



Is psychology in Africa a step-child from western psychology? Teaching of psychology in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This article analyses the teaching of psychology in African universities. This is in the context where a few Zimbabwean scholars have interrogated the teaching of psychology in African universities. The paper argues that psychology is divorced from national discourses in Africa and is seen as a step-child from western psychology. The methodology used in this paper involves the review of secondary data which involve assessing government reports, academic manuscripts and research reports published in English from 1995 to 2017. Indeed, the authors argue that the scholars, and the psychology graduates, shunned national discourses in much the same as the government and the populace shunned the profession. Yet, the authors do show that there are opportunities for an endogenous approach to the teaching and practice of psychology in Zimbabwe. Clearly, psychology should take its place in the national development discourse in Zimbabwe as there is a vast potential of psychology in various development spheres like family life, education, law, social services, health, private organisation, government and management. Psychology in Zimbabwe should also study how Africans think, and behave, and how those thought processes and behaviours can be managed. The article recommends that the key stakeholders, including the Government of Zimbabwe, industry, key scholars and civic society should come together in owning, and using the vast opportunities in psychology as a field.

Key Words: *Psychology; Africa, western psychology, teaching, Zimbabwe*

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Introduction

Psychology as a discipline in Africa in general, and Zimbabwe in particular, has had a deafening silence on the country's national development. There is a glaring absence of psychology from the national development discourse despite the huge investments in training of psychology students by the government since independence. Apparently, psychology in Africa has a colonial heritage that has been recognised extensively (Fanon, 1967; Nsamenang, 1993). More clearly, or rather absurdly, psychology has been blamed for having aided colonial and imperialist powers; of having supported apartheid; for being an elitist discipline and of exploiting rather than serving the needs of African communities (Kaya, 2013).

Relatedly, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, at a conference on tertiary education in post-independence East Africa at Makerere University (Kampala) in 1966, offered two principles to guide tertiary education in post-independence East Africa. These are relevance and excellence in order of their priority. The major focus was on the relevance and role of higher education on the national identity, and developmental praxis, in African countries signposted by social inequalities and poverty. The major concern was that, a poor country cannot afford pure academia premised on the western philosophy which is starkly divorced from political and local realities.

Psychology in Zimbabwe has to answer to the call for national development, relevance and excellence. Omari (1989) decries that studying psychology at universities has been insignificant and its contribution in the research has been minimal over the years. One cannot belabour on the vast potential of psychology in various development spheres like family life, education, law, social services, health, private organisation, government and management.

Zimbabwe, with its vast array of ever-increasing state and private universities churning out thousands of graduates yearly, there is need to produce graduates who are able to answer the call of duty in national development and carry the country forward. This paper interrogates knowledge production in Africa, particularly the teaching and learning of psychology in Zimbabwe. Scholars agree that the content of education in Africa, is largely exotic at best and detached from the realities of Africa at worst, and as such, urgent review is required (see for example Chombo, 1998; Furusa, 1998). Worrisome is the fact that psychological knowledge is not being used evidently in nation building in Zimbabwe, yet psychology is at the heart of all human behavior.

The concern that looms large, therefore, is that a society should use its own psychological education to understand and influence human behaviour. Thus, this paper explains the context of psychological knowledge production in Zimbabwe.

To further explicate the argument herein, the author argues that African psychological education can be produced using an endogenous approach. Thus, African education should be packaged from a local perspective, however, as tied to external factors as and when they may be necessary. The main premise in the paper is what Dei (2012, p. 103) calls 'cultural estrangement' for educated Africans instead of them being 'cultural engaged.' Most African governments are wasting scarce resources teaching scholars who, because of their education, hate everything African as such become local and cultural misfits.

Methodology

The objectives of the current study were to examine the context, and status, of psychology education in Zimbabwe as well as analyse key issues that may be imbued in psychology education in Zimbabwe. This study is exploratory, and employed desk research to uncover as well as explain the data on the teaching of psychology in Zimbabwe. Data collection involved analysis of research articles, and review of literature relevant to the study. Literature on how psychology is taught in Zimbabwe was analysed.

The methodology used in this paper also involved the review of secondary data which involve assessing government reports, academic manuscripts and research reports published in English from 1995 to 2018. Thus, both objectives of the research were met using desk research. The desk research examined secondary data or that data which is collected without conducting fieldwork.

What are Universities?

The historian, David Beach (1999), questioned the role and direction of universities in Zimbabwe. He sought to define a university. Interestingly, Beach (1999) doubted whether the people, especially members of the university communities and the government appreciate what a university is. For him, a university is an association of free scholars for the purposes of study, research and teaching (Beach, 1999), while the term 'college' comes from the Latin word 'collegium,' meaning a 'partnership' or a 'society' (Moger, 2014). Thus, Beach argues that professors and lecturers need to have books and time to study them, the wherewithal and time for research. Doing research clearly requires

substantial funding resources, and in Europe, both the state and private sector organisations sponsor research for national development. In Zimbabwe, however, it seems university's core business revolves around teaching and for that matter regurgitating imported knowledge to local Africans whose enrolments have exponentially risen each year.

Beach (1999) also argues that universities often concern themselves more on research, but they also should control the focus of that research themselves instead of opening up to external influence on research. Beach argues that if the Prussian Academy of Science had followed the needs of the German state or economy in 1913 and had dictated Einstein's research, Einstein might have ended up focusing on the production of superior dreadnoughts. Rather, he was left to determine his own research that resulted in the Theory of Relativity. Beach further gives another example on the control exerted on researchers noting that in the 1930s the army and the air force focused on detecting enemy aircrafts from a distance than the then available sound rangars and searchlights could detect. The army focused on searchlights and sound rangars that could detect an aircraft at 30 000 feet and 20 miles in the place of the then limit of 20 000 feet and 10 miles. Their efforts produced better searchlights and sound rangars.

The air force, however, narrowed down their focus to be more specific; they sought to detect and track aircraft from as great a distance as possible. Their result was the radar. That for Beach, universities lecturers should control their direction regarding focus and have most of their work directed towards research against the contemporary Zimbabwean's focus on churning out tens of thousands graduates into the jobless market.

Nature of Education in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a 'puzzling' country that defies all logical explanations. It is a country close to the ebb regarding economic growth and tops the continent regarding literacy rates. Indeed, Zimbabwe tops the literacy rate in Africa meaning Zimbabweans are most educated compared to other African countries. For that matter, the Zimbabwe's cabinet boasts as being made up of the most educated politicians in Africa. The country has the most learned and currently learning politicians but it is a country with corruption, political discord and economic malaise. Fortunately, there is peace in the country. Education in Zimbabwe has been instrumental in skills development. The literacy rate in Zimbabwe is high, at 91.4% (Shizha & Kariwo, 2012). This is attributed to the emphasis put on education by government before and after independence. There

has been unprecedented expansion of all education sectors since independence in 1980 (Shizha & Kariwo, 2012).

Colonial background of Zimbabwean Education

To fully appreciate Zimbabwe's current education system, one needs to examine its history particularly its pre-colonial background. For close to a century, during the colonial period, the majority of indigenous Zimbabwe people had no influence on state policies and political decisions that influenced affected the education system (Zvobgo, 1996). The western thinking that degraded the indigenous education systems was equated with good life. This colonial culture disturbed the values of the pre-settler notions of learning that were essential in reflecting the socio-cultural needs and expectations of the African community (Abdi, 2005). The European colonialism in Zimbabwe resulted in perforce imposition of colonial worldview and distorted the traditional projects of education already in place (Rodney, 1982).

Colonial education degraded Africans by imposing both mental and outer colonisation (Shizha, 2005a). This was based on the premise that locals would assimilate into the colonial life styles and values that were themselves a threat to the identity and self-perceptions of the local people. Largely, colonial education resulted in psycho-cultural alienation and cultural domination (Mazrui, 1993). The indigenous Zimbabweans were depicted as inferior to Europeans and were literally taught to despise their cultural identities and to internalise the racial stereotypes of the coloniser. Local knowledge systems were devalued by the 'dominant' colonial culture. The myth of the superiority of European worldviews was widely promoted (Dei, 2002b). The Eurocentric flavour in African education became more dominant (Shizha, 2005, 2006). The knowledge myth was produced, reproduced and reinforced leading to Eurocentric knowledge attaining a whole repertoire of social, cultural and political superiority. Unfortunately, psychologists in Zimbabwe are good at regurgitating western knowledge, for example most of knowledge on cognitive development of children in Zimbabwe is based on Piaget's children in Switzerland and not how the children in Chipinge, Gokwe or Binga think.

The European education was embedded in missionary education. The missionary education promoted colonialism while its development was concomitant with colonisation. The missionaries identified with the Western culture and civilisation; hence the church became the "centre for cultural hegemony" (Shizha, 2005a, p. 70). Furthermore, missionary education cemented

the elite cultural values of the European colonial society, values that promoted ethnocentrism and racism. Those values became associated with the educated middle-class who were used to rationalise, justify and legitimise British colonialism (Rodney, 1982; Shizha, 2005a).

The missionaries categorised and regarded native Africans in Zimbabwe as innately inferior beings, barbaric, wild and uncivilised. The provision of education in Zimbabwe was for many years the preserve of the missionaries who had set up schools where 'pagans' were evangelised. Through that education, Abraham of Mesopotamia and Moses of Israel became weightier and more iconic than Mbuya Nehanda, Chaminuka, Mkwati and Sekuru Kaguvi who are among the founding icons of Zimbabwe.

The colonial education system, however, did not prepare local Africans to have control over of their cultural, social and economic development and disturbed their thinking as Africans (Shizha, 2005). The colonial schooling system dehumanised and de-Africanised them leading to an alienated mindset. The setting up of the University College of Rhodesia (now University of Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland in 1957 was the initial imperial government plan toward offering university education. Access to university schooling was influenced by race than the academic aptitudes of the students. Only a few Africans were offered university schooling. Thus, only about 0.2% of all African learners who qualified academically for university schooling were meticulously selected for university education (Shizha, 2006). Conversely, all European learners who qualified for university education were admitted easily.

The bottleneck in university education tallied with the imperial government's lack of interest in African education. The colonial governments avoided competition for jobs between blacks and whites. Shizha and Kariwo (2011) reasoned that colonial government's education policies were selectively made to cater for the interests of the European male-dominated socio-economic order.

Not only does education has a colonial background, but psychology as a discipline was also employed strategically by the colonial government. Cilliers (1985) reported that the Rhodesian colonial government did set up Psychological Operations Unit and Psychological Warfare committees which were headed by a deputy minister to use psychological principles in sustaining the war against freedom fighters. The objectives were to gain, preserve, and strengthen civilian support for the war. This involved the planned use of communications through

words, symbols and actions to influence the behaviour of selected target audiences in order to promote the achievement of national objectives.

The media most often used for psychological operations were face-to-face communication, radio, loudspeakers and printed material. Disseminating propaganda is an essential part of psychological operations (Cilliers, 1985). Nonetheless, the post-independence Zimbabwean government seemed to shun psychology. Perhaps it is explained by the subscriptions to the traditional beliefs systems. Matereke and Mungwini (2012) report that the occult still occupies a significant space in explaining economic and political success and failure in Zimbabwe. Stories are rampant that business leaders utilise witchcraft or sorcery to turn around their fortunes. There are rumours that politicians perform rituals to guarantee electoral success. Deaths, illnesses and disasters have been described in terms that defy simple scientific explanations. The diesel *n'anga* story from Zimbabwe can be used to locate the place of the occult in the whole postcolonial social and political unfolding in Africa (Matereke & Mungwini, 2012).

University Graduates

It has been reiterated that Zimbabwe boasts for having the best literacy rate in Africa, but faces a serious socio-economic crisis, marked by moral decadence such as multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, corruption and political discord. Gaidzanwa and Manyeruke (2011) quipped that Zimbabwe's economy deteriorated to levels comparable to a country at war. Perhaps the causes of the crises are in inept leadership by the ruling elite and committed and persisted demonization by the opposition. Across Africa, there are no nationals who demonise their countries than some Zimbabweans do to theirs. Hwami (2012) laments that university education in Zimbabwe has failed because it has produced people who believe in Tandon's (2011, p.6) conception of "kleptocratic capitalism," that is, the creation of fictitious wealth without going through production of real wealth, and a form of political governance that is controlled by looters and daytime robbers. University students and graduates according to Dei (2010, p.2) seem to lack a "critical nationalism" that addresses social economic and political consciousness and action.

Challenges for Teaching of Psychology in Zimbabwe: The Colonial Background of Psychology in Africa

If African education had a colonial background, psychology was blamed for having abetted colonialism. Eskell-Blokland (2005) writes that psychology has a colonial legacy in Africa that has been recognised extensively (Fanon, 1967; Nsamenang, 1993). Psychology as a discipline has been blamed for having aided colonial and imperialist powers; of having supported apartheid, for being an elitist discipline and of exploiting rather than serving the needs of African communities. This colonial and Eurocentric legacy, is identified as a major impediment to its relevance while western scientific knowledge is depicted as alien to the thinking of most Africans (Abdi, 1985).

Psychologists are dismayed because the profession is virtually unknown in Africa, and has made almost no impact on actual social problems (Abdi, 1985; Nsamenang, 1995). Psychology is variously described as underdeveloped (Nsamenang, 1993), powerless (Nell, 1992), impotent (Mehryar, 1984), insignificant, and a 'fledgling science' (Nsamenang, 1993). Idemudia (2015) that the teaching and psychotherapeutic practice in Africa is too Eurocentric.

Weiten (1998), claimed that psychology was born in Germany, and notwithstanding ^^^^, psychology as a discipline blossomed into 'adolescence' in America. However, the young science did enter a period of turbulence and turmoil (psychology is still very controversial across cultures). The vast preponderance of psychology's research has been conducted in the United States by middle and upper-class white psychologists who have used mostly middle and upper-class white males as subjects (Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1990). Traditionally, Western psychologists have paid scant attention to how well their theories and research might apply to non-western cultures, to ethnic minorities in Western societies, or even to women as opposed to men.

In my previous studies (Idemudia, 2003a, 2005), I have tried to explain that most Africans attribute mental illness or even diseases to breach of taboos/customs, disturbances in social elations, hostile ancestral spirits and spirit possession; demoniacal possession, evil machinations, intrusion of objects, evil eye, and affliction by gods and sorceries. Wicked people, out of jealousy/envy or just being plain wicked, can make bad things (like blindness, illness (physical and mental or even death) happen to other people.

In therapy, witches and wizards are blamed as cause the problem(s) which is what is also leading to the proliferation of churches and mosques where some claim to be seeking powers for protection. In some cases, it is plain extreme stress. It is in this light that Africans in therapy prefer to use treatments that recognizes their ways of thinking and value system. A detailed description of different researchers on the nature of help-seeking behaviour and health-utilisation behaviour among Africans has been described in detail (Idemudia 2003a, Madu & Idemudia 1997, Idemudia (1995) and elsewhere (Gordon, 1990).

African Psychology recognises the importance of culture in their day-to-day interaction. This knowledge is enshrined in our languages. For example, in most African countries, languages there are no words like 'cousin(s)' (not to talk of 1st, 2nd or 3rd). We have names for 'Father' ('Aba' in Esan people of Edo State, Nigeria), 'Mother' (Nene), etc. One's first or second cousin is regarded as a brother or sister, and as such, sexual behaviour among such relatives is regarded as incest and a taboo. Who I am (the self) is also embedded in cultural experiences (Fig 1). How cultural experiences influences the self is discussed elsewhere.

For this reason, Nsamenang (2007) notes that psychology is slowly evolving into a professional discipline, a fledgling science that is still only on the fringes of academia, and society in most African countries (Nsamenang, 1995). Only a few Africans, and their ruling class, appreciate the meaning (Eze, 1991) and potential use of psychology. More still, the current state of academic psychology in Africa is influenced more by imported forces than by endogenous African variables. For Nsamenang (1995), the central issue is that in Africa, psychology is neither practised nor taught in the same conditions as in its natal region, Europe, and the most fertile region, the United States.

As it is, psychology in Africa, scarcely appreciates the tacit wisdom rooted in Africa's indigenous knowledge systems like folklore, proverbs and practices. These indigenous knowledge systems cannot be captured or translated easily into the Western psychological jargon. The indigenous knowledge systems in Africa vilified and rejected, hence, African studies "are unpopular, suspect, or simply insignificant" (Staniland, 1983, p. 77). Nsamenang (2007) decries that in several African countries, most of the Africans, the governing class elite and the tertiary education leaders are more familiar with, and disposed at incorporating the disciplines of economics, sociology and anthropology than psychology. Hence, psychology is a peripheral discipline in practice, policy development and academia.

Current Psychology Education in Zimbabwe

The Psychology Department at the then University of Rhodesia (University of Zimbabwe) was established in the 1970s. A three-year BSc Honours Psychology degree which was introduced before independence by the then University of Rhodesia to train psychologist enrolled a few students mostly whites. Chireshe, Kasayira, Mudhovozi, Mapfumo and Gwandure (2006) wrote that after independence the Zimbabwean government faced the burning need to train more psychologists and particularly to raise the number of African practicing psychologists. After independence, the BSc Honours Psychology degree was then made more available to blacks by increasing the enrolment per annum. Concomitant to this increase in enrolment was the creation of more psychology posts in government ministries such as health and education to increase the availability of services to the black majority (Chireshe et al., 2006).

Interestingly, there was also a resolution to use indigenous systems of psychology. For instance, the Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA) which represents the indigenous and other faith-based healers was officially sanctioned to offer services, that were also psychological in nature (Chireshe et al., 2006).

Development of Local Psychologists

Knowledge production in psychology in Zimbabwe should result in the churning out of local psychologists who are better able to understand and appreciate the psychological nuances for Zimbabweans. Munro, a psychologist who worked in the Department of Psychology at the University of Zimbabwe before and after independence, argued for the development of psychology in Zimbabwe, to be able to understand and appreciate the psyche of Africans (Munro, 1978). Munro made a point that psychology should be handed over to black students and black people themselves.

Munro decried the fact that most psychologists in Africa use skills and methods designed in a Western context and from a Western perspective and try to employ such to solve challenges experienced by African people from the African perspective. Munro (1978), further made a bold statement that the ensuing generation of psychologists in Africa must be African psychologists with grounding in two worlds. They should have the skills and training for examination and solution of human problems from the perspectives of Western psychologists and then they should have an intimate familiarity with African language and culture that is beyond the White Westerner to understand African

realities. If they are able to bring the two together, psychology would be made meaningful in the lives of Africans to solve African problems.

For Munro (1978), there is need for proper training of psychologists in Africa. These psychologists should not focus on merely repeating all that has been done in Europe West which is a different cultural setting. Since the problems are different and the solutions themselves must be different because the ways of looking at the problems are different (Munro, 1978). Munro argues that human problems are the last unconquered area of science and are very extremely difficult to tackle. Thus, African psychologists need thorough training to be able to solve problems on the continent. There is need to generate enthusiasm, motivation, or involvement in the special field to produce experts. Though there several trained African experts in other fields such as sociology, theology or agriculture, there has not been success in the training of psychologists of international note in Africa at large and Zimbabwe in particular.

Munro (1978) explains this by quoting Leonard Bloom (1976) who had vast experience in Zambia and West Africa, and reported a conflict between 'the positivist, empirical and materialistic approach of psychology,' which on one hand, is routed in the traditional African cosmology, which is religious in its base and humanistic in its orientation.. This is expressed in in terms of the way the Western psychologist, and the African philosopher, perceive the human being. The psychologist views reduce the human to the level of a machine; even in the humanistic psychological perspective, theories and models are no different from the perspectives of physics. The African, however, does the opposite. Africans see spirits in every machine and explain the physical world in terms of human motives, wishes and behaviour. Thus, for Africans, a psychology based on hard 'scientific' determinism where no spiritual or mystical experiences are present is cold, remote and inhumane.

The training of psychologists in Africa, is also explained in terms of growing of a child in Africa by Sidney Irvine, among others. At home the child learns human and religious relationships while the classroom at school is cold, hard and dehumanised (Irvine, 1978). Again, at home the child learns and interacts in the mother tongue, which is the language of their social reality, of emotional relationships, of 'real life'. Yet, at school, the language of the classroom –the second language, is separated from the social life. That which they learn at school, using the second language, tends to be relevant only to the world of academic study and of work.

Thus, such a child faces problems in applying scientific classroom knowledge to their own experience and in the same breath, a university student faces challenges applying knowledge to problems faced outside the university walls. That the African student in psychology appreciates at an intellectual level the logic of psychology but does not believe that it can solve relevant human problems. Thus, at university and later at work they may 'role-play' the role of the psychologist which they may not really become involved in (Bloom, 1976).

There is, however, a different perspective which Bloom (1976) also refers. It is clear that both Western science, and African cosmology, are designed to understand and master the world but they take different approaches to achieve this end (Munro, 1978).

If psychology in Africa is to entice the interests of scholars; it should endeavour to understand the behaviour of human beings in everyday life. The psychological theories are not just for discussion in the classroom but should be able to solve Africa's real problems. More so, it has even become difficult for psychologists in Africa to use psychology jargon without devising new ones for local use. Thus, psychology teachers should demonstrate the success of psychology in action. To be successful, African psychologists must be alive to the needs and beliefs of the African people. Their psychology should be valid interpretations of human relationships and attempt to understand the world of Africans.

Gustav Jahoda (1970) showed in some of his studies in Ghana that traditional beliefs in magic and the supernatural can co-exist with Western scientific awareness. Furthermore, there is a suggestion that as people grow in the confidence born of running their own affairs, they actually increase their acceptance of traditional beliefs and intellectually integrate them with the Western scientific conceptions of reality.

Mbiti (1969) wrote that Africans exercise their spirituality in all of their daily activities. Mbiti had written that Africans are notoriously religious that wherever they are they are religious. The African carries their religion wherever they are, whether in fields sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; at the beer party, or attending a funeral ritual; and even when educated the African takes their religion with him to the examination room at school or in the university; if he is a politician, he takes it to the house of parliament.

During the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training of 1999, it was recommended that Zimbabwean education refocus on the *ubuntu* philosophy (Chitumbu, 2013). Manuel Manrique Gil (2010) cautioned against idealising pre-colonial period, and its philosophies as the reconstructed sphere without blemish. Gil (2010) further warns that the *ubuntu* philosophy in its original form, has neither appeal nor place for the contemporary African whose lifestyle is now a cultural fusion because of the presence of the Christian, Islamic traditions and western influence. In any case *ubuntu/unhu* is not fixed in time but is rather fluid and repeatedly adjusting.

The education being offered in Zimbabwean institutions, including psychology tuition, is still foreign since it was designed in Europe and has in the main not been adapted to local realities. This is so precisely because, as argued by Scheurich and Young (cited in Chilisa, 2012) argue, when a community has been dominated by another through colonisation within a largely complex civilisation; it significantly dominates other groups for hundreds of years. The dominant culture not only becomes the central ways of that civilisation, but that the culture becomes so embedded that the dominated typically are seen as natural or appropriate norms rather than as historically evolved social constructions.

One cannot help but agree with Khoza (2012) who states that the great tension for the 21st century African is that two streams of culture have been inherited; individualism from Euro-Western education and its attendant tenets on one hand, and communal, and relational ontology from his African forebears. Khoza (2012 p.>) goes on to declare that:

...lack of understanding of the philosophical differences between the two paradigms constitute the biggest crisis facing Africans. We cannot hope to totally reject the Western heritage and neither can we dismiss the African heritage Ubuntu. African culture now of necessity contains essential components of both spheres.

The Zimbabweans are generally guided by the traditional philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu* (Shizha, 2009; Venter, 2004; Swanson, 2007). *Unhu/Ubuntu* means “personhood... [and] It advocates for “interdependence of persons for the exercise, development, and fulfillment of their potential to be both individuals and community” (Battle, 2009, pp. 2-3). The “individual identity is replaced with the larger societal identity within the individual and collective unity will see to every person’s survival” (Shizha, 2009, p. 144). It is not merely a reference to humanity / personhood, but an indication of human conduct in relation with others. “A human being is a human being through other human beings, human being only exists and develops in relationship with others” (Venter, 2004, p.

152). As a philosophical thread of African epistemology, “*unhu/ubuntu* focuses on human relations, attending to the moral and spiritual consciousness of what it means to be human and to be in relationship with others” (Swanson, 2007, p. 55).

Personality

Creation of psychological knowledge is also pertinent regarding personality research. Indeed, personality research in Africa has been condemned. Pre-colonial personality studies were conducted to determine which African groups were suitable for white- or blue-collar work in the socio-economic setup (Nyasani, 1997). Most of the personality researchers in Africa were interested in designing, and testing, a personality by trying to measure how each individual was modernised or in other words Europeanised. The approaches to African culture and personality were regarded as part of concerted Western effort to suppress and dominate Africans (Nyasani, 1997). According to Nyasani (1997, pp. 56-57), African, Asian and European minds are products of unique “cultural edifices” and “cultural streams” that arose from environmental conditioning and long-standing cultural traditions.

Within the African cultural stream, Nyasani claims, are psychological and moral characteristics pertaining to African identity, personality and dignity. Makgoba (1997) goes further and argues that throughout the African Diaspora peoples of African descent: are linked by shared values that are fundamental features of African identity and culture. These, for example, include hospitality, friendliness, the consensus and common framework-seeking principle, ubuntu, and the emphasis on community rather than on the individual. These features typically underpin the variations of African culture and identity everywhere. The existence of African identity is not in doubt (Makgoba, 1997 pp.197-198).

Personality characteristics are believed to be inherent in the African mind. Nyasani (1997) identifies and discusses sociality, patience, tolerance, sympathy and acceptance as the key traits in the personality of the African person. From this particular Afrocentric perspective, there is increasingly an assertion of a distinctive African mind, which the Eurocentric practice of psychology in Africa has repressed or distorted in the past for racist or colonial purposes. This basic African personality type is understood to be based on a deep-seated, spiritual, psychic property shared by and unique to all Africans, namely the African thought processes and cosmological ideas which regard man not as a social means but as an end, an entity in society (Nyasani, 1997).

Africanising Psychology

Javangwe (2013) notes that the challenge of Africanising psychology in Africa cannot succeed unless there are concerted efforts at Zimbabwean and African universities. Indeed, African psychologists are “Black first and psychologists second” (Williams, 2008 p 250). It is reported that a White doctor at a popular private hospital in Harare referred patients to traditional and faith healers to seek help there. Indeed, Sofonnou, Ngaié and Morchid (2012) observed that the crucial challenge for the whole world involves how to un-Europeanise and un-Westernise the globe. The whole world was Europeanised between the 15th century through to the 20th century.

Additionally, psychology departments in Zimbabwe should consider offering Black African Psychology as a course. More so, there should be an annual day dedicated for showcasing and celebrating Black African psychology and the achievements of many Black African psychologists. There should also be collaboration between Black African psychologists and the leadership of the Zimbabwean Government, African Union (AU) and they should also make presentations at annual meetings or similar gathering of the AU leadership about how Africa envisages the scope and direction of the liberation of the Black African mind. AU should also ere to incorporate the Black African psychologists in their structures and proceedings. This will simulate what happens at the United Nations where the International Association of Applied Psychology has gained reputation and has representatives to the UN body, and makes presentations at the United Nations.

Psychology and Proverbs

Kaya (2013) argued that the fact that indigenous knowledge systems are community-based enables graduates to appreciate the role of culture in education and to be sensitive to the developmental challenges of local communities. Julius Nyerere (1966) advocated for two principles to guide tertiary education in post-independence East Africa, notably the relevance and the excellence. The major focus was on the relevance and role of higher education on the national identity and developmental praxis of African countries signposted by social inequalities and poverty. The major concern was that a poor country cannot afford pure academics emphasised by the western philosophy which is starkly divorced from political and local realities.

A number of scholars and international organisations such as the UN, International Labour Organisations (ILO) and the World Bank (WB) appreciates

the importance of indigenous knowledge systems in livelihoods of many people globally (Australian Academic and Research Libraries, 2005). Indigenous Zimbabweans have employed *tsumo* (proverbs) for generations on teaching people and understanding human behaviour. Indeed, the proverbs contain psychology principles or theories that are very invaluable to Zimbabweans.

Africans use *tsumo* (proverbs) to express beliefs, values and knowledge of the community that creates those proverbs (Materike & Mapara, 2009). The proverbs teach both children and adults and are regarded as a body of knowledge and wisdom which explains every situation in life (Hamutyinei & Plangger, 1974). The proverbs involve proclamations such as *vakuru vedu vakati* or *vakuru vedu vaiti* or *vakuru vedu vanoti* (our elders say/our elders used to say) (Mapara, 2009) when introducing a decision –making process or when resolving conflicts or disagreements, or when warning those that would seem to be deviating from cultural norms (Chimhundu, 1980).

It is believed that there are several proverbs as there are life situations requiring clarification or explanation (Chimhundu, 1980; Mapara, 2009). These proverbs are as good as the Piaget, Freud or Skinner's psychological theories since they are based on scientific method of observation, hypothesising, experimentation and drawing of conclusions. The difference, however, is that whatever led to the development of that proverb was not documented, that they were not linked to a specific individual (Battiste, 2005, Chikuhwa, 2007).

The proverb *rega zvipore akabva mukutsva* (A burnt child dreads fire) when juxtaposed with western psychology theories illustrates the Behaviourist classical conditioning theories or learning by association whereby Pavlov experimented with dogs and used continuous pairing of meat and bell sound (association) until the dog could salivate to the sound of the bell only, just like the African child is frightened by the word *pisa* (hot). Again, the proverb *chindiro chinoenda kunobva chimwe* (A plate goes where another one comes from) exemplifies the Behaviourist theory of operant conditioning by Skinner (Skinner, 1953) which simply states that behaviour is a result of reward systems (or punishment). These proverbs are based on scientific evidence identical to what could be accepted by the western scientific world.

Freud and Erikson psychological theories, the psychosexual and psychosocial, stress the influence of early experiences and their effect on future behaviour. In other words, what happened in the past or what happens now, if not properly accommodated or accounted for, may seem not harmful now but may have

serious consequences in future. This also tallies with the concept of critical periods which posit that there are certain stages in human development where environmental influences can derail the rests of human development. This tallies with the proverb which says: *Natsa kwaunobva kwaunoenda husiku* (Do good with people of the area you are coming from because where you are going there is darkness) means one needs to relate well with relatives and friends one has now because one never knows what the future holds. This is also similar to the proverb *Chisi hachiyeri musi wacharimwa* (working in the fields on prohibited days may have no effect on the day the seeds are sown, but may cause serious consequences in future). This also tallies with the proverb, *chembere mhenzi yakatangira paupwere* (idiocy in late adulthood starts in toddlerhood), that personality in adulthood is fixed in early childhood.

The indigenous Karanga people were also cognitivists. The western knowledge on the cognitivist perspective emphasises the power of the intellect or internal states in influencing human behaviour such as in decision-making, problem solving or information processing. Emphasising on the importance of prior learning, they would say *Muzivi wenzira yeparuware ndiye mufambi wayo* (One who knows the path that passes through a rock is one who always uses that path). This is acknowledging that what somebody has done or said is based on what one knows already.

The indigenous Karanga communities were also aware of Bandura's Social Learning theories which emphasise learning by observation through imitation and modelling (Bandura, 1965).

In situations where they wanted to teach elders good behaviour so that they would get respect from the young ones the elders would reclaim *Gudo guru peta muswe kuti vaduku vakutye* (A big baboon should fold its tail in order for the young ones to fear it). This means, for the young children or subordinates to respect (fear) their superiors, the elders or superiors themselves should behave well so that the young observe what the elders do and imitate or model after them.

Psychology and development

Regarding national development, Sinha (1983) reasons that psychology's task in national development in three ways: to analyse the factors conducive to desirable changes (facilitators), to analyse the factors that act as impediments to change (inhibitors), and to determine ways of avoiding or cushioning the psychological costs of rapid development. Psychologists can play an important

part in this process. They can facilitate a process in which local people explicate their local knowledge as a group, thereby re-building their confidence in the value of their own knowledge and cognitive abilities. It is plausible that psychology can play a role in rehabilitation of veterans of numerous military expeditions engaged in by the Zimbabwean army and of particular importance if the liberation struggle. More still, psychology could also play a part in land redistribution. On their part, the government gave most blacks land, but having land and tilling it are different issues which may be explained by psychological variables.

Omari (1989) argues that is apparent that psychology has not contributed to national development programmes in Africa in general, and Zimbabwe in particular. Thus, studying psychology at universities has been insignificant and its contribution in the research has been minimal over the years. One cannot belabour on the vast potential of psychology in various development spheres like family life, education, law, social services, health, private organisation, government and management.

It is imperative that psychology should be an integral part of the generation of development plans in Zimbabwe and that the fledgling discipline of psychology in Zimbabwe should be cherished to grow and reach its dizzy heights. Omari (1989) decried that psychology in eastern and southern Africa has not developed into a problem-centred discipline. More critically, averred Omari (1989) psychology as it is in the region has only evolved to serve the interests, and needs, of the modern (western-oriented) sector only and is gravely divorced from the populace of the indigenous communities. The public does not appreciate the discipline of psychology. Omari further writes that psychology has only been appreciated by the public in Latin America among the developing countries. Moghaddam and Taylor (1986) challenge psychologists in Africa not to fold hands waiting to be consulted for developmental issues rather they should enlist themselves proactively for that cause.

In the same vein, Sinha (1983) urges psychologists in Africa to participate in developmental concerns in Africa and to offer social and psychological factors that enable stability, and continuity, in development and the social systems. Omari quotes Miller (^^) who opined that psychologists should not be like fish for, "fish will be the last creature to discover water." Hence, psychologists should not be the last professionals to discover developmental and urgent concerns requiring their services and also not to realise when it is too late that they need to participate in people development. It is also up to the psychologists

themselves to be critical about their discipline for it to develop. For instance, Salford (1965) had the audacity to criticise psychology as a discipline in America for being; “fragmented, over-specialized, method centred and dull, same mould in research design and reporting style, inflation of jargon, professional baggage substituted for psychological insight and sensitivity” (cited in Sinha, 1983 p.11).

The self-criticism would give hope and invigoration for the development of the discipline. Some people would take self-criticism as heresy and blasphemy. The discipline of psychology needs to be properly organised and regulated to avoid a situation where advice and solutions are given to most social and personal problems without scientific basis. Indeed, the craftsmen, occult and pseudoscientists can seek to associate themselves to the discipline as that can be injurious to the discipline. It is, therefore, critical to conduct research that meets challenges of development and proffer solutions that can put psychology back on the map in Africa.

Conclusion

This paper sought to explain the knowledge creation in psychology. The paper argued that psychology should take its place in the national development discourse in Zimbabwe. This warrants that psychology as a discipline should self-introspect to ensure it becomes both relevant and visible in Zimbabwe without necessarily sacrificing its excellence goal. It is indubitable that psychology has a large role in on the vast potential of psychology in various development spheres like family life, education, law, social services, health, private organisations, government and management. Psychology in Zimbabwe should also look at how Africans think, and behave and devise ways on how it can penetrate those as they address areas psychologically.

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