

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, MANAGEMENT AND
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CULTURAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNERS IN
RURAL AREAS WITH REFERENCE TO MASEHUNI CLUSTER

BY

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CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0 Introduction

This research study is on the cultural factors that affect early learners performance in rural schools focused on the study through discussing the background, statement of problem, research questions guiding the study, research objectives, purpose of the study, theoretical framework, delimitations and limitations of the study were also outlined .Definition of terms, purpose of the study and chapter summary were also be given.

1.1 Background to the study

Cognitive development of learners is greatly influenced by family cultural status. Most parents believe that there is no value to send young learners to school in rural settings as they perceive this is a waste of resources and time. Wade (2004)cited that the relationship between family context and children’s cognitive development measuring the effects of the variables such as family cultural status, the social support, the quality of physical family environment and the material provided by parents to stimulate cognitive development.

Grigorenko and Sternberg (2006) points out that researchers have found a strong relationship between family context and children’s cognitive development. The influence of culture on beliefs about education, the value of education and participation styles cannot be overestimated. Many children in rural settings for example tend to be quiet, making eye contact with teachers is considered inappropriate. In contrast, urban settings children are taught to value active classroom discussion and to look teachers directly in the eye, while teachers view students’ participation as a sign of engagement and competence.

Altridge et al (1991) posits that parents from rural settings fail to create a conducive environment for cognitive development of early childhood learners whereas parents from urban settings are able to create a conducive environment for their children. True as it may be, Hornings, Rouse and Gordon (2005) asset that there is some evidence that suggests that learners from rural settings can become resilient and can even perform well at school.

The researcher who is into early childhood education is going to investigate whether cultural status has an influence on early learners. The researcher has noted that even though children are of the same age, urban children could operate computers, play games on laptop, sought out puzzles while rural children of the same age struggle even to count objects or name colours correctly. At first the researcher brushed her observations assuming that the differences were due to the fact that learners develop at different times as alluded by Piaget's Cognitive theory. The researcher is going to find out whether there are other factors besides relating the developmental milestones to the variance in children's cognitive abilities. The researcher is going to investigate whether learners who perform better in the above mentioned activities are mostly from urban settings.

According to National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) social-emotional development is influenced by biology and environment relationships formed with primary caregivers' family members and others are vehicles that drive cognitive development. Eriksonetal (2007)in the theory of psychosocial assert that cognitive growth does not happen on its own it comes through curiosity and interaction .Hence young learners who are socially and emotionally healthy have a greater chance of achieving success in school and in life. Research shows that of those learners who are not ready to succeed in school, many have cultural difficulties that prevent them from achieving school success.

Human are cultural beings. Children learn to communicate and understand their world through the context of their language, traditions, behaviours, religion, culture, beliefs and values. Their cultural experiences and value shape the way they see themselves and it has an impact on every aspect of their lives. Learners are born into a cultural system that socialises them into culturally functional and acceptable members. Sunstroke (2008) says, this process of cultural socialisation became a vital source of cognition.

McLeod (2007) in his study of impact of attitude on the children in America found out that attitude has a negative impact on child's cognitive development as well as behavioural characteristics. In the same sentiment Livermore (2008) that poor neighbourhoods often lack positive role model and adult supervision. This implies that this kind of environment often prevents pupils from creating health social networks and lead to lack of motivation which negatively affects cognitive developments of children .In the same voice the Ministry has realised that performance in reading and numeracy among learners had largely been poor. As a way of remedying the situation the new curriculum will now emphasise on use of the local languages in early grades.

A study by Keller (2002) in America established that another contrast involves the role Hispanic parents in education. Parents from Hispanic cultures tend to regard teachers as experts and will often deter educational decision making to them(Valdés 1996).Urban parents are often more actively involved in their children's classroom, volunteer and assist teachers. These differences in value and belief may cause educators to make inaccurate judgements while, it is important to keep in mind that different cultural groups tend to follow particular language and interaction styles. Thus educators need to understand individual histories and ideologies regarding education and learning as well as cultural patterns and beliefs of groups

From what has been put across so far, one would agree that various scholars agree that cultural status plays an important role in the cognitive development of early childhood education learners. It is upon this background that the researcher shall embark on a study on how cultural status influences the cognitive development of early childhood education children in Zvishavane rural schools.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Culture has been a cause of concern for young learners in performance in education. There are many cultural factors which impacts negatively against children's cognitive development. Some of these factors are home-based and community related factors. This study therefore seeks to explore the cause. The problem statement at the centre of this research is: cultural factors that affect early childhood learners in rural schools in Zvishavane.

1.3 Research question

1.3.1 Major research questions

How does culture status affect an early childhood learner's cognitive development?

1.3.2 Sub research questions

- How are children socialised according to culture at their homes.
- What are the effects of cultural status on children's cognitive development.
- How should schools overcome the challenges they face to improve learners' performance.

1.4 Research objectives

- To establish how cultural status affects Early Childhood Education Learners' cognitive development.

1.4.1 Sub -objectives

- To assess how the level of education, interest and attitude of parents influence the cognitive development of earthly learners.
- To establish how culture impact on the cognitive development of early childhood learners.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The substantial constraints that place restrictions on the conclusions of the results of the study will be generalized from a sample to represent the entire population under study. Thus the researcher restricted her study to a few variables and visit nearby schools hence this might compromise the results of the research. The study also demanded that the researcher uses language understood by all participants especially with parents' interview. However the researcher tried to do direct observation to come up with correct information on ground.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

The study was carried out in four rural schools .The researcher assumption was that the cultural status has impact on cognitive development. The researcher focused on ascertaining the effects of community cultural status on the cognitive development of early childhood learners in Zvishavane Masehuni cluster.

1.7 Significance of the study

The study was important in that school heads and other administrators designed, adopted and developed appropriate methods of overcoming the challenges they face which emanated from the way children of different cultural status were socialised in their homes in order to create good learning environment thereby promoting effectiveness and growth through creating stimulating classroom environment. Teachers benefited by gaining an in-depth knowledge of

how to improve learners' performance and behaviour through understanding how certain cultures influence the lifelong academic performance and behaviours of the learners. Thus they implemented relevant teaching methods which were suitable for developing learners' competencies and learning skills. Parents also benefited from the study because they were enlightened on the importance of a positive attitude and interest towards their children's learning. The researcher of the study also benefited, because she was enlightened and equipped with in-depth knowledge of the effects of culture on academic performance and behaviour of early childhood learners in her organisation and this helped her make informed decisions on the issues pertaining the variance among learners from families of different cultural statuses. This also motivated other aspiring researchers to fully explore since the groundwork was laid for further research of the same nature.

1.8 Summary

This chapter focused on the background of the study, the research problem and research questions. The significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study were outlined. Coming in the next chapter is literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presented literature from different courses related to the cultural factors that affect cognitive development of early childhood education learners. It also put across what different authorities say about the level of parents' education, attitude and interest towards the learners cognitive development .It also revealed what different sources say about the impact of norms ,values, attitudes, behaviours ,beliefs and language on the child 's cognitive development .Sidhu(2004) asserts that the purpose of reviewing related literature is to help the researcher attack and have a better understanding of the research problem.

2.1. Influence of culture on the cognitive development of Early Childhood Education learners

According to Shamrock (2008) culture is a shared system of meaning which include values , beliefs and assumptions expressed in daily interactions of individuals within a group through a definite pattern of language, behaviour, customs, attitudes and practices. Rubin and Menzer (2010) point out that culture is a set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours shared by a group of people, communicated from one generation to the next. This implies that cultural experiences and values shape the way the learners see themselves and it has an impact on every aspect of their lives. Therefore there is need to involve young learners in experiences that make them aware of the importance of their culture .Strategies such as the multicultural and multi-faith approach must not be overlooked in order to be explore, discover as well as come up with the solutions to encounter problems of cognitive development in young learners.

Rogoff (2003) propound that there is a close relationship between high levels of cultural status and high levels of cognitive development depends largely on how the parents as well as those around promote growth. On the other hand, Mwamwenda (2011)points out that ,both schooling and culture play a role in children 's mastery of concepts hence there are many debates about the nature and nurture of cultural status .Some believe that these attitudes and behaviours naturally flow from biological and personality traits, whereas others see them as complete cultural constructions.

Cultural expectations vary among communities although other characteristics maybe common in some cultures, beliefs and values determine learner's performance. Chauraya and Mugodzwa (2011) points out that beliefs about man and women which are not necessarily true but taken as truth by the society. They are maintained, perpetuated and transmitted from generation to generation by social institutions like the family, the school, the media, religion, culture among others.

Children are born into a cultural system that socialises them into culturally functional and accepted members. Shamrock (2008) argues that this process of cultural socialization becomes a vital source of cognition. Vygotsky 's socio-culture theory is concerned with the historical and social aspects of human behaviour that make human nature unique particularly in the development of cognition,(Macleod 2007).Hence children learn what is within their cultural context.

Therefore as children learn their culture, they develop a great deal of cognition. Let's take for example a child who is born in a hunting community, such child will display exceptional knowledge of setting animal traps because of his/her cultural context. Therefore as children learn their culture, they develop great deal of cognition. A seemly related scenario to the above, The Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe has realised that performance in young

learners has been relatively poor. As a way of remedying the situation, the new curriculum now emphasises on the use of local languages in early grades that is early childhood education. The centres transmit culture to its learners in the form of knowledge and skills and the hidden curriculum. Haralambos and Holborn (2004) cited that the transmission of culture in schools through the curriculum is geared to improve life chances of the disadvantaged yet it can perpetuate poor performance.

According to Mamwenda (2004) in the school environment, children who are surrounded both at home and at school by strong learning environment that is both informative and supportive may improve in their development. Research has shown children exposed to poor and underprivileged educational environment tend to be at higher risk of being negatively affected in terms of their development.

Young children can be affected by many social, economic and environmental factors both in positive and negative ways because children are so vulnerable, they can be affected by things many parents and adults take for granted. Bradley (2001) advises that there are several factors that can have a direct effect on child speech and language. A study using data from Megan Chen (2011) found that lack of stimulation, delayed motor skills, inadequate awareness of communication change in environment exposure to many different languages and high anxiety. This implies that children who are not exposed to the above are not free to explore because their parents will not allow them to venture too far from them as they will be trying to protect them from harm, hence compromising the children's chances of performance.

Collin (2010) states that health and nutrition can affect education in many ways. Therefore proper nutrition can have a direct impact on child's development both physically and psychologically. The Royal children's hospital (RCH) point out that proper nutrition is

related to functional outcomes for children as they get older. In other words, unhealthy eating can lead to weight gain and other negative effects on performance hence stress on the exposure to eating habits through both hands on learning and leading by example , that really make positive impact on child development.

Research has shown that social isolation or lack of socialisation can lead to early child development issues such as speech problems or inability to socialise with others in a civilised way. Feeney etal (1991) mentioned that socio economic environment in which a child is raised can have a drastic effect on their development.

2.2 How are Children socialised culturally at their homes?

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory is concerned with the historical and social aspects of human behaviour that make the human nature unique particularly in the development of cognition, (McLeod, 2007). Hence children learn what is within their cultural context. Therefore culture they develop a great deal of cognition. At early childhood education level in the teaching and learning, learners are assisted to acquire knowledge and skills as well as things that are common in social experiences such as norms and values, attitudes, beliefs and moral values. This is done through reading, telling stories, singing and dancing

Keller (2002) points that appreciating culture means understanding values, accepting and admiring them as much as you are proud of your own and recognising the difference does not mean better or worse. Thus when learners accept someone there should not be something to point a finger on, or excuses or preferences that is appreciation. Learners need not to look for differences among themselves as this will hinder them on learning about others. The differences can in fact be viewed as something to learn about and learn from.

Culture is obtained from everything and anyone around us. Once the learners understand their own culture and that of others and recognise differences they can seek the necessary cross cultural solutions and more clearly find ways to bridge gaps, communicate and understand each other better and finally leverage the cultural differences to get the most out of the relation (Rosinky 2010). Thus learners need to develop cultural competencies, these are a set of interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase understanding on appreciation of cultural differences.

The family as a social institution is a brewery for patriarchal practices by socialising young to accept their differences. This negatively impacts on learners' performance in education. The Shona culture believe that boys are viewed as heads whilst girls are submissive and are viewed as dependant. This implies that girl learners chances of developing are limited due to the environment they are exposed to. Therefore performance is hindered.

Gwarinda (1985) sees culture as lived experiences, a set of meanings and practices that are constituted in the day to day life of people within a given mode of production. Gwirayi (2010) posits that culture is a quality within individuals deemed to possess characters that are expected in a particular society. Cultural diversities among families and the society at large contribute significantly to young learners' academic achievement and behaviour since they are different norms, values, attitudes and expectation.

Seemingly the fact that culture negatively impacts on gender equality on young learners performance factors such as gender stereotypes, patriarchy and socialisation have emerged due to culture. Hewson (1985) points out that women's experiences vary hugely depending on their country of origin, religious beliefs and their social history.

Jeanes (2002) postulates that, economic hardships lead to family conflicts. The conflicts may be caused by unfavourable income whereby income is insufficient to satisfy the basic needs

.In the same sentiment Maslow (1993) argues that each individual is born with essential inner nature, he assumes that within us there are forces that seek growth. He believes that much of the human behaviour is directed towards achieving a meaningful and rewarding life .This implies that the child is caught in the middle of the parents' conflict and this will affect him or her to the extent that he or she will develop a sense of mistrust of those around him or her. Once a young child develops a sense of mistrust, hence possibility of losing confidence. This means that deficiencies in the child's parent relationship compromises the child's positive development.

However Wells (2012) postulates that the gap between the poor and the non-poor children can be closed before they enter school by providing a safe and enriching environment where children can play with learning materials, reach and go on field trips. Parents can also improve their parenting skills.

2.2.1How should schools overcome the challenges they face to improve learners academic performance.

Zindi (1994) cited that all human societies face behaviours that violate the norms and values of society. Schools and other educational institutions are no exception since they are, in fact societies which host them, also experience problems and these problems manifest themselves in different ways and have been bearing on educational outcomes. Education is one way in which the young learners' performance can be improved.

It has been pointed out that cultural teachings such as gender socialisation, beliefs and family status sometimes have a negative impact on young learners' academic performance. The education system in Zimbabwe has addressed this issue by introducing multicultural and multi-faith approach in schools.

Multicultural approach is an approach that can be used in the teaching and learning for young learners to appreciate different cultures. With everyone in the world having opened up to the global village and all cultures cultural forces knocking at our doorsteps. Learners are taught to understand the whole world only in relation to a starting point of themselves in the context of family, then friends, neighbours and the community at large. Learners also learn about taking responsibilities thus taking care of themselves, others as well as the environment. Education manage to develop a child who will suit the society.

Vygotsky in Rothbom and Morelli (2005) asserts that learning cannot be separated from the child's culture and this means that culture has a crucial role in the child's development. According to Lewis (2006) multicultural enables learners to learn each other's language and appreciate ways of living in different cultures. This can be done through dramatization, singing of different songs from different cultures as well as dancing. When learners are involved in these activities, they learn to accept each other and develop a sense of belonging seeing that their culture is also recognised. Lewis (2006) is of the view that belonging is a fundamental human need that relates to feeling of being valued, accepted, respected and cared about by others.

Once learners notice that they are welcomed and accepted as they are, they feel comfortable even to express themselves without feeling intimidated. For example learners sing songs like 'Torai mapadza muchirima, ndorima musana wandirwadza'. They learn activities that are done when people are working. They also play leisure games like Nhodo, tsoro and Pada where learners will be learning skills like counting and subtraction. By so doing learners develop skills like cooperation, turn taking, sharing, and caring for the environment and communication skills.

Livermore (2008) examines that teaching and learning using multicultural approach avoids conflicts and labelling of other cultures and religions. Basing on this idea, teachers should take all appropriate measures to eliminate the idea of inferiority and superiority of cultural pattern among learners.

Gerry (1990) expresses that multi-faith approach is an approach in which many religions in a particular society are given consideration in the teaching and learning process. Howard (2010) stresses that multi-faith approach is the gathering of people of different traditions where each is responsible for contributing something for their tradition in turn.

Thus multi-faith is an approach that brings together teachings of the people from different religions and traditions and drawing moral values from them, some of which are Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and the Bahai faith. Thus it helps children to know more about other religions they are likely to encounter in life so that they understand their differences and appreciate their similarities in order to illustrate the moral values that learners can pick up like honesty, respect and sharing just to mention a few. Thus teachers train learners to appreciate harmony in diversity hence they will become good future citizens of the country who would have learnt the benefits of tolerating the existence of other beliefs.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has highlighted literature of the research study on the effects of culture on academic performance at ECE level. It has looked at how children are socialised according to culture in their families and communities. The effects of culture on academic performance and behaviour of early learners in schools has also been observed. It also scrutinised how schools should overcome the challenges they face to improve young learners' performance and behaviour.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The research methodology considered and explained logic behind research methods and techniques. This chapter started by describing and justifying the use of a survey research design as a procedure that is descriptive. The population sampling as well as the research instruments used to collect data were also outlined in this chapter. The quantitative research paradigm was employed in this research.

3.1 Research design

Makore and Rukuni (2003) define research design as a structure, form of plan that the researcher has chosen to use to follow in the process of the study. The study was carried out using the survey method of research which includes a coverage of large population. The survey method is a research technique in which data was gathered by asking questions to be responded to by members of a specific sample.

The survey research design in this study can be viewed as a research design that is suitable for the study that seeks to ascertain the cultural factors that affect early childhood learners' performance. Leedy (1980) affirms that surveys allow a descriptive measure of the extent of the particular concern. It encompasses a measurement procedure that involves asking questions to respondents and the answer given to the question constitute the data of the study. The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms, as they complement each other thus the two designs cover for each other giving weaknesses and strengths in the study.

Hence the researcher realised the need to enlighten school heads and teachers and equip them with relevant knowledge so that they can socialise learners in the best way to achieve the best effect of culture on academic performance in rural schools.

3.2 Population

A population is any group of individuals or other entities that have one or more characteristics in common that is of interest to the researcher. Rubin (2008) suggests that population is a group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common of interest to the researcher. In this study, the target population are rural schools in Zvishavane focusing on the Early Childhood learners.

3.3 Sample and sampling technique

A sample is a fraction of a group that is studied so as to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. In this study the sample was a group of subjects who were representatives of the larger population. Thus a sample is a subset of the whole population. In this research, the sample comprised of four schools from Masehuni cluster.

A sample should be large enough so that the researcher can be reasonably sure that if she had drawn a different sample using the same procedure, she would have obtained the same results in her research, in order to generalize for the whole population. The researcher adopted the random sampling technique. Borg and Gall (1983) noted that each member should be given an equal chance of being selected. The participants were sampled in stages. In the first stage, the expert sampling method was used. Frankel and Wallen (2002) viewed that expert sampling involves the assembling of a sample of persons with known or demonstrable experience or expertise in some area. The researcher got a least of teachers with two or more years of teaching experience. In the second stage, simple random sampling is used by the

researcher. According to Leedy and Ormrock (2005), simple random sampling is the selection of the sample by employing a procedure where chances determine which number of the list drawn for the sample. The names of selected teachers were put in a container and picked out. The process was repeated until the respondents from each school were obtained by the researcher.

3.4. Research instruments

These are research techniques employed to generate information that can be used. The three major research instruments of collecting data which were used were questionnaires, and interviews. It is assumed that with triangulation, the weakness of one instrument is overridden by the strength of others (Uwe 2005).

3.4.1. Questionnaires

It is a document comprising of question items that seek information from a subject that is suitable for research analysis. Leedy (1977) refers to a questionnaire as a commonplace instrument for observing data beyond the physical research of the observer. Using the questionnaire with closed ended questions and open ended questions authorised the researcher to gather as much data as possible.

3.4.2 Interview

Cook (1966) and Chivore (1994:63) sees an interview as the most appropriate technique for revealing information about complex, emotionally laden aspects or for probing sentiments that may underlie an expressed opinion. Thus, it is a formal discussion between the researcher and the respondent. In this research, it is a dialogue in which the respondents were asked about their views, feelings and attitudes as well as corrective methods towards the cultural

factors that affect performance and behaviours of early childhood learners in the rural area of Masehuni cluster in Zvishavane district.

3.5. Data collection procedure

The researcher visited four schools in the Masehuni cluster in Zvishavane district after getting clearance from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education to conduct the study on the cultural factors that affect performance of Early Childhood Education learners. The researcher gave the selected teachers questionnaires and explained to them what is required of the respondents as well as assuring them of confidentiality. Interviews were conducted and data was captured through the use of voice recorder. The researcher then sampled a detailed narrative description soon after the interview.

3.6. Data analysis and presentation

Data analysis and presentation is the scrutinising, grouping and organising of data to produce information found in results (Neuman, 2000). The data was analysed quantitatively using Microsoft Excel and presented as graphs, tables and pie charts. Descriptive analysis was also be used to present data. Descriptive statistics were used to gather the frequencies and percentages and presented to determine the effects of culture on academic performance of Early Childhood learners. This was followed by comments, deduction, recommendations and conclusions.

Ways of overcoming challenges faced by early learners were sought for the benefit of ECE learners. World Bank (2001) affirms that, data analysis moderate the size of information and recognises meaningful patterns on the information sought, hence the analysis of data is important as it makes it easier for the researcher to understand and make evaluation of the research study.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Human rights and citizenship education are intended to make the researcher conscious of the rights to which human beings as citizens especially pupils are entitled (United Nations, 2000). The researcher consider the principle of human worthiness and self-determination. This means that, participants have the right to willingly decide their involvement in the study without fearing risk of consequences. On the issue of informed consent, the researcher sought for verbal and written approval after explaining important aspects of the study. On confidentiality and privacy, coding of data was done to safeguard confidentiality. (Majoni, 2015). Thus the researcher made a promise in which information gathered was considered very private and confidential. Names and addresses were not used when answering the questionnaire.

3.8 Summary

This chapter, stressed how the research on the effects of culture on academic performance of ECE learners was performed. It has focused on the research design and methodology, the population, sample and sampling procedures as well as data collection methods, instruments data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

Data collected was quantified and tabulated in frequency tables to reveal certain variables. Data from teachers and school heads was analysed to highlight characteristics which contributed culture on academic performance. Data presentation and analysis will be guided by research questions in this research process: How children are socialised affects their behaviours and attitudes .The data, guided with the research question will reveal how certain factors contribute in the academic performance of young learners in relation to culture of students in selected schools.

4.1 Response rate

4.1.1 Response from School teachers.

Eight infant teachers were given questionnaires from the three primary schools. All teachers had been teaching infants for more than six years. The questionnaires showed that the teachers were fully qualified and have the knowhow with the young learners.

4.1.2 Response from the School Heads

The questionnaires given to the school heads revealed that all heads participated in the study. The heads had been in the position of authority for more than ten years. The information supplied showed that the heads were fully qualified to head primary schools and infant department.

4.2 Presentation and analysis of findings

Data was collected by means of questionnaires and interviews distributed to two heads and six infant teachers. The interviews and the questionnaires were successful, the return rate was high because they were delivered and collected by the researcher. The researcher noted that the respondents' gender would be of paramount importance in the study. The responses of gender were recorded in a pie chart as shown below.

Gender (N=8)

Pie chart illustrating the gender of respondents

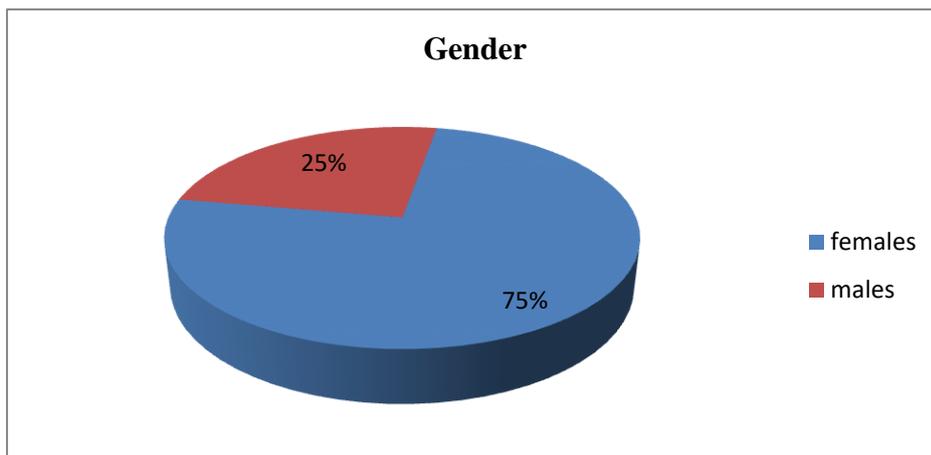


Fig 4.2

The researcher noted that there were few male ECE teachers because male teachers prefer teaching junior grades. The other reason is that it might be the norm that females give extra care to young children. Presently if one can visit schools, she/he will find that ECE are taught by female teachers at most. Males are found here and there.

Table 4.2.1 showing age range of teachers (N=8)

Age range	Number	Percentage %
20-30	1	12.5%
31-40	6	75%
50+	1	12.5%

The outcome indicated that the majority of the respondents were between 31-40 years .Only one out of eight were aged between 20-30, and also one out of eight were 41+.

4.3. Data Presentation Analysis

4.3.1 How are children socialised culturally at their homes.

4.3.1.1 The way young learners are socialised affects their performance.

From the answers given by the teachers and the school heads, it clearly showed that most of them strongly agree that the way young learners are socialised at home affects their performance and behaviour at school.

The heads mentioned in the interviews that some parents are happy because they know that all cultures are being recognised. A school head from school (A) contributed that some parents are against it as they are cultural encapsulated. They said that some parents are against multi cultured approach as they talk ill or evil about their cultures thinking that their children are being taught evil things. Some heads from other schools postulated that parents are happy because they know that their cultures are being in cooperated in the teaching and learning of their children.

Some responses showed that learners show a positive attitude as they will develop a curiosity of knowing the different happenings in different religions or cultures. Some contributions showed that teachers are slowly responding positively since they were used to the old

approach and also to the ill responses they from learners who are being discouraged by parents at home.

4.3.2 Respondents to interviews and questionnaires

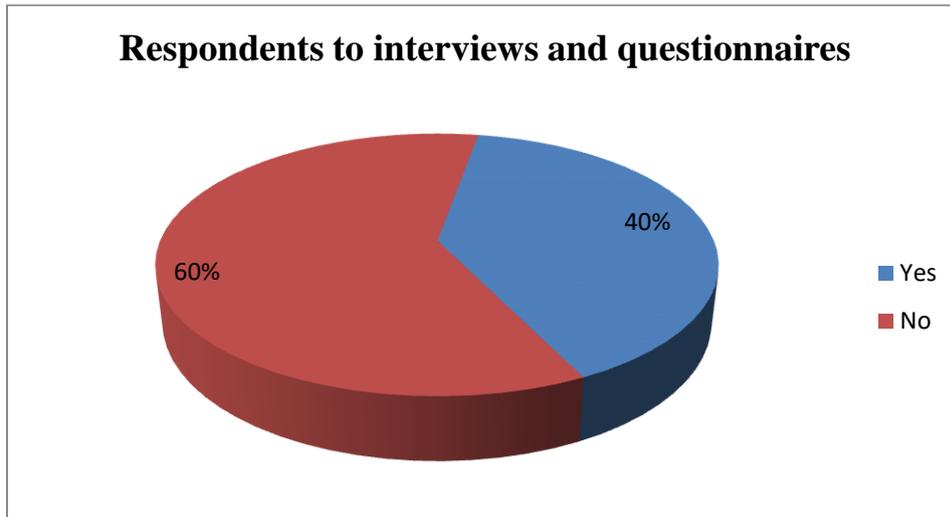


Fig 4.3.2 respondents to interviews and questionnaires

4.3.3 What are the effects of cultural status on children's cognitive development

It was shown from the responses given by the teachers that cultural status at home affects the way pupils behave and perform at school. Most of the respondents evidenced that, the pupils are socialised according to culture which leads to their performance and behaviour being affected during the teaching and learning process. From the questionnaires given to the teachers, they clearly indicated that cultural status has a negative impact on the learner's performance .It plays a role in the children's mastery of concepts. Research showed that rural children achieve mastery of cognitive concepts basing on their culture .All teachers from the schools stipulated that the influence of culture on beliefs about education, the value of education and participation style cannot be overestimated. For example, many students from

rural schools tend to be quiet in class and making eye contact with teachers is considered inappropriate .In contrast, most urban children are taught to value active classroom discussion and to look teachers directly in the eyes to show respect, hence teachers view children’s participation as a sign of engagement and competence.

Teacher (A) also noted that, the differences in value and beliefs may cause educators to make inaccurate judgements while it is important to keep in mind that different cultural groups tend to follow particular language and interaction styles .In her observation, she noted that educators need to understand individual histories and ideologies regarding education and learning as well as cultural patterns and beliefs of groups.

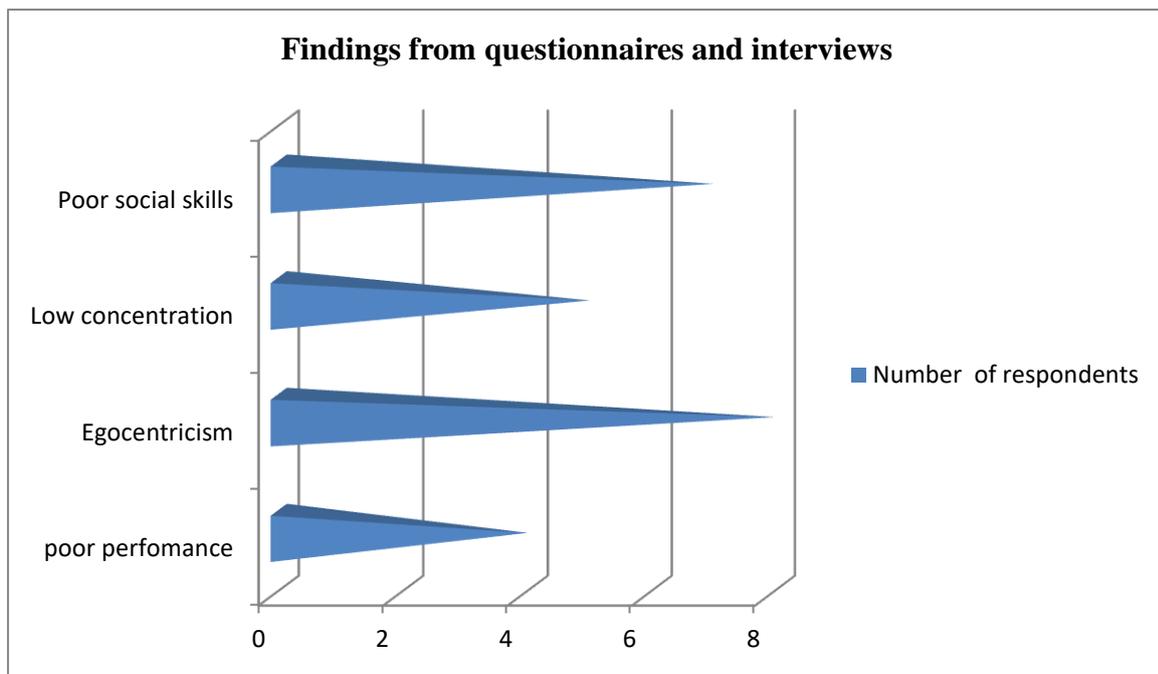


Fig 4.3.3

From the structured interviews and questionnaires that were distributed, the respondents revealed major challenges of addressing issues of cultures in Masehuni cluster 2, Zvishavane District. Support from Administration in encouraging parents and guardians to participate in workshops and seminars which deals with multi-cultural approach.

4.3.4 How should schools overcome challenges they face to improve young learner's performances.

All teachers interviewed agreed that there is need for resource materials which will help in dealing with culture encapsulation in the teaching and learning .They emphasize on the fact that parents be provided with material which enhances them in the knowledge of multicultural. This will enhance teaching and learning in rural schools and improve learners' performance and behaviour.

All teachers pointed that education experts are trying hard in Zimbabwe to meet the objective of eradicating cultural encapsulation hence the ministry is providing materials which will help in teaching and addressing issues that have to do with multi culturist. They mentioned that this will encourage teachers, parents and students to avoid encapsulation, hence teachers noted that after going through the curriculum, there should be activities that allow one to one experiences between teachers, parents and students.

4.4 Discussion and interpretation of findings

Responses to research questions revealed that parent's attitude is a great challenge in addressing issues of culture encapsulation. Parents have a negative attitude in that they do not consider other cultures .Moreover young children can be affected by many social, economic and environmental factors both in positive and negative ways because children are so

vulnerable they can be affected by things adults take for granted. This concurs with Mamwenda (2011), who cited that students especially in rural settings have little interest in the subjects that they do.

The reason for the finding may be societal attitudes towards their cultural status. It might also be lack of awareness of parents on the importance of multi-culture on the advancement of young learners and the nation as a whole. Whatever reason, the negative attitudes of parents are likely to hinder effective learning and teaching of young learners. Piaget (2004) views education as the creation of people who have the ability to be creative and inventive. People who are discoverers rather than people who constantly reflect the ideas of others.

Teacher quality also presented great problems to teaching and learning of young learners especially with matters dealing with culture. The headmaster showed that teachers spend most of their time on lessons, with no time left for guidance and counselling. This enables learners to have diversive thinking, thus enables learners to draw similarities and comparisons among different religions. Nicholas (2010) cited that what students learn cannot go beyond what their teachers are able to present. Young learner's performance and behaviour is linked to the skills and effectiveness of the teachers. If teachers lack content, knowledge and pedagogical competence important for effective learning, then achievements of learners will be weak.

Lack of funds, improvisation and instructional materials greatly impede the teaching and addressing of cultural issues. Many instructional materials do not necessarily have to be bought. The researcher thinks that teachers can improvise materials or exploit objects in the classroom such as learning corners for teaching different aspects of culture.

4.5 Summary

Chapter four revealed that children from rural school setting lag behind in terms in terms of academic performance as responses from the questionnaires, interviews as well as observation indicated. This variance showed that the environments in which they live in is the main cause. Stenberg (2006) viewed that being raised in poverty has been linked with early cognitive, verbal and behavioural outcomes for children. However learners from rural school if provided by stimulating environments can also perform well.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented, analysed, interpreted and discussed the findings of how culture affects young learners performance and behaviour. This chapter focuses on outlining the summary and conclusions from the study. This chapter also make recommendations based on the research findings. This chapter seeks to check whether the research problem and research questions have been answered by the study.

5.2. Summary

From the research which was carried out by the researcher, it has been highlighted that there is much that needs to be done on families attitudes towards socialising young learners towards school activities in order to bridge the gap between the home and school. Chapter one focused on the background of the study, the research problem and research questions. The significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study were outlined

.Chapter two highlighted literature of the research study on the effects of culture on academic performance at ECE level. It looked on how children are socialised according to culture in their families and communities. It also explored on the effects on the effects of culture on academic performance and behaviour of early learners. It also scrutinised how schools should overcome the challenges they face to improve learners performance and behaviour.

Chapter three stressed how the research on the effects of culture on academic performance of ECE learners was performed. It focused on the research design, methodology, population, sample and sample procedures, data collection methods, instruments, data presentation and analysis.

Curriculum issues are identified as a problem, lack of field trips, excursions and wide syllabus .Few teachers are capable of using effective methods. This is supported by Livemore (2008) who observed that few teachers are capable of using effective methods to manage ideas outside the classroom. These issues are likely to result in making teaching and learning impossible.

5.4 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to find out if the objectives of addressing cultural issues have been identified as well as solutions if any have been taken to teaching and learning .The study concluded that challenges of addressing issues of culture encapsulation are caused by various factors ,This chapter summarised in tabular and graphs, the results of the analysis .Chapter five will examine the analysis and its findings ,determine what conclusions can be drawn and discuss their implication .It also considers areas for future research.

5.5 Recommendations

- The ministry must engage in workshops and teaching programmes for teachers and parents to enable them to acquire the necessary information so that they are equipped on how to deal with different cultures.
- Educators should be involved in more practical endeavours on mixing with the students to enable them to be flexible and loom effectively, have time with parents and guardians as they will both help in grooming the students.
- Appraisals should be adopted as a way of improving quality teaching and learning. This provides with areas of strength and weaknesses on both learners and teachers and would serve as a way of avoiding encapsulation.

- School authorities should encourage teachers on addressing the areas of study since they are the key players of educational initiative and a pivotal role for improving quality education. Since young children can be affected by many social, economic and environmental factors both in positive and negative ways because they are so vulnerable they can be affected by things adults take for granted.
- The government should assist rural school by providing them with play materials and equipment so as to bridge the gap in cognitive abilities among learners in rural and urban schools.
- School heads should involve ECE teachers whenever they have a meeting with parents so that they enlighten them on proper child rearing styles.
- Teachers are encouraged to practice multicultural and multi-faith approaches in schools.

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