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A study of African traditional gamesas informal education: The case of mahumbwe, mabombo and nhodo in Mandeya District of Matsapa: 1945 to 2016.

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Declaration

I, James Kuyimba registration number R124600v do hereby declare that this work is of my own origin and it has not been submitted to any institution of higher learning for the award of any degree, diploma, certificate or any other qualification.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents who carried the whole burden on their shoulders to make sure that I reach this level of educational excellence. I appreciate all you have done for me; no words can express how you have touched my life. May God bless you and take you places you have never dreamed of.

To my brethrens in Christ Brothers Gunda, Chengetai and my Apostle Makaza for your prayers and inspiration during my study time may you be granted blessings and survival grace. To my siblings who stood by me and motivated me at all cost may you be accorded your life desires and may you be blessed.

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Above all I thank the Lord Almighty for taking me this far for only grace could have taken me this far. The journey was never easy but the experiences and memories acquired along the journey will forever be cherished.

Abstract

The study examines the position of traditional games as a form of informal education in Zimbabwe, with a particular focus to Matsapa in the HondeValley region. African traditional games was an important educative tool which was used during the pre-colonial era to teach children real life experiences and instill life skills in them which would carry them the rest of their life

The study makes use of qualitative research design using key informant, unstructured in-depth interviews and a review of secondary data sources. The study reveals that the importance of African traditional games is deteriorating day by day as a result of a plethora of factors for instance westernization and globalization. Children of today have adopted western life styles and the things they now learn in educational institutions are nolonger at par with their culture. By so doing there is greater need to come up with frameworks which help enhance the knowledge and preserve the existence of traditional games as a form of informal education for generations and future generations to come.

Acronyms

ATR   **-**   African Traditional Games

HV   **-**   HondeValley

IKS   **-**   Indigenous Knowledge Systems

WE   **-**   Western Education

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Introduction

African traditional games are an important aspect in indigenous knowledge systems and have been used over the years as a form of informal education. Traditional games have promoted the acquisition of practical knowledge of the various skills, the dignity of labor and high moral standards among our people hence should not be forgotten. Games were used to educate children as they were packaged with a lot of wisdom, knowledge and values. Elderly people taught children these traditional games and they were characterized through grey hair which symbolized wisdom and experience. As a way to pass their lived experiences to children, the elders designed various kinds of games that were specifically tailor made for instilling educational value in children. Huizinga saw games as a starting point for complex human activities such as language,

law, war, philosophy and art.[1] Games played a pivotal role during the ancient times in Zimbabwe through establishing models that were educative in nature hence their place in education should not be undermined. The Colombian Encyclopedia defines education as any process, formal or informal that shapes the potentialities of the maturing person.[2]This simply means that whatever helps a person to develop his abilities so as to be useful to him and the society is education. It is the sum total of all the ways by which we develop the abilities, attitudes and all forms of behavior which make us acceptable members of the society. In Zimbabwe children played a plethora of games ranging from physical to mind games. Games like pada, nhodo and tsoro, embrace some mathematical ideas such as counting, subtraction and addition while games like hwishu, dhere and chuti are physical games. The knowledge of these games in Zimbabwe risks extinction as a result of a plethora of factors. These factors include globalization and technological advancements. It is through the aforementioned that children of today have turned to western games like mobile games, chess and snooker of which these have a negative influence on character and moral building. According to Emeagwali, incorporating African indigenous knowledge systems may serve to diminish the structures of intellectual dominance and dependence associated with colonial education and may remove the distortion, trivialization and neglect of otherwise valuable traditions and cultural activities of the indigenous people.[3] Africa has to eradicate the perception of mathematics and science as Eurocentric and adopt their indigenous games as they are equipped with the aforementioned skills. Education can be received anywhere, ranging from homes, schools, farm, market, churches, mosques, workshops and other places. In fact, it is correct to say that wherever people are living, there must be a system of education. It is through the system of education that individuals within the society are made to imbibe the ideals of the society. For this reason the adoption of African traditional

games as a form of informal education may help remedy the current economic problems that the country is currently facing.

Background of the Study

To have an understanding of African traditional games as informal education there is great need to define the meaning of traditional games as well as define what informal education is. Schofield quoting Lodge says education is equivalent to experience.[4]This is, the experience we acquire every day at home, in the streets, farm, school is education. Therefore, we can say that all human beings acquire education through interactions with their environment. On the other hand, Nduka refers to education as the process of transmitting the peoples' culture from one generation to the other.[5]In this context, culture means the ways of life of a people and these are taught through traditional games. That is the way of eating, dressing, including our language, religion, arts and crafts among others. All these things which we learn from people around us help us to know how to do certain things. Plato one of the great Greek philosophers once said that, 'One of the chief aims of education is to turn the soul in the right direction and save it from a life of self-deceit and delusion.[6]Rayfield has written a concise review of the problems of applying modern, formal education to the African, and pastoral, context.[7] Furthermore, in the case of Zimbabwe there is a rapid increase in school dropouts owing to economic instabilities hence the adoption of informal education will help educate those underprivileged as it is free. There is greater need to come up with frameworks to enhance indigenous knowledge systems and the integration of traditional games to the current formal education so as to safeguard the African culture and intrests.Africa educational authorities should revise and reform the content of education in the area of curricula, textbooks and methods, so as to take account of the African environment, child development, cultural heritage and the demands of technological progress and economic

development. However Soni notes that, Indigenous knowledge is susceptible to change owing to a number of factors like urbanization and technological advancement. [8] World Bank notes that much Indigenous knowledge are at risk of becoming extinct because of rapidly changing natural environments, fast pacing economic, political and cultural changes on a global scale. [9] This is where this research comes in because traditional children's games are one form of Indigenous knowledge that is under extinction hence there is great need to promote and preserve their existence in the African context.

Problem Statement

African traditional games are an important aspect of indigenous knowledge systems and have been used over the years as an important educative tool in informal education .During ancient times; indigenous games were of paramount importance as they were used as the starting point for complex human activities and behavior but currently they are being undermined. Economic instabilities have led to a rapid increase in the number of school dropouts in Zimbabwe as well as the absence of early childhood development centers in rural areas therefore there might be need for Zimbabweans to turn up to informal education as a way to ensure education for the underprivileged and remedying the present economic condition. Therefore this study needs to outline the effectiveness of African traditional games as an aspect of indigenous knowledge systems in educating children informally.

Justification of the Research

Many researchers have talked about the role of African traditional games as a form of informal education in Zimbabwe but very little has been done to show the effectiveness of the games as an important educative tool for children during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial

Zimbabwe. Many researchers have concentrated on the documentation of the content on traditional games and very little has been done to discuss the effectiveness of traditional games. Traditional games preserve the indigenous culture and identity as well as equip children with real life skills and experiences which they will later use in life. Cognitive, psychomotor, affective and social roles will create an opportunity for these games to be included in the current school physical education curriculum. Participation of children in traditional games instills in them good behavior, hard work, leadership qualities among others.Nyota&Mapara say that, the values and virtues, which are learnt in these games, become useful later in life.[10]Games are not only something for children, but are also equally important for grown-ups. Western schooling spread by Christian missionaries was strategically meant to dissolve African norms as it was calculated to undermine many aspects of African indigenous education and knowledge. McCarthy notes that, the intellectual and research activities in these institutions of higher learning are still designed to support the economic exploitation of natural resources including justification of the theoretical assumptions of western institutions and scholarship about the primitive nature of Africa.[11] The current forces of globalization, which have strong elements of cultural imperialism and aim at the harmonization of attitudes, supposedly, with the emergence of a global culture and the domination in the use of foreign languages in primary schools in Africa provide little or no room for acquisition of African indigenous knowledge. To arrest the current situation, the research proposes that it is best for Africa to look to herself for the development of her own curricula and modes of delivery through the examination of methods and techniques of indigenous African knowledge. It is against this backdrop that the research on indigenous knowledge be the mandate of Indigenous people themselves hence in the process the importance of traditional games as an educative tool may be observed.

Scope

The Research is confined to the position of African traditional games during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era. Traditional games were used as an important educative tool and African children were educated through these games like mahumbwe, mabombo and tsoro. Through the wealth of knowledge and wisdom packed in these games children were able to develop into better youths equipped with adult knowledge and vital life elements. Therefore the research will demonstrate why there is need to come up with frameworks that alter the current schooling system and integrate some of the aspects in indigenous knowledge systems African traditional games in particular into the current education curricula so as to enhance the weaknesses of the western education schooling system. Indigenous games still remain a pivotal pillar of indigenous African ways of   knowing. The coming of westernization has undermined the role of these games in the present day African societies.McNeely says that, the wealth of knowledge that   still   exists among the elders and other knowledge holders in   African local communities demonstrates the vibrant intellectualism to which African researchers and intellectuals should turn to.[12] There is great need to document content of indigenous games and share with the youth for sustainability

Research Aims

The Aim of this research to document and preserve for revival of mahumbwe, mabombo and nhodo. In the present day Africa, societies have abandoned these games hence there is great need to come up with frameworks which help advance indigenous knowledge systems.

Objectives

The objectives of this research are to:

-Assess the efficacy traditional games as an educative tool which can be used to empower the nation.

-Identify the different traditional games that can be used to educate children

-Identify the extent to which people in Mandeya rely on traditional games as a form of informal education.

Research Questions

1. What were the goals of traditional games in informal education?

2. How important are African traditional games as a form of informal education.

3. Are the principles of African traditional games relevant today?

Literature Review

The research on indigenous ways of knowing has become one of the most captivating debates in Africa. This has led to the coming in of many scholars like Fafunwa, Sifunwa, Nyota, Mapara, and Batiste among others into raising interesting debates in as much as indigenous education is concerned. They have covered the role of indigenous games and how they were an essential educative tool in informal education. Many studies on children games have focused on form of Indigenous knowledge systems focused on pre-colonial samples, form and content, functions and purposes for instance in the works of Masuku and Ndawi (2001), Nyoni and Mika (2003), Nyota and Mapara(2008)among others. All the aforementioned scholars have managed to trace the origins of traditional games and their effectiveness but have largely dwelled on the pre-colonial era. African traditional games were an important educative tool in informal education and

through the games children managed to gain survival skills. Stebbing points out that the major role of children's games is primary socialization.[13]This is so important in that, when they get to the world of education, it becomes the golden link between home and school. This link is vital in the view that teachers can start with what children know and can do; then build on that since children enjoy moving from the known to the unknown, which allows for building of self-confidence. Thompson also notes that children's games stimulate children to learn and help them develop fast in their indigenous motherlanguage.[14] He alludes that in the case of Zimbabwe learning through Chi Shona provides children with an opportunity for them to use their language thereby they can easily understand what they are being taught. According to Nyota and Mapara, Children's games are also a rich source of their cultural heritage, language, traditions and moral values.[15] In as far as learning values and virtues that may be useful later on in life is concerned, Nyota and Mapara put forth a very strong argument that: Shona traditional children's games lead to and provide a rich environment or social context which sustains the flowering of children's curiosity and exploration on their immediate world as they play. [16] Thus as they explore their environment they learn that it is good to play with others hence in doing so they can be able to socialize with their community at large. The virtues and values alluded to earlier on in the discussion, such as good behavior, honesty, hard work, healthy competition, leading and being led, handling of success or failure among others, are in turn instilled into the children vicariously as they interact in play. Nziramasanga says, this helps build foundation for the philosophy of humanness rooted in African culture, characterized by qualities such as responsibility, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, a cooperative spirit, hard work among others.[17]Heyns and Stefiszyn says that the above philosophy is also described elsewhere as a philosophy of shared humanity well expressed in the Nguni language maxim; a person is a person through other persons.[18]Also

relevant to this study is the fact that we become what we become through interacting with others who helps us become human. Thus as children interact in games their sense of being emerges and develops. Theories on child development attest to the importance of play in child development. For example Froebel has this to say about play: The plays of childhood are germinal leaves of all late life, for the whole man is, developed and shown in these, in his tenderest dispositions, in his innermost tendencies. Mavhunga alludes that this helps build a foundation for the philosophy of oneness rooted in African culture, characterized by qualities such as responsibility, honesty, justice, trustworthiness, a cooperative spirit, hard work among others.[20]This study focuses on the extent of performance of children's games and assessing their popularity they are among the children and also to find out if they still contribute as much as they did to children's well-being. African indigenous knowledge should not only be seen as an alternative knowledge but as one domain of knowledge among others. In the works of Batiste, he notes that local people, or the insiders must appreciate and value their own local knowledge as the basis of their community livelihood and development.[21]Battiste says this is due to the fact that when people disregard their own knowledge and wisdom, it slowly gets lost and can easily be misappropriated.[22] This has not been enough as the knowledge and importance of indigenous games continue to be undermined and are running to extinction by day.Nkondo argues that all knowledge is local but becomes universal through processes of conquest and colonialism.[23] This study seeks to show how African indigenous knowledge has succumbed to Western education which has led to the adoption of western ideologies by African indigenous people of today and in doing so the African ideologies have been destroyed.

Research Methodology

The study was adopted using several data collection techniques so as to come up with a balanced assessment of the research problem and fill the gaps that are created. The researcher used the qualitative approach research design in the study as the approach is interactive in nature and it permits verbal description hence the researcher can easily merry with people 's lived experiences as the study of traditional indigenous games as a form of informal education requires interaction with the community .

Data was collected from a population of the Manyika people of Zimbabwe found in the HondeValley region in the Matsapa District. The sample consisted of middle aged and elderly males and females. They all resided in the six villages of Mutasa District which are Mandeya,Zindi,Katiyo,Hauna,Samanga and Muterere and these people should have spent their Childhood there by so doing they saw the transitional changes of life in their region. Fifty children were randomly sampled from five rural primary schools in Matsapa so as to see if the knowledge of African traditional games still exist in the children of today's generation. The study also included ten primary school teachers who were randomly selected from the five schools used in this study so that they may observe the position and knowledge of indigenous games like mabombo, mahumbwe and tsoro as educative tools in their students' day to day activities at school.

The researcher also conducted focus group discussions as a way of gathering information.5 Focus Group Discussions were conducted and they averaged 15 to 20 members. One Focus Group Discussion made up of 15 mabombo players and former players was held and the participants expressed their joy of this game as they embraced their childhood experiences leading to the discussion ending up in demonstrations. Eight males demonstrated how the mabombo game was made and 7 women demonstrated how nhodo is played as well as one man

who bossed about how during his hey days girls used to fancy him for his skill as he was a nhodo guru. The researcher could tell from the faces of the participants the importance of traditional games as a form of informal education and how they helped enhance child education and childhood memories.

The researcher conducted face to face interviews as a way of collecting data. The individuals interviewed explained how the games were played, when they were played and the purposes of the games as well as the lessons they learnt from the games they played. Twenty individual interviews were conducted. The individuals interviewed explained the type of games they played, how the games were played, when they were played and the purposes of the games as well as the lessons they learnt from the games they played. The researcher also conducted telephone interviews with some respondents. This is the fastest method of gathering information from a relatively large sample and this allows the opportunity for some opinion probing.[24]The researcher contacted some respondents on the telephone so as to gather information to advance his research.

The researcher also used secondary sources. The process involved reviewing all readily available materials with relevant content. These sources included newspapers, magazines, on line data bases and others. The researcher also managed to gather some information through observing children in Matsapa play some traditional games as they were mentored by some elderly people hence in the process the researcher acquired information relevant for his project. Online sources proved to be the fastest in gathering information while library literature searches took more time.

Delimitations

The research was conducted in the Mandeya District of Matsapa. The area under study was chosen because traditional games are still noticeable and practiced as an educational model and the wealth of knowledge on indigenous knowledge systems is still preserved in the area. More so, a number of parents in this area are struggling financially in enrolling their children in modern educational institutions due to economic hardships

DISSERTATION LAYOUT

CHAPTER 1

This is the introductory chapter which introduces the project research topic. Background of the study, statement of the problem, justification of the research, scope of the research, the aims and the objectives of the research. The research questions that will guide the researcher in the research and the literature review, research methodology and finally the instruments for data collection will be discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

The chapter takes a historical perspective of African traditional games as a form of informal education in Zimbabwe. Definition of African traditional games, the uses of African traditional games in Zimbabwe, philosophical foundation of education in African indigenous societies, position of games in the colonial era, African traditional games in the colonial era and finally the position of African traditional games as an educative tool in the post-colonial era are also discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3

This chapter discusses the content of indigenous games as a form of informal education. The origins of mahumbwe, mabombo and nhodo. Demonstration of how the aforementioned games are played as well as the equipment and facilities that are used when playing the traditional games mahumbwe mabombo and nhodo. Finally the chapter discusses the place of gender in mahumbwe, mabombo and nhodo as well as giving the content and analyses of the aforementioned games as a form of informal education.

CHAPTER 4

This chapter gives an insight on the main characteristics of indigenous games as a form of informal education. The strengths of indigenous games as an educative tool to the recipients and the society at large as well as the relevance of African traditional games to the modern education will also be discussed. Finally, Criticisms of the informal education model will be discussed and then the final conclusion of the whole dissertation will follow complimenting the whole research.

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CHAPTER 1:

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL GAMES

1.0 Introduction

The chapter focuses on African traditional games as a form of indigenous knowledge and assesses their importance as an educative tool in informal education during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe. The aim is to give an insight on the roles that the traditional games like mahumbwe, mabombo and nhodo played in educating children and the lessons that children learnt from these games.

1.1 Definition of African Traditional Games

A game is structured form of play, usually undertaken for enjoyment and sometimes used as an educational tool.[1] Games are distinct from work, which is usually carried out for remuneration, and from art, which is more often an expression of aesthetic or ideological elements. Games have a significant role in the lives of all human beings. They embrace the fundamental nature of Homo sapiens, which is play. Eichberg and Norgaard notes, "the human being is only then really human when playing.[2] There are different kinds of games that are played across the African continent and various cultures have certain kinds of games they play which defines who they are. In the case of Matsapa which constitutes of the people of the Manyika clan, they play various games some of which are gendered. Some games were meant for girls while others were for both sexes. Games and sport have been found to reflect the evolution of a people's culture. Participation in Traditional Indigenous games by rural communities improves their quality of life by supporting self-determined sport and cultural activities. Eichberg and Norgaard notes that the

aforementioned encourages equal access to participation in the social and cultural fabric of the community that they reside in and which respects indigenous distinctiveness.[3] These cultural activities are miniature windows through which, values, behavior and other cultural activities constituting a unique group of people are seen. Stuart notes that games as cultural mirror and product carry with them the reflection of lived realities and cognitive maps of communities within a given socio-cultural and historical context.[4]

1.2The uses of African Traditional games

African traditional games are an important aspect in indigenous education and they have been used in a number of ways in African indigenous education. Games were used as a form of education as traditional games are packed with educative knowledge that helps shape the child's intellectual. Elderly people with grey hair were responsible for teaching these children traditional games by so doing they designed various traditional games that were packaged with wisdom and knowledge. This was the best way of learning as through play one would easily be educated with real life experiences and knowledge that they would later use in their future. It is therefore in this context that games were regarded as an important educative tool in Zimbabwe.

Games were also used as a form of entertainment. Eichberg&Norgaard notes, games are used in sportive practice, play and games are used as educational entertainment for children or as warm-up. [5] Children in Zimbabwe play games like mabombo, nhodo and mahumbwe and these games are mind blowing and they are entertaining. In many communities children grouped themselves into teams so as to compete in some of the traditional games. By so doing they managed to engage in tough competitions and round robins at times. At the end of the play the overall winner

were selected. Margret alludes that this form of competition instilled the desire to work hard next time in children as the looser had to perfect his mistakes so as to better the future.[6]

Games were also used as a way of preserving the local culture. Ethnic groups and people distinguish themselves from each other by their language and other cultural activities such as play, games and recreational activities. Eichberg & Norgaard notes that play, games and recreational activities provide the bodily language for the different cultures world over.[7] Societies used games as a way of preserving their cultures as these traditional games had cultural lessons in them and they instilled good African morals in children. These games were different from society to society hence this instilled a sense of belonging to one specific culture and tradition in the youth.

Another use of traditional education in the African informal education in the indigenous societies was to prepare an individual for life, for self-reliance as education was for living. The games the youth played   trained the youth for adulthood within the community.

Sifuna states that, emphasis in African indigenous education system was placed on normative and expressive goals.[8]The normative goal was concerned with instilling the accepted standards of beliefs governing correct behaviour of the individual within the society. The child was taught how to behave within the society as well as societal demands. On the other hand, the expressive goal was aimed at uniting and creating consensus within community members.

1.3 Philosophical foundation of education in African indigenous societies

African indigenous education did not originate from the dark. It had its own philosophical bases upon which it was rooted on which include functionalism, communalism, holisticism, preparationalism and perennialism.

Communalism implies that the children are members of the community hence they are bound within the communal beliefs and traits. A child becomes a communal property as soon as he/she receives his/her first breath on earth. The child develops through participation in various activities within the community through learning from good examples laid before them by other recommendable members of the society hence in the process children inherit good morals.

Functionalism also referred to preparedness and children are prepared to be functional members of the community and are prepared to be good future parents. The indigenous education imparted on children through traditional games instils knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to the social economic activities making children ready for the future. They become productive members of the society as they inherit survival skills and strategies from the community they live in which are vital for them to change the existing socioeconomic state of the communities that they live in as well as develop their cognitive psychomotor.

Holisticism means multiple learning and children are prepared to be functional in diverse fields of life. The children were required to acquire multiple skills and mastered them all. By so doing they can use these skills as strategies to address different life situations hence can become active members of the society.

Under preparationalism, children are prepared to become useful members of the community. The role of education was to equip the children with skills appropriate to their gender male or female in preparation for their distinctive roles in society. They are prepared to ready for different communal roles.

This philosophy ensures the continuity of cultural heritage and traditional values. African Traditional societies were using education as an important and necessary tool for preserving the status quo of the tribe and it had a conservative nature. Tendencies ,motives and Ideas of

questioning and going against traditional beliefs and culture were severely crashed leading to community hearing with the elders resulting in to severe punishment even being cast out from the community in waste case scenarios.

1.4 Traditional games a form of informal education in pre-colonial Zimbabwe

The Shona traditional children's games played a crucial role in the transmission of Indigenous knowledge in its various forms to the young during the pre-colonial era. Occiti says children were taught how to farm, hunt, fish, prepare food and build houses and to run a home through the traditional games that they played.[9]Erny also stresses that play was an informal method of instruction where children imitated adult roles through playing games .[10] Traditional games during the pre-colonial era were an important educative tool that Africans used to educate the youth and instill knowledge and value in them. This was the only form of education during the time hence the absence of comparison meant patriotism.

Africans during the pre-colonial era valued their indigenous knowledge system as an indigenous way of knowing. For this reason traditional games were an important educative tool which Africans adopted as a form of informal education. Children valued indigenous games and the elders were responsible for preserving the existence of traditional games. Elders with grey hair were regarded as wise hence they took the liberty for teaching children as they were regarded as wise owing to the experience they gained from their life experiences. A variety of traditional games were played and these include mahumbwe, mabombo and tsoro. Through some of the games that were played children were taught physical skills, mathematical skills, mathematical calculations and strategy. Makaza notes that games in the pre-colonial era were vital as they were a necessity for children as they were taught life survival strategies.[11] During the pre-colonial era these games were a cornerstone of social bonding.Cameroon & Dodd notes that African

indigenous education was a lifelong process of learning where by a person progressed through predetermined stages of life of graduation from cradle to grave.[12] This implies that African indigenous education was continuous throughout lifetime from childhood to old-age.

Mushi defines African indigenous education as a process of passing among the tribal members and from one generation to another the inherited knowledge, skills, cultural traditions norms and values of their culture.[13] African indigenous education is defined as the native, locally developed form of bringing up the youngsters by the older and more experienced members of the society. Being native is by no means to deny the fact that indigenous learning goals, content, structures and methods have not been enriched, or for that matter, polluted or both by outside influences. During the pre-colonial era the traditional ways of knowing had not been polluted by European influence in African ideologies by so doing traditional games were used as an important educative tool in informal education. African indigenous education can generally be defined as the form of learning in Africa traditional societies in which knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the tribe, were passed from elders to children, by means of oral instructions and practical activities.

1.5 Position of Traditional games in the colonial Zimbabwe

The coming of Europeans into Africa had a lot of positive effects on the position of African indigenous education. The Europeans had the assumption that Africa had no history and hence they dubbed it a dark continent. This was the starting point of the deterioration of traditional games as a form of informal education. They believed that Africans had no history and culture to perpetuate and that Africans never taught the young. Partly, this mistaken belief reflected an ignorance of knowledge systems and helps to explain why the first European educationists never

considered that the 'formal' schools they were introducing had any relationship to the largely 'informal' education African children were receiving in their communities. The Europeans had the basic assumption that they were introducing something totally new in Africa yet this was not true as Africans had their own kind of civilization and education. This naive way of looking at African indigenous learning presupposed that there was no social interaction or socialization, and that there was no deliberate effort by adults to bring up children to be the kind of men and women required by society. Nothing could be further from the truth. Other scholars assumed that because Africans knew no reading and writing, they had no systems, contents and methods of education to pass on to the young. To such scholars, education in Africa meant Western civilization. The Europeans neglected anything traditional because of their restricted view of the nature of education.Berman notes, the introduction of Western institutions by some colonial agencies was calculated to undermine many aspects of African social structures and pave the way for their replacement.[14] This made the Africans to dump their indigenous knowledge systems as they were forced to adopt western ways of knowing. By so doing the importance of African traditional games in the colonial era were undermined as Africans were chained to western institutions of knowing.

Colonialism saw missionaries coming with the bible pretending that they had come to help Africans yet they had hidden agendas. Christian missionaries found themselves at odds over the place of indigenous knowledge, beliefs and customs in the emerging Christian order. From the missionaries' point of view total renunciation of the old order was a prerequisite for acceptance of the new. A statement issued in 1938 by the interdenominational International Missionary Council indicates the intensity of this belief. Kraemer notes "…the missionary is a revolutionary and has to be so, for to preach and plant Christianity means to make a frontal attack on the

beliefs, customs, apprehensions of life and the work and by implication…on the social structures and bases of primitive society.[15] Nineteenth-century missionaries believed that African degeneracy was rooted in their culture and traditional belief systems. By so doing Africans were forced to leave their culture and tradition hence this meant that even the place of traditional games as a form of informal education had been threatened. The Europeans believed that Africans were redeemable, but first the evils within their social systems had to be destroyed. Only then could the process of civilization commence. This led to the replacement of traditional culture with western ideologies. All the knowledge of traditional games were swept under the carpet by so doing games in the colonial period started deteriorating however some Africans refused to adopt western ways of knowing. This is the reason why the knowledge of indigenous education is still present and some societies in the present day still practice traditional ways of knowing. The introduction of boarding schools was meant to keep children away from the savage surroundings so as not interfere with the African indigenous civilizing process. The extent to which mission school teachings accelerated the splintering of the traditional society is indicated by the comments of some Africans who experienced them. For example, the late Kenyan leading politician Odinga noted that, missionaries in his school "were not satisfied to concentrate on the word of the Bible; they tried to use the word of God to judge African traditions.[16]Odinga notes that an African who followed his people's customs was condemned as heathen and anti-Christian.[17] By so doing many Africans through the fear of the unknown abandoned African traditional games as a form of informal education and they adopted western doctrines which led to the extinction of indigenous games as a form of informal education.

It however, needs to be emphasized that due to the entrenched racial nature of colonial societies in many African countries, the African elite were leading opponents of the use of the vernacular

as medium of instruction. These Africans felt that most of the colonial language policies suggesting that Africans use their vernacular in school were inspired by racial prejudices regarding the supposedly intellectual inferiority of Africans, a factor making them incapable of benefiting from a Western education. The Africans feared that the linguistic policies were fabricated to keep blacks in their social ghettos in the same way black Americans had been disadvantaged by their education in separate institutions which were inferior to the ones the white children enrolled in. For this reason the Africans made a blunder as they sought systems supposedly tailored to their needs and demanded to be educated in the exact same standards as the colonialists were. Brock-Utne says that in particular Africans insisted on the use of European languages as instructional media In this regard, Africans pushed for the use of a European language in the school system, whenever they had the opportunity.[18]By so doing they had totally subjected to western education and they had completely abandoned their indigenous ways of knowing therefore the position of African traditional games as a form of informal education in the colonial era was destroyed by the strategies that were implemented by the Europeans in order to get read of African ideologies.

1.6African Traditional games in post-colonial Zimbabwe

The knowledge of African indigenous knowledge in the present day is gradually changing due to factors which include westernization, globalization and technological advancements. Currently very few youths are observed playing traditional games. However information from the interviews shows that historically young males and females have been shown to participate in traditional games. The non- participation by the youths could be a result of the effect of acculturation on the play patterns of traditional games of Zimbabwean youths. The youths of

today no longer value the position of traditional games hence they have adopted western games. From an interview with Pedzisai, he says that youths of today have lost their traditional values and no longer have time to engage in indigenous games.[19] Sango notes, a considerable number of youth now spend most of their time at Matambo shops playing snooker and have turned to gambling which have destroyed the youth as some even skip school while others steal money from their parents so as to gamble.[20] From the expression on the interviewee's face one could tell that a lot needs to be done so as to attach the present day youth's umbilical cords to African traditional norms. The post-colonial play trends show patterns of contemporary games culture where western games are mostly played in African societies of the modern day hence through the process the degree of cultural erosion and cross-cultural assimilation can be easily established. Western education has greatly affected the youths and has left a mark on the culture and position traditional games of Manyika youths. The current education curriculum in Zimbabwe physical education that is being used excludes traditional games from some of the minority ethnic groups. Van der Merwe & Salter notes that the fact that school teachers followed a European physical education and sport syllabus in foreign language contributed to acculturation as regards Shona play forms.[21] From the investigations it seems that as traditionally functional play activities disappear and are replaced by culturally non- functional Western play forms. Youths of today no longer practice indigenous games like mahumbwe, mabombo and tsoro. Children no longer seem to understand the meaning and the roles of traditional and games like mabombo are known by very few children. Only nhodo and mahumbwe are popular although children rarely engage in them. The wealth and knowledge of traditional games is vested in Old adults who still have the knowhow of how to play some of the traditional games. According Van der Merwe &Salter, the schools have further encouraged cultural erosion by supplying western games like volleyball,

track and field athletics, and netball and play apparatus such as swings, jungle gyms rubber ball and ropes.[22] For this reason; a lot of children have abandoned traditional games and have adopted western games therefore in the process the knowledge of traditional games has been driven to extinction.

Nyota and Maparaargue that English games have gained prominence in urban pre-schools. If Indigenous knowledge is to be effectively passed on to younger generations this has to be done during their childhood so that they become socialized in the appropriate norms, values and societal expectations.[23] However it needs to be highlighted that western education has disrupted the practical everyday life aspects of Indigenous knowledge and indigenous education. This has led to the extinction of traditional games as the knowledge of indigenous games is no longer implanted in the present day youth. The children of today have drowned in western domains and have invested in western ways of knowing to the extent that they are no longer conversant to

their traditions and culture hence there is greater need to revive the position of traditional games and indigenous knowledge system so as to equip the youth with African culture and traditions

1.7Conclusion

The chapter has traced the origins of African traditional games as a form of informal education. Games have witnessed a transitional change from the pre-colonial period past the colonial to the present day post-colonial time. The value that traditional games had during the pre-colonial times is no longer the same. In the present day, very few youths have the knowledge of indigenous games. Games like mahumbwe, mabombo and nhodo have lost meaning in the lives of children

and the few that play these games only do so for fun and they no longer know the educative

nature of indigenous games. The extinction of traditional games has been caused by factors

which include globalization, westernization and technological advancements among others.

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CHAPTER 2

Content Analysis of Shona Children's Games as a form of informal education and their importance in informal education

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview on the various African traditional games that are played by the people in Matsapa District. There are a plethora of games that are played in this district but through the surveys that the researcher conducted, mahumbwe, mabombo and tsoro came out as the most popular games played within the six villages of Matsapa District. Furthermore, the chapter will give an overview on the origins of the games; demonstrate how the games are played, the equipment and facilities of the games. In addition to the aforementioned, the chapter will also critically analyze and examine the various lessons that the children learnt from these indigenous games and how games as an element of indigenous knowledge system is befitting to be regarded as an educative tool in informal education.

2.1 Mahumbwe (Playing house)

2.2 Origins of Mahumbwe

Mahumbwe is one of the major games that is played in Matsapa District and it is a socio-dramatic play which originate from the pre-colonial era and the game has been used as a cornerstone for social bonding. Mahumbwe sometimes referred to as matakanana is a traditional children's game that is usually played in by children in the age groups of about four to fourteen years. Some historians say that the origins of the game have not been easy to tress but the Shona people have practiced this game from generation to generation in different cultures. The Manyika people of Matsapa have used this game as a way of educating children on various life aspects through imitating different roles through play. Even today children are observed playing

mahumbwe however it has to be noted that the importance and value that is now being given to the game is no longer the same. The game is gender sensitive as it is played by children of both sexes.Mhandire says that, playhouse was an interesting game as it gave us the opportunity to meet and mingle as youths in a dramatic way and we imitated adult roles.[1] By so doing the game was a form of social bonding.

2.3 Demonstration of the game Mahumbwe (How it is played)

Mahumbwe involves the children camping near their homesteads and they arrange themselves in groups within various members of their community.Matandike says that; children assigned one another different roles and responsibilities such as fatherly, motherly and children and they begin to imitate adult roles.[2] In addition, other children take roles as members from the extended family like aunts, uncles, cousins, nephew and nieces. The play then begins and every participant of the game has a role they have to play and they participate in responsibilities that are expected of the characters they will be playing taking lessons from the real life experiences.Mtamba says that girls imitated the roles that their mothers play in the real life which include cooking and being docile to their parents as well as the Sabhuku(Village Head) was responsible for implementing law and order through giving reasonable judgments in controversial issues and acted as an intermediate in resolving conflict whenever a misunderstanding arose between the victim and the victimized in the community.[3]The plots of mahumbwe are both very simple and elaborate. According to Edgar, one's mental stimuli was tested as some children even volunteered to play the roles of livestock with others wanting to be regarded as dogs which safeguard the homestead hence the game was an orientation to children's future dreams.[4]Chisanu notes that, some children opted to be elders with grey hair spending much of their time sharing their knowledge hence through the process they developed a sense of

wisdom in them as well as develop teaching and communication skills while in play.[5] In addition they learnt conflict management skills as they related all their knowledge to real life experiences through play as they participated in passing judgments to all the issues that were brought to their attention.

2.4 Equipment and Facilities of Mahumbwe

Mahumbwe is played on the ground as it utilizes the natural environment.Katerere says, as children we played mahumbwe using various apparatus from the environment which include pots, clay soil, wood, houses, trees, fruits and water among others.[6]The person imitating mother figure was responsible for agriculture and domestic works. For this reason she uses agricultural equipment and cooking utensils like pots to prepare food for the family. The person who played the fatherly role acts as the breadwinner of the family hence he had to search for food to sustain his family through gathering food and the mother cooking and serving the food.[7]Clay soil was also a facility of mahumbwe as the children also practiced pottery when playing mahumbwe. Both girls and boys made pots while manmade huts hence they acquired education through the process. Hunting apparatus like bows and arrows were also used in the play as children learnt how to hunt so that when they become economically active members of the society they may be able to provide for their families.

2.5 The place of Gender in Mahumbwe

The place of gender in any educational setup whether formal or informal should not be ignored or undermined. Richard (1994) defines gender as the range of characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between masculinity and feminity.[8] Mahumbwe as an educational tool is not gender insensitive as everyone regardless of sex was entitled to participate in the game. Through play; girls and boys were awarded an opportunity to mingle and share various views of life by so

doing togetherness was promoted. [9]Howevertaking a closer look at some of the roles in the play the place of gender triggers a lot of debates in the contemporary issues. Women were taught to be docile to their husbands and all decision making was assigned to the males. By so doing they did not have freedom of choice. On the other hand domestic roles were regarded as female responsibilities hence all the males who had passion for domestic works like cooking were undermined as they were afraid of being dubbed sissies hence they remained tied by patriarchal traits and did not have both freedom of choice as well as freedom of expression.

2.6 Analysis of mahumbwe as a traditional game and its educational value to children

An analysis of mahumbwe shows that the game has the capacity to instill in the youngsters those cognitive skills and morals that are valued in Shona culture. In fact mahumbwe is very important rites of passage in Shona culture as it teaches and entrenches in the children's psyche the duties and roles they are expected to play when they have their own families. Gelfand highlights the importance of this stage in the child's learning curve.

 The mahumbwe play provides a platform for the children to explore and rehearse social responsibilities that they will occupy in their adult life. As the children play in mahumbwe, they get a chance to convince others of ideas during small discussions as they often engage at the dare (family meeting place for men).[10]

 The children also learn to control their emotions as they often engage in quarrels. Rueben says that at many times they fought while playing mahumbwe as a result of a dislike of the role one would have been assigned as a lot of boys wanted the fatherly role in order to impress communal girls with their ego and leadership qualities.[11] Through mahumbwe children learnt to address serious issues such as parenting and adolescence in a playful manner hence they easily grasped the lessons and the subjects that the games thought them. In doing so boys learnt conflict

resolution skills as they gave each other an opportunity to act as the father figure. In addition fending for the family required determination and courage hence boys learnt to be hardworking. Children also engaged in pottery and made houses from clay, made pots and dolls among others.Mhandire says that, taiumba hari ne dzimba dzemadhaka izvi zvainakidza ngekuti musikana aigona kuumba aiwunganirwa nevakoma uye aizobatsiravo vamwe vaisagona (we made pots and houses from clay and the girl who was the best potter was appreciated by boys and had to teach others her skill).[12]This process instilled a sense of unity among communal children as they helped each other become better as peers. It cannot be disputed that African pottery is in the form of mathematical shapes such as spheres and cylinders, huts and their roofs are rich in geometrical concepts such as circles, locus and triangular prisms. By so doing through the game mahumbwe children were enhanced with mathematical skills which were useful for making calculations and interpreting mathematics. They also get enlightened and have chances to explore and examine personal concerns in a non-threatening environment of real parents and adolescents. The play also enables youngsters to create self-understanding as the play affords them to be active, interactive and Imaginative.

2.7 Mabombo

2.8 Origins of Mabombo

Mabombo is an African traditional game which has its origins in Zimbabwe and is peculiar to the Shona, specifically the Manyika people who are domiciled on the HondeValley area, on Zimbabwe's border with Mozambique. Males in the age range of about five years to late adolescence play the game. Mabombo is a game that is played across the entire African continent and in some cultures it is dubbed ndondo.The Manyika people of Mutasa District they call it mabombo which means striking an opponent 's disc and the game has been played for many

generations. The origins of the game have not been clear but some historians say that the game originated from Southern Africa and have been adopted by many other dynamic cultures along the way. However it has to be noted that different cultures have different meanings to the mabombo and the value that is given to the game varies from culture to culture. Some they play it for entertainment while other cultures use the game as a way of sharpening the child's cognitive skills. From an interview with Mandeya, he says we do not know the origins of the game mabombo for it has long existed before we were even born and our ancestors left this trail for us to follow.[13] In some cultures the game was gender sensitive only played by boys but in Mutasa all sexes played the game hence the game promoted gender awareness.

2.9 Demonstration of Mabombo (How the game is played)

Boys in the age range of about five years to late adolescence play mabombo which is a game of hitting targets of shelled maize cobs that are placed on either side of the contesting parties. Mutasa says that they as youths they grouped themselves into teams and sometimes they played the game as individuals who competed until there was a winner. He demonstrates how the game was played and says that they chose a smooth ground to which they threw their disks on the ground to spin. They did this through throwing the disks on the ground allowing them to spin. Chitanga says that, the stick acts as the axis of the disc and enables it to rotate moving in the direction of the opponent's arranged shelled maize cobs aimed at knocking them down.[14] Scores are based on each spin that knocks a cob. A draw results in the two bombos being aimed against each other. The one or the team whose mabombo was out spun would have lost the game. The players will be facing each other and they can play either as a team or as individuals. The bombo is a disc made of broken pieces of squash that are used to make gourds and has a hole in the

center which enables it to spin. At times girls also played the game as a way to mingle with boys and sometimes show man that they were capable of also doing what man can do.

1.10 Equipment and Facilities of Mabombo

The game is played using apparatus from the environment and is played on a clear ground or surface so as to allow the bombo to spin smoothly on the ground without being disturbed by objects on the surface. Then bombo is an object disc made of broken pieces of squash that are used to make gourds that are mostly found in rural areas. The dried squash is nicely cut into a disk shape and a hole is drilled in between the center and a carefully made short stick is crafted in between the hole. Maize cobs are used in mabombo and are used as hitting targets as well as an open space or ground on which to spin the mabombo on the ground.

2.11 The place of Gender in Mabombo

Historically, mabombo was a game that was specifically tailor made for enhancing manhood skills in boys. Boys learnt to be creative as making the mabombo required a lot of skill and ability and the mechanism of the bombo show a lot of creativity. It did not really address the place of gender as it was dominated by male participants. History in the ancient times does not give record of female participants hence one may allude that mabombo was gender insensitive. However in the lapse of colonial era female participants became noticeable. In the post-colonial era, some girls became good at the game to the extent that they even defeated male participants.Chizanhi one female says that she practiced the game to the extent that she became very good to the extent that she could easily outsmart most of the male participants in the blinking of an eye.[15] For this reason mabombo became a universal game and it became gender sensitive

2.12 Analysis of mabombo as a traditional game and its educational value to children

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An analysis of this game as an indigenous way of knowing shows that the game instills good sportsmanship in the participants. These values include how to handle success and failure after a game. Through the challenges that the loser may throw at the winner, the participants are taught not to give up. For instance, the loser realizes that his loss is only for that particular day, not an everyday occurrence. Participants learn that losses are not permanent but are temporary setbacks that can be overcome with more practice. Another lesson learnt from the traditional game mabombo is that failure is not for life through practice and hard work a person grows to be better. One has only to assess where they went wrong in order to right it next time. Mabombo also enhances participants with goal and target setting in the participants as a results patience is developed in children are through repeated practice.

Another advantage of mabombo is that it is useful in environmental management matters as it promotes cleaner environment by the use of recycled waste. This is because mabombo disc is made from broken pieces of gourd material that would have broken and would no longer be useful for anything hence encouraged recycling. This game get rids of garbage and unwanted material and dirty are not left strewn all over the place hence promotes environmental management. Also looking at the dynamics of the disc itself as well as its mechanism, a high level of skill is seen hence children are taught to be innovative. Above all the game instills a sense of discipline in children later carry into their adult life.

2.13 Nhodo

2.14 Origins of Nhodo

The study has attributed nhodo as a game that has its origins in Zimbabwe mostly played by the Shona people and its position as a form of informal education is not a new phenomenon. There are several types of nhodo but all involve the mudodo and stones or seeds of fruits. One type

involves throwing the mudodo and picking the other stones one by one or two by two and so on. The ancient game of nhodo was played on a leveled ground with a small hall dug in between which was used as a bank.

2.15 Demonstration of Nhodo (How Nhodo is played)

This game is mostly played by girls in the age range of about five to thirteen years old. The village girls dug a small hall which acted as a bank and the participants sit cross-legged round a hole in the ground. When they play the game, they can use small stones or fruit seed as play implements. One bigger stone or seed is used as the mudodo that is not allowed to hit the ground as it is thrown up and is caught. The game is played through throwing the mudodo in the air and with the same hand one picks and returns stones in the bank. The participants sit around the hole as they wait for their chance to play. Scoring is when the player successfully picks stones without dropping the mudodo. If one misses picking and in the process drops the mudodo, she loses the chance to the next player who also tries to complete all the game's levels without dropping the mudodo and wins the game.

2.16 Facilities and Equipment

During ancient times, the participants dug a small hall on the ground which was used as a bank for the stones. In the present day they draw a circle on a cement floor since it is impossible to make a hole owing to modernization which has led to the construction of concrete structures and flours. The play the game makes use of small stones or fruit seed like peaches and tsvubvu and mazhanje as play implements.[16] One bigger stone or seed or fruit in the form of a guava, small mango and peaches are used as the mudodo which is thrown in the air and not allowed to hit the ground. The numbers of stones that are used in the game differ from culture to culture but the

more famous nhodo use ten stone however there often are extra stones that are used as replacement in the event that another stone in the bank is misplaced.

2.17 The place of Gender in Nhodo

In ancient times, nhodo was regarded as a woman's game and girls in the community gathered and competed against one another. However as time changed and seasons lapsed, it became a universal game played by both boys and girls. Owing to the educational value packaged in nhodo for instance numerical skills, the elders might have realized the blunder that they were making through raising boys unable to count hence even in the event that one cattle is lost from the herd they wouldn't notice. For this reason elders gradually included boys as nhodo participants and boys numerical skills were also enhanced. Hence it became a gender sensitive game. Some boys were even better that most of the girls to the extent that they even became reputable in their communities. Chitanga says that he mastered nhodo to the extent that girls around the village became to appreciate him as he had proven to be a guru.[17] By so doing nhodo became a gender sensitive game.

2.18 Analysis of nhodo as a traditional game and its educational value to children

A critical analysis of nhodo as an educative tool in informal education shows that the game teaches numeracy as each player is taught to count since at every stage of the game there is a certain numerical pattern that has to be followed when picking stones from the bank as well as when returning the stones in the bank. For this reason the players learn numerical counting skills in an ascending order sequence.

In addition, as the player juggles between hand, eyes and stones, the players develop their motor skills. Newton and Joyce defines motor skills as the process when children start to learn how to control the movement of parts of the body and the process involves coordination of the

musceles.[18] Nhodo also instills sportsmanship in the players as they learn how to deal with winning and losing by so doing they may be able to carry this virtue in their future. For this reason they can be able to deal with various life situations which range from tragic, fun, disappointments and happy moments. A sense of responsibility is instilled in the elders who act as mentors teaching the younger ones through demonstrating the mechanisms of the game to the children. The participants also adopt good morals through respect as they learn how to appreciate the services they receive from their mentors. In turn, this propels the young apprentices to aim high so that they can also graduate into being mentors of their own young siblings in the near future. The game also teaches hardworking as a way to excel tomorrow.Katsande says that nhodo instilled hard work in participants as the winners mocked and laughed at the losers sarcastically which made the losers work hard next time as a way to avoid the outcomes that were associated with failure.[19] For this reason the game became competitive and tough as all players perfected their mistakes and became good by day.

2.19 Conclusion

This chapter has fore grounded Shona traditional children's games as indigenous way of education. Highlights on how lessons and cognitive skills valued in Shona culture are packed in African traditional games have been discussed. These lessons and skills are rooted upon the basis on issues such as good behaviour, hard work, total commitment, competition and unity of purpose. One is expected of having these skills even in this modernised world. The chapter thus asserts that the skills and values learnt through indigenous games prepare the children with skills and knowledge so to take up their adult roles. The traditional games as an educative tool in informal education also provide interactive apprenticeships which the learner child is given guidance to learn and perform these skills.

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CHAPTER 3

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter gives an insight on various aspects of African traditional games. These include the main characteristics of African traditional games as a form of informal education. The strengths of African indigenous games to its recipients and the society at large taking a closer look at the effectiveness of traditional games as an educational tool. In addition to the above, the chapter also discusses the limitations of African indigenous games and the relevance of African traditional games as a form of informal education to the modern day educational curricular. The criticisms of the informal educational model are also be discussed.

3.1The main characteristics of African indigenous games as a form of informal education

African indigenous games as a form informal education had many characteristics. Traditional games were community oriented and their major concern was aimed at solving the problems that are associated with the community. The instructional activities were therefore, directed towards the social life of the community, so as to prepare the learners to fit into their community.

The participants were taught about noticeable elements of the community for instance about dangerous insects and animals how they could be controlled and avoided. In the same way they learnt about trees that were good for firewood and in the process they became conversant on botanical names. Kenyatta holds that indigenous education was taught in relation to a concrete situation.[1]This implies that it dealt with existent things which happen in life.

It was illiterate and did not require certificates for one to be a teacher just wisdom; age and experience were the basic fundamental requirements for the teaching job profile. The learning experiences were made orally and the knowledge was stored in the heads of elders and there were no classrooms like in the modern education were there are lecture rooms and boards. The tutors for African traditional games were selected from the family or clan and they entitled to imparting knowledge and skills as well as shaping attitudes for the children. Nyerere says, "At the didactic level the teaching process took the form of the stories, legends, riddles, and songs; while at the practical level individuals enacted what they had learnt didactically, by imitating and watching what their elders performed".[2] This was done through games like mahumbwe when children imitated adult roles and adhered to real life roles in practical means.

Another characteristic of indigenous games as a form of informal education is the science of learning by doing. Nyerere notes, The best way to learn sewing is to sew; the best way to learn farming is to farm; the best way to learn cooking is to cook the best way to learn how to teach is to teach and so on.[3] Hence through traditional games, participants adopted and experienced a physical approach of education.

It was not separated from other spheres of community activity. This implies that it was the whole life of the community and it had no special time of a day or life when it took place. Instead it took place in the entire span of life it can therefore be viewed as a life-long process in which an individual acquired skills, knowledge and values from womb to tomb. Mush comments that in this case education was essentially part of life and not separated from the societal culture, It was functional.[4] The knowledge skills and values that were imparted were relevant to the

socioeconomic activities of an individual. The learners learned the skills that were for immediate and long term activities.

Finally, there was no use of paper as the mind was the storeroom of all the education knowledge content. There were no certificates given following the completion of a level and the participants graduated ceremoniously. There was no board of examinations that assessed children's intellectualism through a set of questions given in an examination or test as the participants were considered graduates when they were able to practice what they had learnt throughout the whole training period.[5]

3.2 Strengths of African indigenous games to its recipients and the society at large

African indigenous games had a plethora of strengths to its recipients as well as the society. To begin with, traditional games were a form of employment as every member of the community was employed. Children were employed as participants and parents and elderly people were employed as mentors. Children learnt the skills that prepared them to immediately utilize their physical environment for self-employment. The skills acquired by watching, and imitating the elders were immediately put into practical use through playing games like mahumbwe. From an interview with Saungweme, he says that they learnt a lot of roles through playing mahumbwe and everyone was equipped with necessary practical skills which were relevant as life survival tools.[6] They had passed theoretical assumptions as they engaged in physical learning. Boys learnt how to cut wood and boys learn how to fish and hunt. For this reason children became productive and useful members in the society. African traditional games were also successful in maintaining the socio-economic and cultural structures of the society.Daidzani says that they grew up to good children who were conversant to their culture and tradition as traditional games

taught them to be preserve and value their cultural norms and traditions.[7] The learners were taught among other things, to preserve their own culture and to get rid of external influences. Also the skills like pottery, cooking, carving, cloth making and building were taught in the view of maintaining the socio-economic and cultural heritage of the society.

The participants of African traditional games acquired societal attitudes rather than individualism hence togetherness was promoted.[8] An analysis of the communalism philosophical base, learners were taught to respect the properties of the whole society, and they used their acquired knowledge for service of the society. By so doing every member of the society was responsible for development of their community.

3.3 Limitations of African indigenous games

Although African traditional games a form of informal education had its strengths and successes, it also had its limitations. To begin with, the absence of writing and written records has affected the position of traditional games in a number of ways. The accumulated knowledge and skills could not be preserved in written form and lacked proper methods of storing knowledge and relied on the memories of the elders hence it was difficult to spread from one place to another. Mushi says "it was not easy to describe, compare, and estimate distance, volume, weight, and size of different objects because figures or letters were unknown to traditional African societies".[9] Since knowledge was passed from generation to generation through word of mouth and the elderly people with grey hair were responsible for passing this knowledge to the youth. The death of these elders gradually means that they die with some of their knowledge hence the only base for knowledge that remains is from secondary sources. This means that originally the content is no longer the same as it would have been subjected to alterations. There secondary

sources may have the tendency of editing the original content as a way of pleasing their participants hence there is no credibility given to the original founders of the module.

African traditional games were also tailor made for a specific society hence this meant they could only educate the people from that same community and did not go beyond the borders of the society. This meant that it was limited as there was no room for participants to learn and relate to other cultures' ways of live and beliefs. For this reason they remained unaware of other people's histories which hindered development. Furthermore the elders who were teachers were acute in character hardly entertaining challenges. This further cemented by Mushi as he notes, "traditional education had a specific body of knowledge to be learnt which never changed, and which concentrated only on the transmission of cultural heritage, i.e. of traditions, values, and norms among the members of the tribe from childhood to adulthood…"[10]

African traditional games as a form of informal education lacked intellectualism largely because very few games like nhodo and tsoro were intellectual in nature. Education was primarily based on solutions of tackling life situations practically. The education is more practical rather than theoretical hence greater emphasis was placed on the 'concrete' rather than the 'abstract'. It ignored other cognitive abilities like reasoning, which although it was imperative, was insufficiently developed and they attributed everything that happens be it good or tragic to God's will.

African traditional games also limited creativity and innovation as learning was lineal. This was largely because only the elders who were chosen by virtue of grey hair were regarded to have had experienced various life situations taught by elders taught the young.[11] The participants were not awarded an opportunity to pass judgments, debate or analyse concepts as they were

considered to have no experiences and knowledge solid enough to contribute in the learning process. This can be seen from a critical analysis of mabombo as a traditional games. There might have been a change in the way the bombo (disk) is made owing to the day to day change in perceptions but because children are spoon fed there has not been new versions of the game. Societies still stick to the original standard some of which need alterations so as to fit in the modern day. For this reason they were they were entitled to listen and comply with what they were taught by their tutors hence this limited their scope hence the process hindered development in traditional societies.

In playing games like mahumbwe, Katerere says, participants were taught to be conversant to what they were taught but some lessons were unrealistic.[12]This is evidenced when one takes a closer look at the place of food in the traditional cultural context. Foods such as eggs, fruits and milk were censored as they were regarded as adult food. Some beliefs were attached to such foods for example eggs were not supposed to be eaten by pregnant mothers owing to the belief that they would give birth to a bald-headed child. Eggs are an important source of proteins which help in bodybuilding. By so doing when mothers do not eat eggs they lack proteins which means their babies experience stunted growth as they lack proteins which are a vital nutrient for body building. With this in mind, it is true to say that some assumptions in African traditional education were unrealistic hence it is sound to assert that some of the indigenous beliefs were based on misconceptions.

The place of gender was also not fully addressed in traditional games. In African societies, decision making was for man as women were seen as the source of labour and did not own means of production neither did they take part in decision making hence roles played in games

were gendered. This is evidenced in the case of mahumbwe, women were segregated as they were isolated from men and were supposed to learn skills related to domestic works and imitated roles in mid wifery, healthcare weaving and farming. On the other hand even those men who were good at women duties could not do so owing to societal expectations hence their gifts were undermined as they could not specialise in what they were good at.[13] Hence in the process they were robbed from freedom of choice and expression hence in the process societal development was hindered.

3.4 Relevance of African traditional games to the modern education

African traditional games as an indigenous educational tool are relevant in the modern educational curricula in a number of ways as it is the basis for the foundation of Education for Self-reliance in modern education. During the establishment of ESR in 1967, Nyerere recalled how the traditional education was relevant to the community life-especially learning by doing, and included it in modern education.[14]Learner's participation in learning is highly encouraged by modern educators. This is the same as in African traditional education; games allow children to learn through participation as they engage in plays like mahumbwe, nhodo and mabombo which are educative in nature.

Modern education prepares the participants for real life duties in the professional world and traditional games prepare children for adult roles   hence the two complement as they both prepare learners to enter the working world. Taking a closer look at the present education curricula which includes information and communication technology courses in schools and universities. These fields address the increasing global demands of information and communication technology. This process is the same traditional education also changed in

response to communal problems for instance finding the antidote for combating the emerging diseases among others hence.

African indigenous games have also greatly influenced the need for development of more appropriate problem solving educational curriculum and the promotion of life-long education which is the same aim of modern education. Looking into some aspects of traditional games which include hard work and conflict management skills are also used in modern education. Children develop confidence in modern education through presentations while in traditional games participants gain confidence through play as they win.[15] Basically African indigenous games managed to provide education to all members of the community, although it differed from society to society.

3.5 Criticisms of the African indigenous educational model

The Africa indigenous educational model is by no means a one-size-fits-all solution, and there are challenges that must be addressed when implementing this approach. Initially, it is arguable that indigenous interpretations of the right to education conflict with the universal standard for the rights of girls.[16] Second, there is an argument that the incompetence of African leaders has led to the influx of the African indigenous education model and Eurocentric scholars have alluded to Tanzania's successful educational policies only because the country had a strong national leader. One criticism of the African indigenous model is that allowing indigenous interpretations of the right to education opens the door for infringement of girls' rights.[17] Scholars, such as Tamar Ezer at Georgetown's International Women's Human Rights Clinic, point out that even though the model was successful in promoting gender equality in primary schools, unequal representation is still prevalent in secondary schools. [18] This is because

education regulations "expel students for marriage or pregnancy." [19] In Tanzania, girls are expected to marry young; "almost half of women marry before age 18 and two-thirds marry before age 20." [20] "The average age of school attendees in secondary school is fourteen to nineteen." [21] Thus, more than half of the girls in Tanzania are expelled from school due to marriage or pregnancy. [22] Girls are torn between the cultural pressure to marry at a young age and the desire to continue school. [23] These critics claim that Tanzania should "eliminate the practices of child marriage and guardianship." [24] Thus, the Tanzanian model of promoting education arguably creates a conflict between the right to education and the rights of girls.

While these scholars make valid arguments concerning the right to education and its conflict with girls' rights, this Comment argues that simply proclaiming or declaring that a certain educational policy be abolished is not sufficient to invoke change. While laws matter, typically changing the law alone does not accomplish much. [25] The international community must focus on legitimizing girls' right to education in that specific country and not simply mandating it. While indigenous interpretations of the right to education may at first conflict with the universal conception of the role of girls in society, with time, the indigenous society will evolve and learn to adopt new values and make it their own.

In order to reconcile the indigenous interpretations of the right to education and the universal notion of the role of women generally, a process called "cultural transformation" must be adopted. [26] Professor An-Na'im proposed this process, which focuses on internal discourse and cross-cultural dialogue. [27] He argues that universal standards "are unlikely to prevail without due regard for local cultural legitimacy and contextual understandings of these rights." [28] An-Na'im illustrates how attempts to "transplant a fully developed and conclusive concept and its

implementation mechanisms from one society to another" [29].They are likely to fail because they have not been developed and internalized by the people in that society, and "the way to get a universal idea accepted locally is to present it in local terms, which can best be done by local people." [30]

The right to education must also be brought about in each country in a similar fashion, with specific attention to how it will enhance girls' education. External forces may encourage girls' rights to education but it will ultimately be up to individuals in that society to legitimize it and make it their own. With sufficient internal discourse and cross-cultural dialogue, this right to education should evolve to incorporate girls' rights to education. The focus on promoting the right to education must be based on legitimization in individual communities.

3.6 Conclusion

In conclusion the chapter discussed the characteristics of indigenous games and education as well as the strengths of traditional games to both the participants and the society and how this have affected the way various people view traditional games as an indigenous way of knowing. Finally emphasis has been given on the limitations of traditional games as well as the criticisms of indigenous games as a form of informal education.

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CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

This is a comprehensive study and erudite description of the struggle of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in an Age of Globalization, using in particular three children's traditional games in Mandeya District of Matsapa. The research is an informative and interesting anthropological account of rare African children's games at the risk of disappearing under globalization, technological advancements and westernization among others. The virtue of this research is founded in the healthy appreciation of the creative art forms and skills that are packaged in traditional games. The research has given a concise review on traditional games and has given a clarion call to Africans and the world beyond to come to the rescue of relegated and marginalized African creativity in the interest of future generations. The study looked at African traditional games as a form of informal education taking a historical analysis of games in different periods ranging from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times. The way games were valued as an important educative tool has differed from decade to decade owing to the various demands that are associated with transitional changes. During the pre-colonial era games were a vital element in indigenous education and all the children valued the position of games. Elderly people with grey hair were largely responsible for teaching children as through the virtue of age, they were regarded wise owing to the various life situation that they encountered in their life.

The study reviewed that African traditional games are at the risk of running extinct owing to a number of factors which include technological advancements, westernisation, and globalisation among others. This means that the knowledge of African traditional education will reach a point

when it will become non-existent and future generations to come will be non-conversant of their indigenous knowledge systems. Therefore the study has investigated a number of indigenous games which include mahumbwe, mabombo and nhodo as way of preserving the content and wealth of knowledge embedded in African traditional games. By so doing the content of African traditional games as a form of informal education would have been preserved. This means the wealth of knowledge embedded in African traditional games would have been preserved for the future and generations to come will remember these games through treading the works on indigenous games from historical archival sources. By so doing the knowledge on indigenous education will stand from generation to generation and youths will continue to be educated with these games hence African indigenous knowledge would have been successfully promoted.

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