An Analysis of Programmes that Promote Multicultural Education at Four Private Schools in Harare, Zimbabwe (3rd Series)

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ABSTRACT

The article is part of a broad study that was carried to establish the extent to which multicultural education issues are being embraced at four private schools in Harare, Zimbabwe. This article specifically analyzed multicultural education programmes related to the promotion of equity pedagogy in private schools. The study paradigm was largely quantitative though some elements of qualitative research were also employed in sampling. The survey design guided the study. The population included all 16 administrators and 115 teachers. Convenience sampling was used to come up with a representative sample of 4 administrators (one from each school) and 20 teachers (five from each school). Structured interviews were used to collect data from school administrators while questionnaires were administered to teachers. The results showed that culture positively influences educational outcomes. The results also revealed that private schools have programmes in place that promote multicultural education. These include the teaching of Religious and Moral Education (RME), Mere acceptance of all students from diverse cultural backgrounds, provisions of subjects like Portuguese, French, Shona, English, which are languages of different cultures and the Provision of international syllabus i.e. Cambridge which is examinable in Zimbabwe among others. For these schools to be more sensitive to multicultural issues the study recommended that teachers and administrators should revise the curriculum, content, instructional strategies and environmental settings to accommodate diversity. Teachers were also encouraged to be attentive to the ways in which they structure learning activities to suit diversity. The use of culture brokers and theatre arts were also suggested.

Key Words: *Culture, Multicultural Education, Teachers, Administrators, Learner Diversity, Private School*

1.0 Introduction

Zimbabwe is one of the African countries that embrace multiculturalism in educational, political, economic and social aspects. The Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) is the major law that shows everybody is welcome in all national activities. While Zimbabwe does not have specific stand alone laws on multicultural education she is a signatory to a lot of international charters on multiculturalism and non discriminatory education. Domestically there are a lot of policy frameworks that informs educational practice. These include the Zimbabwe Education Act (Education Act, 1987, revised 1996), the Disabled Persons Act (Disabled Persons Act 1992, revised 1996) and various Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education circulars such as (Education Secretary's Policy Circular No. P36, 1990). These require that all students, regardless of race, religion, gender, creed, and disability, have access to basic or primary education (up to Grade 7). The Zimbabwean Education Act introduced free and compulsory education for all students regardless of any demographic differences implying support for multicultural education (Chireshe, 2011).

Zimbabwe has four major categories of schools. These include government owned schools, church owned schools, and council owned schools and trust or privately owned schools. The researchers experience as an educationist for about two decades has shown that while most schools enroll learners from different cultural backgrounds significant multiculturalism is in private schools. These schools are mainly run by trust funds and they are considered as elite schools. There is a mixture of learners in these schools inter alia, Blacks, Indians, Chinese, Coloureds, and Whites. What motivated the execution of this study is the need to find out the extent to which multicultural issues are being handled in these private schools.

2.0   Delimitations

The study was restricted to four private schools in Harare only. The private schools included two primary schools and two high schools. Thus respondents were two administrators and ten teachers from two primary schools while the remaining two administrators and ten teachers were from two high schools. Other private or public schools in and outside Harare were not covered in this study. The Early Childhood centres in the 4 private schools were also not part of the study.

3.0   Literature Survey
3.1Meaning of Multicultural Education (MCE)

The concept of MCE has been talked about seriously after the Second World War. This follows the rapid increase in migration as states were gaining self rule. The increase in immigrants necessitated the call for cultural sensitivity in the schools. Multicultural education encompasses theories and practices that strive to promote equitable access and rigorous academic achievement for students from all diverse groups to enable them work toward social change. It is a process of educational that challenges oppression and bias of all forms, and acknowledges and affirms the multiple identities that students bring to their learning. Researchers and scholars have been finding it difficult to come up with a generally agreed definition of MCE. Instead, the majority of these researchers found it better to define multicultural education as a matrix of practices and concepts rather than a singular static notion. They agreed that MCE must be constructed within its history and roots in the civil rights movement (Banks 2004; Grant, Elsbree & Fondrie, 2004; Gay, 2004; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004).

One of the most renounced scholars of MCE is James Banks. The meaning of MCE in this study is therefore in line with his definitions. Banks (2006) advanced a definition of multicultural education as a broad concept and extrapolated on five dimensions. These are content integration, knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure (Banks, 2004). Content integration deals with the infusion of various cultures, ethnicities, and other identities to be represented in the curriculum. The knowledge construction process involves students in critiquing the social positioning of groups through the ways that knowledge is presented. Prejudice reduction describes lessons and activities that teachers implement to assert positive images of ethnic groups and to improve intergroup relations. Equity pedagogy concerns modifying teaching styles and approaches with the intent of facilitating academic achievement for all students. Empowering school culture describes the examination of the school culture and organization by all members of school staff with the intent to restructure institutional practices to create access for all groups (Banks, 2004). According to banks, while these dimensions are inextricably intertwined, a lot of effort must be put by schools to address each dimension separately. This makes the foundation for MCE assessement.

3.2 Relationship between culture and provision of MCE

Language, Communication and Culture

Leach, (1976:10) makes a direct analogy between culture and language; articulates that, "The various dimensions of culture, such as styles in clothing, village layout, architecture, furniture, food, cooking, music, physical gesture, posture, attitudes and so on are organized in patterned sets so as to incorporate coded information in a manner analogous to the sounds and words and sentences of a natural language." The phrase, patterned sets, is critical in that it indicates that cultures must be learnt (like language) and that they cannot easily be assumed; there is no instant acculturation (Corner 1984 in Bhatia, 2004). The real content of culture is "how people organize their experiences conceptually so that it can be transmitted as knowledge from person to person and from generation to generation." It can be said that culture is an exchange (or communication) of primary message such as linguistic ones, or auxiliary messages, such as goods and services. Just as knowing a language implies the ability to communicate verbal messages with other members of the speech community, so knowing (being part of) a culture implies the ability to exchange all kinds of social (including verbal) messages.

Knowing a language certainly involves learning how to be a member of a culture. There are, of cause, dangers in learning a language too well linguistically and not being acculturated. Telling jokes in a foreign language is hard because jokes depend on cultural assumptions to make their point. From the researcher's perspective, how a student would feel in a multicultural school, were he/she does not understand a joke put in a foreign language is left to one's imagination. Humiliation and frustration would always accompany the student in the set up. It is not only in jokes that the foreign learner is at risk. As soon as his command of the language code becomes like that of the native speaker, then expectations will be set up that his command of cultural code is equally proficient. It is in this way that many highly skilled foreign learners (of any language) come to grief.

As highlighted by Hofsted, (1991) on layers of culture, words and gestures carry a lot of meaning. Some individuals in the education system come from high or low context cultures. High context cultures derive their meaning mostly gestures or a word. This is mostly understood in a family context where a gesture may convey the equivalent of paragraphs of spoken words.

Low context cultures typically focus on precise, direct, logical, verbal communication. Lynch and Hanson, (995:45), ascertain that members of the low context cultures may not process gestures, environmental clues and unarticulated moods that are central to effective communication in low context cultures often leads to misunderstanding and dissatisfaction for both parties.

For the learner in MCE, it is his/her duty to interpret ad understand both the teacher and fellow students to get satisfaction in communication. The learner therefore has to be competent in both high and low context cultures. It is the researcher's belief that language and communication are pivotal in the education system. The educationalist and a student from different context cultures may have difficulties in appreciating and understanding each other. A teacher who is so much depended on gestures, unarticulated moods and clues may find a student from the opposite context as insensitive, dull or lagging behind in information processing.

The less visible aspects of culture associated with everyday etiquette and interactions and with expressions of rights, obligations, values and aspirations through norms of communication are commonly overlooked. "One can honor cultural pride on the walls of a room, yet inhibit learning within them", by overlooking and not accommodating such cultural differences in communication and interpersonal interactions, (Hymes, 1981:59).As culture is leant from cradle and cultural elements are

portrayed at an unconscious level, it may be a challenge in the provision of MCE. This may also result in over- representation and under-representation of minority groups in special programs.

Instruction/ Instructional Material and Culture

One of the major objectives of MCE is ensuring that all students are instructed in ways that do not penalize them because of their cultural differences and that, in fact, capitalize on their cultural heritage. However, the methods used to achieve this objective are among the most controversial topics in education, (Hernandez, 1989). Students respond differently to instructional demands. In some cultures, for example Africans, cooperativeness and group effort are encouraged, (even in child rearing practices) while the Americans put emphasis on competitive learning such as through use of rewards like means. This therefore means the teacher recognize the students' background to realize how she or he responds to instruction.

The controversy regarding instruction was generated by what Minow, (1985), called the Dilemma of difference. He explained the dilemma as either ignoring or recognizing students' linguistic or cultural differences, which could perpetuate them and maintain inequality of social power and opportunity among ethnic or other micro-cultural groups.   If cultural differences were ignored, the students would probably be given instruction that would not suit their cultural styles or needs. They would then likely fail to learn many skills, which would in turn deny them power and opportunity in the dominant culture. Minow, (1985:838), gave an example and said that if we ignored non- English speaking students' language and cultural heritage and forced them to speak English, they might have great difficulties in school.

However, the answer to this problem is not necessarily recognition of students' differences, for instruction geared to individual students' cultural styles may teach only skills valued by their own micro-cultures. Because the dominant culture does not value these skills, the students' differences will be perpetuated. For example, if non- English speaking students are taught in their native language and are not ere required to learn in English, their progress in the English speaking society will be slowed.

Minow, (1985:384), further explained the other side of the dilemma; acknowledgement of difference could create barriers to important aspects of school experience and delay, or derail successful entry into the society that continues to make that difference matter. Both sides of the dilemma appeared and reappeared in the history of education of students who were not native English speakers. Implementation of multicultural curriculum requires instructional materials that reflect the diverse character of any society. The 'density of diversity' is a reality in the present day and one that cannot be ignored (Hernandez, 1989).   Globally, the spirit of interdependence is a major characteristic of relationships among nations and peoples of the world have more implications than ever. Moreover, as students from all ethnic groups find themselves in classrooms with students whose backgrounds are considerably different from their own, :global understanding and related intellectual sensitivity attain a growing significance at home, as well as in our relations with the rest of the world", (Cortes and Fleming, 1986:384).

Instructional materials in general and textbooks in particular are central to the educational process. However, due to globalization and advancement in technology, instructional materials such as e-learning are fast gaining grounds especially in tertiary institutions and some private schools. Generally, about 80-90% of the school curriculum is based upon textbooks, and textbook- oriented activities account for about 75% of all class work and 90% of all homework, (Honig, 1985, in Hernandez, 1989).Concerns have been raised on how different groups are portrayed in textbooks. For many years, for example, Americans have taken time and action on the same concern (Hernandez, 1989). This led

to a study of how minorities were being portrayed. Depictions were found to be distressingly inadequate, inappropriate and even damaging to inter – group relations (Kane, 1984, in Hernandez, 1989).

The study also revealed that females were also under- represented and stereotyped. Attention was also given to how textbooks portrayed older persons, religious minorities, and the handicapped. It is therefore imperative that teachers regard instructional materials from a multicultural perspective, with a critical eye to the multiple messages they convey.From observations by the researcher in Zimbabwe, The Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) is seen to have given some thought to instructional material and has produced some visual aids, such as posters which portray women or men doing the opposite of culturally stereotyped jobs men doing domestic chores and vice-versa.

Academic Achievement and Culture

As earlier highlighted in the previous areas on cultural differences, these differences affected children's academic performance. Some questions which could be raised are; how can be the difference in children's academic performance be accounted for? Is something wrong with poor children and children of color- their genes or their families- that undermines their development and achievement? Some children are at risk of abnormal development because of the deprivations inherent in living in crisis-ridden families most poor and minority children were developmentally normal and their families ably carried out the essential child rearing functions. Poor and minority children's range of adaptive and learning disabilities were as other children's. The explanation for the differences in school performance lies in the difference in life experiences between groups- the worlds in which children of different cultural and socioeconomic groups live do not encourage the same beliefs and attitudes nor do they emphasize the same skills. Bowman also claimed that differences in the academic performance of children appeared   early. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NEAP) reported that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and many children of color consistently achieved below the national average in Mathematics and language skills, with the gap widening as children continued through their school years. The longer some children stayed in schools the greater the discrepancy between their educational performance and that of white and middle class students. Gradually and inexorably, the chances for academic success diminish for poor and minority students as they were launched into trajectories of failure (Alexander and Entwisle, (1988) on http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadershp/leObow.htm. Sue and Padilla, (1986), have given some explanation on differential academic achievement of some minority groups –genetic inferiority and cultural deficit. The cultural deficit ascribes differences to the minority culture itself and to the consequences of racism and discrimination. From the perspective of cultural deficit, Sue and Padilla, (1986:44), claim that the members are "lacking the cultural competence necessary for dealing with academic and social challenges."

Sue and Padilla (1986) also identified cultural mismatch and contextual interaction. Cultural mismatch assumes that cultures are inherently different but not necessarily superior or inferior to each other. Educational underachievement in some minority groups is thought to occur because their cultural traits do not match those of the dormant culture. (Sue and Padilla, 1986), as reflected in schools. They further explain that educational performance of minority groups is related to the degree of congruence between group values and traits and those of the educational system; the better the match the greater the likelihood that the level of academic achievement will be high. The contextual interaction explanation gives a more holistic, comprehensive and dynamic view. The contextual interaction looks at interaction between two cultural orientations- the cultural values of the larger society and those of the ethnic minority group. Sue and Padilla, (1986) explain that the behaviours, beliefs and perceptions of individuals within specific minority groups are influenced by the more or less fortuitous social,

economic and political circumstances they experience. Over time, the changes in beliefs and behaviours that result from cross- cultural interaction may enhance or impede achievement.

The contextual interaction perspective therefore emphasizes changes in the larger society, schools, ethnic groups and communities as solution to educational problems. At the societal level, elimination of discrimination and prejudice and greater appreciation of cultural diversity are of significance. For significant improvements in educational outcomes for minority group students depends on school reforms such as changes in teacher attitudes towards minority students, adaptation in curriculum and instruction; use of unbiased testing procedures, and the adaptation by ethnic minority students to the institution.

Differential treatment in classroom and culture
The experiences of students in the same classroom can differ significantly. This can be attributed to the student/ teacher interaction and relationship. A study by Sadker and Sadker, (1986) on differential treatment established that variations are associated with gender, ethnicity and achievement level. However, they emphasized that in many cases, those differences laid beyond the self-conscious of teachers.

Differential treatment of students by teachers also is related to ethnicity in some classrooms. A study carried out in New Mexico, Texas California indicated that some schools "are failing to involve Mexican-American children as active participants in the classrooms", (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1973:43). Other studies of reaction in internal classrooms also have found differences in teachers' treatment of students and variation in students' friendship patterns, (Schwanke, 1980 in Hernandez, 1989).

It is clear that students experience different living environments in the classroom and these have effects on leaving outcomes. Some of the variations are accounted for by student and teacher characteristics. Others may result from culturally influenced patterns associated with ethnicity language, socioeconomic status and gender some differential treatment in classrooms is inevitable; in many situations, and it is beneficial. Educators therefore must be willing and be able to determine whether differential treatment represents "helpful individualization, or detrimental bias", (Cazdem, 1986, in Hernandez, 1989:52).

3.3 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Social Reconstructionism which describes a complete redesign of an educational program. The notion of reconstructionism draws from Brameld's framework to offer a critique of modern culture (Sleeter & Grant, 2006). Such a redesign recommends addressing issues and concerns that affect students of diverse groups, encouraging students to take an active stance by challenging the status quo, and calling on students to collectively speak out and effect change by joining with other groups in examining common or related concerns (Sleeter & Grant, 1987, 2006).The study explored whether parents and teachers have embraced the need for reconstructionism among the children and learners respectively.

4.0   Methodology
The study was largely the quantitative though some elements of qualitative research were also employed in sampling. The survey design guided the study. Permission was first sought in writing at each school before data was collected. The population included all 16 administrators of the four schools that included school heads, deputy heads, senior masters and senior ladies. The four schools had a

teacher population of 115. Convenience sampling method was used to come up with a representative sample of 4 administrators (one from each school) and 20 teachers (five from each school). While parents were a key stakeholder in this study, those approached expressed mixed feelings towards participation and were dropped. Teachers were in turn asked questions related to the parents which is a great limitation. Structured interviews were used to collect data from school administrators while questionnaires were administered to teachers.

5.0   Results

5.1   Demographic Data

Table 1: Response Rate

Respondents	Sample	No. from which data was collected	Response Rate
Administrators	4	4	100%
Teachers	20	20	100%
Totals	24	24	100%

From the information presented in the above table, it shows that the response rate was 100% for both teachers and administrators.

Figure 1: Distribution by experience- Length of Service

Information presented in Fig 1 shows that all administrators and teachers had great experience in private schools. Teachers were had mainly 11-16+ years of experience and all administrators had over 16 years of experience.

The research intended to establish the levels taught by the teachers and the following was established

Figure 2: Distribution of Teachers by level taught

The data in Fig 2 shows that teachers from all levels participated, however concentration on respondents was from the lower primary and lower secondary which had 30% and 35% respectively. The upper primary and upper secondary accounted for the remaining 20% and 15%.

Figure 3: Distribution by Race
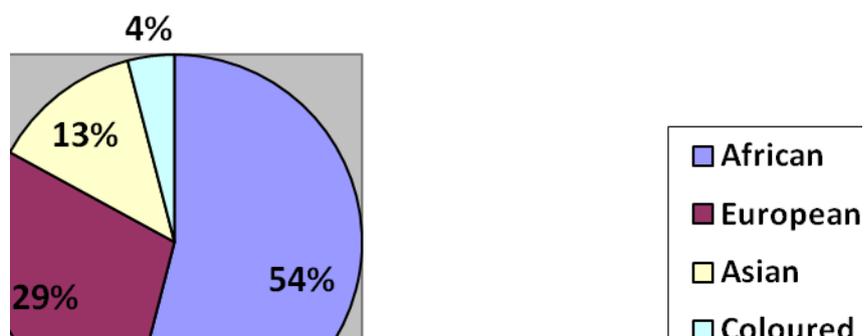
It was deduced that the majority of the respondents included African who constituted 54%, Asians constituted 13%, and European constituted 29% and coloured constituted 4%.

5.2 Relationship between culture and provision of MCE

For administrators, questions 14 and 15 solicited for their views on whether culture had any effects on the provision of MCE in private schools. They all agreed that culture had effects on education and gave the following reasons as tabled in table 2.

**Table 2: Whether culture influence the provision of MCE**
        N=4

Response	Frequency	%
Cultural traits can be expressed unconsciously which can have a negative impact on provision of MCE.	3	75
Culture is learnt from a tender age that it can influence education	4	100
Some cultures are believed to be superior/ inferior to others, which can have a negative impact on the provision of MCE.	4	100
There is a lot of intimidation in other cultures, which may have adverse impact on education	1	25
People have preconceived ideas about other cultures, which may affect education	3	75
Belief systems in different cultures affect provision	4	100
Interpretations of actions, language and communication can affect education	2	50

From the table above, it can be deduced that culture had effects on the provision of MCE. However administrators also pointed out that not only do cultural factors affect the provision of MCE, but a lot of other factors come into play. Issues like methods of instruction, provision of teaching and learning processes, students learning abilities, personal motivation and parental support affect the provision of MCE.

Teachers responses on whether culture had effects on provision of MCE

Figure 4: Whether culture had effects on provision of MCE
N=20
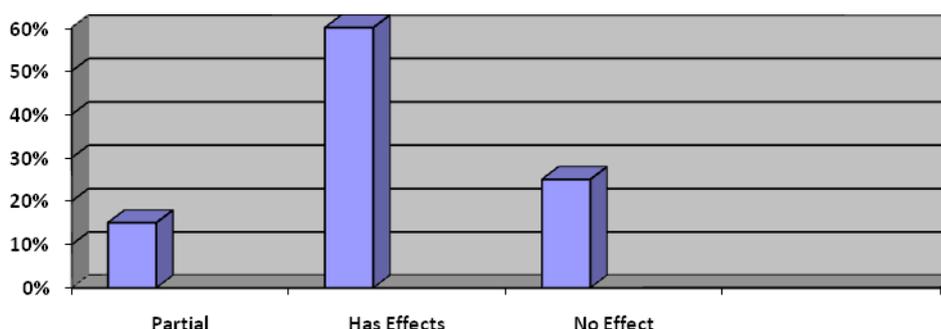
The teachers further clarified their responses as shown in the table below.

Table 3: Given reasons on effects of culture on provision of MCE N=20

Response	Frequency	%	Reason
Yes	12	60	• Home background affects performance • Misconceptions and misinterpretations of actions. • Inadequate knowledge about other culture causes misunderstandings • Societal or environmental influences affects learning, • Expectations of cultures affects performance, • Culture is within an individual and has influences on our thinking. • Value placed on some cultures affects learning i.e. superiority and inferiority complexes
No	5	25	• Children need only good educational provisions to excel, • Children need support to learn, • Education is about intellectual ability of a child • Self motivation and self perception influences education • Equal opportunity among cultures helps learning.
Partially	3	15	• The environment and instruction contribute to positive or negative learning, • Norms and values of culture affects learning for example, gender balance in educational provisions

The table above shows that the majority of teachers held the view that culture and effects on education, as they contributed 60% of the sample. However it should be noted that some teachers gave more than one reason. The reasons given were closely related and tended to agree on more than one point. The 25% who thought that culture had no effects on education gave their own views. The majority of them agreed on child's intelligence as a contributory factor to successful education of a child. The remaining 15% were being analytical as they tried to explain both views. However the outstanding revelation is that as much as culture affects learning and education.

5.2 School programs that promoted provision of MCE

Question 5 and 6 for administrator sought to establish whether MCE was promoted in the schools. Administrators indicated that they promoted MCE in their schools and the table show details on how this was done.

Table 4: How MCE was promoted
        N=4

High Schools	Primary Schools
- Teaching of Religious and Moral Education (RME) - Mere acceptance of all students from diverse cultural backgrounds - Provisions of subjects like Portuguese, French, Shona, English, which are languages of different cultures - Provision of international syllabus i.e. Cambridge which is examinable in Zimbabwe	- Teaching of RME - Enrolment is open to all students despite their cultural associations. - Some cultures are represented among our staff members - Teaching of other languages like French, Portuguese, Shona besides the English which is our main language.

It can be deduced that all the schools provided for MCE. Asked why particularly French and Portuguese languages, administrators responded that these were some of the main global languages and one particular school looked forward to introducing Chinese language as they realized that Chinese population was growing significantly in Zimbabwe.

It was also realized that the private schools had programs in place that helped promote MCE. These are listed in table 2 below:

Table 5: Programs that promoted provision of MCE
        N=4

High Schools	Primary Schools
- Culture days/ evenings, - Interact clubs - Culture clubs - Annual international exchange visits - Theatre clubs - Sports tournaments with other government schools	- CHIPAWO program - Music, club, annual educational tours

The table shows that all schools had programs in place to promote provision of MCE

Since parents play a role in the education of their children, question 9 for administrators was to establish whether parents participated in the provision of MCE. In all schools, parents played a major role in provision of MCE. The following points indicate how they participated.

- They act as resource persons for their own cultures (culture brokers)
- Parents participate in our programs e.g. attend and provide for our culture evenings
- They also direct our programs, e.g. drama based on a particular cultural theme, coach dance classes
- Parents sponsor children on exchange visits.

6.0 Discussion

Literature showed that there is a relationship between culture and the provision of MCE. This was evident in areas such as instruction and instruction material, interpretation of language/ communication, behavior misinterpretations, assessment issues, academic achievements, and differential treatments in the classrooms. Results established that language could be a challenge to minority students in the schools. In private schools, provisions put in place, include examination for non- English and Shona speaking students in High Schools though this was not the focus of the research study. The above were also the major areas cited by the respondents as those influenced by culture in the provision of MCE. In addition other areas of concern were inadequate knowledge about other cultures 60%, and societal and environmental influences 60%. Religious beliefs, such as dressing styles, food habits, and gender beliefs 100% were also cited as affecting provision of MCE.Though information from literature and the actual research agreed on a number of issues, research seemed to place much emphasis on religious issues. All respondents in one way or another had cited religion as having effect on the provision of MCE. It should be noted that religion has different dimensions as earlier highlighted.100% respondents agreed to multiculturalism in the schools. It therefore implied that all have dealt with issues of multiculturalism in one way or another. Research showed that all schools. 100%, had programs put in place to promote the provision of MCE. The major ones included, teaching of different languages, 100%, interact clubs, provision of international syllabus, 100%, exchange visits, 75%, culture days, 100%, teaching of R.M.E. 100%.

The research findings indicated that all private schools had accepted and accommodated multiculturalism. As school is part of a community, what affects a community has ripple effect on the school. Literature showed that migration worldwide was a permanent feature and that it contributed so much to multicultural in all societies and communities. Researchers such as Noguera (1999) therefore recommended the school and the educators to play leading roles in building accommodative and harmonious societies. Research also established that the most dominant cultures in the schools, in terms of ethnicity, African and European, benefited so much in exchange visits. 50% of administrators confirmed visits to European and Southern African countries mostly. However, the same did not benefit so much in Asian and other countries.

Multiculturalism was seen to be an area that many people, majority and minority alike, were struggling with. It can be deduced from the study that MCE needs a lot of attention for the success of students. 100% respondents suggested that there was need for teacher training on multiculturalism in teaching training programs. However, it should be noted that culture is dynamic therefore continual in-service training is necessary. Training should not focus on teachers only, but all relevant stakeholders, such as policy makers, parents, psychologists and other educationally related professionals need awareness and training in MCE

7. 0 Recommendations

- Accommodating diversity requires complementary use of instructional and behavioural techniques. Teachers and administrators should revise the curriculum, content, instructional strategies and environmental settings to accommodate diversity.
- In organizing students for instruction, teachers need to be attentive to the ways in which they structure learning activities to suit diversity.
- Multiculturalism cannot be avoided therefore the business community could promote MCE through program sponsorship.
- Culture brokers could be engaged by schools to advise schools on minority cultures in the community.
- Theatre arts could be used to disseminate information on multiculturalism in the community.
- All students should be encouraged to take up at least two different languages at all levels in their studies.

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