

Decolonizing Students Mind Set to offer Transformative Service to the Nation and the Society at Large: A Case Study of Kwame Nkrumah University, Zambia

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Abstract One of the core principles of Kwame Nkrumah University (KNU) is training for transformation with a primary goal of decolonizing students mind set to offer transformative service to the nation and the society at large. This means decolonizing the thoughts, preferences and values that derive from a colonial way of thinking. A number of scholars have focused on the value of transformation with little regard on how far the curriculum can help decolonizing students' mindset to offer transformative service to the nation and the society at large. This is the knowledge gap this study addressed. The objective of the study was to suggest strategies that can be employed to decolonize students mind set to offer transformative service to the nation and the society at Large. The study employed Case Study design. The study was guided by the transformative theory of leadership. The sample under the study consisted of 8 lecturers, 20 students, 3 Heads of departments, 1 Assistant Dean Postgraduate studies. Others included 1 Assistant Director postgraduate studies and a Registrar for ODL. Convenience sampling was used to select Kwame Nkrumah University. Purposive sampling technique was used to select lecturers. The Post-graduate students were selected using the quota sampling. The researchers used questionnaires with open-ended questions and semi-structured interview guide. Thematic analysis was used to analyse open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. The results indicated that an educator should be a role model to what is expected of a student. The curriculum needs for a paradigm shift to vocationalise our curriculum. The knowledge acquired by students should help the nation and the society at large to be critical thinkers, innovative and productive hence decolonization.

Keywords: *decolonization, mind-set, transformative service, nation, society*

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1. Introduction

The task of decolonizing students' mindset to offer transformative service to the nation and the society at large cannot be ignored if we have to achieve academic excellence. Most students intend to enter employment after completion of their tertiary education. It is either they go into formal or informal employment. Decolonizing students' at large entails that students develop a critical minds and the knowledge received should relate to the acquisition of relevant skills, which enable them to make meaningful contributions to the sustainable development of the nation and the society at large. Decolonizing students mind set to offer transformative service to the nation is the greatest solution to the challenges facing the world. African Continent is in need of leaders with integrity, resourceful and service orientated. However, a number of scholars have focused on decolonisation in relation to colonisation [1].

A number of other scholars have focused on the value of transformation with little regard on decolonizing student mind. For example, [2] focused on perspective transformation. This revealed that although some research relating to decolonial education has been conducted, no effort has been made to investigate the decolonization of the curriculum. Texts related to the focus of the curriculum has not been sufficiently intergraded to enhance decolonizing students' mindset to offer transformative service. Studies reviewed especially locally in Zambia did not address some critical questions related to the current study. However, the missing gap in the curriculum for the courses offered will be filled by promoting decolonial education in relation to indigenous education, life skills, the integration of cultural norms, community service and entrepreneurship and critical thinking in an attempt to decolonize students' mindset to offer transformative service to the nation and the society at Large. It is against this background that the researchers intended to assess the extent at which KNU is trying to

decolonize students' mindset to offer transformative service to the nation and the society at large at Kwame Nkrumah University in Zambia.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which KNU is trying to decolonize students' mindset to offer transformative service to the nation.

2. Theoretical Framework and Reviewed Literature

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The research conducted was guided by Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT). Several theories of transformational leadership were based on the ideas of Burns (1978). The theory suggests that with transformation leadership, the followers feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect towards the leader, and they are motivated to do more than they originally expected to do. According to [3], transformative leadership is distinctly different from transactional and transformational leadership. The transformational leader is reform-minded but not a revolutionary, whereas the transformative leader interrogates and seeks to disrupt that which is taken for granted. This means that education offered by a transformative leaders, helps the students to be transformed in an integral manner. Transformative leadership involves critique and disruption of the status quo. Transformative leaders courageously call attention to and disrupt systemic and structural inequities that oppress marginalized and disenfranchised groups [4].

The researchers related the current study to the theories discussed above. According [5] study which was done earlier at Kwame Nkrumah University showed that many young people are finding themselves unemployment due to lack creativity and innovative skills. In this vein, it is significant to pay attention to how the curriculum of education is structured. Like many missionaries of the time, Moreau stated that schooling affected his own country for the worse [6]. However, modern education is equally important. A modern education system is where students are taught the skills that are required today. These include skills in science and technology, management, and everyday skills. A modern education system uses technology to impart education. Students are given marks based on their performance in these exams and tests. The curriculum is not tailored on practical skills.

2.2. Role of Educator in Decolonizing Students Mind Set to of Students

In promoting decolonizing students mind set to of students to offer transformative education to the nation and the society, the educator is called upon to do several things. According to [7], the educator should help learners to become aware of and be critical of assumptions. The educator should aim at creating a community of learners who are united in a shared experience of trying to make meaning of their life experiences.

The educator should also provide learners with opportunities to effectively participate in discourse.

Through discourse the learners will be able to assess beliefs, feelings and values. It is the responsibility of the educator to encourage equal participation in the discourse so that every student takes responsibility over their own beliefs, feelings and values. Researchers such as Taylor [8] states that decolonizing the mindset of students requires critical thinking. Critical thinking will enable a student to better express his /her thoughts ideas, and beliefs. Critical thinking fosters creativity and out of the box thinking that can be applied to any area of one's life. Additionally, it is important for higher education educators to encourage students to be critical thinkers. The educator should also set objectives that include autonomous thinking, promote discovery learning and establish an environment that builds trust and care and facilitates the development of sensitive relationships among learners.

2.3. Strategies to be Employed to Achieve Decolonizing Students Mind Set

Decolonizing students' mindset of students entails critical service learning requires that students grapple with power even as they negotiate with discourses that frame service as transformative for others, without the reciprocal effect of service learners being transformed [1]. [3] view transformation as an outcome to be a deep and lasting change, equivalent to what some people would term as a developmental shift or a change in worldview. According to them, transformation enables people to move towards habits of the mind and habits that are more inclusive, open, whole, and wise. This view is echoed by [7] who says that a holistic change is how a person both effectively experiences and conceptually frames his or her experience of the world when pursuing learning that is personally developmental, socially controversial or requires personal or social healing. [9] from their study on linking and practice in curriculum implementation stated that lessons should be administered in curriculum where teachers can have an opportunity to bring in new knowledge.

Decolonizing students' mindset may require learning which occur through life experience itself as well as through formal and informal education programs. It is therefore important for every educator to make sure that the formal and informal education programs are geared towards transformative learning. It is therefore imperative to look at the role of the educator as far as transformative education is concerned. However, before that, it is cardinal to focus on some principles of decolonizing education that may help to define the role of the educator in enhancing transformative education.

Any education to be considered as transformative, it should uphold the importance of value systems, paying particular attention to morality and ethics. This means that transformative education should embrace the values, ethics and morality that have stood the test of time worldwide. This is because these values recognize and honor the interconnectedness of all life. In embracing values and morality, transformative education should lead to a more conscientious global citizen who emphasizes on empathy and compassion with an understanding that science, technology, engineering and mathematics without the underlying values of the planet and human

sustainability is devoid of meaning [10]. From the preparation of the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework 2013, it is evident that to some extent, the Ministry of Education has recognised the importance of skills to individuals, the youth and society.

It is revealed that in Zambia many young people are finding themselves unemployed due to lack of work experience [5]. Lack of work experience is also a common complaint by employers when looking to hire new employees [11]. This as a matter of fact refers to the competitiveness of the job market to which graduates are exposed. Further analyzing this, we may understand that lack of job opportunities is the credo of the aforementioned challenges. And if there are no job opportunities, it implies that there will be less or no possibilities of gaining work experience, which is presented as a key requirement for the job industry.

In some countries like Zambia, it is rare to note government supporting graduates to integrate into the larger society. However, this does not absolutely state that the government is effortless towards such an issue. There are some policies that are in place with an objective to financially empower youths and citizens at large. For example, there is the youth empowerment fund and the citizen empowerment fund. The outcry on the access to the aforementioned funds is that of bureaucracy. Some youths and citizens barely manage to access the funds.

The challenges discussed above may be translated into poor social economic welfare of graduates and this implies poverty. This may consequently result into high crime rates and moral decadence among youths, but if the said graduates were to be adequately equipped with different type of skills such as entrepreneurial skills, they would be capable of creating jobs and thereby contributing positively to society.

2.4. Bridging the Gap in Teacher Education Curriculum in Promoting transformative Education

[10] adds that current generations are very knowledgeable when it comes to technology, but it is not always life skills oriented, hence the need to teach students strategic ways changing their mind set to from white color job and dependency syndrome. Orientations towards transformative education among students may be dependent on their adaptive skills and ability to effectively navigate through unanticipated transitions.

Some scholars have proposed a number of models which they think would promote effective decolonization. [12]. proposes that in order change the mindset of students to acquire life skills and develop a critical mind, decolonization should be embedded into the education system, it should be child centered in primary education, subject centered in secondary education, vocational centered in further education and discipline centered at university.

Some learners make an active choice leading to a separate subject approach where business language and terms are added and the aim is narrowed into creating a venture, for example the very common Young Enterprise approach [11]. In the second step the stakes are raised and

the risk for failure increases, allowing learners to develop perseverance and a constructive attitude towards failure. The separate subject approach leans on the narrow definition of entrepreneurship [5]. As learners approach the end of their education it is possible to add the goal of creating a sustainable venture with intention to incorporate after graduation, that is; the sustainable venture creation approach [2]. This adds to the engagement levels of students and also results in some of these ventures actually becoming real- life start-ups creating jobs and economic growth, [13]. The final output of the separate subject approach is the actual creating ventures within or outside established organizations, but also people creating growth and value in all domains of society. According [2] such a unified model would incorporate many of the dimensions deemed to be central to achieving progression in transformative education.

3. Methodology

This study used Case study design which is a qualitative approach. The design was suitable for this study due to its suitability in generating in-depth information from the respondents in their natural environment, which in this case KNU. [14] stated that the purpose of using a case study is to describe and interpret the experiences of participants with the aim of understanding the experiences as perceived by the participants. The target population were Undergraduate and Masters' students, Assistant Dean of Postgraduate studies, Lecturers, Heads of departments, Assistant Dean Postgraduate studies and Assistant Director postgraduate studies. The study used non-probability which is considered as a form of sampling that does not adhere to probability method. Non- probability methods choose samples basing on researcher's subjective and biased choice of a sample he/she considers appropriate to provide the information he/she wants. The no-probability sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling. This technique was used to select the Lecturers and students. The researcher used an in-depth interview guide for the sake of obtaining detailed information from Assistant Dean Postgraduate studies, Heads of departments, Assistant Director postgraduate studies, Registrar ODL. Each respondent group had an independent interview guide.

The population was made up of students and lecturers. The sample under the study consisted of 8 lecturers, 20 undergraduate students 10 Post-graduate students who have substantial experiences at the University and among these students quota sampling was used while for Lecturers and Administrators purposive sampling were used respectively. The researchers prepared to administer open-ended questionnaires to the undergraduate students and the postgraduate students. The use of in-depth interview guides were employed on Lecturers and Administrators. Some unstructured interviews were also conducted on some lecturers and some administrators. These interviews involved closed ended and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants.

4. Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

The presentation and discussion of the findings was based the themes that evolved from the interviews and incorporated into the questionnaires.

4.1. Role Played by Educators in Decolonizing the Mind Set of Students

About 5% of lecturers indicated that the role of educators is to model research for knowledge, provoke critical knowledge application. The findings is in consisted with the observation by [15]. that new ideas must be based in part on old ones, and hence learning to teach is a gradual process rather than a sudden initiation. Additionally, knowledge must make sense in terms of a person's whole way of life. One cannot separate the professional from personal, the academic from the every day.

Further, the students were asked on the role played by their educators in decolonizing their mind set to prepare them to offer transformative education to the nation and the society at large. The responses obtained were similar. Decolonizing education is relevant at all education levels. Ultimately, this opening up looks to transform the "What" and the "How" of teaching so that students are better equipped to navigate a diverse world.

In view of this, one the assistant dean postgraduate studies,

The road to decolonizing students mind set to offer transformative service to the nation and the society at large entails the interaction of the community through community service, nation and the society. The community is represented by the religious bodies, the government, youth organizations and other social groups.

The family refers to the first experience as far as any form of decolonizing student mind set to offer transformative education to the nation and the society is concerned. The interdependence of the family system and the community nurtures relationships, informed choices and the wellbeing of each individual. This in turn brings fairness, respect, dignity, justice, sense of belonging, fullness of life and hope, hence transformed individuals who eventually bring about a morally transformed society. This is in line with [12] who proposed four steps leading to the formation of an integrated progression model. The researchers have focused the interest on the first step, where learners get to take action by addressing societal challenges and everyday problems based on their own interest and ideas, integrated into the core subjects of school rather than treating other subjects as a separate. Here the students can be turned into teachers, telling their peer students about what they learned through the process. Hence, decolonial education and transformation.

4.2. Determine Decolonial Curriculum Content

The study revealed that Critical thinking in courses like Entrepreneurship should be an independent course where

students can create their own Jobs. One of the respondents (student) cited that,

We don't have courses in creative writing, No independent course on Cultural heritage. Teacher education is a key area for consideration in the development of any decolonized curriculum.

When it comes to decolonizing the school curriculum teachers can serve as important agents for change. This is in line with [5] who explain the role that teacher training and development can play in decolonization efforts.

A student complained that,

"It is quite difficult for some of us who take information courses such as Religious Studies (RE), Civic education, English and other information courses to be deployed in the Ministry of Education. Our colleagues in Business studies, Sciences and Mathematics get employment easily in the Ministry of Education at all levels check the deployment of 2022." In another vain a student stated that deployment depends on availability of Payroll Management and Establishment Control (PEMIC) vacancies not necessarily on subjects.

While and 9% mentioned that they are lacking qualified personnel to mentor them in entrepreneurship. In addition, 90% of the respondents highlighted lack of material support, 69% mentioned unavailability of financial support, 27% talked of lack of industrial attachment, and 58% respondents said students lacked motivation and hence poor entrepreneurial attitude. Staff responded expressing a number of challenges on mentorship in entrepreneurship. From the total of 20 staff who responded; all stated that the university has challenge financially, 84% responded that there is lack of qualified mentors, 68% expressed the poor entrepreneurial attitude, 63% acted in response to lack of practical involvement, while 53% reaffirms to no facilities and material resources in the university.

All the students pointed out that decolonizing the student mind set is determined by the structure of the curriculum in application at the university. Lectures respondents expressed a number of challenges; indicated that an educator should be a role model to what is expected of a student. About 20% stated that, the curriculum needs to be reviewed as it does not speak to vocationalisation of the education system, there's need for a paradigm shift to vocationalise curriculum in the courses offered at KNU. However, the findings, showed that the vision Kwame Nkrumah University is to be an instrument of liberation and transformation of people in their social, cultural, political, economic and religious dimensions. The knowledge received by the students should help the society to be transformed shifts that impact on social-political-education life of post-colonial Africa existential beings. Findings indicate that Africans Scholars, political pundits and researchers tend to rely on the mentally embedded notion of caged colonial mentality CCM in advocating for decolonial curriculum reform, with little regard for the multifaceted seismic This is in line with [8]. who states that decolonizing the mind set of students requires critical thinking. Critical thinking will enable a student to better express his /her thoughts ideas, and beliefs.

In view of the Assistant Dean Postgraduate studies stated that,

decolonizing the mind the curriculum of education is not about deleting knowledge or histories that have been developed in the West or colonial nations; rather it is to situate the histories and knowledge that do not originate from the West in the context of imperialism, colonialism and power and to consider why these process of colonization.

This is in line with a scholar who stated that cultural world views that have either ignored or been antagonistic to knowledge systems that sit outside those of the colonisers have missed the point of decolonizing the mind set of people in order to transform the system of education [7].

4.3. Suggest Strategies to Decolonize Students Mind Set

Implicitly or explicitly, teachers/lecturers are cast as key actors in any implementation of any policy, curriculum change. Below is what one the administrator raised during the interviews;

Teachers /Lectures are agents of change, and ensure they are well equipped to implement the process of decolonization in their class/lecture rooms, Lectures are uniquely placed to understand their students concerning the current trend of decolonizing their mind set to offer transformative education to the nation and the society at large. Lecturers need to act as positive role models for a diverse student body. This because teachers are a major component of this changing making decolonization requires awareness of issues around historical, cultural, moral values, indigenous education and power relations. Within this context, it is important to understand teachers' own perceptions of the decolonisation process, in order to overcome potential obstacles to implementing a decolonised curriculum. This will help to ensure diverse content is central to the enacted curriculum, rather than remaining at the margins.

Additionally, Decolonisation is a process which involves a long-term commitment of effort and reflection. Perspectives that have developed in a society with a well-established colonial legacy are not easy to displace. In line with one of the respondent,

As part of this process of deep reflection there should be ongoing opportunities to research how teacher training is continually engaging with decolonisation. This could involve the observation of training programmes, conversations with teachers about decolonised learning materials, and qualitative evaluations of teachers' shifting perspectives.

All the students suggested that entrepreneurship should be treated as a compulsory course for all categories of studies at the University in order to change the mind set of student to offer transformative education to the nation and the society at large. They further suggested the curriculum for KNU should consider research seminars for undergraduate students to improve professional skills in academic research. Two students had difficulties in understanding the concept of decolonization. Their views were more on transformative education than decolonizing education. The colonial past was not addressed. After further explanation, all the students suggested to introduce

decolonization of education as a course or component in the syllabus. The idea that all people, wherever they live and however poor they might be, should have the opportunity to develop their capacities to improve their own lives and create better societies was encouraging to the students.

Out of 8 lectures 6 stated that the school curriculum should incorporate and integrate Moral education, Critical thinking (logic), and Cultural heritage and life skills in education. Students should be taught how to act and think as they relate to the people and the environment around them so as to function successfully in society. Furthermore, two lecturers pointed out that, Educators on the other hand should be role models and act as back up to expected behavior. Changing the mind set of students for transforming the Nation and the society at large requires changing the mind set for both Lecturers and students [16]. Additionally, training for transformation is a joint responsibility and all stakeholders should endeavor to support it. With rapid globalization, educators need to come up with new policies in the curriculum that will cater for cultural heritage in education.

5. Conclusion

The component of decolonization to be inclusively added to the curriculum. Lecturers should be formed as qualified mentors and allowed to accumulate substantial knowledge in the context of Decolonization. Among other ways of bridging the gap teacher training for the promotion of decolonization may seeks to proudly urge teachers/Lecturers to use their culture, language and knowledge in constructing Afrocentric curricula. The educators' role is to create an environment that will challenge and nurture integral development of students in a classroom set up. It is up to the university community to creatively come up with a program that can contribute in decolonizing the mind set of students to offer transformative education to the nation and the society at large.

6. Recommendation

In order to decolonize student mind set to offer transformative service to the nation and the society at large is the question of curriculum review and the content related to decolonization will be cardinal.

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