

The Quality of Primary School Teacher Training in HIV/AIDS Pedagogy in Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Teacher training is important for both pre-service and in-service teachers to allow them to increase their competence and confidence in teaching about HIV/AIDS in schools. The link between instruction and culture in HIV/AIDS teaching and learning within African contexts is subject to debate. Some argue that African culture is adaptable to Western pedagogic styles, while others maintain that the two are dichotomised. For this study, a qualitative research approach was used to explore the quality of training received by primary school teachers in preparing them to teach about HIV/AIDS using participatory pedagogy. Purposive sampling was used to identify 15 participants from 10 schools. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews followed by non-participant observation were used to collect data from five teachers. Focus group discussions with 10 teachers were conducted and document analysis was also done. The study reveals that teachers have knowledge about participatory teaching techniques. However, this is not fully reflected in the documents and practical lesson delivery. The nature of primary school teacher training in HIV/AIDS pedagogy is weak and limited. There is a lack of teacher training to handle sensitive cultural issues in HIV/AIDS teaching and learning. The study concludes that primary school teachers' preparation for HIV/AIDS teaching and learning is inadequate. It is recommended that both pre-service and in-service teachers should undergo a structured HIV/AIDS training programme to increase their competence and confidence in teaching this critical aspect.

Keywords: teacher training; participatory pedagogy; culture; HIV/AIDS

Introduction

Global statistics on HIV/AIDS show that the number of people infected with the virus continues to increase exponentially, especially in Africa, where the pandemic has ravaged communities due to some cultural barriers to effective intervention. The search for an effective response mechanism saw countries activating their education systems to combat the menace. A key determinant of the success of HIV/AIDS education was teacher preparedness to shift from the didactic and moralistic teacher-centred methodologies to interactive, student-centred and participatory strategies. Tok (2016) shows that participatory methods are an effective teaching strategy that allows students to actively use their experience in knowledge production, as opposed to the didactic approaches, which treat the student as a passive recipient of knowledge. Teacher preparedness for such a transition has generated debate, especially in Africa where the dual role of the teacher in the African cultural context comes under the spotlight. Teacher preparedness is an outcome of adequate training. The current study sought to establish the quality of teacher training to handle sensitive HIV/AIDS issues in the Zimbabwean cultural context.

Background to the Study

Teacher training is considered a prerequisite for effective HIV/AIDS teaching in primary schools the world over. Despite the availability of trained teachers when the HIV/AIDS curriculum was introduced, the adoption of participatory pedagogies remains controversial in most countries. The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) emphasises that sexuality education should be taught by well-trained teachers (Georgiou et al. 2015). This will ensure that key messages about sexuality education are not distorted (Breuner and Mattson 2016). Despite this, only 35.5% of the districts in the United States (US) have a policy that requires continuous professional development for teachers. The methods used were found to be ineffective and unscientific because they incited feelings of fear and guilt among learners (Moirra 2015). Pound, Langford and Campbell (2016) disclosed that in the United Kingdom (UK) some teachers were not adequately prepared to deliver sex and relationships education (SRE). Similarly, Georgiou et al. (2015) report inadequate training of teachers in Cyprus.

Leung et al. (2019) maintain that in some Asian and Latin American countries traditional teaching methods were used for instruction, with very little reference to experiential learning methods. For example, about 66% of teachers in Taiwan and 51% of teachers in Guatemala received training from the government, but the training was short term, scattered and lacked clear objectives, and hence was considered inadequate (Leung et al. 2019; Monzón et al. 2017). Haruna et al. (2018) report of limited abilities to use participatory pedagogies in most African countries because of taboos that censure open discussion of sex-related matters. Wood, Rogow and Stines (2015) noted that

teachers in Nigeria were generally not used to participatory pedagogies, while Nyarondia, Ongong'a and Omollo (2014) found that in Kenya, the dominant teaching method was the lecture method. In South Africa, teachers were found to adopt a moralistic and didactic approach to teaching (Francis 2013). Although teachers' knowledge on HIV/AIDS was found to be high (Mogoane 2012; Francis, 2013), it did not translate into effective teaching and learning of HIV/AIDS using participatory styles. This vindicates Baxen and Breidlid's (2009) argument that the possession of knowledge does not guarantee teachers' ability to teach the subject. Teachers believed that there was a conflict between what was taught and local cultural values (Ahmed et al. 2009; Helleve et al. 2009). The teachers, therefore, found it difficult to convey the right message using the appropriate language (Beyers 2010).

Zimbabwe activated its education system to deal with the pandemic, but experienced similar cultural challenges in the teaching and learning of the subject. The integration of HIV/AIDS education into the curriculum was expected to yield rewards based on the assumption that teachers' basic education and professional training placed them at an advantage to implement HIV/AIDS teaching. The teaching and learning of HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe commenced in 1993, using didactic approaches. These approaches were abandoned in favour of participatory pedagogies. Participatory teaching approaches were officially launched by the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture in 1994. The training of pre-service and in-service teachers complemented this. However, a series of evaluation studies carried out to date give conflicting results on the effectiveness of the training. The Ministry of Education, Sport, and Culture (n.d.) and the Nziramasanga Commission of 1999 (Nziramasanga 1999) bemoaned the limited knowledge on participatory strategies among teachers. Zimbabwean teachers preferred didactic teaching methods to participatory methods because they feared discussing sexuality issues with young people.

Chinyanganya and Muguti (2013) found that teachers were not comfortable discussing sex in HIV/AIDS lessons, while pupils felt shy and embarrassed and therefore limited in-class communication and participation. Chamba (2011) noted a high disparity in HIV/AIDS knowledge between teachers and pupils; yet teachers are expected to transmit this knowledge to the pupils. Chinyanganya and Muguti (2013) argue that in a bid to uphold societal norms, teachers resort to other linguistic strategies to articulate certain topics. However, this may limit communication between the teacher and the pupils. Magudu (2012) also confirmed this dilemma where teachers were torn between fulfilling their professional role of teaching HIV/AIDS education and maintaining their societal dignity in front of the pupils.

Despite teachers' acknowledgement of the effectiveness of participatory methods, most of them preferred the lecture, question and answer methods. No explanation was given for trained teachers' preference for teacher-centred approaches. The overall conclusion

from the studies is that the use of participatory pedagogy had limited success due to the limited training of teachers. This, however, contradicts government policy to train all pre-service teachers in Life Skills from 1994 (Government of Zimbabwe 1999). The success of HIV/AIDS teaching and learning in primary schools hinges on the availability of adequately trained teachers with sufficient pedagogical skills and subject content knowledge. From a UNESCO perspective, a trained teacher has received the minimum training required to teach at the relevant level in a given country (UNESCO n.d.; UNFPA 2018). A trained teacher in HIV/AIDS education may be viewed as one who has undergone sufficient training in theories and methodologies of education to enable him/her to perform educational tasks with pupils of diverse backgrounds in different contexts. In Zimbabwe, a trained teacher has acquired the necessary theoretical foundations in sociology, psychology and philosophies of education. In addition, the teacher must have mastered the content of the subject to be taught. In this case, the teacher must have command of the subject content of Health and Life Skills. Teacher training should combine methodological knowledge with subject knowledge to prevail over some of the cultural influences. An HIV/AIDS educator should also have an appreciation and awareness of sexuality issues in different cultural contexts. This entails the acquisition of important information about sex, reflecting critically on issues of sexuality, the ability to talk about sex issues comfortably, and good moral behaviour consistent with societal expectations (Mungwini 2013).

The integration of HIV/AIDS into the curriculum created a demand for teachers with the requisite skills to teach the subject, hence two types of training were adopted in 1994, namely, in-service and pre-service training. In-service training was designed for practising teachers to sharpen their pedagogical skills by learning how to better identify and address learning problems, in this case, related to HIV/AIDS (Foster 2009). In-service training of teachers commenced in 1994 and by 2004, 6000 schools were teaching the prescribed curriculum and all national, regional and district education officers had been trained (Singh and Kumar 2011). A cascading model was adopted that started at the national level and filtered down to the province, district, cluster, and eventually the school level (Singh and Kumar 2011). Chamba (2011) examined the training of school heads in different provinces but noted that the training was inadequate and fell short of addressing the cultural challenges faced by teachers when using participatory pedagogies in HIV/AIDS teaching and learning. Chamba (2011) observed that the training was weak in terms of the methods used, with 59.5% of the teachers reporting that practical demonstrations were used; 67.8% said they were taught to respond to the sensitive question and 73% said the lecture method was used to train them. It can thus be argued that teachers in Zimbabwe received training in HIV/AIDS teaching, which should have resulted in meaningful changes in the pedagogical styles employed by teachers.

Pre-service training targeted trainee teachers. It introduced them to pedagogical practices and educational foundation theories as well as practical teaching (Foster 2009). The number of trained teachers in Manicaland rose since 1994, and to date, all teachers in the province are qualified (Manicaland Regional Director 2013). Although there has been a marked decline in HIV/AIDS cases in the province, from 21% in 1999 to about 10.3% in 2014, in comparative terms, this figure is high when compared to other African states, especially in North of Africa; for example, Cameroon reported 4.6%, Nigeria 3.7%, and Morocco 0.2% (UNAIDS 2012). At the national level in Zimbabwe, Manicaland Province occupies the third position in infection rates. The decline in HIV/AIDS infection rates was a positive sign in the fight against the disease.

Research on the performance of trained teachers points to a big training gap in the current crop of practising teachers (Magudu 2012; Mugweni, Phatudi, and Hartell 2014). Very limited evaluations of the preparation of HIV/AIDS teachers have been carried out in Manicaland. However, judging from the performance of primary school teachers, there is a need to establish the quality and adequacy of training received by primary school teachers to overcome culturally related barriers to HIV/AIDS teaching. Against this backdrop, the present study sought to determine the quality of training for teachers on the use of participatory pedagogy in the teaching of HIV/AIDS at the primary school level. The sub-objectives of the study were to:

1. establish teachers' knowledge of participatory pedagogy in the teaching and learning of HIV/AIDS at the primary school level;
2. examine the nature of primary school teacher training in HIV/AIDS pedagogy;
3. determine teacher competence to handle the cultural issues in HIV/AIDS teaching and learning.

Research Methodology

For this study, a qualitative research approach was used to explore the quality of training received by primary school teachers in preparing them to teach HIV/AIDS using participatory pedagogy. Purposive sampling was used to identify 15 participants from 10 schools. The major criteria for inclusion into the sample included location, a high level of professionalism as observed by the District Education Officers, and the teacher should have been trained after 1994. Selected teachers were expected to command respect among colleagues, pupils and the community. Sampling is the selection of specific units, members or people to be included in a study (Yin 2011). Sampling was necessary because the researchers could not study the whole province due to financial and logistical challenges. The researchers used purposive sampling techniques whereby they used personal judgement and/or prior knowledge to include people who were knowledgeable about the issues being investigated (Monette et al. 2011). Headteachers

and district education officers assisted the researchers to pick information-rich participants who could answer the research questions and thus help achieve the research objectives (Wicks 2010). In line with the principles of qualitative research and the case study design, the researcher worked with a small sample of 10 schools that were spread across the province of Manicaland to select 15 participants. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews followed by non-participant observation were conducted with five teachers. Focus group discussions with 10 teachers were conducted and document analysis was also done. This triangulation of data sources improved the trustworthiness of the collected data. In this study, the aim was to understand how teachers were trained to use participatory pedagogy in the teaching and learning of HIV/AIDS. This involved real-life interactions with teachers in the schools. The researchers wanted an in-depth understanding of the teachers' experiences in the field. A thick description of activities, which the researchers were searching for, was made possible through a case study approach. The researchers probed teachers about their experiences during training and how this translated when teaching HIV/AIDS using participatory pedagogy in a rural setup.

All relevant data generated were thematically analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of data analysis. This process followed six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) for categorising research data according to themes. These phases are familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes. After using this detailed and structured process before analysis to form categories, a more streamlined data analysis process gave rise to four focused themes that answered the main research question and gave rise to the findings section. In the final analysis, the main research question and sub-questions guided the analysis and generated three themes, as discussed under the findings section.

Findings of the Study

The researchers sought to establish the quality of training received by teachers in using participatory pedagogies in the teaching and learning of the subject. To achieve this, the researchers established the knowledge and competencies acquired by teachers during pre-service and in-service training. Three themes emerged from the data, namely, teachers' theoretical knowledge of participatory pedagogies, the nature of the training, and competence to handle sensitive cultural aspects.

Teachers' Knowledge of Participatory Teaching Techniques

This sub-theme had three categories, namely, knowledge of participatory techniques, the weak reflection of the knowledge in documents, and limited reference to cultural issues in the schemes of work. Regarding *knowledge of participatory techniques*, most teachers were knowledgeable about participatory teaching techniques, and they identified some of the most common techniques used in the teaching of the subject.

However, in some cases, teachers revealed limited knowledge, as most of them gave definitions that the researchers thought were inferred from the word “participatory.” The most common definitions given by teachers were:

I understand it as having children being involved in the running of the business of a lesson, they are much involved hands-on. (Mr Muya of Gomba School)

I think it is when we make the child do what he or she is expected to do, to make the child take part in what we are doing, incorporate them, to let them give their views. (Mrs Mashwete of Mbara School)

While the definitions were generally correct in terms of the level of participation by pupils, they fell short of showing the role of the teacher as a learner since participatory pedagogy is a collective and reciprocal activity (Tok 2016). The participants were, however, able to identify the most common types of participatory methodologies, as presented in Figure 1.

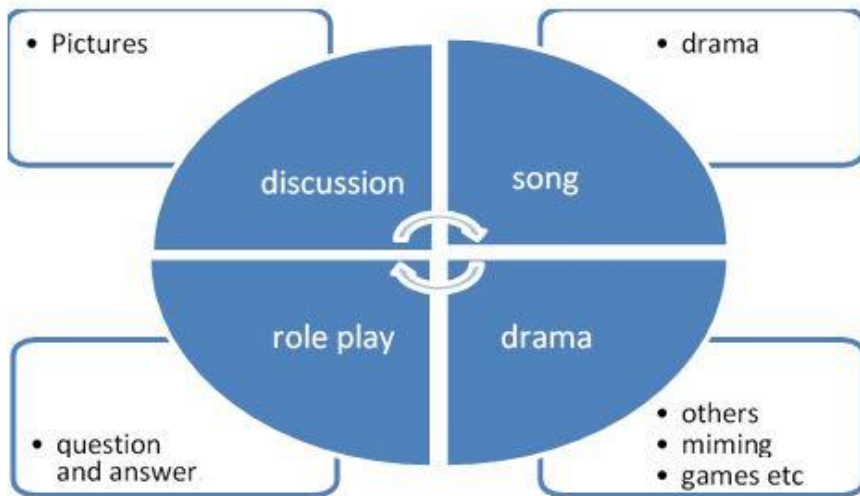


Figure 1: Common types of participatory approaches used by teachers

The researchers confirmed these methods with the school syllabi where they were clearly outlined, and a perusal of the schemes of work confirmed that teachers were aware of some of these methods.

Relating to the *weak reflection of the knowledge in documents*, the study found that although teachers identified the appropriate techniques, this was not fully reflected in the documents and practical lesson delivery. The methodology section of the schemes of work was ritualistically done with very little or no reflection on the teaching. Table

2 below shows extracts from the methods and the evaluation section of the schemes of work from two schools.

Table 2: Common scheming and evaluation patterns

School	Methods and activities	Evaluation
Nyadzi	—Children tell each other their likes	—Pupils did well on likes and dislikes
	—Discussion on their likes — Group work and feedback	—The methods used helped
Muzo	—Explaining —Describing —Identifying	—The aim of the week was achieved

A common thread in the schemes of work was the congested nature of the methods and activities section where several methods were lumped together. The last example was vague in the sense that it did not specify who did the action. The evaluation was also very weak with no reference to key indicators of pupils' proficiency.

With regard to *limited reference to cultural issues in documents*, the study found that reference to culturally related challenges was conspicuously absent in the schemes of work, yet it dominated the interviews and focus group discussions. During interviews and focus group discussions, teachers referred to how language influenced their teaching, but there was no reference in the schemes of work reflecting on the challenge. An analysis of the evaluation of schemes of work confirmed that teachers were generally not using the planned techniques. There was little or no correspondence between what the teachers said were culturally induced problems during focus group discussions and interviews and what was revealed through the evaluations in the schemes of work. There was no reference to the challenges of selecting the appropriate language or differences in meaning. There was, therefore, a contradiction in that, while teachers noted discussion as a method, they argued that it was difficult to discuss effectively with young children.

This anomaly led the researcher to doubt the authenticity of the evaluation in their schemes of work. Despite the overwhelming reference to the effect of culture on teaching and learning during interviews and focus group discussions, the evaluation section of the schemes of work was silent about this. The comments lacked critical reflection, as revealed in Table 3 below.

Table: 3 Teachers' evaluation comments in schemes of work

Aim was achieved The teacher's methods were quite helpful. The teacher's methods helped pupils a lot.

The schemes of work did not reveal what transpired in class during the teaching and learning of HIV/AIDS education and rarely mentioned cultural issues. The researchers sought to find out from teachers the nature of the discussion between the teacher and pupils. As mentioned before, there were inconsistencies in that while teachers noted discussion as a method in their schemes, they argued it was difficult to discuss effectively with young children.

Below is an excerpt from the interview with Mr Shinda of Mount School:

Researcher: Do you think there is a fruitful discussion between you and your pupils?

Mr Shinda: I cannot actually say it is fruitful, that is when that cultural aspect comes into play, because we have grown up in a culture whereby children are not supposed to talk much so the discussion ends up being one-sided.

The above conversation demonstrates the challenges of using the participatory method as experienced by teachers. The excerpt confirmed that it is not adequate to know the methods and there is a need for willingness and confidence (Weiler and Martin-Weiler 2012). Clandini and Connelly (1992 cited by Weiler and Martin-Weiler 2012) argue that teachers were traditionally viewed as conduits that transmit the curriculum to passive learners. Rebecca, a female teacher from Nyadzi School, further elaborated on this when she defended her use of teacher-centred methods by saying:

because I am the source of information, children are just tabula rasa; they don't have any information because there are no textbooks. They have little knowledge; what they just know is that copulation is that number one area.

What emerged from the interviews suggested that most teachers' views on the use of participatory methods represented the official position on the use of the methods. This position was, however, not corroborated by practical lesson observations. The few who said they did not use the methods were bold enough to challenge the status quo and the official stance on the methodology. Overall, the use of the method on the ground was low, which could be a pointer to limited teacher training.

The findings also reveal a disparity between documentary evidence and practice. The study established disparities between evidence in the scheme of work and the actual lesson delivery. The most commonly cited techniques were discussion and role play. However, a perusal of the school syllabus revealed that teachers omitted several other participatory methods. The excluded methods include dance, simulation, games, group projects, demonstration, puppets, and animation, among others. The exclusion of other techniques by teachers could be construed as evidence of limited knowledge and therefore training in the various participatory techniques as outlined in the syllabus. Figure 2 below shows all participatory methods as outlined by the syllabus and those mentioned by teachers. The centre represents those commonly mentioned by teachers. Those further out of the boundary represent those least mentioned and probably unknown to teachers, but which are included in the syllabus. In addition, the lessons observed did not reveal teachers' awareness of participatory pedagogies.

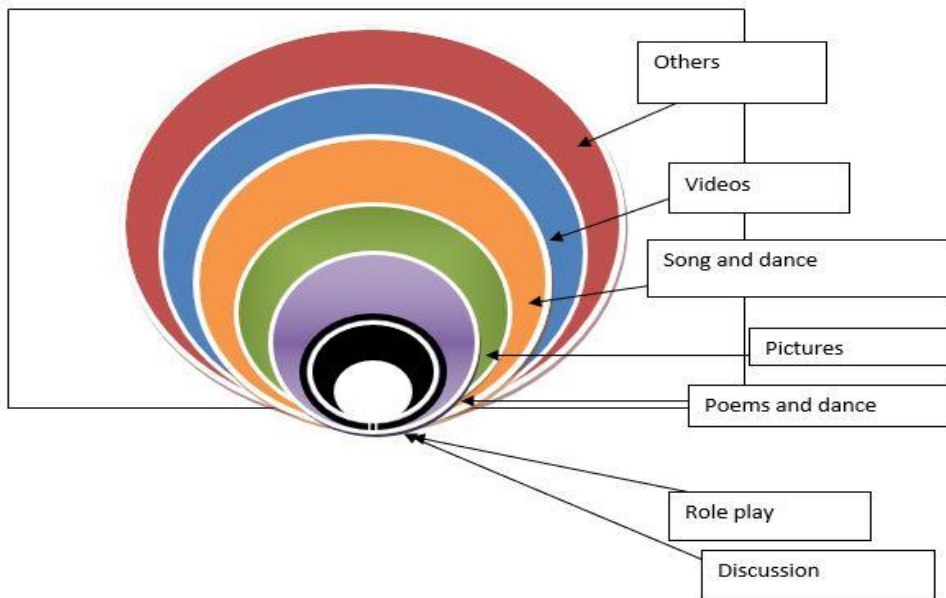


Figure 2: Participatory methods in the syllabus and those commonly used by teachers

Demonstration lessons observed showed that pupils and teachers had very little experience in the methods presented in Figure 2. This was confirmed by the reluctance of some teachers to conduct lessons using participatory methods. Most of them confessed that they rarely used them during their day-to-day teaching and learning. Thus, it can be concluded that based on the documentation made available to the researcher, teachers' knowledge of participatory pedagogies was low and thus point to low quality of training.

The Nature of Primary School Teacher Training in HIV/AIDS Pedagogy

The researchers sought to establish the nature of the training received by teachers. Two sub-themes emerged from data, namely, weak, general training and limited in-service training by government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). With regard to weak general training in HIV/AIDS at the college level, there was a general paucity of teacher competencies in handling the subject, with most teachers disclosing that they received general training in participatory teaching techniques, as illustrated in Figure 3 below.

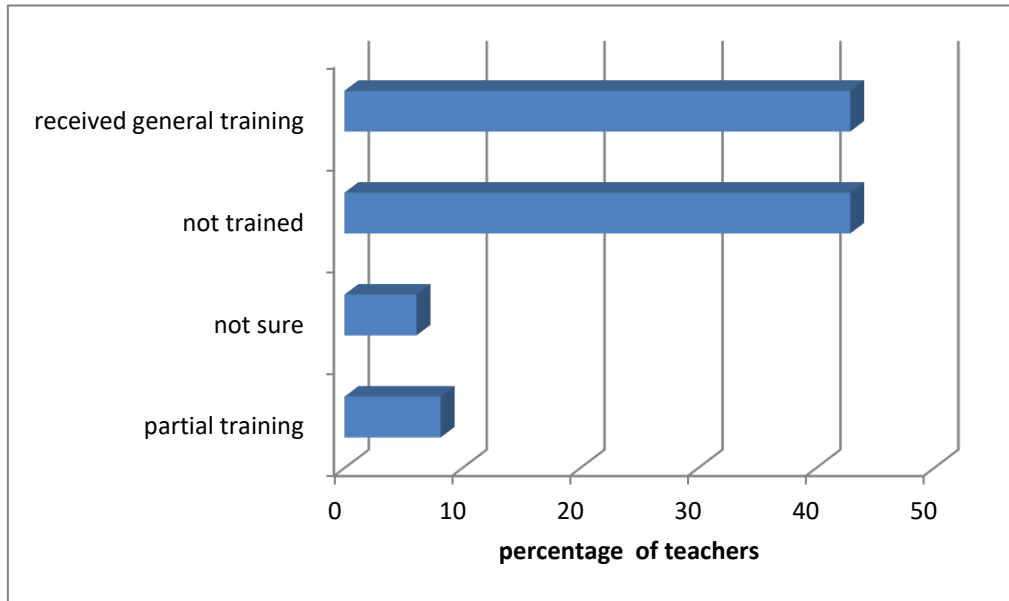


Figure 3: Teacher training in HIV/AIDS teaching and learning

General training in Table 3 refers to training that is not specifically for HIV/AIDS teaching and learning. Participants were never inducted into the teaching of the subject per se. The majority agreed that the training in the teaching of the subject was never a priority at most teachers' training colleges. One participant noted that:

Ummm, I think we were given basic skills in HIV/AIDS of which we just know how it spreads, how we can prevent it, eehh, how we can treat it, it is only what we know.

Most participants noted that the issue of participatory teaching was covered at college in very general terms and the training of teachers to handle culturally sensitive information was weak and incidental. According to the participants, this was just mentioned in passing, with very little or no details on the expediency of the techniques. Mr Nyeke of Ndeha School revealed this when he said:

At college, we were just guided that when you are teaching you have to use this [participatory method]. We were not taught but were taught [reminded] to be careful in terms of handling cultural issues.

This contradicts a major principle of teacher training; as Desalegn, Tadele, and Cherinet (2008) observe, a teacher training curriculum should include the values, beliefs and practices the curriculum is designed to promote.

During training, most of the teachers never practised the teaching of the subject in peer and micro teaching sessions. The training was general and not specifically for HIV/AIDS teaching. Ms Uya of Gomba School highlighted that:

On that area, we were taught in RME [Religious and Moral Education] where we were trained the multi-faith approach whenever we teach RME we use multi-faith approach because children are of different denominations. ... [D]on't take any cultural denominations as major or minor.

This observation, however, contradicts reviewed literature which contends that the training of teachers in HIV/AIDS pedagogy commenced in 1994 (Government of Zimbabwe 1999).

Another participant, Mr Mbanje of Tantan School, added that:

I say not necessarily because ... I was doing social studies, so in social studies, there are some similarities and the like especially when I was doing my research project.

On the whole, teachers considered themselves untrained on issues related to HIV/AIDS teaching and learning.

Regarding limited in-service training by the ministry and NGOs, most teachers reported receiving in-service training from the responsible ministry at the cluster level in the form of workshops. A cluster is a group of between four and seven schools in the same locality. These workshops, according to teachers, addressed the documentation aspects and the preparation of media for the subject. In terms of the cultural aspects related to the teaching of the subject, very little or nothing was covered. Apart from government-initiated training programmes, some NGOs were involved in the training of teachers. These were the Family Aids Counselling Trust (FACT) and Simukai. However, these NGOs addressed the content part of the subjects, with little or no attempt to tackle the methodology part of the subject. Mr Shinda of Mount School commented on the NGOs' workshops:

The workshops do not incline to the teaching of the children but ... they usually deal with how the disease is contracted, spread and how you can prevent it.

Mrs White of Gomba School concurred with Mr Shinda, adding that:

Normally they don't teach us how to teach the subject, but they just give us some handouts then we impart the knowledge, but FACT yes they do teach the children, I won't be teaching the children.

According to the teachers, the NGOs did not employ any participatory methodologies and preferred the lecture method. They agreed that the workshops did not address the methodological problems, especially about culture and teaching. Some teachers, however, regarded the NGOs' training as important, in the sense that it gave them a starting point in addressing problems associated with teaching the subject. Asked how the training had assisted them in dealing with cultural issues in HIV/AIDS education, one teacher, Tsori of Mutso School, observed:

It has trained me to bridge that gap between me and the community because we need to work together in harmony ... If the community says our culture says you do this and you don't do it, then you will be at loggerheads and you will not be able to help the children and will not fit in the community.

The findings reveal that teachers received a superficial type of training that fell short of their needs.

Teacher Training to Handle Sensitive Cultural Issues in HIV/AIDS Teaching and Learning

Most teachers admitted to receiving small amounts of training related to handling cultural issues in general teaching. However, the majority confirmed that they did not receive any training to handle culturally sensitive issues in HIV/AIDS teaching and learning at the college level, but that they received very general information about culture. One teacher, Pasama of Nenga School, explains what they were taught:

for everything that you are supposed to teach, you should make sure that you don't affect other people's culture.

Mungwini (2013) argues that training entails an awareness of sexuality issues, the acquisition of important factual information about sex, reflecting critically on issues of sexuality, the ability to talk about sex issues comfortably and good moral behaviour consistent with societal expectations. The small amounts of training received in the sections on educational foundations, social studies and religious education did not address these issues. This is what the teachers said:

On that area, I think we were taught other subjects like RME where the idea of multi-faith approach was developed. Children are of different denominations; you don't take any cultural belief as minor or major. (Uya of Gomba School)

Yaah, in general, we were told to be careful when teaching this and that but it was not as specific as saying you want to teach HIV/AIDS, you do so and so but generally we were told how to deal with culture. (Hole, of Mount School)

Thus, the majority confirmed they were not technically prepared to deal with the challenges associated with the subject. Baxen and Breidlid (2004 cited in Kilonzo and Mugwagwa 2009) warned that the major obstacle to the successful development of competent HIV/AIDS educators was the absence of a culturally compliant strategy to assist teachers to overcome some of the cultural taboos that impact the sharing of sensitive sexual information. Dhlamini et al. (2012) further argue that teacher education programmes failed to provide teachers with the skills to introspect on their values and prejudices that may be detrimental to the successful teaching of HIV/AIDS. This was the prevailing situation in most teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe.

Generally, the findings confirmed what has been observed in other parts of Africa, for example, in Zambia (Ramos 2008), Ethiopia (Ramos 2008), Kenya and Tanzania (Oluga et al. 2009), where, despite acknowledging the merits of training teachers, most teachers' colleges were constrained by the inability to navigate the cultural terrain in HIV/AIDS teaching and learning. Asked how they coped with the teaching of the subject without training, the teachers proposed three main ways. The first was to use their experiences from the teaching of other subjects to address any challenges that emerge during the instructional process. For example, Ms Chiko of Nyadzi School articulated this view in the following way:

You get experience as you get along. As you can see now it's 12 years. ... We read books, these days we have internet, you end up having more knowledge from other sources rather than being trained.

Other teachers covered the sensitive areas without the necessary details. The last group, of very few teachers, avoided the topics altogether. It can therefore be concluded that teachers had very limited skills to handle HIV/AIDS education.

Discussion

The main objective of the study was to establish the quality of training received by teachers. The intention was to discover whether teachers were trained specifically to handle cultural issues when using participatory pedagogies in HIV/AIDS teaching and learning in primary schools. The overall finding is that teachers had general training in the teaching of HIV/AIDS, but lacked the training to specifically deal with cultural issues. This finding contrasts with results in the US where Georgiou et al. (2015) found that the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States was responsible for teachers' training by providing guidelines on the discussion of sensitive issues. However, teacher preparation for the teaching of the subject was generally

inadequate. Findings from the UK also revealed that 80% of teachers lacked confidence and felt that they were inadequately trained (Brook 2011).

These findings further confirm Wood, Rogow and Stines's (2015) revelations in the Nigerian context, where few teachers were adequately trained to handle Family Life and HIV Education (FHLE), which includes HIV/AIDS education. Moreover, Chau et al.'s (2016) 20-year longitudinal study in Senegal revealed that trained teachers remained constrained to handle sensitive issues. The current study showed that the training received by teachers at colleges does not provide the skills aspect to deal with cultural issues in HIV/AIDS teaching. It confirmed that the training of teachers to handle sensitive HIV/AIDS issues was receiving peripheral attention because authorities seem not to take it seriously. This could be a result of what Ramos (2008) found in Zambia and Ethiopia, where even lecturers were found wanting in terms of possessing adequate skills to handle sensitive issues. Oluga et al. (2009) also confirmed similar findings in Kenya and Tanzania. Based on the data, one can say that the quality of training received by teachers in Manicaland Province is generally low. Practising teachers in the Manicaland Province of Zimbabwe are ill-equipped to handle culturally sensitive issues in HIV/AIDS lessons using participatory pedagogies.

These findings largely confirm the findings reported in the literature in most countries. In the UK, inadequate teacher training was reported by Pound, Langford and Campbell (2016), while Monzón et al. (2017) revealed that 53% of teachers who had received in-service training in Guatemala considered it inadequate. This suggests that countries have general challenges in addressing the teaching and learning of HIV/AIDS. The training of HIV/AIDS teachers was not the panacea to the problem. Weiler and Martin-Weiler (2012) illustrated that teachers who underwent training in Ghana had the confidence and willingness to teach the subject, but could not do so because the teacher education curriculum was not problem-based and dynamic. Teachers in Zimbabwe received some training, but it lacked depth. This observation confirms findings from Kenya where Njue et al. (2009) found that being a trained teacher did not translate into the ability to teach sensitive issues. The same claim was made by Baxen and Breidlid (2009), who posited that the possession of knowledge does not mean one can teach the subject. The problem of weak training in HIV/AIDS teaching could also be a result of weak policy implementation and institutional support. In Zimbabwe, the Higher and Tertiary Education Policy of 1999 specifies that all teacher colleges should teach HIV/AIDS, but, from the findings of the research, it appears this been poorly implemented. In addition, the cultural policy of the country advocates that all teaching and learning should be culturally sensitive. Reasons for poor implementation could be a lack of adequately trained lecturers to train teachers, as noted in Zambia (Ramos 2008), Kenya (Oluga et al. 2009) and South Africa (Francis 2013). Generally, the lack of training revealed in the study was consistent with findings elsewhere in the US, Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa. The lack of training could be an indicator that

the government overestimated the capacity of teachers' colleges to deal with the cultural challenges of teaching the subject. Weiler and Martin-Weiler (2012) argue that teaching a subject is not a purely cognitive and academic exercise and incorporates personal values and experiences as part of the learning process. Unlike other subjects where pupils' performance is judged based on clear and observable mastery of specific skills, this is not the case with the subject of HIV/AIDS. The findings, on the other hand, are contrary to research findings which show that training teachers to handle culturally sensitive information is possible and does produce positive results (Mwebi 2012).

Another explanation for the poor skills possessed by teachers in this study could be the inadequacy of in-service training provided by the responsible ministry and some NGOs. The researchers found that some teachers received on-the-job training from the responsible ministry and NGOs at district and cluster levels. However, the government-initiated training in most cases was found wanting because it only addressed the documentation, media aspects and the preparation of the media for teaching the subject. Chamba (2011) found that the training was weak because 73% of the teachers said the lecture method was used to train them and 59.5% said practical demonstrations were used. Furthermore, the NGO-initiated training programmes focused more on the content and theoretical aspects at the expense of the methodology part of the training, which is critical to addressing the culture-related challenges. The absence of practical technical skills training partly explains teachers' continued lack of skills necessary to tackle culture-related challenges to HIV/AIDS teaching and learning. This was compounded by the fact that most of the NGOs did not use participatory methods but preferred the lecture method. The use of the lecture method had an obvious effect on teachers being trained as they avoided participatory methods in the classroom. This reinforces the researchers' observation that using participatory methods remains a challenge for most teachers. Another challenge is that most of the NGO training was conducted intermittently, and teachers never had the chance to reflect on the success of their training. In addition, the programmes were not informed by a needs analysis of the problems on the ground. Furthermore, the uncoordinated nature of the NGO training could have a further negative impact on the teachers' ability to handle culture-related issues in HIV/AIDS teaching and learning.

Conclusions

The researchers wanted to find out the quality of training received by teachers and whether they had the required competencies to effectively teach HIV/AIDS at the primary school level. The conclusion from this study was that teachers were not adequately trained to tackle HIV/AIDS teaching and learning, especially in rural setups. The researchers also found that the training of primary school teachers in participatory pedagogy was rudimentary, inconsistent and inadequate, hence of poor quality. Because of the limited training, teacher competencies to handle the cultural issues in HIV/AIDS teaching and learning were very low.

Recommendations

Given the conclusions from the study, the researchers recommend that there is a need to scale up teacher training to resonate with the cultural context of schools. Both pre-service and in-service teachers should undergo a structured HIV/AIDS training programme to increase their competence and confidence in teaching this critical aspect. To achieve this, tertiary institutions must be engaged and the Department of Education must collaborate to strengthen both pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes.

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