Implementing Arts and Culture in Secondary Schools: The Case of Matabeleland South In Zimbabwe

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Abstract
This qualitative study focuses on the implementation of the Arts and Culture programme in eight secondary schools in the Matabeleland South region of Zimbabwe. Adopting a multiple case study design the article explores, through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires District Education officers, secondary school heads, Arts and Culture Heads of Department, secondary school teachers, parents and secondary school pupils’ perceptions on how effective the Arts and Culture programme is being implemented in secondary schools. The study, among other things, established that while most schools acknowledge that the Arts and Culture programme should be implemented according to Ministry specifications there is a tendency amongst schools to give attention to Arts and Culture when inter-house, inter-school and district competition dates have been announced. Findings also reveal that not all learners are given the opportunity to participate in at least two performing and two visual arts programmes in a year as stipulated by circular number 28 of 2010. Additionally, the policy on the institutionalisation of Arts and Culture was not matched with the provision of adequate materials, infrastructural facilities and manpower. The study recommends the deployment of qualified Arts and Culture teachers to secondary schools, provision of adequate support by District Education officers as well as close monitoring if Arts and Culture is to be effectively implemented.

Key words: Arts and Culture, implementation, secondary schools

1. Introduction:

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) efforts to mainstream arts education into the general education system worldwide was launched in 1999 by the Director General. To facilitate this development the world Conference on Arts Education held in Lisbon (6-9 March 2006) came out with the aims of Arts Education. One of these aims is to uphold the human right to education and cultural participation. Culture and the arts are seen as essential components of a comprehensive education leading to the full development of learners. It is from the proceedings of this conference where the basic rationale for making Arts Education an important and compulsory part of the educational programme in any country emerges. This is also strengthened by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) article 31 which reads “state parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”

Zimbabwe has recently joined other nations by institutionalising Arts and Culture in the secondary school system. Through circular 28 of 2010 from the Ministry of Education Sports, Arts and Culture, every secondary school was directed to establish a Department of Arts and Culture headed by a Head of Department. Secondary schools were instructed to timetable Arts and Culture. Additionally school heads, district and provincial officers were tasked to supervise the programme. Given the fact that the prime consideration in teachers’ curriculum and pedagogical planning is preparing their students for public examination, and that Arts and Culture is not a core examination subject it is regarded as an ‘extra’. Arts and Culture may actually be construed as value–laden and values are seldom assessed in public examination.

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In the light of the above this study investigates perceptions of secondary school stakeholders (district education officers, school heads, teachers, parents and secondary school learners) in the implementation of Arts and Culture in the Matabeleland South Region.

Problem Statement
Whenever innovations are introduced into the school system there is need for schools and personnel therein to be adequately prepared in advance. One curriculum innovation that has recently been introduced in secondary schools is Arts and Culture. Arts and Culture which comprises programmes such as performing arts, visual arts as well as crafts was introduced by the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture in 2010. All secondary schools were directed to time table the preceding Arts and Culture components. One challenge associated with the use of directives is that schools may not be ready for the innovation. This study investigates perceptions of secondary school stakeholders with respect to the implementation of Arts and Culture in Matabeleland South Region.

Objectives of the study
a) To establish how district education officers, secondary school heads and teachers implement Arts and Culture.
b) To ascertain district education officers, school heads and teachers’ perceptions on the implementation of Arts and Culture
c) To find out parents’ views on the introduction of Arts and Culture in secondary schools.
d) To establish secondary school learners’ views on the implementation of Arts and Culture.

Research Questions
a) How do district education officers, secondary school heads and teachers implement Arts and Culture?
b) What are district education officers, secondary school heads and teachers’ perceptions on the implementation of Arts and Culture?
c) How do parents view the introduction of Arts and Culture in secondary schools?
d) How do secondary school learners perceive the implementation of Arts and Culture?

2. Literature Review
Innovations in education may refer to adjustments to the existing system or outright changes that bring in new ideas, subjects or programmes into the school system. According to Hall and Hord (2001) educational innovations cannot be implemented overnight since they require changes in beliefs, possible use of new materials as well as change in structure. Fullan (2007) corroborates this view when he observes that educational change is not an event but a process. These observations tend to negate the use of directives in curriculum programme implementation. Use of directives, mandates and circulars tends to expect immediate curriculum use yet according to Fullan (2007) it is difficult to mandate what matters. Secondly, the more complex the change the less one can force it. Arts and Culture is a new programme introduced in the secondary school curriculum. It therefore required the creation of new structures, establishment of new objectives, provision of human, material and financial resources. Such a curriculum change is thus very complex. To implement a complex programme of this nature Kennedy (2005) observed that school heads and teachers are key to this process. Teachers should not only be involved but also adequately prepared for new programme implementation. To this end Steyn (2010) proposes staff developing teachers in particular disciplines before ministries of education can introduce those new programmes. Such an approach is likely to enhance ownership of the introduced programme. School heads, on the other end, also require staff development for effective curriculum implementation (Kennedy, Chan and Fok, 2011).

Besides being gatekeepers school heads are also expected to provide curriculum leadership. Within the school organisation, institutional leadership is critical in creating a cultural context that fosters innovation and helps in establishing organisational strategy, structure and systems that facilitate innovation.
implementation. There is a growing acceptance that innovations in an organisation require a special kind of supportive leadership (Roberts, 2004) Different stages of the innovation require different types of leadership. For instance the initiation phase would require a nurturing type of leadership while the implementation phase would require a championing type. Such types of leadership (by both school heads and district education officers) are likely to enhance the quality of new programmes introduced in secondary schools. On the other end parents and learners consume the school menu. Their voices need to be heard if Arts and Culture is to be successfully implemented in secondary schools.

3. Research methodology

This qualitative study adopts a multiple case study research design. According to Yin (2011) a case study is an investigation of a phenomenon in its real context. The phenomenon being investigated in this study is stakeholder perceptions on the implementation of Arts and Culture in secondary schools with particular reference to the Matabeleland South region.

The study adopts purposive sampling and identifies eight schools representing different contexts. For the purpose of this study a government day rural secondary school, two government day urban secondary schools, a government boarding rural secondary school, a council day rural secondary school, a mission/church run boarding secondary school, a church run day secondary school and a government day resettlement secondary school will be selected. From each of these secondary schools one school head, the Arts and Culture head of department, a minimum of two Arts and Culture teachers, four learners(pupils) and two school development council members (representing parents) will be purposively selected. One district education officer will be selected from each of the administrative districts of Matabeleland South province.

The study explores, through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and observations secondary school stakeholders’ (district education officers, school heads, teachers, parents and secondary school learners’) experiences in the implementation of Arts and Culture in secondary schools. Adopting this approach adds to the truth value of the study (Merriam, 2009). In this study ethical considerations namely, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality will be seriously considered. In this respect Babbie (2004:401) observed that anyone involved in research especially in the social sciences “needs to be aware of the general agreements about what is proper and improper in scientific research”

Data Analysis Plan

Audio-taped interviews were transcribed, read and analysed to identify ideas and themes emerging from the qualitative data collected. The analysis was in three steps, namely, organising the data, summarizing the data and interpreting the data. In this study data analysis was both formal and informal. Informal analysis took place during data collection while the formal analysis involved sorting of data into categories in order to create meanings from observations, questionnaire responses, documentary data and interview transcripts. (Denscombe, 2007; Johnson and Christensen 2008)

4. Findings

These findings, on the implementation of Arts and Culture, were collected from twenty secondary school teachers, eight secondary school heads, thirty-two secondary school pupils, eight parents, six district education officers and eight Arts and Culture Heads of Department (HOD).

Data collected from the respondents were coded and categorised into sub-themes. Some of the responses from the interviewed respondents were included verbatim. Three themes emerged from data analysis namely:

(i) Implementation of Arts and Culture programmes.
(ii) Perceptions on the implementation of Arts and Culture programmes.
(iii) Parents’ views on the introduction of Arts and Culture.
Findings and Discussions

Implementation of Arts and Culture

The above theme captures observations by district education officers, heads of schools, Arts and Culture HODs, Arts and Culture programme teachers and pupils on the implementation of Arts and Culture. From the outset it should be pointed out that there is an education officer for Arts and Culture appointed by the Ministry of Education to facilitate the implementation of Arts and Culture in each district. The majority (five) of these education officers indicated that performing arts such as drama, dance, poetry, public speaking and debate are being implemented in most secondary schools in their districts. The district education officers encourage secondary schools to hold inter-house and inter-school Arts and Culture competitions. Some education officers come in as judges during competitions. It was noted with concern, by some district education officers, that currently there is no budget set aside to run Arts and Culture programmes. Schools struggle to put structures like culture huts, buying necessary resource materials (like traditional attire, artefacts, novels) as well as preparing for Arts and Culture competitions from their limited coffers. Aggrawal (2004) points out that for any curriculum programme to be implemented effectively there must be adequate material, financial and human resources.

Some of the education officers opined that they sometimes request chiefs and elderly people in the community to attend Arts and Culture competitions so that they share their experiences on culture with students and teachers. Community members are also invited to participate in Arts and Culture activities during inter-school and inter-house competitions. Most of the district education officers indicated that these community elders normally participate in dance and music as well as preparing traditional dishes. Preparation of traditional dishes is incorporated within the cultural policy of Zimbabwe. Chigwedere (2007:13) under food and settlement section of the policy observes that “It is imperative for us as people to be proud of that which is our own, especially in terms of food and our eating habits. Steps should be taken to improve on these recipes and food preparation habits”. Arts and Culture education officers encourage schools to build culture huts to signify the implementation of Arts and Culture at that particular school. The sentiments from most of the district officers were that schools should do their Arts and Culture activities in performance arenas or centres as well as in culture huts.

The above findings reveal that the Arts and Culture programme as an innovation was institutionalised without putting the necessary resources such as funds and experts in place. It appears that schools have financial challenges when it comes to buying materials for use during Arts and Culture activities as well as sponsoring teachers to attend workshops. This challenge may derail implementation of Arts and Culture activities. Failure by managers to ascertain whether the resources for the change are in place according to Dulziel and Schoonover (1988), is identified as an obstacle to any change effort. It would seem that the policy of institutionalising Arts and Culture in secondary schools was not matched with the provision of adequate instructional materials, infrastructural facilities, manpower and funds as alluded to by Irivwieri (2009). Findings also indicate that there is no specific budget set aside for the implementation of Arts and Culture. Budgets for anything related to Arts Education, if they exist, may be centralised in one ministry or department with little opportunity (or willingness) to share them with another (UNESCO 2006:12).

Secondary school heads have timetabled Arts and Culture so that it can be implemented. In most of the eight schools which were visited Arts and Culture is slotted during third term. Findings revealed that the Arts and Culture programme is implemented once a week in the afternoon for between two to three hours at the majority of the secondary schools. Two schools implement Arts and Culture two times a week in the afternoon and one school does Arts and Culture throughout the year. Four school heads indicated that they sometimes sponsor teachers and pupils to attend workshops and competitions on Arts and Culture.

To facilitate implementation of Arts and Culture most school heads indicated that they appoint a Head of Department who is interested and has studied aspects of culture in his/her area of specialisation. Most of the teachers (thirteen out of twenty) who are in the Arts and Culture committee specialised in Ndebele with a few others in Music, Arts and Design, History and English. The responses from both the heads of school and district education officers indicate that currently schools do not have teachers who are qualified in Arts and
Culture as a subject. Biographical data collected from teachers also reveal that the majority of the nineteen teachers used the knowledge and skills obtained from their areas of specialisation namely Ndebele, English, History, Music, Arts and Design to assist pupils in arts and culture activities. Two teachers majored in Arts and Design as a subject, eleven in English and Ndebele, three in Music, three in Commercials and, one in Mathematics and Geography. One school head indicated that it is difficult to understand Arts and Culture programme and that there is need to have more workshops so that teachers and heads can be familiarized with what to do. This scenario is reminiscent to a situation observed in Ontario, Canada as reported by Andrews (2006:445) where teachers are expected to instruct their pupils in dance, drama, music and visual arts... (Ontario Ministry of Education 1998). Often they must undertake this task without any adequate background information in the arts (Smithrim and Upitis 2001) or sufficient pre-service training (Wilkinson et al.1992).

In the context of this study the findings above imply that Arts and culture activities are taught by teachers with little expertise because of lack of qualified personnel in Arts and Culture as a subject. Writing about the South African context Blerk (2007) noted that “those schools with qualified Music and/or Art and/or Drama teachers were in a more fortunate position ... whereas in less fortunate schools the teaching of Arts and Culture was delegated to an educator with little or no knowledge in the field.” This observation, in the context of this study, implies that secondary schools whose Arts and Culture programme is handled by teachers with specialisation in such subjects like Music, Art and Design, History, English and Ndebele are fortunate. This scenario however implies that teachers only teach activities they know and have interest in, and this may limit pupils’ experience in Arts and Culture. A study on the impact of culture on creativity(KEA European Affairs,2009) cited by Denac and Cagran(2012:1420) singled out teacher training as one of the main areas that has to be improved in order to establish a creative learning environment in schools, underlining why it matters who teaches arts and culture and how well these teachers are trained.

In Matabeleland South the majority of the teachers who participate in Arts and Culture programmes train pupils in drama, music and public speaking. A few of these teachers also teach debate and poems as performing arts. Most teachers indicated that they do these activities in the existing classrooms since they do not have special rooms set aside for these activities. The general teacher consensus was that Arts and Culture programmes are mostly taught through dramatisation, demonstration, lecture, discovery, excursion method as well as the use of resource persons. The majority of these methods suggested by teachers are participatory in nature.

Although the findings above reflect the usage of participatory methods, it should be pointed out that teachers who lack skills and knowledge may not be able to meaningfully utilise such teaching methods. Since most school heads indicated that they have problems with funding Arts and Culture activities, it may also imply that use of excursion as a method is limited and yet such visits provide pupils with a wealth of information, artistic encounters and opportunities to see and get absorbed into artistic processes, and also provide vast potential for integrated teaching practices (UNESCO 2006:12). Technology has become one of the key methods of teaching and yet teachers teaching Arts and Culture activities seem to neglect it. Computer art, for example, has become accepted as an art form, as a legitimate form of art production, and as a method of teaching art(UNESCO 2006:10)

Perceptions on the implementation of Arts and Culture programmes

Most Arts and Culture Education officers in Matabeleland South perceive the building of Arts and Culture huts as one of the core issues to the implementation of Arts and Culture. Consequently all schools which comprise this study were planning to build culture huts in the near future. Almost all the eight secondary schools selected for this study are into performing arts at the expense of visual arts. The view of some education officers was that visual arts are very expensive to run for most of the schools hence most schools prefer to engage in performing arts.
The majority of the secondary school heads perceive Arts and Culture programmes as an area that can be taught by any teacher who has interest in the activities. In the majority of cases, school heads noted that only those performing arts activities which teachers and pupils are able to do are being taught namely public speaking, poetry, debate, drama, music and dance. One school head remarked: “At my school, I appoint those teachers who specialised in subjects like Ndebele, Music, History and English to be in charge of these Arts and Culture programmes”. Other school heads indicated that they offer performing arts activities in areas where their teachers have expertise and can afford to run them basing on time and funding. Additionally, school heads indicated that they normally do these activities during third term in preparation for district arts and culture competitions and the culture day.

From the above observations it is evident that there is a challenge of qualified personnel to teach Arts and Culture. Blerk (2007:4) in her study of teachers’ perception of the Arts and Culture learning area in the senior phase in South Africa” also noted that qualified teachers for these new learning areas did not exist and in the case of Arts and Culture, for instance, schools that are fortunate enough have qualified Music and/or Art and/or Drama teachers but in the majority of cases, the study noted that the teaching of Arts and Culture was delegated to an educator with little or no knowledge in the field.

Justifying why Arts and Culture activities are relegated to the third term one secondary school head had this to say, “Our time table is so congested that we can only squeeze in these arts and culture activities during third term in preparation for competitions.” Another one said, “Arts and Culture activities are just like any other extra mural activities which are done for entertainment and for the purpose of competition.” Most Arts and Culture Heads of Department and teachers noted that Arts and Culture programmes (performing arts in particular) are done without a lot of preparation. To them it’s like the programmes are done to fulfil a requirement from the highest offices. One Head of Department recommended that schools be assisted to teach performing arts by experts from Amakhosi theatre group and others.

The above findings seem to suggest that teachers need to be assisted to improve their limited skills and knowledge of Arts and Culture hence the need to attend workshops facilitated by experts. Art teachers should be encouraged to draw on the skills of other artists, including those from other disciplines, while also developing the skills required to cooperate with artists and with teachers of other subjects in an educational setting(UNESCO 2006:9).In order for teachers to gain skills and knowledge in Arts and Culture, effective partnership is needed. Schools should invite artists, with experience and expertise in movement, words, sound, rhythm and images. Teachers can benefit from new experiences which can enrich their teaching methods (UNESCO2006:12).It would seem that most teachers do not prepare much to teach these arts and culture activities unlike what they do for examinable subjects. One senior teacher had this to say: “Our education system requires that we produce high “O” level results and so we do not see the importance of the Arts and Culture activities. There is no way in which I will seriously prepare for Arts and Culture lessons. I just go to see what the learners can do during times set aside for these activities.” Such an attitude is likely to compromise the standards of work being done during Arts and Culture time. Sharp and Le Metals,2000; Taggart et al.,2004;Bamford,2006 in Denac and Cagran (2012:1420) highlighted the problem of ensuring good –quality teaching in the field of arts and cultural education and noted that in the past not enough attention was paid to studies that monitored how well the arts were taught.

The following sentiments echoed by most HODs and teachers in Arts and Culture committee confirm inadequate attention to Arts and Culture activities in secondary schools in Matabeleland South:

“We start running around organising our pupils to practice if competition dates have been announced and a theme to follow has been availed to us or when our pupils are invited to perform at a particular function. In between we will be extremely busy preparing our pupils for end of year examinations.” “We normally choose intellectually gifted pupils to prepare them for performing arts competitions. At times the same pupils participate in almost all the activities because of their potential. For traditional dance competitions we normally engage local traditional groups to train our pupils.”
Some HODs noted with concern that some pupils and teachers do not feel free to participate in traditional dance activities because of their religious beliefs. In most cases this activity is left for students who volunteer and these are very few, if any.

Lack of expertise contributes to seemingly negative teacher perceptions of Arts and Culture. Most teachers, in this study, suggested that they instruct pupils to work on their own and then perform in the classroom for refinement of skills and ideas. One Arts and Culture teacher had this to say with respect to the foregoing observation: “There is not much we can assist pupils with because we are not specialists in most of these activities like dance, drama and theatre. This is why we ask them to practice on their own and at times ask them to seek for help from whoever they think is knowledgeable in that area.” In addition to this some teachers indicated that they are forced to join the Arts and Culture department although they are not specialists in any of the activities done. A teacher, who claims to have been forced to belong to the Arts and Culture department by the school head had this to say: “I cannot teach pupils drama, dance and theatre because I was not trained in that field. In fact I am just a place holder in that department who assists coordinating the events which happen and accompany pupils when they go out to display at gatherings and competitions.” Arts and Culture cannot be expected to be meaningfully implemented when teachers hold such attitudes and perceptions.

There are some schools in Matabeleland South which consider Art as an academic subject. At such schools Art is allocated time like any other practical subjects. The Arts and Culture programme seems to be better implemented in such schools. At one such school pupils’ work is displayed for all to observe. This school has been designated a heritage site by the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture. While pupils at this school produce excellent pieces of Art worth of display at the national gallery a teacher of Art and Design observed “Some of our best pupils in Art drop it at “A” level in preference for Commercials or Sciences.” The perception is that Art as a subject cannot open their windows to employment in the future and that parents, other pupils and teachers discourage them because they say the industry has nothing to offer for pupils who qualify in Art as a subject. These sentiments were also echoed by some pupils, in other secondary schools, who participate in performing arts saying that the other pupils and teachers who are not involved in Arts and Culture activities look down upon them saying that these activities are done by pupils who are intellectually less gifted. However this perception seemed to contradict what was said by most of the pupils who were interviewed. The majority of the pupils who participate in these activities noted that ever since they became involved in these activities their thinking capacity has improved. “The way I write my compositions is completely different from what I used to do before joining the drama group. I can now express myself better and arrange my ideas in order”. Some of the pupils also made the following sentiments; “These drawings, paintings, prints and murals can earn us a living especially with tourists. People want to decorate their homes and work places so they buy what artists produce.” “We can earn a living through Arts and Culture programmes especially so if we get capital to establish our own studios ” “People need entertainment almost every now and then so Arts and Culture activities such as drama, theatre, dance, music and poetry are in demand”.

Most of the interviewed pupils noted that time set aside for performing arts activities is very limited. “The time doesn’t allow us to develop a lot of skills and yet there is a lot to learn.” Pupils also noted that form four and upper sixth pupils are excluded from these activities because, according to school authorities, they need to concentrate on examinable subjects. This kind of arrangement did not please some of the pupils who felt that they are deprived of pursuing their area of interest which motivates them to learn. One of the pupils who is being inspired by Martin Luther said that he had a dream to achieve.“The inner man urges me to do what I am doing. This inner man must not be blocked”. The majority of the pupils expressed some disappointment that they will be exempted from participating in these activities when they are in form four and upper sixth classes.

Some pupils suggested the invitation of resource person such as Cont Mhlanga, Phathisa Nyathi and Albert Nyathi since their teachers seem not to be skilled in these activities. “Our teachers seem not to know much about activities such as drama, theatre and dance because they keep on asking us to practice on our own and to ask our parents to help us.” “We need to be given time to visit places such as Makhosi to get
lectures on these performing arts activities.” Quite a number of these pupils indicated the need to have theory and background information for each performing art activity they do so that they present the activity in an acceptable/professional manner.

Some pupils also noted with concern that their schools are not supportive enough in purchasing current reading materials which can enrich them with performing arts skills for example novels and magazines. It was quite interesting to note that there are some pupils who see their career path in these performing arts activities especially drama and dance because of the motivation they get from their parents and siblings. Such pupils had to ask how best they can pursue their career in theatre, drama, dance and music so that they become professionals. One of the pupils had this to say, “Is it possible to do studies in activities like theatre, drama, music, dance and public speaking and get a certificate? I want to be a specialist in these activities and even go to the university to do a degree.” Some pupils suggested the need to educate their parents on the importance of Arts and Culture programmes because they discourage them from participating in these activities because they do not see their value in life. Worse still, according to some parents, students are not supposed to do traditional dance because they will invite evil spirits.

The above findings suggest that Arts and Culture is not taken seriously because it is not an examinable subject. It is construed as value-laden and values are seldom assessed in public examinations (Yan and Lam 2009). This might be the reason why most teachers instruct pupils to do performing arts activities on their own and sometimes ask them to seek for assistance from their parents. The fact that some heads, teachers and pupils do not give Arts and Culture programme special attention may imply that as an innovation, Arts and Culture was not fully explained to them. Lack of conscientisation of the new programme may act as a barrier to implementation. According to Fullan (1991’127) a question such as, “Why should I put my efforts into this particular change” may be asked by teachers. Such a question may come into teachers’ minds maybe because they do not view Arts and Culture as a subject that is equally important as any other subject. The fact that performing arts activities are taught for entertainment in most schools render them less important as compared to other subjects. The current Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture, Cde Andrew Langa declared that Arts and Culture was no longer business as usual for the sector and a lot of things have to change particularly the idea that the arts are just for entertainment and leisure.(Baya, 2013)

Parents’ views on the introduction of Arts and Culture in secondary schools

Parents provided contrasting views on the implementation of Arts and Culture in schools. While some parents were happy with the introduction of Arts and Culture programmes others were against the programme’s introduction. Those who were happy expressed that Arts and Culture moulds the behaviour of their children. According to one interviewed parent:

“Society has changed due to westernisation. Our children are no longer exposed to traditional African values of Ubuntu. Our children look down upon us elders. They think that we are old fashioned. In some cases they laugh at us, yet they do not know that they are losing their identity as a result of western values.”

The parents indicated that they were happy to be invited by schools during Arts and Culture festivals to share their way of living in the past through preparing traditional dishes and wearing traditional attire which they use when dancing. Some of these interviewed parents think that the introduction of Arts and Culture will make pupils behave like what was expected of them in the past. There are however some parents who feel that their children should not be taught such activities as traditional dance and preparation of traditional foods because they do not use them in their everyday life. One parent had this to say:

My children are being dragged backwards in schools due to the introduction of Arts and Culture. There is no way my children will live a life of the past. We are a modern family living in town. The town is our home and so we will not be going back to our rural home. Let those children who live in rural areas be taught Arts and Culture. I want my children to be taught Science, Computers and Technology. These subjects will be beneficial to their future lives.

The above sentiments represent feelings and perceptions of those parents who do not support the introduction of Arts and Culture in secondary schools in Matabeleland South province. Taken together the two excerpts above clearly illustrate different world views between parents who value tradition and those
whose mind set is modern and technological- between parents who support the introduction of Arts and Culture and those who are against the introduction of Arts and Culture in Matabeleland South. According to one school head one parent-teacher committee meeting nearly ended in chaos when parents did not agree on funding Arts and Culture activities because of differing perceptions of the programme. It was the tactful intervention of the school head and the school committee chairperson that parents eventually decided to implement the programme. On the ground, however, the school head observed that those parents who voiced concern at introducing Arts and Culture are not paying for such activities. The dilemma in which the school finds itself in is that those who resist paying for Arts and Culture activities are the major funders of many other school projects. This group of parents seems to be saying that pupils should spend time learning skills that they will use in modern life.

5. Conclusion

The article has explored the implementation of Arts and Culture in secondary schools in the Matabeleland South region of Zimbabwe. In line with the recommendations of the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation Zimbabwe has mainstreamed Arts and Culture in the secondary school system. All the secondary schools in this study had a department of Arts and Culture but due to, among other issues, lack of expertise the implementation of Arts and Culture has only been minimal. Generally the programme lacked support from Education officers, school heads, teachers and parents. Teachers focussed more on examinable subjects since Arts and Culture was considered as an extra. Notwithstanding the foregoing observations Zimbabwe can build on the existing structures by training specialist Arts and Culture teachers. This can be done through the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology Development. In the interim teachers who are currently manning Arts and Culture programmes in secondary schools should be capacitated through workshops, seminars and conferences so that they not only acquire knowledge and skills in Arts and Culture but also develop interest in the programme. Additionally, outreach programmes to educate parents and the community on the importance of Arts and Culture should be mounted so as to enhance school and community ownership of Arts and Culture as a programme.

References


