The Role of Culture in Shaping the Curriculum of Higher Education in South Africa

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ABSTRACT
Over the past two decades, the South African higher education (HE) sector has highlighted the usefulness of a locally relevant curriculum that incorporates culture. There is also some research calling for the integration of culture and an emphasis on the Africanized curriculum. However, these related concepts (culture and Africanization) have yet to be sufficiently applied in the HE curriculum as part of the HE transformation drive. The present paper aims to present a review of the literature regarding the role of culture on curriculum transformation and the Africanization of academic material in the context of the HE sectors in South Africa. The primary research method for this study is the review of the selected research findings containing issues related to culture and its role in curriculum transformation. The findings of this review reveal that the concepts of culture, and more specifically the Africanization of the localized curriculum (in the HE sectors), are not yet adequately understood, even though progress has been made over the last two decades. The inheritance of colonial Eurocentric views is believed to be hindering this progress. Higher education can in this regard play a significant role in achieving the goal of a locally relevant curriculum.
KEYWORDS
Africanization; culture; curriculum transformation; locally relevant curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Before 1994, South Africa's curriculum was used to exclude some groups (e.g., Africans, blacks in general, women and rural students) from accessing higher education (Van Wyk & Higgs, 2011). Up to the present time, such inequalities of the past have been addressed through revisions to the curricula and syllabi; many government papers and policies have also been issued, and the restructuring of some processes (Ebewo & Sirayi 2018) has since been achieved. The White Paper on Higher Education of 15 August 1997 is but one of the wide-ranging documents that provide a picture of South Africa's shift from apartheid to democracy which calls for a renewed perception of higher education in which institutions and their values are viewed afresh. As outlined in the aforementioned White Paper, higher education is now regarded as having a significant role in the development of modern democratic societies (Department of Education, 1997). Curriculum transformation in higher education has been one of the essential aspects in addressing the injustices and inequalities of the past apartheid government (Gumede & Biyase, 2016; Msila, 2007; Department of Education, 1997).

Some of the issues that feature prominently in the discussions on curriculum transformation include recognizing and acknowledging the value of culture, Africanization (considering the concept of an African curriculum) and indigenous African knowledge systems (Council on Higher Education, 2016; Higgs, 2016; Prinsloo, 2010; Ukwuoma, 2016; Van Wyk & Higgs, 2011). These related concepts (culture, Africanization, indigenous and African knowledge systems) focus on different cultural groups in South Africa and suggest that the curriculum should serve the cultural and educational circumstances in which they exist (Higgs, 2016). Africanization of the curriculum includes developing academic learning material established in the African context (Naidoo, 2016). Van der Westhuizen et al., (2017) also suggest that education and training as well as practice should be based on the ideas and beliefs of the people of South Africa and their interpretation of what is needed to build a more equitable society. A curriculum that is formulated based on culture and indigenous African knowledge, therefore, empowers educators and learners and instills a sense of pride in them (Kaya & Seleti, 2013; Van Wyk & Higgs, 2011).

As South Africans, we are often proud of our society's diversity. However, the significance of our diverse cultures is rarely visible in our curriculum. It seems as if the current attempts to incorporate culturally responsive instruction into the classroom are still driven by colonial and Eurocentric views and there is little attention paid to the nature of South African society (Ngubane & Makua, 2021; Kaya & Seleti, 2013; Lekgotla laga Ramoupi, 2012). In addition, the adoption of culture in the classroom appears to be relatively slow and is not given the attention that it deserves, which may impact students' academic performance, general well-being as well as other social aspects such as inequality and unemployment (Adonis & Silinda, 2021). The adoption of culture in the classroom involves an approach to teaching and learning in which the role of culture in the classroom is recognized and making culture a part of the curriculum. This adoption of culture in the classroom would be helpful to students in shaping

their thinking, beliefs, and actions to become responsible citizens in their communities (Maluleka, 2020). This paper contributes to the discourse on the role of culture in curriculum transformation and Africanization of the curriculum in the South African higher education context and contributes to the knowledge base for students and academics. Based on the findings of studies in the context of Africanization of the curriculum, this contribution will demonstrate that culture should be considered an integral part of curriculum transformation and in certain circumstances can even fulfil a significant role in shaping the curriculum.

Problem Statement

Research exists calling for an emphasis on an Africanized curriculum (Ngubane & Makua, 2021; Van der Westhuizen et al., 2017; Louw, 2010; Higgs, 2016; Kaya & Seleti, 2013; Lekgotla laga Ramoupi, 2012). There are also government policy and reform documents that have been developed to create awareness of the role of culture in the curriculum. These include, for example, the White Paper on Higher Education, the 2013 Council on Higher Education (CHE) proposal for the reform of South Africa's undergraduate degree programs (Council on Higher Education, 2013), the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) (Department of Education, 2001) articulating the vision of the Education White Paper 3 (1997), and the general governmental policy on transformation.

The debate on the Africanization of the curriculum in higher education (HE) has been ongoing for a considerable time; however, not much has been accomplished to implement the concepts that have emerged from these debates in the curriculum nor in classroom practice. Despite calls to the contrary from inter alia the academic community, it seems as if the efforts intended to ensure the integration of African culture in the HE curriculum as part of the HE transformation initiative are not effectively realized. Currently, there is a lack of balance between Africanized content and knowledge from elsewhere (see Madiope & Mendy, 2020). Therefore, there is a need for awareness regarding the role of culture and adequate appreciation and support of "Africanness" in the curricula which inform the greater part of our education.

This paper argues that there is a need for the advancement of the role and integration of African culture in the HE curriculum. The question to emphasize the need to integrate culture and the Africanization of the curriculum in the HE sector is a significant one and at the same time a cause for reflection as this is regarded as an opportunity for educators and students in HE to develop and value their cultures and also other cultures in the South African multicultural milieu and likewise in the global context. As such, educators and students in HE need to take an active part to nurture and promote the development of the Africanization of the curriculum.

Aim of the paper

The aim of this paper is to present a review of the literature relating to the role of culture on curriculum transformation and the Africanization of academic material in the context of higher education in South Africa in order to contribute to the debate and identify areas where there are significant gaps and challenges.

Research Objectives

More specifically, this paper will also address these objectives:

- To provide an overview of the current state of the role of culture and Africanization of the curriculum.
- To collate empirical evidence that suggests that culture should be integrated into the curriculum.

Research Question

The following primary research question will guide the research:

- What is the role of culture and the Africanization of the academic material in shaping the curriculum?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section of the paper a brief review of the literature is presented, with a view on first describing its role in curriculum transformation, followed by a brief overview of the concepts of Africanization of the curriculum, African renaissance theory and culturally responsive teaching to reflect on how a selection of the current literature understands these concepts. The review of these concepts provided the necessary background for the central theme of this paper, namely culture and its role in shaping the curriculum. The process of curriculum transformation is then defined in its relation to culture and to discourse. The paper concludes with a presentation of the potential factors that relate to culture.

The role of culture in shaping the curriculum

In general, culture is used to describe a group of people's way of life, their traits and characters, their beliefs, and their relationships (Idang, 2015). Culture is also most common in organizations where certain values and beliefs are shared to increase productivity and to realize the goals of the organization (Schraeder, Tears & Jordan, 2005).

In the revised versions of the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (2013; 2017), culture is defined as "the dynamic totality of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features which characterise a society or social group". It is included not only as part of the arts but all other modes of life including human rights, cultural values and traditions, heritage as well as beliefs that have been developed over a period of time and which may change based on a particular set of circumstances.

During the administration of the apartheid government, the concept of culture was considered a matter specific to and controlled by a particular ethnic group (culture was considered as each separate group's "own affair") and as a result, each designated ethnic group had its own education system in what is termed as the "tri-cameral" and homeland systems of governance (White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage 2013; 2017). The White Paper now acknowledges that South Africa is a multicultural country with diverse cultural or ethnic groups and therefore is committed to the development of the diverse cultures of people living in this country. In the White Paper, drama, dance, language and indigenous art are some of the varied sub-sectors of culture and are viewed as an integral part of education. This confirms that

culture is a fundamental function of the curriculum in HE and therefore should receive adequate recognition and be integrated into the curriculum to reinforce the needs and expectations of our diverse cultures.

According to Gay (2002; 2018), there are a variety of different characteristics that constitute culture, which may have direct implications for teaching and learning. These include, for example, ethnic groups' cultural values, their means of communication and traditions, learning styles and the ways in which they interact. In his book titled *Sociology: Understanding and changing the social world*, Barkan (2011) provides a more detailed account of what culture entails, focusing on the two basic elements thereof. According to Barkan, the one element of culture – referred to as "nonmaterial culture" and also known as symbolic culture – relates to nonphysical ideas that individuals harbor towards their cultural symbols, language, beliefs, values, and artifacts (material objects), while the second element – known as "material culture" – consists of physical resources, such as tools and technology, clothing, eating utensils, and means of transportation.

Blignaut and Koopman (2020) have made a call for transformative education that recognizes inequalities and attempts to create a more just society. This will ultimately help to transmit the cultural traditions of society to the younger generation. Various cultures have different views, expectations, and ways of doing certain things based on their shared beliefs, and these cultural differences have a major influence on education.

Some researchers (Bhengu, 2020; Offorma, 2016) argue that "the language of education is the language of culture". This suggests that a curriculum whose content is based on cultural heritage permits students to have a great learning experience (Bhengu, 2020). This view is also shared by Alismail (2016) as well as Demir and Yurdakul (2015). These authors are of the view that cultural-based education has an influence on decreasing racial and cultural prejudices. According to Offorma (2016), "any society whose education is not founded on its culture is in danger of alienating the products of that system from their culture".

In this paper, the concept of culture is understood in its most general sense – namely as a collection of ideas, beliefs, values, activities, traditions and practices adhered to by various cultural groups in a particular society. These, then, ought to inform the HE curriculum. According to Adonis and Silinda (2021), culture has a role in shaping an institution's cultural practices, values and behaviors, all of which support the career progression of students and academic staff alike.

Defining Curriculum Transformation

Curriculum transformation, also known as curriculum renewal, change or reform (Madiope & Mendy, 2020), is often loosely defined. Different scholars offer varied viewpoints on what they understand curriculum transformation to mean or to entail. For example, Fourie (1999) claims that transformation in higher education does not only constitute the staff and students of a particular institution, or changes in governance structures or course content. Rather, in essence, it is a collective activity that can be achieved through the involvement of all stakeholders and

role-players, in which academic staff requires particular attention (Fourie, 1999). Fourie's (1999) definition of transformation is significant as it emphasizes the importance of democratic governance in an institution's structures and the involvement of both academic staff and students. Her point of view seeks to address broader aspects of transformation such as internationalization and social and economic transition. Le Grange (2006, p. 189) defines a curriculum in higher education based on the types of knowledge contained or not contained in the university educational courses.

More recently, Du Preez, Verhoef and Simmonds (2016) conducted a meta-analysis of 30 studies to help understand the way in which transformation in higher education was discussed. Four main patterns emerged from the findings of these authors, these were: "transformation through curriculum, transformation through structures, transformation through redressing equity and transformation through access." According to Du Preez et al. (2016), these four patterns may be regarded as the four main features of transformation in higher education.

In a recent presentation, the Chairperson of the South African Human Rights Commission, Professor Bongani Christopher Majola, warns of the various ways in which transformation is interpreted by some institutions who tend to limit their interpretation to a narrow focus on demographic changes only. Majola (2021), however, agrees that there are other institutions that understand that transformation should be acknowledged in a broader sense and should not be confined to race only, as this ignores the broader challenges of historically black universities. "Transformation should be addressed holistically, rather than prioritising particular issues, without taking cognisance of their intersectionality of all the different forms of oppression" (Majola, 2021). This notion is supported by Higgs (2016) in his transformative model that seeks to foster a learning environment where those differences that have historically been ignored or disparaged are accepted and clearly understood. Furthermore, Luckett (2010) also asserted that curriculum transformation should similarly be understood as a social activity based on cultural and social circumstances that serve as the basis of curriculum knowledge.

This paper has adopted the view accepted within the context of South African higher education that: "curriculum transformation is a complete and fundamental change from one kind of education system to another" (Legodi, 2001). This change transitions from the previous system of education known to be discriminatory where certain groups were excluded to the democratic one in which all groups are included, recognized and acknowledged along with their cultures. It seems as if the curriculum transformation of higher education institutions (HEIs) is driven by several factors including the ones mentioned above, as well as others such as students, academics, development in research, regulations, and the community itself (see Anderson & Rogan, 2011).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Many concepts have been utilized in the literature to better understand the role of culture in curriculum transformation. The following concepts need to be clarified when discussing the role of culture.

The African Renaissance Theory

One of the theories central to educational discourse is the African renaissance theory. This theory is significant to this discussion as it relates to African ways of thinking in relation to the global community and has been known for almost four decades of African post-independence (Van Wyk & Higgs, 2011). The theory itself is based on the perception that much of educational theory and practice in Africa relies heavily on either European ideas or is Eurocentric (Higgs, 2016). This perception has therefore led to a substantial debate among some African scholars arguing that it is borrowed from a unique European setting and context and, as such, is not relevant to Africa (Cossa, 2009; 2015). This suggests that much of education believed to be African is in fact not African, but rather a reflection of Europe in Africa (Higgs 2008).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching is described as a teaching practice in which students' cultures, languages, and life experiences are closely linked with their academic activities. According to Gay (2002), these connections create higher interest appeal, are helpful to students to engage with the curriculum rigorously and ultimately promote meaningful learning. A discussion on culturally responsive teaching practices is nonetheless beyond the scope of this paper. However, generally speaking, such practice would include an approach in which students are involved in the construction of their knowledge through exploring the curriculum from multiple perspectives, the existence and nurturing of a learning environment where the student's personal and cultural strengths are recognized and respected, the use of wide-ranging assessment practices that promote active learning, and an inclusive classroom culture (Gay, 2002).

The "Africanization" of the Curriculum

In the literature, there seems to be a considerable amount of evidence that supports the use of African indigenous knowledge systems in institutions of learning. For the purpose of this discussion, the term Africanism is also used. What, then, would this indigenous knowledge mean for education? The earlier definition provided by Makgoba (1997, p. 199) suggests that Africanization (i.e. African-oriented content) involves "incorporating, adapting and integrating other cultures into and through African visions to provide the dynamism, evolution and flexibility so essential in the global village". Le Roux (2001, p. 35) subsequently defined the Africanization of education in South Africa as "the centralisation of a unique South African identity and culture". The more recent definition of Africanization of the curriculum as applied to higher education refers to the process in which the subject matter, teaching methods, and content are transformed into the African environment that accommodates a body of indigenous knowledge systems (Letsekha, 2013).

The above definitions do suggest that Africanization is significant to the African continent as a whole as it facilitates unity for people from a variety of cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds (Horsthemke, 2017; Louw, 2009). The Africanization of a higher education institution, in addition, furthermore, entails that educators should also develop their teachings based on what is happening around the world. This is important in today's digitized world in particular, as the internet has sharply accelerated the globalization of local communities (Louw, 2009).

Some scholars refer to the fact that African education, in general, may still be dominated by European worldviews (i.e. that it remains essentially Eurocentric), which tends to undermine indigenous principles and ideas such as Ubuntu as simply illegitimate African thinking (Ngubane & Makua, 2021; Kaya & Seleti, 2013). As a result, such unfounded thoughts about African indigenous knowledge systems (AIKS) have had an immense influence on which students from varied African cultures feel undermined and marginalized in higher education (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, p. 8). In fact, Ndlovu-Gatsheni refers to this as the "rejection of knowledge" that, regrettably, African students bring to higher education.

The integration of AIKS into higher education is necessary for several reasons: Firstly, through AIKS, students can learn appropriate community principles and values which provide a structure for sustainable livelihood (Kaya & Seleti, 2013). Furthermore, students are able to bridge those gaps which inevitably exist across generations, thus enabling and preparing them to become better citizens in their communities by acknowledging and respecting not only their own elders and their own cultures, but other cultures as well (Kaya & Seleti, 2013).

In his study, which evaluates the significance of education in post-apartheid South Africa, Msila (2007) emphasizes the need to take advantage of AIKS – or indigenization as referred to by Horsthemke (2017) – and incorporate them into mainstream formal education. According to Msila, AIKS have the potential to address many social needs, such as a sense of belonging based on one's cultural heritage. When these social needs are fulfilled, we experience a sense of well-being. This is also supported by Emeagwali (2003) where he rightly points out that the strengths of an African-based system lie largely in how learners are taught and are grounded on indigenous and local knowledge of the African people. According to Emeagwali, education and culture share the same language. This may be attained, in other words, when the content and teachings permit students to see themselves and realize their cultural practices in the curriculum.

The "Post-Africanization" of the Curriculum

Although there is considerable literature in support of the Africanization of the curriculum, there are also some instances where other researchers have questioned the concept of Africanizing the curriculum. One of the questions that still remain, according to Botha (2007), is whether such an identity could indeed be identified especially seeing as South Africa is rich with multiple and diverse subcultures. Furthermore, other problems are related to the lack of a conceptual framework that could have provided a theoretical and methodological guide for the integration

process from the African indigenous point of view (Kaya, 2013). Another issue relates to inadequate support from institutional management due to limited knowledge on the significance of Africanization in a modern global community, particularly in science and technology (Kaya, 2013).

There has also emerged a new concept, Post-Africanism, considered as an alternative to Africanization, and deployed to chart a new direction for an African renaissance. Post-Africanism was established by Denis Ekpo, who is regarded as its founder. Ekpo views Post-Africanism as an attempt to challenge most of the negative ideas of Africanism, including those discussed in different platforms such as in art, politics, or development (Ekpo, 2010). Ekpo believes that Africa's recovery to a healthy cultural life demands novel ideas and refreshed conditions aimed at a "more performative African intellectual engagement with Africa, modernity and the West" (Ekpo, 2010, p. 182). In addition, Horsthemke (2017) has also warned against what he termed as "the fallacy of the collective singular", in which cultures are seen in isolation and different groups often leading to common expressions such as "the African university, European identity" and so on. This, according to Horsthemke (2017), is the reason why in some cases there are xenophobic attacks on foreigners.

From a distance, it seems as if there is a strong debate among scholars who are sympathetic towards the ideas of Africanism and those that perceive this new concept of Post-Africanism as Afrophobic. There are also those who view Post-Africanism as an instrument for change. It may be helpful, therefore, that as we embrace these ideas of Africanism and Post-Africanism and reflect on cultural changes in Africa and in our curriculum, we do not lose sight of any controversies which may sensibly inform them.

Factors Perceived to Be Related to Culture's Role in Curriculum Transformation

With the concepts presented above as background, the next part of the literature presents three of the many factors identified to have a direct relationship to culture and its role to facilitate or hinder curriculum transformation.

Faculty-student Involvement and Commitment

The literature, ostensibly, raises the concern that students are omitted from the curriculum transformation process even though it is implemented for their benefit (Levin, 2000). According to Ngussa and Makewa (2014), students should be at liberty to participate in curriculum transformation as this will empower and enable them to be more directly involved in and responsible for those matters that concern them. A study by Wawrzynski et al. (2012) supports the debate as regards the benefits of student involvement in co-curricular activities in order to advance the scholarship to an international context. Other authors argue that for the curriculum to be effective and successful, it should be up-to-date and aim to address the needs and demands of diverse cultures, society as a whole, and the expectations of the population being served.

Some scholars have stressed the commitment of faculties together with students. In their study on "the role of transformation in learning and education for sustainability", Leal Filho et

al. (2018) highlight the importance of the commitment by faculty and academics for the sustainability of transformation in teaching and learning. According to Leal Filho et al., their efforts, motivation and innovative ideas, change in content and methods appear to be significant.

In general, there is not much research available to examine student engagement in South Africa. It is the author's view that, if culture has an influence on the skills, attitudes, values, and behaviors that students and educators bring to the curriculum as suggested by Offorma (2016), then the involvement of both parties is critical in solving the problems of underperformance in teaching and learning.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a practice in which the mentor – who in most cases is a more senior and more experienced individual in an organization – provides support to a junior colleague in a lower rank (i.e. the mentee). This support may include a variety of developmental functions such as regular guidance, feedback and general discussion so as to maximize the growth and full potential of the mentee (Seekoe, 2014; Seekoe & Arries, 2011; St-Jean & Audet, 2012). Seekoe (2014) further describes mentoring as an "interactive, reflective, participatory process of relationship building, engagement and development between mentor and mentee". In this process, the mentor facilitates the process through a series of activities from the development of the mentoring program, responsibilities and roles, and how they are to be accomplished as well as other important aspects of the program (Seekoe, 2014; Seekoe & Arries, 2011).

Generally, mentoring is perceived as a critical aspect of transformation within academic and professional settings meant to develop and empower individuals (Feiman-Nemser, 1996). To attest to this, some public organizations offer mentoring-inspired support programs to novice entrepreneurs wishing to launch a business (St-Jean & Audet, 2012). As such, its prominent role has been widely acknowledged in both academic and professional arenas (Berry, 2003). It is nonetheless clear from the information presented in the literature that the effectiveness of the mentoring process is dependent on the personalities of the mentor and mentee, as Msila (2012) has rightly suggested.

Even though mentoring is accepted as an important factor for transformation, it also has some shortcomings and poses some challenges. Some of the issues that appear to have a negative impact on mentoring include fraudulent practices, the mentor's ability to effectively provide guidance to the mentee (which is directly related to the professional's level of expertise), abusive relationship behaviors such as sexual harassment, cultural diversity and cultural and gender biases (Hicks, 2011). To avoid problems such as these, Geber and Keane (2017) have suggested a transformational mentoring model which embraces the principle of Ubuntu. In this framework, a mentor is required to focus on a shared learning experience and be prepared to learn about African Ubuntu principles in their interaction with mentees. In addition, Bryant-Shanklin and Brumage (2011) also agree that mentoring can only be effective if the administration processes are clearly defined to support the mentoring efforts. It is quite

interesting, though, to note that very little research has focused on the negative aspects of mentoring.

Participation in Student Organizations

The objective of this section is not to present an in-depth examination of the formation and structures of student political organizations but simply to provide an overview of students' leadership role and its influence on matters related to curriculum transformation.

Mapesela and Hay (2005) indicated that during apartheid, students had no voice in their general and social well-being in the learning environment. However, the Higher Education Act of 1997 has since altered this situation to a participatory role in which the Student Representative Council (SRC) can take part in almost all aspects of academic life and where they can effectively influence students' academic interests (Mthethwa & Chikoko, 2020). It is now believed that student leaders, with their different affiliations, have had "a very significant role in instilling their aspirations and interest into a democratic and transformed higher education system" (Moreku, 2014). It is in this context that student organizations are therefore included as significant for discussion in this section of the paper. However, some authors (Mthethwa & Chikoko, 2020) have warned that the participation of student organizations is focused largely on their political aspirations, for example the recent #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall campaigns, instead of their academic obligations, which suggests a strong political influence, especially during the SRC elections. This practice (and the outcomes thereof) does not always add value to students' academic experiences. It is therefore suggested that this is one of the topics that need further interrogation.

Drawing from the brief overview presented above, the three key factors that have an influence on culture in enhancing learning in the curriculum transformation process are presented in Table 1 below. In this table, the subsectors of culture represent the independent variable while the enhancement of curriculum transformation acts as the dependent variable. When considering the role of culture in curriculum transformation, it is likely that these factors would need to be considered and may not be ignored. It must, however, be stated that this figure is not a decisive representation of all the factors. Other related factors could thus be identified for the purpose of stimulating further debate on this subject matter.

Table 1: *A summary of key factors that have a direct relationship to culture and its role to shape or hinder the curriculum (Barkan, 2011)*

ELEMENTS OF CULTURE	RELATED FACTORS
Material elements: Art and design (including indigenous art), tools and technology, clothing, eating utensils, and means of transportation, drama, dance, heritage	• Faculty-student involvement and commitment • Mentorship • Students' participation
Non-material elements: The values, beliefs, symbols, and language, Politics and developmental issues	

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In addressing the research question, the author reviewed secondary data obtained from policy documents, publications by government and related agencies and published annual reports from higher learning institutions depending on their availability. The search was furthermore restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles to ensure the authority and quality of the sources. Other information related to relevant institutions has been taken from official websites and online sources. It was decided that a compilation of a variety of relevant research resources was more appropriate than a comprehensive review.

In making this review more inclusive, earlier studies (during the years transitioning from the old apartheid rule) were included as well as more recent studies (twenty years after the first democratic elections). All these studies provide analysis and reflect on the role of culture and the Africanization of the learning material in relation to the process of curriculum transformation and to identify areas where there are significant gaps and challenges.

It is also acknowledged that there is considerable literature that includes institutional reports and white papers; however, it was not possible to access and include all relevant books for a qualitative review. The databases and repositories that supplied the resources include EBSCOHost, ERIC, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, Academia.edu, and Research Gate.

In analyzing and interpreting the literature, a technique referred to as "Keywords-in-context" was used (see Onwuegbuzie, Leech & Collins, 2012). Using this technique granted the author the flexibility of analyzing the information extracted from the literature review. The author was able consider the concept of culture within the context of higher learning, together with all the factors that relate to it, to understand what the influence of culture is in transforming the curriculum. The following keywords were used to collect useful research articles: culture, Africanization, Africanism and curriculum transformation, and Indigenous

knowledge systems (IKS). Approximately 50 articles were generated using this keyword search technique from the above databases.

DISCUSSION

The central question posed by this paper is: What is the role of culture and the Africanization of the academic material in shaping the curriculum? To address this question, a review of the selected existing literature was conducted. Various reasons were revealed as to why the integration of culture into the higher education curriculum is necessary. The most prevailing include that culture affords students the opportunity to understand and acknowledge appropriate communal attitudes, values and the general social context for sustainable livelihood (Kaya & Seleti, 2013). It is also believed that culture has an influence in preparing students to become better citizens in their communities so that they can appreciate and respect the teachings of their elders, their own cultures and the cultures of others (Kaya & Seleti, 2013). When students see their cultures being recognized at their institution, they feel included and empowered in their academic community and this then creates an increased sense of pride in their cultural heritage (Kaya & Seleti, 2013). There also seems to be consensus among most scholars that when integrating African culture into a given curriculum, the emphasis should shift away from Eurocentric views. However, it is also necessary to find a balance between the African, the non-African as well as modernization in the curriculum as the world we live in is now more globalized (Ebewo & Sirayi, 2018). It is clear that the concept of culture in the HE sector is by no means a unidimensional one. It can be viewed and understood in multiple ways and will differ depending on the particular context in which it operates and is thus wholly dynamic.

This review, although limited, has shed some light on the viability of integrating culture into the curriculum which can then be used to enhance practice and direct future research. The review has revealed that there is some research supporting the integration of culture and Africanization of the curriculum. However, the calls to this effect have not yet yielded results that can be considered significant. Although the available literature review provides that some attention must be placed on culture and the discussion around Africanization and transformation in higher education, there generally seems to be insufficient appreciation and respect for locally relevant curricula as a significant role player in curriculum transformation. The following considerations would then be critical for future research in higher education: firstly, it is recommended that some priority be given to culture, modernization and globalization discourse to inform higher education to strengthen the discussion of its role in transformation and to encourage the rethinking thereof. HEIs should confront this issue with the urgency it deserves. Secondly, HEIs should also embark on aggressive cultural and heritage activities to maximize the effective integration of culture into the curriculum. Thirdly, students should also be allowed to participate in the curriculum.

Finally, despite credible publication databases that supplied the resources used to identify research studies exploring the role of culture on curriculum transformation in higher

education, this paper's contribution to the field is still confined within the limits of the available reviewed resources and the methodology employed. Further research should also investigate other sources such as books, conference proceedings, journal articles and other publications to validate the findings of this paper. Furthermore, case studies and empirical and quantitative research studies are all encouraged and could be used to stimulate our understanding of culture's role in curriculum transformation.

CONCLUSION

The concepts of culture and Africanizing the curriculum are, undeniably, altogether dynamic and outright intensive. From a distance, it seems as if culture is a sensitive and multifaceted subject matter and not less so with its plethora of related concepts. Therefore, it is critical to tread carefully in attempting to approach these concepts so as to interpret them accurately in their role in curriculum transformation. It would therefore be difficult to make conclusive decisions based on a few selected studies alone. However, it is noted that the integration of culture in learning content has a very crucial role in transforming the curriculum. For this reason, it is necessary to develop curricular materials and learning conditions that integrate cultural context and encourage students to engage in the issues of curriculum transformation as a way of communicating and reflecting on these practices. Understandably, we must also be thoughtful and critical of how culture is integrated into the curriculum, particularly if it is used to cater to the benefit of the modern institution of higher learning. However, our caution should not lead us into a separate space for Africanization and Indigenous knowledge in and outside institutions of learning. We must, ultimately, be mindful that our academic practices and politics do not determine the quality of Indigenous knowledge systems.

Limitations and future considerations

Despite all the efforts in preparing this paper, there are certain limitations that cannot be ignored. Given the wide angle and the diversity of topic, some limitations were inevitable given the need to explore as wide as possible to find interesting and relevant information. The data used for this study is mainly secondary data, and which has been obtained from published journal articles, annual reports and other publications; as such, its findings depend on and are limited entirely by the accuracy of such data. It is noted that there exists a considerable literature on this topic in the form of institutional reports and white papers, and it is possible to access only a limited number of sources for a qualitative review such as the one at hand. Future papers may, inter alia, consider focusing on the negative aspects of mentoring, the political versus academic aspirations of student organizations, student engagement, and accessing a wide as possible body of primary as well as secondary sources to ever more closely determine and define the practicalities of Africanism in our higher education curricula. Such research will undoubtedly contribute to ultimately developing a conceptual framework as theoretical and methodological guide in any endeavor to integrate African culture into higher education and higher education studies.

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