


Chapter 16

Empowering Pre–Service Teacher Trainees on Navigating Turbulences Affecting Teachers in Zimbabwe: Towards Indigenizing Pre–Service Teacher Training

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ABSTRACT

Since 2000, Zimbabwe faced significant educational challenges due to crises triggered by the Land Reform. There is no immediate relief in sight, which has prompted this qualitative case study to focus on empowering pre-service teachers with skills to manage and navigate the turbulent school environment, ensuring effective instruction. Four schools were sampled in the Marondera District. Data were generated and analyzed thematically. The findings indicated that teacher morale, motivation, and professional conduct are the lowest. Resources for educational provision have dwindled, and teacher salaries are inadequate, leading to a substantial brain drain and dual employment or side hustling among the remaining ones. The study recommends integrating Indigenous strategies, utilizing locally available resources, incorporating the Ubuntu philosophy into the curriculum, reinforcing entrepreneurial training and innovation, and implementing Education 5.0: Teaching, Research, Community Engagement, Innovation, and Industrialisation.

INTRODUCTION

The context within which we approach the indigenization of teacher training should aim at destroying and not creating silos, being transformative, yes, but within a context and not a vacuum, the African *Ubuntu* context with a Zimbabwean aptitude. The key to that is decolonizing the pre-service teacher

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training curriculum, interactive teaching and learning, promoting Indigenous knowledge systems, robust community engagement and innovation, leading to industrialization, all under the auspices of *Ubuntu*. The main thrust is an approach where people are teased to think outside the box and do what they thought was unimaginable in creating homegrown solutions through curriculum change, starting with pre-service teacher training. To Indigenise and Africanise, pre-service teacher training means to value and validate African ways of knowing and existence through promoting the African culture and way of living, as projected through multiple expressions such as singing, dancing, laughing, painting, and sculpturing, which is regarded unique and peculiar to Africa (Obanya, 2005; Moalosi, 2007). The context of teachers in schools is an appropriate setting to tease out critical examples that educators face on their day-to-day experiences of dealing with socio-economic turbulences affecting education in Zimbabwe. Pre-service teacher trainees will benefit a great deal from learning from those in the field so that they themselves can apprehend how they can better navigate the prevailing circumstances when they become integrated into the teaching fraternity. This study will also benefit all pre-service teachers elsewhere and the trainers of educators in universities to better prepare the teachers they train to be better prepared when their time to be teachers come. In isiZulu they say, “*Indlela ibuzwa kwa ba phambili*” (is important to learn about the road travelled from those who have used the road before)

Thus, this paper argues, alongside Dei (2016), that knowledge cannot merely be garnered through observation or the fragmentation of measurement. In the words of the Ghanaian proverb, it can only be the bearer of the bag of salt who can tell us its weight.’ Unfortunately, much of what is observed, measured, taught, and examined through Western lenses and frames is misinterpreted, misfitting, and often to the detriment of the recipients, hence this call to Indigenize pre-service teacher training in Zimbabwe, given the pursuant socio-political and economic turbulence. This comes in the wake of runaway inflation, a record workforce migration running into millions, an unemployment rate above ninety percent, and some ninety-five percent of the working population in the informal sector, alongside a visibly collapsing education system (Chimbunde, 2023; Kgari-Masondo & Chingwanangwana, 2024; Bakasa & Mokomane, 2024). This necessitates rethinking educational provision, with the first port of call being the Indigenisation of pre-service teacher training, granted that teachers are pivotal cogs in this equation.

Research Objectives and Questions

1. To identify the turbulences affecting teachers in discharging their duties ethically.
2. To establish how these turbulences are hurting teaching and learning.
3. To identify long-term sustainable strategies for dealing with the turbulences through Indigenizing pre-service teacher training.

To achieve this, the following research questions were the mainstay:

1. Which turbulences affect the teachers discharging the teaching and learning in Marondera District?
2. How are these turbulences hurting teaching and learning in the schools under study?
3. What long-term strategies should be developed to Indigenize pre-service teacher training to arrest these turbulences and enhance teaching and learning?

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