

INDIGENOUS-CENTERED

PEDAGOGIES: RETHINKING THE AFROCENTRIC APPROACH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

PEDAGOGÍAS CENTRADAS EN LOS INDÍGENAS: REPENSAR EL ENFOQUE AFROCÉNTRICO EN EL SIGLO XXI

Jonathan Olanrewaju Fatokun^{1*}

E-mail: jofatokun@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1343-2948>

Mishack Thiza Gumbo¹

E-mail: gumbomt@unisa.ac.za

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6760-4341>

¹University of South Africa, South Africa.

*Corresponding author

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ABSTRACT

This literature study aims to argue for contemporary teaching and learning strategies that integrate indigenous-centered pedagogy as an alternative to the existing dominant Eurocentric-centered pedagogies in the African educational system. Around the world, there has been a push for indigenous-centered pedagogies as an alternative to Eurocentric-centered pedagogies, which have historically dominated teaching and learning. However, the Afrocentric knowledge system in Africa has not been given its rightful space. This is attributed to colonial influence, which has denied the advancement of learning that fosters transparency and the creation of African-based knowledge and inventions. Our educational systems in Africa need to emphasize and incorporate African-centered perspectives in teaching and learning strategies to realize decolonization of the practice. This article promotes indigenous-centered pedagogical approaches in African schools, enumerates the roles of stakeholders in integrating the indigenous-centered pedagogy, and draws attention to the problems with Eurocentric pedagogies in indigenous African communities. We contend that the advancement of learning that fosters transparency and the creation of African-based knowledge and inventions has not been given priority by Western educational techniques. We argue that the decolonial effort will gain a crucial component if the African indigenous-centered approach is integrated into the educational system.

Keywords: Teaching and learning, Indigenous-centered pedagogies, Eurocentric-centered pedagogies, Decolonization, Transformative pedagogy, 21st century.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio bibliográfico es abogar por estrategias contemporáneas de enseñanza y aprendizaje que integren la pedagogía indígena como alternativa a las pedagogías eurocéntricas dominantes en el sistema educativo africano. En todo el mundo se han impulsado las pedagogías centradas en los pueblos indígenas como alternativa a las pedagogías eurocéntricas, que históricamente han dominado la enseñanza y el aprendizaje. Sin embargo, el sistema de conocimiento afrocéntrico en África no ha recibido el espacio que le corresponde. Esto se atribuye a la influencia colonial, que ha negado el avance del aprendizaje que fomenta la transparencia y la creación de conocimientos e invenciones de base africana. Los sistemas educativos en África necesitan enfatizar e incorporar perspectivas centradas en África en las estrategias de enseñanza y aprendizaje para hacer realidad la descolonización de la práctica. Este artículo promueve los enfoques pedagógicos centrados en los indígenas en las escuelas africanas, enumera las funciones de las partes interesadas en la integración de la pedagogía centrada en los indígenas y

llama la atención sobre los problemas que plantean las pedagogías eurocéntricas en las comunidades indígenas africanas. Sostenemos que las técnicas educativas occidentales no han dado prioridad al avance de un aprendizaje que fomente la transparencia y la creación de conocimientos e invenciones de origen africano. Se sostiene que el esfuerzo decolonial ganará un componente crucial si el enfoque centrado en los indígenas africanos se integra en el sistema educativo.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza y aprendizaje, Pedagogías centradas en lo indígena, Pedagogías centradas en lo eurocéntrico, Descolonización, Pedagogía transformadora, Siglo XXI.

INTRODUCTION

Around the world, there has been a push for indigenous-centered pedagogies as an alternative to Eurocentric-centered pedagogies (Smith, 2021). Indigenous-centered pedagogies, particularly in Africa, are an educational approach that centers on the perspectives, knowledge systems, cultural values, and ways of learning inherent to the indigenous community (Van Wyk, 2014). Indigenous-centered pedagogies aim to create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that empowers indigenous teachers and learners and fosters a deep understanding and appreciation of indigenous cultures. However, due to the colonial legacy in Africa, the Afrocentric knowledge system has not been given the right space. This has caused modern education and traditional education in Africa to remain historically and contextually separate entities. Colonial education policies aimed to assimilate indigenous populations into Eurocentric worldviews, leading to the erosion of traditional practices and languages. The growing acknowledgment of the value of indigenous knowledge in addressing contemporary challenges and enriching educational experiences compels research into indigenous pedagogical alternatives in teaching and learning. It is for this reason that this article argues for contemporary teaching and learning strategies that integrate indigenous-centered pedagogy as an alternative to the existing dominant Eurocentric-centered pedagogies in the African educational system.

The African educational system must create a contemporary, community-based learning approach that is based on tribal values, orientation, and principles while also making use of the best suitable ideas and tools from contemporary education. An indigenous-centered pedagogy in Africa is rooted in a profound recognition of the rich diversity of indigenous knowledge systems, cultures, and traditions across the continent (Shujaa, 2020). This

educational approach acknowledges the centuries-old wisdom passed down through generations within African communities, often encompassing holistic understandings of the environment, spirituality, social organization, and sustainable living practices. Indigenous-centered pedagogy in Africa seeks to reclaim, revitalize, and integrate indigenous knowledge systems into formal and informal education settings (Faude, 2021). It emphasizes a collaborative and participatory approach, where elders, community members, and traditional practitioners actively contribute to the teaching and learning process. This approach preserves cultural heritage and fosters a sense of identity, pride, and belonging among learners.

In the 21st century, as Africa navigates the complexities of globalization, technological advancement, and socioeconomic development, there is a pressing need to re-evaluate educational paradigms. Indigenous-centered pedagogy emerges as a transformative agenda that not only addresses historical injustices but also offers a holistic and culturally relevant approach to education. For an Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogy to be effective in the 21st century, all stakeholders in the teaching and learning process must become involved in integrating quality teaching and learning into the African education system (Bolarinwa, 2022). This step in the right spirit forms part of the decolonization of the education system in Africa. The African and other knowledge systems including the global context should rather be integrated alongside. Hence, we do not advocate for an indigenous pedagogy that is divorced from other approaches from elsewhere. The colonial influence makes us argue for an indigenous pedagogy as an equal partner in the available pedagogies. The Eurocentric theoretical framework and philosophy have dominated the African educational system, and Africans have not done much to incorporate local pedagogy into the systems of instruction. The educational system deserves a contemporary teaching and learning pedagogy to achieve the decolonization process of the education system. The primary goal of this paper is to highlight the strategies for integrating the Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogy into the African educational teaching and learning systems. This paper attempts to answer the question: what strategies support the integration of indigenous-centered pedagogy as a substitute for the currently prevalent Eurocentric-centered pedagogies in the African educational system?

This article is structured as follows: promoting the indigenous-centered pedagogies in African schools in the 21st century, followed by the definition of various concepts related to the phenomenon of indigenous-centered pedagogy, then the roles of relevant stakeholders in integrating

the Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogy are outlined and discussed. Furthermore, the rethinking strategies for integrating Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogy in education are presented and finally, we present the conclusion. In an attempt to integrate an indigenous-centered pedagogy into teaching and learning in the African education system in the 21st century, there is the need to first emphasize the promotion of this philosophy among the African educational stakeholders which is the context underpinning the next section in this article.

Promotion of indigenous-centered pedagogies in African schools in the 21st century

Promoting indigenous-centered pedagogical approaches in African schools is crucial and significant for several reasons (Ndoye, 2017). According to Ndoye, it fosters cultural pride and identity among learners, which is essential for their overall development and sense of belonging. When learners see their cultural heritage reflected in their education, they are more likely to feel valued and motivated to learn. By integrating indigenous perspectives into the curriculum, schools can equip learners with a holistic understanding of their environment and empower them to address contemporary challenges while preserving their cultural heritage. Moreover, embracing indigenous-centered pedagogies promotes inclusivity and diversity within educational settings. It acknowledges the richness of Africa's diverse cultural heritage and promotes respect for different ways of knowing and learning.

One of the main challenges of the 21st-century education stakeholders in Africa is how to develop and integrate local indigenously sensitive curriculum models that facilitate the effective use of resources, such as indigenous artifacts to promote indigenous teaching and learning strategies. These culturally sensitive pedagogies, also referred to as culturally relevant or culturally responsive pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 2014) can be integrated into the teaching and learning process that will promote its decolonization. Culturally sensitive pedagogy is about teaching that integrates learner's background knowledge and prior home and community experiences into the curriculum and the teaching and learning experiences that take place in the classroom (Gumbo et al., 2022). Gumbo et al. (2022) further argued that the failure of the teacher to rightly accommodate indigenous learners in contemporary 21st-century Western education in the teaching and learning process is informed by the forces that have conceptualized and perpetrated the curriculum and the teaching from a purely Western Eurocentric perspective, and this is due for deconstruction if Africa must move forward. In this article, we argue that the decolonial effort will gain a crucial component if the African indigenous-centered

approach is integrated into the educational system. The African indigenous-centered pedagogy emphasizes the importance of valuing and integrating the knowledge, experiences, and worldviews of the indigenous communities into educational practices.

Scholars have observed that there is an alignment between the indigenous perspectives on learning and the 21st-century principles of education (Munroe et al., 2013, p). They argue that teachers can meet the needs of 21st-century learners through the inclusion of indigenous perspectives in schools in three basic approaches. The first approach recognizes the value of knowing multiple languages, including indigenous languages and holding respect for diverse cultures, acknowledging the need for cultural preservation. Battiste (2013) submitted that 21st-century learning requires that all learners begin to see with multiple perspectives by coming to know one another in ways that do not treat one knowledge as the only knowledge. The second approach positions both indigenous perspectives and the 21st-century approaches call for education to emerge from context and appreciation of the interconnectedness of all things. Both approaches acknowledge that learning is rooted in place; understanding the local context is a prerequisite to understanding the global context. Finally, both indigenous perspectives on education and the 21st-century approaches to learning acknowledge the need for education to help learners develop "sophisticated complex responses to complex phenomena" (Doolittle, 2006, p. 22). The three suggested alignment approaches of the 21st-century principles do not fully address the needs of indigenous learners but can enhance them. Decolonizing education requires a commitment to indigenous perspectives throughout the curriculum. Munroe (2013) further argues that integrating indigenous perspectives drawn from ancient wisdom embedded in those very old ideas can enhance 21st-century approaches to teaching and learning. This transformative pedagogy has been afforded attention elsewhere in North America, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, indicating that a similar feat can be achieved in Africa.

The problem of investigation in this article is underpinned by the dominance of the Eurocentric/colonial philosophy and theoretical paradigm over the African educational systems. The advancement of learning that fosters transparency and the creation of African-based knowledge and inventions have not been given priority by Western educational techniques. The education system in Africa has not done much to cater for the development of indigenous knowledge among learners because it is still dominated by the colonial Westernized education practices that were introduced over a century ago (Govender & Mudzamiri,

2021). Therefore, the African school system deserves a contemporary teaching and learning pedagogy that aims to achieve the decolonization process of the African education system. There is a need to offer useful indigenous teaching and learning pedagogies and models to teachers and learners and push for indigenous-centered pedagogies as an alternative to Eurocentric-centered pedagogies. In the next section, we describe concepts that are central to the arguments in this article. We align ourselves with the descriptions of the concepts sourced from other works as we found them relevant to this study.

Conceptualisation

Afrocentricity, is one of those phenomena that challenges the traditional Eurocentric perspectives in several dimensions of Africans' lives. The Eurocentric phenomena has dominated the historical, political and cultural lives of Africans as a result of colonialism, whereas the Afrocentricity proposes the relocation of Africans and African persons within their own historical, political and cultural context as a key to their liberation from the domination of Eurocentric ideologies (Omar, 2020). Afrocentricity is generally conceptualized as a frame of reference or paradigm in which phenomena are viewed from the African perspective (Omar, 2020). It places Africa at the center of African lives and experiences. The focus of the Afrocentric ideology in this article is the liberation of African people from the Eurocentric knowledge system and its hegemonic practices in the African educational system. Afrocentricity in this perspective is an educational, philosophical, and theoretical paradigm in the context of schooling, society, and inclusive education. It is a conceptually inclusive approach underpinned by important principles or canons relevant to teaching and learning in an inclusive education system in Africa. The Afrocentric idea is a move to challenge the Eurocentric perspective and paradigms to knowledge in the indigenous African community in which knowledge had been previously construed as the only legitimate philosophy (Van Wyk, 2014). Van Wyk (2014, p. 4) further contended that "many scholars have tried to reduce Afrocentricity to a mere intellectual exercise, confusing it with the creation of a shallow, discursive space with no serious and real implications for one's life choices". Afrocentricity is a paradigm that can truly impact Africans and give them a push toward emancipation and economic prosperity.

Afrocentric philosophy, is a way of thinking from an African perspective, based on the principles of inclusivity, cultural specificity, critical awareness, and political awareness (Gumbo et al., 2022). It is a kind of philosophy that tends

to turn into an ideology. Thoughtfully, the Afrocentric philosophy is a framework of thought that emphasizes the experiences, history, culture, and perspectives of people of African descent. It is philosophy that seeks to re-centre the discourse on Africa and its diaspora, challenging Eurocentric narratives that have historically dominated academia and popular culture. Afrocentric philosophy aims to reclaim and celebrate African identity, heritage, and contributions to humanity. Afrocentric philosophy critiques the legacy of colonialism and its ongoing impact on African societies and their diaspora. It calls for the decolonization of minds, institutions, and systems, as well as the recognition and rectification of historical injustices.

The Afrocentric paradigm, is a true paradigm for African liberation towards emancipation and economic prosperity. It was the context of European hegemony and racism that necessitated the need for an Afrocentric paradigm that seeks the liberation of Africans' liberation (Omar, 2020). The Afrocentric paradigm places the learners at the center, thereby, moving them from the margins and empowering them by making them the subjects and not the objects of the learning encounter. Van Wyk (2014) argues further that Afrocentricity is not just a mere intellectual exercise with no serious implication for the life choices of the African people, but a discourse for profound impact on African lives and the populace.

Afrocentric indigenous pedagogy, is a framework for education that centers on the cultural, historical, and epistemological perspectives of African and indigenous people. It is embedded in an educational system that works both within and against colonial systems and frameworks through a focus on revealing, examining and challenging the ways colonial relations of power continue to construct and uphold ideologies that produce multiple oppressions in African school systems (Battiste, 2013). This pedagogy emphasizes the importance of valuing and integrating the knowledge, experiences, and worldviews of these communities into educational practices. Indigenous pedagogy activates connections between the heart and mind of the indigenous learners that enable unique forms of inquiry and learning (Anuik & Gillies, 2012). Afrocentric pedagogy incorporates some perceived elements as underpinned by indigenous studies scholars. This includes incorporating literature, history, art, music and other cultural artifacts into the educational experience. The relevance of the curriculum is found in its emphasis on the importance of reclaiming and revitalizing indigenous languages, knowledge systems, and cultural practices within educational settings. The Afrocentric indigenous pedagogy also often emphasizes the importance of community involvement in education. This may involve collaboration

with local community leaders, elders, and organizations to ensure that the educational experiences are relevant and responsive to the needs of the community (Cajete, 2015). Ladson-Billings (2014) further claim that the Afrocentric and indigenous perspectives aim to empower learners to challenge systems of oppression and advocate for social justice within their communities. This move also encourages the development of critical consciousness and activism to challenge systems of oppression and promote social justice. Smith (2021) affirms the value of oral tradition as a repository of indigenous knowledge and promotes its incorporation into educational practices. An Afrocentric indigenous pedagogy acknowledges the importance of language and oral tradition in preserving cultural knowledge and transmitting it from one generation to the next. Efforts must be made to preserve and revitalize indigenous languages and oral storytelling practices within educational settings. The Afrocentric indigenous pedagogy recognizes the interconnectedness of mind, body and spirit. It seeks to address the holistic development of learners by incorporating cultural practices that promote physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being (Kovach, 2020). Battiste (2013) acknowledges the interconnectedness of all living beings and emphasizes the importance of fostering relationships of reciprocity and interdependence. Education within this framework often integrates multiple disciplines, including history, social studies, literature, science and mathematics to provide learners with a comprehensive understanding of their cultural heritage and the world around them.

Eurocentric philosophy, is an educational approach that centers around European perspectives, history, culture and values, often to the exclusion or marginalization of other cultures and perspectives (Van Wyk, 2014). The dominance of European perspectives, history and culture in educational curricula is often at the expense of other worldviews (Gillborn, 2018). This can manifest in various ways, such as the focus on European literature, history and scientific achievements while marginalizing contributions from non-European cultures. Eurocentric philosophy often perpetuates the colonial legacy by promoting narratives that justify colonialism and imperialism while downplaying or ignoring the perspectives and experiences of colonized people. Eurocentric philosophy promotes uncentricity that denies Africans the right map of their own development trajectory, informed by African knowledge and African understanding of the world, embedded in their own history and cultural practices. Eurocentric philosophy is a worldview that is centered on Western systems or a biased view that favours the West over the non-West has been associated with pedagogical problems in the non-Western education systems, particularly in Africa.

Problems with Western-oriented Eurocentric pedagogy

Western-oriented pedagogy has been criticized for the various problems it has generated. Govender and Mudzamiri (2021) highlighted some of these problems. Western-oriented pedagogy promotes the use of Western examples, contexts and formats in written textbooks. These textbooks do not portray the diverse cultural background of indigenous people. The Western-oriented approach has little acknowledgment of indigenously developed teaching strategies such as mentorship and cultural transmission strategies. There is a lack of the use of indigenous teaching and learning resources including local language, artifacts, oral teaching through stories, local textbooks, locally made charts and locally manufactured equipment. The cultural context and local environment of the indigenous learners are hardly regarded, even in the assessment approach. Van Wyk (2014) also argues that school curricula in Africa even in the post-colonial era do not educate the African youth, but continue to perpetuate capitalist and colonial ideologies. The current public school system has not moved away from the colonial Western-oriented philosophy and ideology which has been impoverishing the African learners; a part of the cause for African learners drop out of school or end up being unemployed after school. Indigenous researchers globally, as can be noticed in the below statements, have noticed this lacuna and indicated the need to integrate the Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogy through the cooperating efforts of stakeholders in education. The problems with the Western-oriented Eurocentric pedagogy particularly for the African education system are underpinned by indigenous scholars. For instance, Govender and Mudzamiri (2021) noted that eurocentric education prioritizes European languages over indigenous languages, leading to the erosion and loss of indigenous linguistic heritage. Eurocentric curricula typically prioritize Western perspectives and experiences, neglecting indigenous contributions to various fields such as science, traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous languages, literature and history. Moreover, the Eurocentric pedagogy seems to perpetuate the colonial attitudes by promoting the western cultures, and erasing the contributions and perspectives of colonized people, which is achieved through prioritising of European history, literature, leading to maginisation and exclusion of non-western knowledge.

The role of stakeholders

Integrating Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogy involves multiple stakeholders who play crucial roles in its successful implementation. Each of the stakeholders discussed in this section has a unique and important role in ensuring that Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogy

is effectively integrated into the educational system, providing a more inclusive and representative learning experience for learners. Stakeholders in this context include but are not limited to learners, teachers, community leaders and elders, policymakers, and academic researchers.

The role of learners in Afrocentric indigenous classroom

The learners are the primary beneficiaries, their engagement and receptivity to the curriculum are very essential. Their feedback can help refine and improve the pedagogy. In an Afrocentric indigenous classroom, the role of the learner is multifaceted and deeply intertwined with cultural, historical, and communal values. Asante and Asante (2017) argue that Afrocentric education emphasizes learning as a communal activity where people share their knowledge and experiences to advance the community's overall comprehension. Learners are viewed as active participants in the construction of knowledge, drawing upon their own lived experiences, cultural backgrounds, and indigenous ways of knowing. They are encouraged to contribute to classroom discussions, share personal narratives, and engage in collaborative learning activities.

Learners' cultural identities are affirmed and celebrated within the classroom environment. They are expected to explore and express their cultural heritage through various forms of expression, such as storytelling, music, art, and dance. According to Banks (2021), culturally relevant pedagogy validates learners' cultural backgrounds and draws on their lived experiences to make connections to the curriculum. Furthermore, in the advocacy for Afrocentric Indigenous pedagogy, learners are nurtured to become critical thinkers who question dominant narratives and systems of oppression while advocating for social justice and equity within their communities. This involves analyzing issues from Afrocentric and Indigenous perspectives and taking action to address social inequalities. Ladson-Billings (2014, 76) argues that culturally relevant teaching "empowers learners to be change agents in their own lives and communities." Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges learners' holistic identities and creates environments that nurture their academic, social, emotional and cultural needs, emphasizing the holistic development of learners in the African indigenous school setup.

The learners' role is also to prioritize encompassing intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of learning to hone their holistic development. Therefore, other stakeholders must foster a supportive learning environment where learners' well-being is nurtured, and their diverse needs are acknowledged. Learners are

also expected to actively engage with their communities, drawing upon cultural resources and seeking guidance from elders and community leaders. They are instilled with a sense of responsibility toward their communities, and encouraged to apply their learning to address local challenges and contribute to collective well-being.

The role of the teacher in integrating the Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogy

In utilizing Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogies in an inclusive education, the teachers are the primary implementers of the classroom pedagogical innovations. Their understanding, acceptance, and ability to deliver content from an Afrocentric perspective are crucial. The role of the teacher is equally multifaceted and crucial in creating an environment that honours diverse cultural backgrounds, fosters critical consciousness, and promotes academic success for all learners (Faude, 2021). Scholars and indigenous researchers highlight several key teacher roles expected from the teacher in fostering an inclusive and representative educational environment. The role of the teacher in integrating the Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogy is significant in promoting its cause in African countries. The teacher acts as a cultural mediator, bridging learners' cultural backgrounds with curriculum content. They incorporate cultural references, histories and values from African and indigenous perspectives to make learning more relevant and relatable for learners by selecting texts, materials and activities that reflect diverse cultural experiences and histories. The teachers' role as a cultural mediator in integrating African-centered perspectives to make education more relevant to black learners (Shujaa, 2020).

According to Asante and Asante (2017), teachers play a central role in establishing classroom environments where all learners feel valued, respected, and supported. They advocate for the inclusion of Afrocentric and indigenous perspectives in the curriculum, working to ensure these perspectives are central, rather than marginal in educational settings. This involves proactive efforts to create a sense of belonging for learners from diverse backgrounds, including implementing inclusive language, acknowledging diverse perspectives, and celebrating cultural differences without discrimination.

Teachers recognize and accommodate learners' diverse learning needs and styles within the classroom. This may involve employing various instructional strategies, including visual, auditory, kinesthetic and experiential approaches to engage learners and promote meaningful learning experiences. They adapt newly emerging teaching methodologies integrating and incorporating

the Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogy (Dei, 2021). Teachers can adapt or develop curricula that include Afrocentric and indigenous content. This involves sourcing appropriate materials, redesigning lesson plans and creating new activities that reflect these perspectives. Teachers are responsible for advocating for equitable policies and practices within the school and broader education system. This suggests challenging institutional barriers to inclusion, advocating for culturally responsive curriculum and resources, and actively working to address disparities in educational outcomes for marginalized learners. By embracing these roles, teachers can create learning environments that honour the cultural identities of all learners, promote academic excellence, and foster a sense of empowerment within the Afrocentric indigenous communities.

The role of community leaders and elders in promoting and supporting the Afrocentric indigenous-centered education

Communities play a pivotal role in promoting and supporting Afrocentric indigenous education. Their involvement is essential for creating an educational environment that reflects cultural values, addresses community needs, and empowers learners to succeed academically and socially. They equally ensure the inclusion of authentic indigenous knowledge, practices, and perspectives. They can provide cultural expertise and resources that enrich the curriculum. Researchers highlight several roles that community leaders and elders can play in promoting and supporting this paradigm. Communities must create a supporting environment for a balanced integration of learning through integrating modern education with the cultural bases of knowledge and value orientations (Cajete, 2015). Van Wyk (2014) added that a community-based education process that is founded upon tribal values, orientation, and principles but simultaneously utilizing the most appropriate concepts and technologies of modern education must be embraced. Elders and community leaders act as role models and mentors, offering guidance and support to learners. Their presence and contributions in educational settings help learners see the value of their cultural heritage and provide them with positive examples of leadership and success within their communities. Dei (2021) argue that indigenous leaders and elders are role models in educational contexts, fostering a sense of pride and identity among learners. Community leaders and elders serve as custodians of cultural knowledge, history and traditions. Community elders' knowledge can be integrated into education to preserve and promote indigenous practices and knowledge systems (Govender & Mudzamiri, 2021). Community involvement is essential for

the success of Afrocentric indigenous education initiatives. By working collaboratively with schools, families and other stakeholders, communities can create a supportive and empowering learning environment that celebrates diversity, promotes cultural pride and equips learners with the knowledge and skills to thrive in a multicultural world.

The role of policymakers in implementing the Afrocentric indigenous education

Government officials and policymakers can influence the adoption of Afrocentric pedagogy by enacting supportive policies, funding initiatives, and setting educational standards that embrace diversity in the African context. In Africa, there is a need for a new political discourse on the way forward in the integration of Afrocentric indigenous pedagogies (Masenya, 2022). Some African leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Kofi Annan, and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana have indicated an interest and openly acknowledged the need for Afrocentric education policies and structures (Van Wyk, 2014). Policymakers play a crucial role in the implementation of quality Afrocentric indigenous education in Africa. Their involvement is essential in ensuring that Afrocentric indigenous perspectives are integrated into the curricula, teaching practices and educational standards. Banks (2021) underpinned the primary role of policymakers as policy developers. They are responsible for developing educational policies that support the integration of Afrocentric and indigenous perspectives into school curricula. Policy-makers develop guidelines and frameworks that prioritize Afrocentric and indigenous perspectives in educational settings (Banks, 2021). This may include the creation of curriculum frameworks, standards and guidelines that prioritize the inclusion of diverse cultural perspectives and histories. Policymakers also allocate funds and resources to support the implementation of Afrocentric indigenous education initiatives. This may involve providing funding for professional development programs for teachers, purchasing culturally relevant teaching and learning materials and resources, and supporting community partnerships and initiatives, grants for curriculum development, professional development opportunities for educators, and community engagement initiatives.

Setting of curriculum standards and assessment frameworks that reflect the importance of Afrocentric and indigenous knowledge and perspectives is also the responsibility of policymakers. This may involve revising existing curriculum standards to include specific learning objectives related to Afrocentric indigenous education, as well as developing assessment tools and methods that allow for the evaluation of learner learning in this area. Policy-makers establish mechanisms to monitor the

implementation of Afrocentric and indigenous education policies and evaluate their impact on learner outcomes and community engagement. According to Smith (2021), policymakers engage indigenous communities in policy development and implementation processes to ensure that educational initiatives align with community values and aspirations. Policymakers facilitate collaboration between schools, communities, and cultural organizations to support the implementation of Afrocentric indigenous education initiatives. This may involve creating mechanisms for community input and involvement in educational decision-making processes, as well as supporting partnerships between schools and community-based organizations that promote cultural awareness and enrichment (Adam, 2020). Policymakers are equally responsible for enforcing compliance with policies related to Afrocentric indigenous education and ensuring accountability at the school and district levels (Bolarinwa, 2022). This may involve monitoring implementation efforts, conducting evaluations and assessments to measure progress, and providing support and guidance to schools that are struggling to meet policy requirements. Policymakers equally establish mechanisms for evaluating the impact of indigenous-centered education policies on learner learning outcomes and community well-being. Banks (2021) argues that policymakers advocate for culturally responsive curriculum development and teacher training programs. This may involve raising awareness about the benefits of integrating diverse cultural perspectives into education, advocating for policy changes to address systemic barriers and inequalities, and building coalitions with stakeholders to support legislative efforts in this area.

The role of academic researchers in promoting the Afrocentric indigenous-centered pedagogies

Academic researchers can contribute immensely by researching and advocating for the benefits of Afrocentric pedagogy, providing evidence-based practices, and publishing relevant materials. Banks (2021) advocates for the importance of integrating culturally relevant content and perspectives into the curriculum to engage learners from diverse background through empirical studies. The research conducted by seasoned academic researchers contributes to the development of evidence-based practices, informs policy decisions, and guides educators in effectively integrating Afrocentric and indigenous perspectives into teaching and learning. Academic researchers promote the Afrocentric-centered pedagogies by conducting empirical studies objectively to investigate the effectiveness of Afrocentric indigenous pedagogical practices that improve the learning outcomes of indigenous learners and foster the cultural pride and identity of these

learners (Cajete, 2015). Researchers also develop theoretical frameworks that underpin Afrocentric-indigenous pedagogy, providing conceptual clarity and guiding the implementation of culturally responsive practices. For an instance, Govender and Mudzamiri (2021), and Van Wyk (2014) developed theoretical models for integrating indigenous pedagogies. They identify and disseminate best practices and strategies for incorporating Afrocentric and indigenous perspectives into curriculum design, teaching and learning methods, and assessment practices based on the outcome of their research.

Researchers equally explored effective approaches to teacher preparation and professional development in Afrocentric-indigenous pedagogy, guiding how to support educators in implementing culturally responsive practices (Smith, 2021). From the outcome of their studies, researchers analyze educational policies and advocate for changes that support the integration of Afrocentric-Indigenous perspectives in curriculum development, teacher preparation, and assessment practices. Researchers collaborate with indigenous communities and Afrocentric scholars to ensure that research efforts are respectful, culturally relevant, and responsive to community needs and priorities (Smith, 2021).

Rethinking pedagogical strategies in education

Indigenous pedagogies have found their place and have been afforded attention in other parts of the globe, contributing to their political and economic growth. North America, China, India, and Australia have adopted indigenous pedagogy as a teaching methodology based on their indigenous values and philosophies. The African education system needs a rethinking strategy to integrate indigenous and sustainable pedagogy for the African education system, development and growth. It has become obvious that among the challenges for twenty-first-century African educational stakeholders is the integration of local indigenously sensitive curriculum models that facilitate the effective use of resources, such as indigenous artifacts, to promote indigenous teaching and learning strategies (Govender & Mudzamiri, 2021). The Eurocentric philosophy and approach had made indigenous learners struggle to grasp knowledge, particularly in science, technology, and engineering concepts making learning more abstract and leading to their poor performance and lack of motivation to pursue careers in these fields. Govender and Mudzamiri (2021) further argue that Eurocentric philosophy and approach fail to align the curriculum according to the experiences and culture of the indigenous communities in terms of language usage, textbooks, and pedagogical approaches.

There is a need to decolonize the foregoing for the holistic development of the African indigenous communities. The transformative pedagogical approaches have been ongoing since the 19th century, yet the African communities have not gained their ground in the right direction. The transformative change desired has not been realized, as the African leaders continue to develop white paper documents on the discourse and grapple with persistent challenges of unequal development and growth in the Western world (Sekiwu et al., 2022). Decolonizing the African educational system would mean that the learning pedagogies must be transformed. This feat could be achieved by integrating the context of indigenous pedagogies with the traditional Western pedagogical approach. Transformative pedagogy will involve moving through a process of integration as emphasized by scholars, some such views are stated thus:

- Adopting the integrated indigenous-pedagogical models (Govender & Mudzamiri, 2021, 844).
- Teaching to unlearn the Eurocentric histories and dominant national narratives, especially in native literature and culture.
- Introducing alternative Western concepts like peer mentoring, apprenticeships, learning through authentic experiences, and holistic development.
- Legal and political approach – developing and implementing legal and political standards for culturally responsive schools as applicable in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, China, Japan, etc.
- Conducting research-based proactive discussion on indigenous pedagogy that goes beyond theoretical abstractions.

While Afrocentric education and pedagogies hold promise for promoting cultural pride, academic success, and social empowerment among African-descended communities, some cautions and challenges must be considered. For instance, there may be resistance from mainstream educational institutions, policymakers and stakeholders who are resistant to changes in curriculum and pedagogy. Overcoming this resistance requires strategic advocacy and collaboration with diverse stakeholders. Teachers may also lack the necessary training, resources, and support to effectively implement Afrocentric pedagogies in the classroom. Teacher preparation programs and professional development initiatives must address this gap to ensure the successful implementation of Afrocentric education. Furthermore, there may be political and ideological controversies. Afrocentric education initiatives can be politically and ideologically contentious, sparking debates over the role of education in promoting social justice, cultural identity and historical accuracy. It is essential to

navigate these debates with sensitivity and a commitment to dialogue and understanding. Achieving needed results will require absolute resilience from African educational stakeholders.

Afrocentric education initiatives may face institutional constraints, including limited resources, standardized testing requirements and bureaucratic barriers. Overcoming these constraints requires strategic advocacy, community mobilization, and innovative approaches to curriculum development and assessment (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Lastly, there may be the challenge of ethical considerations in academic research. Researchers and practitioners must navigate ethical considerations when engaging with Afrocentric education, including issues of cultural appropriation, community representation, and power dynamics. It is essential to approach research and practice with humility, respect, and a commitment to ethical principles.

Recommendations

Africanising the education system is an ongoing decolonizing process. The relevant stakeholders have to develop school curricula that involve and include indigenous history, traditional ecological knowledge, and indigenous languages. Educators implementing the curriculum must be trained to recognize and incorporate indigenous methodologies such as storytelling and proverbial wisdom into the teaching practice. The school administrators must encourage community-based learning, which involves engaging local communities to develop contextually relevant educational programmes that draw on community knowledge and expertise.

Implications

Integrating indigenous-centered pedagogy into the mainstream of the African educational system has some implications. Incorporating this pedagogy into formal African educational systems will enhance relevance and effectiveness. This involves a deliberate push for curriculum reform by all stakeholders, teacher training and retraining on indigenous pedagogical approaches, and well-supervised pedagogical practices that respect and utilize indigenous knowledge. Incorporation of indigenous-centered pedagogy will also encourage contextual learning and community engagement in education. These approaches ensure aligning teaching and training with students' cultural contexts. It can improve educational outcomes in Africa education systems. The integration of indigenous-centered pedagogy should be recognized as valid and complimentary to western knowledge system. This is a pluralistic approach to knowledge creation, where multiple knowledge systems co-exist and inform each other.

CONCLUSION

This article concludes that Eurocentric pedagogical approach has not improved the learning of indigenous Africans; it has led to poor academic performance and a lack of African-based inventions, initiatives and advancement. The educational systems in Africa need to decolonize the pedagogical approaches and emphasize and incorporate African-centered perspectives in the strategies of teaching and learning to realize decolonization of the practice. It is possible to decolonize the pedagogy when the African content and illustrations, context, and perspectives are blended with the Western content in an integrated approach. This will enable learners to quickly grasp the understanding of concepts taught and apply them in their local environment. Timely integration of indigenous-centered pedagogy in the African context of teaching and learning will initiate the advancement of learning that fosters transparency in the African educational system. It will also enhance the creation of African-based knowledge and inventions that have not been given priority by Western educational techniques. Finally, the decolonial effort in Africa will gain a crucial component in the African education system.

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