the curriculum, the case of a University in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: epistemic, Eurocentric, Afrocentric, higher education, curriculum

INTRODUCTION

There are epistemic systems that have existed in African communities since dawn of civilization. These epistemic systems have aided communal life and are prevalent in all sectors of life. Human activities such as agriculture, natural resource conservation, and traditional medicine are all supported by Afrocentric epistemic systems. Mohamedbhai (2013), is of the view that, in Africa there is a wealth of local information contained in cultural and ecological diversity, and natives have used this knowledge to solve a variety of developmental and environmental problems for hundreds of years. However, the fact that Afrocentric epistemic

systems are not adequately acknowledged and recognized in Zimbabwe's higher education curriculum, particularly at the Catholic University of Zimbabwe (CUOZ), is cause for concern. Consequently, this article primarily focuses on the CUOZ, notwithstanding that similar research might have been done in other spheres of higher education.

Afrocentric epistemic systems are frequently dismissed as unimportant, as seen by their omission from the institution's curricula. In essence, these epistemic systems are mostly transmitted orally in society, without adequate investigation and documentation (Murwira 2020). Action is, therefore, necessary to harness these systems in the socioeconomic development of society. Institutions of higher learning, should, consequently be at the forefront of advocating for the integration of Afrocentric epistemic systems in their curricula. As a result, the present article was based on research that was conducted at the CUOZ with regard to what degree Afrocentric epistemic systems featured in the curriculum at the CUOZ.

This article's main research issue is, therefore, concerned with how the Catholic University of Zimbabwe's current curricula favors Eurocentric epistemic systems while giving Afrocentric epistemic systems little, if any consideration. In essence the problem being focused on pertains to the epistemic systems that inform the curriculum at the CUOZ.

The main problem is guided or informed by the following research questions which specifically focus on integration of Afrocentric epistemic systems in the curriculum of the CUOZ: What programs offered at CUOZ's curriculum include Afrocentric epistemic systems indigenous? What factors influence the non-inclusion of Afrocentric epistemic schemes in the education programs of CUOZ? What are the advantages of incorporating Afrocentric epistemic systems in the Catholic University of Zimbabwe's curricula? And how may Afrocentric epistemic systems be successfully utilized to decolonize the CUOZ's curricula?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

Several academics have carried out research on Afrocentric epistemic systems, also referred to as Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IAKS). However, this article focuses on Afrocentric epistemic systems, higher education and the curriculum at the institution of higher learning under study. The ideas being generated in this article are novel in regard to the CUOZ. The ideas and studies of other researchers are presented to delineate this study from their work and perspectives and to, add value on existing body of knowledge on Afrocentric epistemic systems and the curriculum in higher education in Zimbabwe. In this particular research, literature pertaining to this, was embarked upon as regards to Afrocentric epistemic systems, higher education and the curriculum at the CUOZ?

What is referred to as, IAKS, have been viewed or understood or perceived from different

angles by different scholars. It serves as the basis for local judgments in the management of natural resources, agriculture, and other areas. IKS is specific local knowledge that is learned by members of a community through informal experiments, the amassing of practices, and a thorough grasp of the surroundings within that society (Chikaire et al. 2012). IAKS, like other local knowledge systems, is essentially a creation of African communities that were amassed over a long stretch of time. IAKS is a technique used in communities to address issues including daily survival, well-being, learning, the surroundings, and others that arise on a daily basis. IAKS are typically passed down orally in most societies.

IAKS is, in essence, a creation of the local community with minimal outside involvement (Murwira 2020). Indigenous knowledge, according to Owuor (2007), is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and sharing each particular society's way of life, group's daily activities, economic and socio-political activities. As a result, IAKS is holistic in character, encompassing all aspects of human life in a society. "Today, indigenous knowledge is ignored, if not denigrated," writes Odora-Hoppers (2002, 8), "yet it supports and nourishes several communities in their socio-economic activities". IAKS empowers people in terms of culture and in different economic activities. It is a fountain of riches, in terms of economic assets and cultural heritage. An examination of this viewpoint reveals that the knowledge system makes significant contribution to society's well-being and growth. IAKS, basically emanates from the local environment and consequently should constitute the basis upon which any society's formal curriculum education is built, but have been persistently and purposely degraded to a lower place, according to Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019). Such a strategy would ensure that the knowledge students acquire in higher education institutions is relevant to their social demands. People in African societies acquire local knowledge informally as they explore their surroundings (Murwira 2020). IAKS, according to Kaya (2013), refers to local people's time-honored customs and activities. Indigenous African knowledge abounds in society, and the knowledge system's keepers are the locals.

IAKS AND HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN AFRICA

Several scholars have investigated and remarked on the positive and negative aspects of integrating IAKS into African higher education curricula. No research in particular focuses on the Catholic University in Zimbabwe. The knowledge now distributed in African universities is largely sourced from Western countries and does not include IAKS (Murwira 2020). This can be traced back to colonial historical narratives, which portrayed anything coming from Africa as backward and primitive, while everything from Europe was regarded as superior. Africa is considered as a dark continent by the Western world, with diabolic, barbaric, and

backward culture, and ways of knowing (Chiwanza, Musingafi and Mupa 2013, 19). Many people have misunderstood indigenous knowledge as being simplistic because it is primarily oral rather than recorded, and society oriented and not always quantitative and not suitable to scientific examination in a systematic way (Emeagwali 2003, 4). This viewpoint is subjective and ignores IAKS' contributions to the long-term development of African societies. The inclusion of IAKS into university education, according to Kaya (2013, 141), allows African scholars and academics to re-evaluate the intrinsic order of KS, which has been denigrated in the past. Scholars and academics in Africa should give the local knowledge system its appropriate status among the world's higher education systems. As a result, incorporating African traditional knowledge in instructional methods is essential in transforming the existing education system, which is being criticized for being overly abstract, irrelevant, and exam-oriented (Owuor 2007, 26). African colleges must respond by conducting more studies on IAKS and validating information derived from African communities' existential circumstances.

According to Sifuna (2008, 9) many elements of IAKS should be incorporated into modern education so as make it relatable to the local context. Students should be able to relate to the issues raised in their classes. Kay and Seleti (2013, 30) notes that University curriculum in Africa is highly theoretical and disconnected from the evolving difficulties faced by local people. Most of the knowledge conveyed in university education is based on Western theories. In terms of educational content, integrating indigenous knowledge with contemporary knowledge systems in curriculum, teaching resources, and textbooks aids learners in becoming more globally aware (Kante 2004). Because of this, dominance of Western knowledge and the marginalization of AKS remain to be academic challenges that demand thoughtful analysis, meticulous preparation, and careful application of procedures that guarantee the acknowledgment and provision of space for the local in current governance, socio-economic, and educational realms (Osman 2014, 10). Stakeholders in higher education facilitate a vital role in ensuring that IAKS is recognized as a viable and valuable knowledge system around the world. Appiah-Opoku (2005, 103) says, "Indigenous environmental knowledge is defined as having in-depth and detailed information about the fauna and flora in your locality the creation, utilisation of relevant technical tools for resource use; and all-inclusive cosmic view that is symmetrical to the study of ecology". IAKS is all-encompassing in terms of human activities in society, as well as the geophysical environment, which includes fauna and flora.

One need to be cognizance that IAKS have been denigrated and looked down upon in the international community. The marginalization of IKS in the majority of global cultures must be acknowledged. Indigenous knowledge has historically been denigrated using labels like primitive, backward, savage, rustic, unscientific, and others. The idea of "universality," which

is exclusive to Western study, is commonly used to criticize non-Western knowledge (Kiggundu 2007, 49). Course content is frequently Eurocentric, prohibiting students and intellectuals from discussing and exchanging African-related concerns, claim Abdi, Puplampu, and Dei (2007, 119). Universities like CUOZ must take the lead in advocating incorporation of IAKS in their curricula. According to Kante (2004), students would gain from the inclusion of IAKS at different stages of learning in Africa because it might increase the significance and efficacy of instruction by facilitating instruction that is suited to each student's unique perceptions, experiences, language, and customs. Universities in Africa should work to have local knowledge systems recognized alongside notable education systems, universities in Africa have to be centers where knowledge systems can define their notions and demand their space (Osman 2014, 10). According to Murwira (2020) Universities in Africa should not be merely consumers of Western knowledge but should generate knowledge based on African experience and culture. This issue should apply to the CUOZ as well, in order to disseminate heritage based knowledge to students.

In Africa's higher education institutions, Western knowledge and ideologies continue to dominate teaching and learning. This is exhibited through learning of social sciences in African higher education institutions, the theoretical framework is currently entrenched in Western Europe and North America's techniques, concerns, opinions, and concerns (Kaya 2013, 3). The problem being faced is the acknowledgement of IAKS and the cohabitation of diverse episteme in the university programs, rather than the removal of western episteme from the education system.

According to Ukwuoma (2015, 113), knowledge gained via university education must be relevant. This is supported by Moahi (2007, 3) who says, universities in Africa must advocate for the acknowledgement and incorporation of IAKS in the curriculum. As a result, Western dominance of information and denigration IAKS remain an academic obstacle that necessitates thorough assessment, careful organization, resulting in vigilant application of policies that ensure the appreciation and provision of space for the local in existing political, economic, cultural, and educational purviews (Osman 2014, 10). The responsibility is upon African colleges to rise to the occasion and generate relevant, African-focused theories.

IAKS AND THE HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN ZIMBABWE

The Western episteme dominates the university education system in Zimbabwe, as it does other African higher education systems. The curriculum's courses are heavily influenced by Western knowledge systems, with no convincing integration of IAKS, (Murwira 2020). Forty years after gaining independence, the higher education system still exhibits the colonisers' influences. The

inability of the current educational system to solve societal concerns, according to Ndhlovu and Masuku (2004, 281), necessitates a fresh push centered on mainstreaming IKS in higher education curriculum. The higher education system in Zimbabwe is notable for its dismissal of local knowledge systems which are seen as not worthwhile and lacking scientific basis (Ndhlovu and Masuku 2004, 281). Anything African-related is typically seen as substandard and unworthy of inclusion in the curriculum. Chirimuuta, Gudhlanga and Bhukuvani (2012, 281) point out that, this indigenous ideology, which has endured over centuries, should be the bedrock of Zimbabwe's curriculum. This necessitates a paradigm shift and calls for transformation of the curriculum taught at the CUOZ.

It is apparent for Zimbabwean universities to examine their curricula and establish course content that is relevant to society's demands. Mawere (2015, 58) claims that indigenous knowledge systems are used by societies all over the world. People are advocating for local knowledge to be taken into consideration in higher education programs, as they can help students understand how to manage daily socioeconomic problems, meet numerous environmental difficulties, and adapt to change. Ndhlovu and Masuku (2004) posits that, that the information imparted to students in Zimbabwean institutions of higher learning is concerned with acquiring foreign concepts, and theories that have less to no bearing to all of the country's everyday concerns for ordinary men and women. Universities should provide progressive and realistic education, therefore delivering solutions to society in a diverse and dynamic world. Shizha (2006, 22) claims that current education system in Zimbabwe is Western in attitude, academically oriented, reflecting on foreign culture as compared rather than the culture of students and instructors. Local people's culture, heritage and aspirations should be reflected in higher education.

ISSUE OF IAKS AND TEACHING, AND LEARNING IN ZIMBABWE

Indigenous knowledge is highly prevalent in society, hence may simply be used in teaching and learning. Zimbabwe and other African countries, are characterised by an abundant body of indigenous knowledge systems that are expressed in their different socio-economic activities, agriculture, and climate change control and management, according to Chirimuuta, Gudhlanga, and Bhukuvani (2012, 1). The fact that content being transmitted to them is relevant to their existential circumstances, students may easily relate to it. Formal learning in Africa, is still mainly limited by western imposed constraints as to what comprise "appropriate knowledge" (Ezeanya-Esiobu 2019, 108). As a result, the majority in the prevailing CUOZ system was repurposed from the European subjugation of native people. "It is very troubling that most colleges in Africa still consider IAKS as the 'other'," writes Osman (2014, 8). Undeniably, the

irony of African institutions of higher learning is that, although being headquartered on the continent whilst offering education and conducting research there, little of what they do is actually applicable to the continent.

The Catholic University of Zimbabwe is similar to most universities in Zimbabwe in that it prefers to study topics that have a Western influence as opposed to indigenous episteme. According to McGloin, Marshal and Adams (2000), in the framework of education, IK is defined as knowledge gained through experience, millennia of contact through material, non-physical, and physical aspects of existence and the knowledge of the universe that this conveys (McGloin, Marshal, and Adams 2000). As a result, IAKS can be used as the foundation for Catholic University Zimbabwe's curriculum transformation.

An examination of Zimbabwe's higher education curriculum reveals that foreign knowledge dominates at the expense of IAKS. The entrance of formal education brought by the Europeans was not informed by African traditional education, note Muchenje and Goronga (2013, 890). According to Majoni (2014, 20), colleges must adopt and redesign courses quickly to keep up with rapidly changing settings, evolving and dynamic globe. A section of certain courses taught in universities are irrelevant to the issues that confront modern society. The practical and procedural aspects of native AKS contrast sharply with the foreign focused forms of information that dominate university education systems in contemporary society (Ndhlovu and Masuku 2004, 285). They further note that Zimbabwe's university and tertiary education curricula are heavily influenced by exotic Western-oriented knowledge systems. The curriculum in this country is academically oriented and Eurocentric in approach, replicating exotic economic and scientific principles as opposed to the way of life of students and educators (Shizha 2006, 22).

Gumbo's (2004, 1) research focused on incorporating IKS into science curriculum in Zimbabwe including the entire African continent. He urged academics at universities to embrace Indigenous African Knowledge Systems in all areas of creating information and hypothesizing, arguing that any thoughtful researcher intending to develop an education system informed by African thought and application should prepare an enabling environment for indigenous knowledge implementers and information bearers. Hamilton-Ekeke and Dorgu (2015, 35) posits that, indigenous knowledge integration into curricula, teaching resources, and textbooks has a comparable impact on preparing learners for existence after leaving school as other educational systems, such as the Western form, in terms of educational content. Due, to the fact that IAKS is primarily communicated orally, Zimbabwean academics should do research and develop reading materials that are easily accessible to students.

IAKS AND OTHER KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

IAKS as a way of knowledge acquisition, can be utilized among an array of other global knowledge systems (KS). The knowledge system can be utilized in the same curriculum with Western knowledge systems. Le Grange (2000) says, it is vital for different approaches of acquiring knowledge whether indigenous or modern; Western or African, to be analyzed and outputs be included into educational frameworks that would make society develop. According to Higgs and Van Niekerk (2003, 41), basing on this wide conceptualization of IAKS, the scope of an IAKS program is basically not to substitute Western knowledge systems, but rather challenge their dominance and accord IKS their opportunity as equally different approaches of acquiring knowledge among varied global knowledge systems, so as to solve problems confronting the world successfully. It remains feasible to blend IAKS and Eurocentric frameworks of knowledge in the University education system in Africa

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

The research undertaken in this article was informed by an Afrocentric perspective. “Afrocentricity as a perspective is grounded in the discernment of the African people as concentrated and found in local way of life holistically, in all that is spiritually, socially, politically and economically oriented” (Owusu-Ansah and Mji 2013, 3). An Afrocentric perspective has the capacity to form the basis of education curricula and inform the kind of knowledge and skills to be transmitted to students. It should be noted that an Afrocentric perspective is as Mkabela (2005) points out, a product of the African trajectory is concerned with the issue of African individuality from the cosmic view of the natives. Consequently, an Afrocentric perspective advocates societal considerations contrary to any positivism approach in a study, it also engages approaches native to communities involved.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was conducted at the CUOZ. The research is concerned with establishing the degree to which Afrocentric epistemic systems featured in higher education in Zimbabwe and more specifically, in the degree programmes at the CUOZ. The research design utilized a constructivist research paradigm, and the research study approach was qualitative in nature. In so doing the research involved collecting information from a population of students and lecturers in the Faculty of Arts in the university utilizing purposive sampling which consisted of ten (10) lecturers and forty (40) students. Face to face interviews were carried out with administrators and lecturers whilst focus group discussions were conducted with students to determine the degree to which Afrocentric epistemic were seen to be encompassed in the degree

programmes at the CUOZ.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

A number of findings emerged from the research conducted into the problem regarding Afrocentric epistemic systems and the curriculum at the CUOZ. The findings were supported by responses from respondents in the research design undertaken and related specifically to the programs at the CUOZ. The study findings are discussed in what follows:

The research revealed that Afrocentric epistemic systems were only sporadically referred to in the CUOZ. Reference to these systems were used in a few classes, including in courses in Shona Literature, Disaster Management, and Development Studies. The following responses from some of the participants confirms this:

“Currently, there is no subject or course in the faculty referred to as Indigenous African Knowledge Systems. You note that you locate it in certain courses as aspects. We have oral literature such as *ngano* (tale telling) as part of Shona literature, where we select lessons from people of different cultures and analyze their contribution to Zimbabwe’s sustainable growth. We also cover proverbs, songs, poetry, traditional poetry, and everything else in the course, all of which are related to IAKS. The aspects included are not detailed but just referral points.”

The research findings also revealed that the non-inclusion of Afrocentric epistemic systems in the CUOZ education system was the result of colonization. Responses from participants confirm this: “It can be attributed to the fact we inherited an education system designed by our colonial masters that made us believe that information that is disseminated in institutions of higher learning emanate from Europe.”

“Institutions as ours are pushing local indigenous knowledge to the margins in favor of Western knowledge raising questions about the worthlessness of local knowledge; The British conquered Zimbabwe and other African countries, and the colonial system is still evident in the CUOZ education system. In the university, curriculum transformation to remedy components of neo-colonialism has been gradual. In terms of our education in system, a shift in perspective is required.”

It is evident from the above sentiments, that, the Catholic University in Zimbabwe has not done much to reform their curriculum in terms of the inclusion of Afrocentric epistemic systems. The research findings, therefore, demonstrate that the university’s curriculum has remained Eurocentric to a greater degree in denigrating the importance of Afrocentric epistemic systems in teaching theories and content that originate from Europe. The following are the opinions offered by the participants in support of this view:

“When we reminisce on our past as Africans and our domination by Europe, we can respect and appreciate why Indigenous African Knowledge systems have always been marginalized in the Catholic University of Zimbabwe education programmes. The problem is that certain courses are Western derived, influenced and local KS systems are irrelevant to these programs.”

In terms of courses provided and their content, it is evident that the knowledge content of the CUOZ curriculum, is to all intents and purposes a carbon copy of that found in the curriculum of Western universities.

According to the findings of the research conducted the omission of Afrocentric epistemic systems from the education system at CUOZ can be linked to the influence of globalization. According to the, participants’ Afrocentric epistemic systems have no place in today’s globalized society They reiterated this in claiming that:

“Many lecturers in this university, like other local academics, are skeptical that local IKS methods can be absorbed or even taught in the classroom. Due to the phenomena like globalization, some academics are not in favour of the local culture and knowledge. Their world view is Eurocentric and they are afraid of being called backward if they incorporate IAKS in the university courses.”

One needs, therefore, to be cognizant of the fact that the effects of globalization are inevitable when it comes to the university curriculum Globalization at present is permeating all aspects of human existence, and education is not an exception, since it incorporates a variety of perspectives from around the world.

Furthermore, according to the research findings, lecturers, and students have varied perspectives about Afrocentric epistemic systems. Some of the lecturers and students were skeptical about the ability of Afrocentric epistemic systems to be absorbed and even taught in courses. They note out that:

“Some lecturers and students are only interested in information and things which are European oriented. They tend to despise local herbal remedies, in favor of foreign produced pharmaceuticals. Due to their failure to comprehend the relevance of indigenous African knowledge systems, students have negative attitudes towards local knowledge systems. In certain cases, the removal of local knowledge from courses may be due to lecturers’ and students’ attitudes against the indigenous African knowledge systems. They are of the view that indigenous or local knowledge has no relevance in today’s modern and technologically driven society.”

The research also established that Afrocentric locally spoken languages in Zimbabwe are not accorded the same significance or privilege as foreign languages, which is not mother tongue to most students. The medium of teaching and learning at the Catholic University Zimbabwe is not Shona but English. This is in line with the views of the participant who noted that:

“All facets of life in our society have been influenced by Western culture or outlook. The issue of language is one of the most unpleasant aspects of this situation, as is the challenge of conducting Shona lessons in English. Shona is a local language that should be spoken in its native tongue. Some instructors appear to be uncomfortable with their local or first language; they regard it as not important. Due to this attitude by lecturers, it may be necessary to put a language policy on indigenous languages in the university.”

In countries like Zimbabwe, English is recognized as the official language of communication. English proficiency is commonly regarded as a sign of being educated. One surprising aspect in this regard, is that Afrocentric language courses are taught in English.

The research findings also revealed that Afrocentric epistemic systems are not included in the curriculum because they are not documented in textbooks. In most cases, the guardians or fountains of indigenous knowledge are the community’s or society’s elders. One participant expressed the sentiment that:

“Essentially, most local knowledge or information is not documented, and they are passed on by word of mouth from older members of society to the younger generation. It may be quite obsolete; and extremely challenging for individuals to be observed doing such activities today that we have new knowledge that is far more trustworthy than local oral knowledge.”

The research undertaken also found that the advantages of Afrocentric epistemic systems are vast, and that they seek to address society’s social, political, economic, and educational needs. It should be mentioned that the advantages are also related to the country’s progress and development. In their comments, the participants emphasized some of the advantages:

“Indigenous African knowledge systems are particularly relevant to university courses, and we can connect the module’s contents to indigenous African knowledge systems. Students will be able to relate this knowledge to current communities.”

“Indigenous African knowledge systems have the potential to create new innovations and lead to the solving of problems affecting society. There is a wealth of untapped information that can contribute to the advancement of education and society.”

Furthermore, according to the research findings, the Catholic University of Zimbabwe’s library’s reading resources on Afrocentric epistemic systems were restricted. Participants in the focus group discussion emphasized the scarcity of reading materials on Afrocentric epistemic systems;

“I believe that what is written, what is on paper, is true and that it provides solutions to issues. In most situations, indigenous African knowledge systems are passed down orally to the next generation, but as students, we want something with proof, something that is written down,

something that has been scientifically proven before.”

“As a lecturer I note that, locals do not document information that much and rely on word of mouth to pass on information, library resources on local issues are sparse. More publications and books about indigenous African knowledge systems are needed. The ideal condition would be for a range of information on indigenous African knowledge systems to be available on the internet.”

Most course modules in the programs at the CUOZ, according to the research findings were directed by European world views such as the global economic theory, and dependency theory nowhere in the CUOZ’s curriculum were any Afrocentric oriented theories to be found.

The research findings also revealed that there are advantages in integrating Afrocentric epistemic systems in the curriculum of the CAUZ. This is because Afrocentric epistemic systems are particularly pertinent to the university’s courses in that they can be connected to module themes in the various disciplines. Students can, therefore, link Afrocentric epistemic systems to modern culture and in so doing feel a sense of belonging. In so doing it will enable students to comprehend and understand how people survived without all the difficulties they still encounter today and, what it is about modern day society that is causing them to face all the illnesses and economic difficulties that that their African predecessors did not have to encounter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Research on which the article is based focused on argued for the incorporation of African epistemic systems in bringing about a distinctly Afrocentric perspective in the degree programmes at the CUOZ. In doing so by way of conclusion the subsequent recommendations are crafted based on the research outcomes:

The first recommendation offered in this regard is that the Catholic University in Zimbabwe must transform its curriculum by incorporating Afrocentric epistemic systems in the curriculum and the knowledge that they transmit to students via the courses they are involved. Higher education institutions in general in Zimbabwe need to generate knowledge which is transformative in nature and relevant to students’ existential conditions by incorporating Afrocentric epistemic systems in their curriculum. These higher education institutions need to examine whether the courses they offer to students are relevant to society’s needs and aspirations in terms of what knowledge Afrocentric epistemic systems can offer them.

The Catholic University of Zimbabwe should organize research workshops, and conferences to expose academics in the university to a variety of perspectives in Afrocentric epistemic systems. Academics could then be influenced by their involvement in such workshops and conferences to embark upon collaborative research projects with researchers

from other African institutions of higher learning on different aspects of Afrocentric epistemic systems in relation to their academic concerns.

Academics at the Catholic University of Zimbabwe should be active in curriculum transformation which is fostered by Afrocentric epistemic systems. In so doing, lecturers should then be encouraged to advocate for the formal integration of Afrocentric epistemic systems in the transformation of the university's curriculum.

Lecturers at the Catholic University of Zimbabwe need to ensure that the knowledge presented to students is practical and that it will assist students in solving their own cultural and by referring to and using their local Afrocentric epistemic knowledge to develop new ideas, innovations and designs.

Funding for Afrocentric epistemic systems research and writing should also be made available so that staff and students have access to a corpus of literature that is related and relevant to Afrocentric epistemic systems. The Catholic University Zimbabwe should also establish a research center for research on Afrocentric epistemic systems and thereby champion Afrocentric epistemic research to develop local solutions to local problems.

And finally, the transformation of the curriculum should also be based on an Ordinance or Policy Pronouncement by the Education Department in Zimbabwe in order to the implementation of Afrocentric epistemic systems in the curriculum for higher education more effective. Afrocentric epistemic based education, which considers local knowledge, is a prerequisite to a relevant higher education system.

CONCLUSIONS

The research undertaken for this article was basically concerned with addressing the problem regarding Afrocentric epistemic systems, university curriculum and the and the transformation of the curriculum at the CUOZ. Research findings revealed those Afrocentric epistemic systems were not included in most courses in the CUOZ. The curriculum was rather dominated by Western biased theories which pay no particular attention to Afrocentric epistemic systems. To transform the education in universities in Africa it is important first to recognize Afrocentric epistemic systems as relevant knowledge systems that should be incorporated in the university curriculum in co-existing with other knowledge systems. Secondly, it is important for the transformation of the degree programmes in African institutions of higher to be guided and regulated by conventions, official policies, and Act of Education in Zimbabwe because the higher education curriculum needs to be guided by a new narrative which is informed by Afrocentric epistemic systems that are seen to be relevant in contributing positively to the development of African societies in different existential circumstances. In short, Afrocentric

epistemic systems must be recognised as valuable knowledge systems universities in Zimbabwe.

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