Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Educatedness in an Afro – Zimbabwean Context – The role of philosophy of hunhu /ubuntu

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Abstract

This paper seeks to explore and examine the possible contributions of Early Childhood Development (ECD) on the understanding and appreciation of educatedness in Zimbabwe within an African context. This is against the background of research studies which maintain that the nature and quality of the end – product of any education system is to a large extend determined by the nature and quality of the ECD programme if any, forming the basis of that particular education system in any society. In light of the preceding, this paper therefore seeks to establish how current theory and practice of ECD in Zimbabwe can assist in the realisation of authentic educatedness within an Afro – Zimbabwean context. Accordingly, this paper shall posit that, if ECD in Zimbabwe is to play the foundational role it should, in the development of the child, resulting in his / her being educated, then indeed, it should be rooted in and informed by a relevant philosophy. In line with the preceding, it shall be contented that, ECD should be informed by philosophy of hunhu / ubuntu. By the philosophy of hunhu / ubuntu is meant a philosophy which evolves from and is rooted in the African indigenous people's world – view and is anchored hunhu /ubuntu and chivanhu. By chivanhu and hunhu/ ubuntu is meant, the processual mental and physical dispositions of an individual characterized by humility, kindness, courtesy, warmth, empathy, understanding, respectfulness, responsibleness, friendliness and consideration which manifests itself amongst others, in the manner one talks, walks, behaves, dresses and interacts with relatives and non-relatives alike (Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Ramose, 1999; Makuvaza, 2013).

Keywords: Educatedness, early childhood education, unhu/ubuntu, philosophy, processual

1. Introduction

Early Childhood Development (ECD) is currently the backbone of most formal education systems not only in Zimbabwe but internationally. This is as a result of a realisation through research of the potential ECD has in determining and shaping the subsequent development of the child, physically, socially, intellectually and otherwise (Farquhar, 2007, Riley, 2003; Berger, et.al., 196). Accordingly, the success or failure of any education system can be attributed to the quality of its ECD programmes. Similarly, the nature and quality of the end - product of any formal education system can be evaluated and appreciated in the context of the nature and quality of the ECD programme providing the basis of that particular education system. Consequently, some logical and causal relationship can be inferred between the two, namely, ECD and the end – product. It is instructive to note therefore, that, a deficiency in the latter might mean a corresponding deficiency in the former and vice – versa.

From the preceding it can be deduced that ECD has a direct bearing, notwithstanding other factors, on the nature and quality of the end – product of any education system. In other words, ECDE has the potential to define and determine what constitute 'educatedness'. Educatedness in this paper, though a highly contestable concept, shall refer to the quality of the end – product of any education system in any society. However, in light of the fact that the issue of educatedness is very subjective, it is being suggested that it should be the responsibility of societies, individually or collectively, to define the quality of the end – products or educatedness of their respective education systems. Accordingly, in Zimbabwe, it is being contented that ECD has a similar function of providing the basis of what constitutes educatedness.

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The preceding notwithstanding, it needs to be submitted that ECD like education in general should be informed by a relevant philosophy if it is to satisfactorily perform the function of meaningfully defining the quality of the end – products of any education system. It must be cautioned that in the absence of an explicit philosophy to give it the required and desired direction and vision, it risks being reduced to mere activism (Makuvaza, 2011). Additionally, especially within the Zimbabwean context it will fail to perform the crucial function of determining and defining the quality of educatedness. Thus, it shall be argued that if ECD is to perform this crucial foundational role of determining what constitutes educatedness in Zimbabwe, it should be informed by a relevant philosophy evolving from the people's world – view.

In this regard therefore, it is being posited that ECD should be informed by *chivanhu* and *hunhu*. *Chivanhu* and *hunhu/ubuntu* in this discussion is being understood as the world -view of the indigenes of Zimbabwe. In other words, it is being posited that ECD should be informed by philosophy of *hunhu/ubuntu* if it is to contribute towards the end – products from the education system being considered as being educated (*vanhu vakadzidza)*. Consequently, this paper is arguing for philosophy of *hunhu/ubuntu* to be the philosophy that should inform ECD in Zimbabwe.

The purpose of this paper therefore, is to examine and explore the potential of ECD in determining and defining what constitutes educatedness in Zimbabwe. This examination has been necessitated by the desire to check the possible negative influence on the youth firstly, of Westernisation as a result of globalisation and knowledge explosion brought due to the inevitable impact of ICTs and secondly cultural uprootedness being continuously reinforced and perpetuated by the same (Makuvaza, 2009). It is the thesis of this paper that ECD in Zimbabwe *if* informed by philosophy of hunhu and rooted in *chivanhu* has the potential to bring about authentic educated graduates, people who are both African and Zimbabweans at heart and proud to be so both at home and internationally.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Context
The concept of ECD in Zimbabwe has been there since time immemorial. In the traditional African context, young children especially in the rural setting played *mahumbwe/ amadlwane* and listened to folk stories by their grandparents (Nyandiya-Bandy, 2000). Those in the urban set-up had very little to engage themselves in as children all day long. Education policies during the colonial era discriminated against the blacks; therefore, meaningful Early Childhood Education was accessed by a few privileged families mostly in urban areas. Very few child care facilities were available hence; many children went through early childhood without enjoying it in a significant way. Competences, abilities, challenges and the fun the stage carries would all go unexplored. The advent of independence in 1980 saw the mushrooming of play groups, crèches or play centres all around Zimbabwe, including the rural, mine and farm communities. Initially these centres were the responsibility of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Community Development with the aim of providing custodial services for the young children while their mothers engaged themselves otherwise, like taking part in community projects. Caregivers or 'teachers' to baby - sit these children were handpicked from the local community. No prior professional training or standard level of education was sought. The idea was just to baby sit the children and allow their mothers to do other profitable activities for the survival of the family and community.

Today ECD in Zimbabwe is more organised, under the Ministry of Education, Arts, Sport and Culture. National ECD policies in the early 90s saw the transformation of the random play centres to the current more professional model of ECD which is closely following standards and practices on the international platform. The Secretary's circular number14/2004 which called for all primary schools to attach two ECD classes A (3-4years olds) and B(4-5year olds) has facilitated children's access to ECD by the majority of the children. The majority of both public and private centres are manned by para - professionals who have reasonable understanding of child development issues. However all primary teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe have embarked on aggressive training of ECD specialists in order to fulfil the requirement of

appropriately qualified staff who should manage ECD classes professionally(Secretary's Circular No. 14/2004).

Rationale for Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the Zimbabwean School Curriculum

The benefits of ECD in the Zimbabwean school curriculum are enormous. Early childhood years make a template of the child's later years. Besides the dominant focus on ECD as preparation for formal schooling, the broader view of ECD goes beyond school readiness as in academic performance(reading writing ,number work) (Dyanda et al, 2005). According to UNICEF,(2005) ECD is a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for young children, their parents and caregivers (teachers). In a school system, each party involved affects and is affected by the other parties. The school is a community in every respect. The culture of the home, school peers and the larger community are all fused to bring about an individual who should fit in different cultural environments. Culture is critical because curriculum is a selection from culture (Lawton, 1982).

In the school set up, children's rights should be respected. This is a fundamental component of ECD. Right from a tender age, children need to understand their place and relationship with older siblings and adults in the school environment. Psycho - social development is critical in early years of life. Erikson(1963) cited in Riley (2003) contends that, stable personality patterns begin in early childhood, and so, early childhood experiences play a critical role in terms of personality development. The development of the sense of self, self awareness, self regard and regard for others all need to be nurtured in early years of life. The knowledge of 'I am' and 'I can' are important for development of confidence and self awareness which are essential for personality development. A person who is able to identify one's capabilities and limitations can operate effectively in their immediate environment and elsewhere. Such individuals are equipped to handle relationships carefully and intelligently in any given situation and at any stage in their life span. They can socialise, express and control emotions appropriately (Slavin, 2000). Thus the principle or philosophy of *hunhu* then finds its proper place. In this case ECD makes a significant contribution   towards the achievement of broad educational goals.

ECD does not operate in a social vacuum. It encompasses community and parental involvement. Thus, family centred approaches and practices are incorporated in the school curriculum. Key characteristics of family-centred approaches include treating families with dignity and respect, sharing information so that families make informed decisions and providing individual flexible responsive support to families (Follari, 2011).The idea behind is to build capacity and confidence of parents who are the primary agents for facilitating children's growth and development. The partnership created between the school and the families helps to perpetuate home culture in the school thus, consolidating the child's culture and in the process the philosophy of *hunhu / ubuntu* is consolidated.

The call by government to attach two ECD classes A and B to all primary schools in Zimbabwe is a noble idea. Since public schools generally have descent shelter and charge reasonable fees which are quite sustainable, the policy served as a way of modifying inequalities rooted in poverty and social discrimination by giving children from all backgrounds a fair head - start in school in particular, and in life in general.

In support, Patterson (2008) points out that ideas about educating and raising children in their early years have come a long way and the historic roots run deep. Examples include John A. Comenius, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau all philosophers who advocated for children's growth and development in natural and harmonious settings. Comenius saw children as possessing great potential for learning and therefore should be assisted to learn through active means, hence, the need to place them in a school setting. To promote the philosophy of *hunhu / ubuntu*, one is persuaded to consider views about young children by Locke and Rousseau who assert that happiness is derived from individual freedom. Both were, therefore, against use of punishment, direct control and authority over children. Locke encouraged the use of children's internal need for approval and guilty, to manipulate them into the desired behaviour.

Locke, thus, preferred reasoning with the child to the use of corporal punishment (Hobart & Frankel, 1995). The respect for the young child would instil a sense of responsibility, thus, the child gains dignity and character.

The Role of Philosophy in Early Childhood Development (ECD) – A Justification

Practice can be conceptualised at two levels namely low – order or general / commonsense level and high – order or conscious / intentional levels respectively. The low – order or general / commonsense level of practice is characterised by actions which are done without being informed by clear assumptions or unarticulated theories. Though people might be quite aware of what they are doing, they may however not be aware of the theoretical reasoning behind the actions. In fact in most if not all cases that is not an issue, what matters is that 'I have done something or I am doing something'. Precisely because such practice is not informed by a clear and articulated theory or philosophy, the goals of such practices are similarly not clear and defined.

The other level of practice and which is of interest to this discussion is one which is characterized by consciousness and intentionality with respect to the course as well as the purpose or goal to be attained. Consciousness and intentionality of goals are a result of a well defined and articulated theoretical foundation informing the particular practice, in the absence of which the practice becomes haphazard and mere activism. It is our further submission that any practice should be a result of prior serious reflection and thinking, so that it does not end up being haphazard and mere activism or simply practice \ action for practice's / action's sake. Nkrumah (1972: 77) corroborates this point further when he contends that "practice without thought is blind; thought without practice is empty". Thus, any practice for it to have meaning and to realise the intended goals for which it was set must be informed by some theory, indeed a theory which must emanate from serious and conscious reflection over the intended practice. What seems apparent from the preceding is a quasi – dialectical relationship between theory and practice. The interplay can be viewed as such because in as much theory informs practice, further reflections on practice itself by way of summative evaluation is likely to impact on the theory, either modifying, refining or abandoning it altogether. Of course this refining or modification or abandonment of theory in question, will necessarily impact on the practice in similar dimensions. Thus, underlying every practice is some assumption, theory or philosophy. Theory thus provides the direction, focus and vision of practice otherwise it becomes mere activism.

The preceding discussion has far - reaching implications for our examination of the role of philosophy in ECD in Zimbabwe. Arising from the quasi – dialectical relationship between theory and practice, a similar relationship seems to obtain between theory, philosophy and education as practice in general, and ECD in Zimbabwe in particular. In as much as theory should inform practice in general for the practice to have focus on direction, in the present context we are also suggesting that some conscious and well articulated theory should inform the practice of ECD in Zimbabwe, if the education is to have meaning and relevance in Zimbabwe. Precisely because (not all) theory like knowledge is neutral or 'dead' it needs to be 'awakened 'or 'activated' to give it relevance. Thus, to 'activate' or 'awaken' theory so that it attains relevance and functionality within a given context, it needs to be interrogated by a particular philosophy evolving from a specific and concrete context. It is precisely in light of the above that we posit the thesis that: 'any education to be deemed relevant and meaningful, must evolve from a particular people's philosophy of life and must seek to articulate and address the concrete existential circumstances and needs of the particular people – in the absence of a well defined philosophy of education, to inform both theory and practice, education will unfortunately remain apparently haphazard and mere activism (Makuvaza, 2012 & 2013).

Accordingly, within the Zimbabwean situation, what is needed is a theory being informed by a philosophy of education evolving from and seeking to articulate and address the people's concrete and historical existential circumstances. What is being contended in the present discussion is that, if ECD is to

have relevance and functionality in Zimbabwe, its theory and practice, must be informed by a philosophy of education, evolving from and seeking to articulate and address the same. Indeed, if it is to perform the function of being the foundation or basis for sound definition and understanding of educatedness in Zimbabwe, it should be informed by the same. It is therefore against this reasoning that this paper is arguing for philosophy of *hunhu* to be the philosophy that should inform the practice of ECD education in Zimbabwe.

Towards a philosophy of ECD in Zimbabwe -A call for a philosophy of hunhu
The purpose of the preceding discussion on the role of philosophy in ECD was, firstly, to demonstrate the quasi - dialectical relationship that obtains between theory and practice in general (Makuvaza,2008; Nkrumah, 1972), and more specifically the practice of teaching ECD and secondly, between philosophy and education in general and ECD in particular. Indeed, for any educational practice to have relevance and meaning to the people it is intended for, it must be informed by some philosophy of education (Makuvaza, 1996a). Thus, for ECD to have significance and sense to the people it is intended for in any country, it should be informed by some philosophy of education which In turn should be informed by the particular people's philosophy of life.

According to Luthuli (1982: 13), philosophy of life comprises principles which are eternal truths and they must consequently always guide, direct and regulate a human's activity and ultimately, his education .A true philosophy of education should therefore be drawing from principles which emanate from eternal truths about man**.**

However, it needs to be pointed further that, it should not be any philosophy **per se** but rather it should be a 'particular' philosophy evolving from and seeking to address the people's concrete and historical existential circumstances. In addition, it should be a particular philosophy being informed by the particular people's 'philosophy of life'. Thus, if ECD is to have any meaning and relevance to Zimbabwe, it is being posited that, it should be anchored on a philosophy evolving from, and seeking to articulate, interrogate and address the concrete existential conditions and circumstances of Zimbabweans. Further it should be informed by a philosophy of life of Zimbabweans as Africans. Accordingly, it is considered important that ECD in Zimbabwe should be informed by *hunhu / ubuntu* and *chivanhu*. This has been so considered in view of the potential it has in influencing the end – products of our education system, as discussed earlier. Thus, it is in light of this that this paper is arguing for philosophy of *hunhu / ubuntu* to be **the** philosophy that should inform ECD in Zimbabwe. The assumption being that the young children exposed to this particular type of education will, in the long run develop into the type of educated graduates Zimbabwe wishes for notably, educated graduates *vane hunhu.*

The view of educatedness this paper is arguing for is one that is processual and not an event which is simply marked one's certification after a period of study at a college or university. Indeed it should be a process precisely because education itself which brings about educatedness is itself, but a process (Makuvaza, 1996b). If educatedness is viewed in the context of a process, then it only makes sense that students get exposed to those values which make them acceptable in their society early hence the role of ECD informed by philosophy of *hunhu / ubuntu* in this regard. It needs however to be submitted that this paper has a holistic view of education and hence educatedness – one which admits that *hunhu* is indeed necessary but cannot be sufficient in itself to constitute educatedness especially in the contemporary world. *Hunhu / ubuntu* should be complemented with knowledge and skills acquisition, in order, for one so – called educated to functional and acceptable in the contemporary Zimbabwe.

Philosophy of hunhu /ubuntu, ECD, and educatedness in Zimbabwe – Towards constructing a Zimbabwean 'person'.
It has been argued in the foregoing discussion that for any practice to have direction, purpose and vision it should be preceded by some serious thinking or theorising otherwise the practice risks being haphazard and mere activism. Similarly, educating as practice if it is to realise the intended goal of producing a

'particular' product and not just a 'mere' product, needs to be preceded by some conscious and serious thinking lest it becomes education for education's sake. In other words, for any educational provision not to produce 'mere graduates' but 'particular' graduates it necessarily needs to be informed by a 'particular' philosophy of education. Thus, particular philosophies of education have a crucial function of defining and determining the particular graduates of education systems in particular societies. Philosophy of education thus determines the quality and type of the person or graduate from any education system.

In line with this logic therefore, it can further be argued that ECD as general theory and practice can similarly produce general products. However, if ECD is to produce particular 'persons' in society then it should be informed by a particular philosophy of education. Accordingly, in Zimbabwe, if ECD is not to produce simply mere graduates but particular graduates, then it necessarily needs to be informed by a particular philosophy of education arising from the world – view and philosophy of life of the indigenes of Zimbabwe. In that regard, it is being posited that, ECD will have been successful in performing its foundational role of determining and defining the nature and quality of Zimbabwean persons the nation requires. Thus, in pursuit of the desire to have graduates from our education system who are genuinely Zimbabweans, *vanhu vane hunhu,* it is being contented that ECD should be informed by *hunhu / ubuntu* and *chivanhu.* It is in this regard that this paper is reiterating that, if ECD is to succeed in that pivotal role then it should be informed by philosophy of *hunhu / ubuntu* and *chivanhu.* Accordingly, this paper is arguing for philosophy of *hunhu/ubuntu* to be the philosophy that should inform ECD, if Zimbabwe is not to end up with 'mere' citizens but more importantly 'particular' citizens who are indeed Zimbabweans, *vari vanhu vane hunhu.* By the philosophy of *hunhu/ubuntu* is meant a philosophy which has as its point of departure the culture of the people of Zimbabwe as Africans and rooted in and projecting *chivanhu* and *hunhu* which is an encapsulation of the aforementioned traits. The assumption being that the young children exposed to this particular type of education will in the long run develop into the type of educated graduates Zimbabwe wishes for, notably, educated graduates *vane hunhu* (Makuvaza, 1996b).

Implications of ECD for educatedness, teaching and globalization

The call for philosophy of *hunhu / ubuntu* to be the philosophy of education in Zimbabwe to inform ECD has far reaching implications not only for educatedness but for teaching in general and also for globalization and the attendant challenge of cultural uprootedness as a result there from. Precisely because educatedness is not an event but a process, it therefore implies that the thrust of *hunhu / ubuntu and chivanhu* in teaching should not be a 'one – off' event with ECDE, but should run through the entire education system. It is therefore being posited that the philosophy of *hunhu / ubuntu* be the guiding philosophy of Zimbabwean education system. The assumption being that, as a consequence, we might end up with not only people who graduated from colleges and universities with knowledge and skills but in addition with graduates who are genuinely educated – *vanhu vakadzidza ivo vaine hunhu*(Makuvaza, 1996a).What is being called for is a serious re – examination of current conceptions and perceptions of educatedness which seem to exteriorize the dimension of *hunhu/ ubuntu* and *chivanhu* into the definition(The Nziramasanga Commission, 1999). What it therefore means is that teaching and educating should no longer exclusively be for knowledge and skills acquisition as a sign of educatedness, but in addition to that, teaching should be for *hunhu / ubuntu* at whatever level of teaching, educating and learning.

Additionally, and with special reference to teaching and teachers, it means there is need for a new crop of a teacher, one who in addition to having qualified as a teacher, can live *upenyu hune hunhu* so that students and learners can emulate him / her. The dimension of living *upenyu hune hunhu* in relation to teaching and the teacher is of special importance because *hunhu* is of the nature that a teacher cannot only theorise it without *living* it. *Hunhu / ubuntu* demands that one is committed to and is conversant with it, both verbally and existentially. Hence the need for a particular type of teacher, one who not only 'knows about' *hunhu /ubuntu* but more importantly, is 'sold out' to *hunhu / ubuntu ,* that is, one who can live *hupenyu hune hunhu* in line with *chivanhu* if one's teaching is going to have an impression on the

learners such that ultimately they develop into *vanhu vane hunhu* and further resulting into a society *ine vanhu vane hunhu* (Makuvaza,1996b).

Further, in light of some of the possible side effects of globalisation and such as cultural 'uprootedness' and 'identity crises' (Makuvaza, 1996a), as a result of ICTs and the concomitant 'knowledge explosion', it is being suggested that education informed by *hunhu/ ubuntu* from as early a stage as ECD, has the potential to check such advances. It will assist in addressing some of the problems associated with identity crises and cultural 'uprootedness' emanating from the possible risk of being 'absorbed' into the global village, as it aims at fostering and instilling confidence, self – esteem and identity in the youth for which this philosophy and education is aimed at. Further, it is hoped it will assist in checking the advances of 'mimetic philopraxis' which according to Ramose (1999 : 10) is the "uncritical imitation of the life of non – Africans" which has invaded especially the youths of today. Indeed, this can only be a 'hope' in view of the manner non – African lifestyles are unreservedly presented to the gullible youths. They are presented in such a manner so as to *whet* their appetites for more. Thus, it is being suggested ECD informed by the philosophy of *hunhu* is indeed strategically placed to contain such tendencies. Conclusively, it is being argued that even in the so – called 'global village' one should always be first and fore – most, a Zimbabwean who espouses *hunhu / ubuntu* and *chivanhu* without being apologetic (Makuvaza, 2008 & 2013).

Possible Challenges in teaching ECD in the context of *hunhu* and *chivanhu* in Zimbabwe.
Cultural diversity
Different cultures prize different values. Hacker,(2011) defines cultural diversity as significant variations in the way societies organise themselves in their shared occupation of morality and the way they interact with their environment. It entails different cultures respecting each other's language, dress, traditions and religious practices. Gatsi and Dyanda (2010) explain cultural diversity as a social construct that accounts for differences in race, ethnicity, language, value systems and religion. It clearly shows that the definition of a child and how the child must be raised and become differs from one culture to the other.

While cultural diversity makes the world colourful, basing on the explanations in the preceding paragraph, one observes that parenting becomes a real challenge. The nature of care giving or parenting styles by different families is an issue today yet it is important to note that emotional availability and sensitivity of care givers in different children's settings is critical for personality development (Hacker, 2011). Due to the variations in raising children, the concept *hunhu / ubuntu* would be interpreted in different ways. Children of a dominant parent, for example, generally experience hostility. They are low in experiencing and expressing love and affection. A dominant parent is known for being high on rules. The language in his/her communication is characterised by such statements as; " Do it because I say so" ' I said so and that's it' The neglectful parent generally does not want to be bothered unless there is a crisis. Language is characterised by such statements as; 'leave me alone', 'I am tired 'and reminders like ' I work for the family' They lack humour and make empty promises. As a result, the child feels unwanted, angry and left out. On the other hand, a permissive parent, though strong on love and affection tends to spoil the child. In turn the child takes advantage of such a parenting style and can get away with all kinds of mischief and easily get into trouble because discipline is very minimal. It is only a balanced parent, however, who knows and clearly defines rules and limits and informs the child correctly. This kind of a parent does not trade rules for love or vice versa. While love is expressed for the child, good behaviour is also insisted without compromise. Language sends very clear messages such as, 'I love you', 'I am concerned about you' Children from such a family background stay out of trouble and feel good about themselves.

The ECD teacher faced with children from all such varied belief systems may have serious problems in defining *hunhu / ubuntu* . Several questions can be raised, for example; Whose culture should be upheld? What is correct or wrong behaviour and from whose perspective? This paper observes that the issue of moral character is indeed debatable. Turiel (1983) contends that traditional character education practice is

premised in the idea that virtues and vices are the basis to moral behaviour. The question is; Who determines correct/ right behaviour? One notices that moral behaviour is a bag of virtues such as honesty, kindness, patience. Teachers are expected to teach through modelling or by example and direct communication of convictions (Bandura cited in Berger, 2000). In such a scenario, children are even given an opportunity to practise the virtues and expression of the virtues is rewarded. The challenge in such practices is that teachers may end up imposing certain values depending on their societal, cultural and personal beliefs.

The ECD teacher, however, can capitalise on stage dependent theories of moral development by Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. Kohlberg (1969) in Turiel, (1983) rejects focus on values and virtues not only because of lack of consensus on what virtues are to be taught but also the complex nature of practising such virtues. An example is where two people make different decisions yet hold the same basic moral values. As a result, Piaget and Kohlberg agree that morality develops in stages and is tied to the sequence of qualitative mental development (Pauser, Huggins and Kohlberg, 1989). The argument is that a person interacts and reacts to own environment based on their current understanding of their environment. At some point, the child will encounter information which does not fit into their world view. The child is then forced to adjust their world view in order to accommodate the newly gained information. This leads to equilibration of the mind and so development occurs. The child now reasons at a different and higher level. Decisions are based on rationalisation and not just rules or mere virtues (Nucci, 1989). The role of the ECD teacher, therefore, is to encourage children to develop to the next stage of moral reasoning. Building children's character around the philosophy of *hunhu* becomes more manageable and justifiable, as morality is defined through reasoning which continues to develop in line with mental growth rather than imposition of values and virtues.

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)
The development of Information Technology (IT) is transcending geographical boundaries and reshaping relationships between families, peers, work places and even citizens. Children in early years of life are not an exception. Hacker,(2011) points out that the growth of mass media industry has largely impacted on individuals and societies. Hacker further makes an observation that although beneficial in some ways, the increased accessibility to information has the capacity to negatively impact on individuals especially young children because of limited reasoning capacity.

The impact of television, radio, literature and internet on young children's personalities cannot be overemphasised. Today communication between individuals and countries has become more and more frequent. With information so easily distributed throughout the world, cultural meanings, values and tastes run the risk of becoming homogenised. As a result, the strength of identity of individuals and societies obviously begins to weaken and people's originality is shaken (*vanhu vobva pa hunhu hwavo*) *(Makuvaza, 2010).*

Globalization
Many globalisation factors are affecting parenting styles of different families. As much as possible, the underlying culture sets the stage fro norms and values which parents want to impart and society on the other hand, rewards and incentivises. Nonetheless, technology economic conditions and global views and standards influence, to a greater extent, parents' abilities to lead and guide children to become full functioning members of their own societies (Nuccci, 1989). Parents, thus, cease to become models for their own children. Different technologies, to a large extent, have taken the role of a parent in raising the child. To this end, one cannot avoid questioning the mode of character building that today's society and families are instilling in young children. It is, therefore, the nature of personalities (*hunhu / ubuntu*) envisaged in decades to come, no matter the amount of education that one receives, that this paper is concerned about.

Globalisation is having an impact in shaping children's personalities and character dispositions. Marie (2011) raises the following questions; with the 'all in one' computers around, where children are glued to all day long, will we have real leaders out of that? Marie (2011) thinks that the time children spend sitting in front of screens, today, is too much. Most of then hardly exercise. Even in ECD centres and nursery schools, children have long screen times. Some cartoons, music, films and literature to which our young children are exposed to day in and out through television, radio, Internet and literature leaves a lot to be desired in terms of character /personality building. How then can the excessive use of these screens by young children be avoided?

Socio – economic status of families

Again, because of the seriously compromised socio-economic status of most families, many parents in today's world tend to spend very little time if any with their own children as they are preoccupied with bringing food to the table. Sitting down with children to chat over life becomes a luxury for many families. As a result, parents may fail to effectively direct on the proper or desired conduct. The influence of media and peers on the life of today's child seems greater than that of parents. This shows how parental guidance is dwindling. While all this happens, one wonders whether what children see, hear, watch and read is censored and if not whose responsibility is it?. The other concern is whether what young children spend time on, is by any chance what their families and society at large cherish or prize? Marie,(2011) concludes by positing that some parents think that giving children freedom to do whatever they want is a sign of affluence and how they have come up to the social ladder. It is essential to understand that children need benevolent directors as parents. Guided discovery serves rather than misguided liberalism. Children should not be left to raise themselves. The philosophy of *hunhu* promoting *chivanhu* should, therefore, be well understood and be used as the basis for raising and training children for full functioning adulthood.

Resources

Concerns about availability and quality of resources cannot be overemphasised in our Zimbabwean situation. For instance, most of the ECD centres are still being manned by para professionals who may not have adequate knowledge and skills to foster total development in children. Thus, the level of training against the needs and interest of various age groups in ECD leaves a lot to be desired. Because of the level of training that most of our ECD teachers have, many may be found wanting in as far as relevant skills are concerned, for example, technological developments which are now quite complex (Tassoni & Hurker,2005). ECD teachers need to understand different technologies relevant to ECD. Some of the questions that one may ask are;

- Does the ECD teacher know how to access the internet? ,where to find different soft ware for young children including videos?
- Does the ECD teacher have updated knowledge about HIV and AIDS?
- Does the ECD teacher have knowledge about child protection issues and child counselling?
- How skilful and knowledgeable are ECD teachers to handle diverse children's issues?

In terms of infrastructural and material resources, issues related to adequacy and appropriateness are of interest. In the majority of cases, ECD children in the mushrooming settings are either squashed in small rooms in some cases without enough ventilation or ablution for boys and girls. Play materials are insufficient, given the numbers that one finds in the centres. Such practices seriously compromise quality of learning. Dignity is infringed when children are deprived of privacy especially with limited refreshing rooms (UNICEF, 2005).

The highlighted challenges need to be seriously considered and addressed if ECD programmes are to assist us to mould desired personalities, *vanhu vane hunhu,* for both the present and future generations in Zimbabwe.

2. Conclusion

Twenty – first century Zimbabwe, particularly the youth, are at a cultural cross – roads. This cultural dilemma is as result of the inevitable powerful impact of western education, globalization and information communication technologies. Accordingly, as a result of these forces, the youth in particular, are experiencing serious cultural crises resulting in identity crises and mimetic philopraxis (Ramose, 1999). Thus, in order to salvage today's Zimbabwean youth from the ravages of globalisation, so that they can have an identity as Zimbabweans, ECD anchored on philosophy of *hunhu / ubuntu* has a vital and strategic role in this regard. Therefore, if Zimbabwean education is to take the centre stage, as it should in firstly, determining and defining educatedness and secondly checking the negative impact of globalisation in the wake of cultural uprootedness and cultural paralysis, the foundational location of ECD informed by *hunhu / ubuntu* does not require any further emphasis.

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