APORTAL VoL3 (1) 2019

Interrogating the implications for the exclusion of family, religious and moral education in infant education in Zimbabwe's updated curriculum

Muchabaiwa W, Jakachira G and Kanda M
Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University

Abstract

The study interrogates the continuities and discontinuities of Zimbabwe's updated curriculum focusing on the exclusion of Family, Religion and Moral Education (FRME) in the infant school. The study was carried out in Mashonaland Central Province and utilised Bindura district as a case to explore the implications for excluding FRME in the infant school curriculum. It adopted a qualitative research approach and utilised a case study research design informed by interpretivism as a research paradigm. The interpretive analysis model helped in establishing emerging patterns or themes from the collected data. Ten school heads, ten teachers in charge and 20 teachers were purposively selected on the basis of their experience and qualifications. The data collection methods were in-depth interviews and document analysis. The study reveals that FRME as one of the learning areas is only introduced at grade three. Paradoxically, the philosophy underpinning the updated curriculum emphasises morality and yet it denies a space for FRME in the infant school curriculum. The deliberate omission of FRME as a learning area in the infant school curriculum does not only pose challenges in terms of children's moral development, but also becomes a disjuncture in terms of a spiral and developmental curriculum. Thus, the study strongly recommends curriculum review to reconsider the reintroduction of FRME in infant education.

Key terms: updated curriculum, spiral curriculum, infant school, morality, Religious Education

DECLARATION: We hereby confirm that the article is our original work and has not been submitted elsewhere. All authors have approved the final article.

BACKGROUND

The study explored the continuities and discontinuities of Zimbabwe's updated curriculum focusing on the exclusion of Religious and Moral Education (RME) (now Family, Religion and Moral Education) in the infant school curriculum. It seeks to establish whether the exclusion of FRME in the updated infant school curriculum does not create a disjuncture in terms of moral development as well as in terms of a spiral and developmental curriculum. The findings of the study are analysed using Piaget's theory of moral development which clearly shows that moral development starts at infancy.

On the attainment of Independence in 1980, the Government of Zimbabwe embarked on major reforms in the education sector. The programme, Education for All in 1987, led to the construction of more schools to ensure access to education by all learners (GoZ, 2004). There was dire need too to ensure that issues of equity and equality were addressed. In the second decade of independence, there was a paradigm shift in the running of affairs in the education sector as the Government realised the need to provide quality education to the masses of Zimbabwe. In 1998, therefore, the Government set up the Presidential