

Enhancing Children's Critical and Inquisitive Skills in Culturally Informed Communities of South Africa

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ABSTRACT Evidence exists that young learners in culturally inclined communities of South Africa lack critical thinking and inquisitive skills. These learners are assumed to be culturally beguiled into believing that it is an abomination to question elders, and those who did so are tagged rabbles. Therefore, this study used the perspectives of community elites to expose the challenges children/young ones face in gaining critical and inquisitive skills along with possible solutions. The study is underpinned by Sociocultural Theory within the transformative paradigm. The study was designed using participatory research and unstructured interview to elicit information from the participants. The data collected were analysed using thematic analysis. The study revealed that children/young ones are being demonised as rebels, and stereotyped as uncultured, untrained and disrespectful, hence deprived of skill development. The study recommends organisational advocacy and curriculum restructuring, alongside strong school advocacy and awareness towards children/young ones' skill development.

INTRODUCTION

Children worldwide are developed, not only with knowledge inculcated under the four walls of classrooms, but the place of social, historical, and cultural disposition also play a significant role in their development (Greenfield and Cocking 2014). The beliefs that culture and environmental inclination shapes the personality of the young ones, so also the place of education/schooling also contribute to their developmental process. Among the expected development are the acquirement of critical thinking skills, questioning skills and being inquisitive to their environment. The need for these skills could be linked with the national economic demand that places creativity over and above certification. The strength of any economy depends on learners' ability to think critically, be smart, inquisitive, and be innovative (Pithers and Soden 2000; Rotherham and Willingham 2010). For any nation to outsmart the likely deficiency that could emanate from lack of those skills, culture, school, and indigenous liberation are inevitable towards making the young ones curious, thinkers, question the unclear and the unknown. The argument of Barnes (2005) and Mabaso (2017) confirm that school learners have limited critical thinking skills, questioning skills, sustainable reasoning towards knowledge flexibility that could enable them to add values to their society. This may not be different from the 1995 education reform in South Africa that the production of critical thinkers with the ability to

question to make an informed decision is imminent (Republic of South Africa (RSA) 1995). According to Lombard and Grosser (2008), this reform brings about the idea of lifelong learning, process-oriented learning, among others.

Hence, to ensure that the above-mentioned skills are acquired and retained by the young ones, the place of their cultural upbringing cannot be undermined. According to Huang (2018), culture and child development are inseparable because the environment constitutes part of cultural disposition to children's behaviour and beliefs. This is supported by the findings of Yang and Li (2020) that local culture plays a significant role in childhood development. According to these scholars, childhood development includes; cognitive, social, thinking ability, and learning development shaped by the quality and value eroded in such culture. According to Pumariaga and Joshi (2010), cultural values and beliefs are inculcated primarily to children by the family and complements by other social institutions. This further confirms that the behaviours (critical thinking, inquisitive, and ability to ask questions) of the young ones are shaped by cultural inclination from their family and communities. Observing from the rural communities in South Africa is that the university students and school learners from rurally located communities face various vocalised challenges such as inability to ask questions in the classroom, inability to think outside the box, and their perceived low morale towards

academic activities. When asked, some of these students confirmed that it is an abomination to question elders and or to be too inquisitive to know things. This observation may not be unconnected to the negative cultural beliefs imposed on them from birth coupled with low community and institutional response within their locality.

Existing literature also indicated that traditional beliefs erroneously mislead the young ones, and they end up living with it and pass it from generation to generation (Li and Karakowsky 2001). Traditional influences such as customs, aesthetics, and beliefs affect children's emotional, social, physical, linguistic, and cognitive development (Isidien 2017). This undoubtedly could hinder learning and other outer developmental skills. In such cases, Maryville University (n.d.) recommends that it takes a culturally inclined educator to transform such children from the misled aspect of cultural and traditional practices. Experiences also indicated that children from rurally located communities are informed that it is wrong to question the elders and/or anyone older. This may also be interpreted as a reason for the children to refuse to challenge authorities and demand for their rights and privileges since doing that could be tagged "being rebellious". Such beliefs could also be tagged as self-coloniality where the children are unable to challenge any perceived operation or epistemic imbalance in the education and social system. The researcher also argues that this is unknowingly paving the way for western epistemic sustainability. This observation is a total deviation from the process that could lead to the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) blueprint that focuses on a sustainable, better, and productive future for all (United Nations n.d.).

However, there is limited literature to justify the observed negative effect of cultural beliefs of the young ones towards their development in terms of skill development and ability to question and think outside the box. The fact that the community elders and parents are the authorities and the custodian of beliefs and are powerful which demand that the young ones must listen to them to avoid being demonised as a rebel. These informal authorities have inevitably shaped children mentality towards their lives (Mucherah and Mbogori 2019). Hence, the researchers' experience will be substantiated by the theoretical underpinning alongside the study's result. In unravelling the problem, sociocultural

theory is essential as it sheds more light on the connection between culture and child development. It also helps the researcher establish the nexus between society's cultural and individual mental development processes (John-Steiner and Mahn 1996). This is the gap that this study intends to fill. More knowledge and solutions about the correlation between culture and children's mental development, children development such as questioning and critical thinking skills were exemplified.

Theoretical Framework

The sociocultural theory was adopted to underpin this study. Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, and associates were among the first persons in the field of sociocultural theory in the 1920s and 1930s (John-Steiner and Mahn 1996; Wang et al. 2011) with an argument that social consciousness is derivative (Vygotsky 1978, 1979). That is, individual mental functionality is a function of social interaction with specific social structures and cultures. Lev Vygotsky "translated seminal works", "Mind in society", "Thought and language" (Vygotsky 1978, 1986) place more emphasis on the social and cultural dimension of human cognitive development (Wang et al. 2011). Vygotsky is not the only personality in this development. Scholars like Lemke (1990), Rogoff (1990), and Wertsch (1991) advanced the development of sociocultural theory with an argument that human cognition is shaped in social and community activities by integrating with people and its environment. This is to confirm that cognitive development, which characterises the feature of human critical and inquisitive skill, is inseparable from the cultural, social, historical context of development (Johnson and Johnson 2009). In a nutshell, whatever human disposition or behaviour, it is assumed to result from cultural and social injection from early engagement and interaction with the environment. This argument is furtherance of Vygotsky's law of development, which emphasizes the viability of social interaction in human and cognitive development (Phan 2012). This law confirms that "human mental ability appears twice; firstly, on the social level, that is, between people (interpsychological), and secondly on the individual level which occurs inside the learner (intrapsychological)" (Vygotsky 1978: 57, 1997: 106).

Deducing from this theory, learning which leads to skills and human development happens in two spares: social, which is linked to interaction and engagement with others and the society, the other is the individual ability within. These two spares are combined in the process of human and cognitive development, and if contaminated by misleading beliefs, potent may affect human development negatively. In this case, if the culture in social interaction is made wrongly, the receiver, children/young ones, will be affected, and that is not far from the observed cultural lacuna among the young ones/learners in the selected community. The argument here is in consonance with the contestation made by Phan (2012: 14) that "there is a dialectic association between individuals and their societies" where the development of simple and complex skills is inherent in the social milieu. This is to argue that values, ideologies, beliefs, communities, and societal placement is significant skill internalisation. Therefore, this theory is relevant because it helps to understand the possibility of unstructured and misleading cultural beliefs on the development of young ones. And that such an act could contaminate the child's development and their quest for criticalness and inquisitive tendencies. Having established the possibilities of misleading cultural pedagogy among the young ones towards acquiring life skills such as being critical and inquisitive, the study aimed to provide possible solutions to the problem. This study will, however, be piloted by one research question and two research objectives.

Research Question

Based on the above problem, the following research question was raised to guide the study;

- How can misinformed culture be reconstructed to enhance children critical and inquisitive skills in culturally informed communities of South Africa?

Research Objectives

Based on the above research question, the following research objectives were formulated to guide the process of answering the question;

- The study explored the challenges young children face in gaining critical and inquisitive skills in culturally informed communities.

- The study investigates the possible solutions that could redefine the disconnections between culture and skill development.

METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm and Design

The Transformative Paradigm (TP) was adopted for this study. This is because the study aims to transform the predicament of the *researched* (Romm 2015). That is, the framework is suitable to address inequalities and injustices in society (Mertens 2007). In Mertens' (1999) argument, TP is a research method that seeks to transform the lives of the marginalised or the colonised entity, community, or group of persons. This paradigm is relevant to this study because it aims to understand the challenges that culturally misinformed social reality has done to children's development and provide solutions that could transform the "*researched*" for a better developmental process. Based on this, Participatory Research (PR) was adopted as a research design for the study. This design is appropriate because it allows the concerned and well-informed people about the problem of the study to come together and provide a lasting solution to the problem (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995). This is in line with the definition by Krishnaswamy (2004) that PR is a research process that engages the people facing the problem in generating solutions to the problem. That is to say that PR is a methodological design process of collaborative construction of knowledge involving the community members and the specific group facing a particular problem as a co-researcher to co-produce solutions to the problem (Weller and Malheiros da Silva 2011). This agrees with Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2014) that "collectivism is a key feature of PR". In this study, the participants were selected based on their experiences within the problem of the study, and they were involved in sharing their knowledge about the problem and made to share the possible solution to the problem.

Participants and Selection of Participants

The study carefully selected three participants to participate in this study. They were considered to be well informed in the problem of the study. Apart from being a member of the selected

community, they were born and raised in the same community, attended rural universities located in the same community, and work in the same rural community. Two of them were teachers while one was a university lecturer, though their place of work is insignificant to their selection criteria, to show that they were all elites who had adequate knowledge on both culture and education. However, getting hold of more participants with the same characteristics was a challenge to this study. They were selected using a snowballing sampling technique. This technique was appropriate for the study since there are limited participants with adequate knowledge of the problem. The researcher depended on the referrer's suggestions on the possible participants. This is in line with Beauchemin and González-Ferrer's (2011) argument that snowballing sampling technique is suitable to select participants that possess uncommon characteristics that strangers could not identify. In this study, the researcher is a stranger and needed to be referred to suitable participants.

Instrumentation and Data Analysis

An unstructured interview was used to elicit information from the participants. This interview was adopted because it enabled the participants to freely dispense information without restriction (Dana et al. 2013). This also enabled the researcher to arrange the research objectives into interview questions in such a way that the participants were allowed to talk and refer to various experiences. The questions were based on the challenges that young ones face while growing up that affect their critical and inquisitive skills. And the second question centered around how the challenges could be addressed to transform the children in the community. The data collected were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was considered appropriate because the objectives of the study, which constitute the basis for the interview, were already in the form of themes, and the data were made to respond to each objective which could be tagged as themes. Hence the data were presented to respond to the objectives using the six steps of doing thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2012; Clarke and Braun 2014). The steps included getting to know the data, coding the data, identifying themes, reviewing them, giving names

to the themes, and writing the results (Braun and Clarke 2006). For the study, the six steps were followed in producing the result.

Trustworthiness

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the research, which is synonymous with reliability and validity in quantitative studies (Mohajan 2017), the research process, most especially the data generation process was done with honesty. That is, the input, process and output were based on trust. The reality and the truth of the data were presented because it is a process to ascertain that findings are dependable, confirmable, credible and transferrable (Omodan and Ige 2021).

Ethical Consideration

Compliance with research ethics is not negotiable, and it promotes honesty, confidentiality, trustworthiness, integrity, objectivity, and openness (Gajjar 2013; Haligamo 2021). It also includes freedom and respect for participants and their identities, including the protection of both the researcher(s) and the participants from any potential harm (Omodan 2021; Mthiyane and Mudadigwa 2021). In this study, the participants were well informed about the study, the purpose, and that they are free to withdraw from participation should they feel uncomfortable. They were given a consent form, and they were given enough time to either reject or accept to participate. They were also ensured that their identity and everything concerning them would remain anonymous during and after the study. In the data analysis session, their identities were represented using pseudo names. That is, participants were represented with P1, P2, and P3 during the data production stage.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected through the lens of transformative and participatory research were presented and analysed based on the two objectives of the study. As discussed above, the data were presented in themes under the principles of thematic analysis. Objective one generated two themes,

namely, demonizing a child's urge to discuss with adults and unfair stereotypes. While objective two also generated two themes: organisational advocacy and curriculum restructuring, and school advocacy and awareness (See Table 1).

Table 1: Thematic representation of data based on the research question and objectives

<i>Research Question: How can misinformed culture be reconstructed to enhance children's critical and inquisitive Skills in culturally informed communities of South Africa?</i>	
<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Analysis of sub-themes</i>
1. The challenges young children face in gaining critical and inquisitive skills in culturally informed communities.	1. Demonising child's urge to discuss with adults. 2. Unfair Stereotype.
2. The possible solutions to redefine the disconnections between culture and skill development.	1. Organisational advocacy and curriculum Restructuring. 2. School advocacy and awareness.

Objective 1, Theme 1: Demonising child's urge to discuss with adults

It is a popular African adage that when you hide reasons from children, the life span of such practices will go into extinction. In this case, evidence shows that children of the selected community are culturally not allowed to discuss with elders, and they are made to know that it is wrong to be inquisitive. These suffixes are in the data collected from the participants. P1 has this to say:

"As an African, who grew up in the rural area, I found that our indigenous culture has negatively influenced the way we individual think and behave. Based on the indigenous culture, a young child is chided from engaging in discussion with adults. This is because it is seen as disrespectful as well as unruly behaviour. In addition, the learners who grow up in a rural community where this indigenous culture is eminent experiences difficulty in relating or interacting with other people as they develop low self-esteem and feel isolated from the rest of the world because of what their indigenous culture teaches them. For example, a young lady growing up in the rural area is taught that women are inferior and men are superior. She is trained on how to be submissive to the husband and how to make a home, while the man in question is not trained on how to be a responsible man. This gender-based role and inequality will now affect the way the lady in

question thinks and acts. The lady will not be able to express herself due to the values she was taught from home."

From the statement above, it is confirmed that indigenous culture being dispensed negatively has affected the behavior of the young ones. This emanated from how they were made to know that it is wrong to discuss with elders because such an act was made to look like a disrespectful act to the children. This kind of demonisation has affected the development of one "in relating or interacting with other people, which has affected their self-esteem and *caused them to be isolated from the rest of the world*". This participant also made mention how the young ladies were made to have beliefs that they were inferior to boys. This, according to the participant, affected the development of young ladies. In a similar argument, P2 also has this to say:

P2: *"Learners living in rurally located community lack inquisitive skills due to their inherent education from their parents, culturally, a Mosotho child was not allowed to be among elders, was not allowed to question their elders, they had to listen and abide by what their elders were telling them to do, for instance, "Basotho teenage girls and boys were told that they were not allowed to eat eggs without been given the reasons why? If it happened that a child wanted clarity by asking "what will happen or why? It was found a crime and such a child considered to be not respecting."*

The above statement from P2 also confirms that rural learners, who are also categorised as young ones, lack inquisitive skills as a result of the misinformed culture dispensed to them by their parents. This statement also corroborates P1 that children are not allowed to be among elders and that they must not question elders, and that there are some superstitions they practice that were not explained to the children. Such as prohibiting young guys from eating eggs without telling them the reasons. In this case, they are not also allowed to question the elders to enable them to know the reason. The statement of P3 below is in support of P1 and P2 as indicated below:

P3: *"learners who are most often those from rural areas, are lost in the learning process, ever willing to be followers, with the "do-as-you-are-told" approach to all aspects of learning. Rather than approach me as a teacher, they tend to avoid the question or problem and leave*

without understanding the lesson content than ask the teacher. When you ask them why they are not willing to learn, they say they are willing to learn but afraid to confront me because I am older. This has detrimental bearings on their test scores and overall performance. The notion of not approaching a teacher/questioning a teacher/enquiring for clarity or further understanding is synonymous with rural students, and it is most evident in the classroom."

According to the P3, who is a teacher recounted that the learners from the rural communities are lost during learning and always want to be followers instead of thriving to be independent. They are still wallowing in the abyss of "do-as-you-are-told". They are afraid to approach their teachers just to avoid been see as a rebel because they were made to believe that it is wrong to talk, discuss and question elders. The participant further confirms that the notion of approaching, questioning, or enquiring is peculiar to rural learners, evidence that they are afraid of being tagged a rebel.

Discussion of Finding: Based on the above analysis, it was revealed that children/young ones in the selected community lack critical thinking, inquisitiveness and inquiry skills because of their preconceived cultural pedagogy. This cultural belief shows that they will be labelled as a rebel if they discuss, question and inquire to know what is unclear to them. Therefore, demonizing a child's urge to discuss with adults remains a challenge that affects rural children to gain inquisitive, critical, and questioning skills. This finding contradicts Mucherah and Mbogori (2019) finding that culture is significant in a positive direction to children a social and academic development. This is also in consonance with the argument of socio-cultural theorists that human cognition is shaped in social and community activities by integrating with people and its environment (Esmonde 2016; Danish and Gresalfi 2018). The finding further showed that some cultures are still unfavourable to the development of the children/young ones.

Objective 1, Theme 2: Unfair Stereotype

In the field, it was gathered that when children/learners are curious, ask probing questions and think rationally, and they are stereotyped as uncultured, untrained and disrespectful. In this case, children often keep their curiosity within themselves in the below participant's statement.

P1: *"Another example is the case of respecting our elders, and when the elder misbehaves with the child, due to culture, the child is not able to report to their parents. In this regard, the child or learner develops psychological imbalance. Therefore, when a learner is inquisitive, curious, asks probing questions, and thinks rationally from the indigenous cultural perspective, the learner is seen as untrained, disrespectful, and uncultured. Hence, this reveals that culture limits the learners' ability to utilise their potentials and transform their lives."*

P2: *"Very unfortunately, Having brought up like this, knowing that to question a parent or an elderly is wrong, a child cannot be a critical thinker, these negatively affected him/her in how to express their feelings and even shy away to ask particularly if the question had to be directed to an elderly and even today is the case, as a primary teacher in one of the rural schools, I have noticed that the learners in these areas need to be spoon-fed., They fail to participate fully in the class especially if they had to address questions that require their critical thinking. Again, these learners, when are in schools, they are still under the same approach where teachers have to teach based on curriculum demands without been given a chance to question the curriculum "top-down approach" For example, they are even compelled to do certain subjects because are the subject done in school, of which at some point if they were given a chance to express and reveal their choice they may not."*

From the above participants' statements, one could see that the ways young ones are brought up were not in tandem with the 21st century child development agenda where individuals should be trained to be self-reliant (United Nations n.d.). P1 confirmed that culture limits the children/learners' ability to utilise their potential to transform their lives. This is because their culture has taken away self-trust. And such stereotype has killed their consciousness where they won't be able to report any misdeed or maltreatment from elders to any authorities. In the statement of P2, this also affects the children in the classroom, where they find it difficult to participate and dispense their critical thinking skills.

The effect of this cultural act against the child development in the community also affects their level of reasoning, and they are always of the opinion that the teacher is right. See below statement:

P3: *"I have found that there is a glaring distinction between learners who come from rural areas and whose parents have little or no education. They believe that the teacher is always right and absorb whatever is taught without questioning it or challenging the content. Whilst this may be true, learners who come from more affluent areas, whose parents are educated, are able to think beyond what is said by the teacher. They ask questions that are relevant to the lesson and are more eager to question what they don't understand for further development. In my grade 12 class, learners are attentive to detail, always willing to provide an opinion on a topic, and question and discuss their answers to class activities. Upon further investigation, one would find that these learners' parents are professionals who invest time in their child's education. They are also taught that discussions are healthy, and they are more than willing to apply rational thought processes to problem-solving."*

The statement from P3 is connected to the fact that learners, through their cultures, have been made to see that elders are always right and whatever they say must not be challenged. The teacher has to be part of the culture also believed that this might be true, but then, other learners who are from affluent areas, whose parents are educated, can think outside the box because they are eager to know and willing to ask for clarifications on issues. Perhaps, in their homes, they are told that it is to engage with elders.

Discussion of Finding: Based on the above analysis, the study revealed that children are unfairly misled by stereotyping them as a result of their curiosity to "knowing". The fear of being stereotyped as uncultured, untrained and disrespectful constitutes the challenges responsible for their inability to think critically, inquire about knowledge, and question authorities whenever there is a need to do so. This does affect not only their social life but also affect their academic life. This finding is in consonance with the finding of Tomasello (2000) that local culture at some points is inimical to children's social and cognitive development. This also confirms the argument of Roopnarine and Davidson (2015) that customs and practices are a key function of child socialisation and development. This is to say when there are bad cultural practices will have negative implications on the children of such communities.

Objective 2, Theme 1: Organisational Advocacy and Curriculum Restructuring

By responding to the above challenges, the participants identified the place of a strong awareness by organisations, curriculum developers, and social groups to concertise the young ones and their parents. This awareness becomes necessary to open the minds of the rural children to their rights and privileges abound in them in gaining critical, inquisitive, and inquiry skills. See below statements.

P1: *"I believe that with regular or constant advocacy from NGOs, awareness should be created for students/learners/young ones to understand that as human beings that they have a right too as citizens to exercise, challenge and question their superior when they don't understand some certain rules or asked to do things which they are not familiar with."*

P2: *"Again, there has to be revisited on Basotho cultural norms and practices starting from home, to primary schools up to high schools. The curriculum has to be inclusive and accommodating, maybe there to be some topics in the curriculum that promote learners' critical thinking."*

P3: *"The ultimate solution is two-pronged. Rural parents need to be encouraged to understand that a child's opinions and questions are productive to their cognitive development and SHOULD NOT be dealt with via punishment. This needs to be reinforced at parents' meetings."*

From P1's statement, the role of NGOs is advocated for. The participants recommend that concerted awareness by NGOs should be established to enable students/learners/young ones to understand their rights and privileges and their right to challenge and question the superior from an ethical perspective. In the same motive, P2 also suggest curriculum need to be restructured to establish some topics in school that will unravel acquirement of critical thinking skill. The recommendation of P3 also reiterated more on parental awareness where they will be made to understand that child's opinions also matters and that allowing them to have a say also contribute to their development.

Discussion of Finding: Based on the above analysis, the study revealed that one of the solutions that could enhance a child's acquirement of critical, questioning, and inquisitive skill is to ensure organisational advocacy and curriculum

restructuring. That is awareness among students/learners/young ones to sensitise that that their urge to know is not a crime but a right. In the same vein, reconstructing the curriculum to ensure that there is a topic/subject that deals with critical thinking skills will also go a long way in ameliorating the problem. This is in line with the argument that social awareness is a critical factor in a child's education (Greenberg et al. 2003). This is also in line with the conclusion of Gehlbach et al. (2012) that students with strong awareness could easily adapt to the environment and engage productively with other people.

Objective 2, Theme 2: School Advocacy and Awareness

Another suggestible solution is the recommendation that individual schools must intensify on strong awareness and effort in making sure that students/learners/young ones are liberated and emancipated. This recommendation suffixes in the below statements.

P1: "Schools should also be seen as an environment that enables the learners to speak out or voice out freely, and this will help them to overcome some of the challenges they are experiencing educationally, physically, socially and psychologically."

P2: "I think what is needed is to start by involving their parents at an early stage of their schooling by proving parents' education during parents meeting to collaboratively work with teachers in how to 'raise a child without fear'. This phenomenon will ease the teachers' work because it is a belief that every child is a reflection of his /her family. Therefore, when parents clearly understand how a child raised without asking is affected it will enable them to realise that it is not wrong to ask but help the child how to ask."

According to P1, efforts should be made by schools to make their environment friendly to help students/learners/young ones overcome cultural challenges. Not only that, but the place of parents' education is also important as recommended by P2 that parents need to be informed and work alongside teachers to be able to raise a critical child. This effort, according to P2 will enable the young ones to realise that there is nothing wrong with being inquisitive and critical. The comment from P2 also confirmed that the school manager exhibit superiority and see any subordinate who asks a question as a challenger.

See below;

P2: "Lastly, even the superiors those who hold management positions also have to change their cultural habits, for instance, in my school, my principal because of the culture that 'superiors are not supposed to be asked,' sometimes makes decisions and become defensive when questioned and regard questioning as challenges and even sent us to a disciplinary hearing that we are not respecting the principal."

This further confirms that this problem is not limited to the young ones, but also the elders of such community still believe that they must not be challenged or questioned. Perhaps this is while P3 suggests that educators must create an avenue for learners to speak, inquire, and question. See below statement;

P3: "The second way to address the issue at hand is for educators to inculcate in learners a culture of respect that allows for learners to be able to speak/enquire/question/discuss their thoughts and ideas without being afraid of being punished, as is the case in many rural schools. By encouraging them to ask questions and discuss ideas, learners become independent critical thinkers and seek knowledge beyond what the teacher has to offer."

The argument from P3 indicated that educators also have a huge responsibility in ensuring that students/learners/young ones acquired critical, inquisitive, and questioning skills. That is, the teacher should at all times encourage them in the right direction to enable them to become independent critical thinkers and seek more knowledge independently. However, P3 further confirms that "this can only be achieved when educators themselves are open to the idea of a democratic classroom where all learners are free to express themselves respectfully, without the fear of punishment for exercising such a right to a holistic education."

Discussion of Finding: Based on the above analysis, the study revealed that one of the solutions to the problem is that there is a need for strong school advocacy and awareness that educators must make to empower the students/learners/young ones. This action is not limited to teachers' efforts to improve the students' skills and make them understand the dividend of being inquisitive and critical. Limitless to teachers, the school managers should also ensure that

the culture of being superior and unchallenged should be erased to bridge power differentials affecting the young ones. This finding is in tandem with the finding of Burroughs (2019) that teachers' strong person for work is significant to students' academic performance. In the same vein, Akiri's (2013) finding also confirmed that teachers' effectiveness enhances students' success and knowledge attainment.

CONCLUSION

The study addressed the issue of misinformed cultural disposition to enhance children/young ones' critical, questioning, and inquisitive skills in culturally informed communities of South Africa. Transformative and participatory research lens assisted in unravelling the issues alongside solutions. The study, therefore, concluded that children/young ones are being demonised as a rebel, and stereotyped as uncultured, untrained and disrespectful, hence deprived them of their urge to be critical and inquisitive in their developmental process. The study, alongside, also concludes that organisational advocacy and curriculum restructuring, alongside strong school advocacy and awareness towards children/young ones' skill development, are possible solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above conclusion, it is recommended that NGOs should be charged to take responsibility for ensuring awareness and sensitisation movement that could empower and equip the young ones. The curriculum planners should also re-examine the current subject being taught in school and consider the place of establishing a subject on how critical thinking, inquisitive and inquiry skills could be gained. Teachers and all educators should also intensify more efforts and devise a strategy that will ensure that the young ones are critical, inquisitive, and ready to seek more knowledge with little or no supervision.

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