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EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

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THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION

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FROM THE EDITORS

This issue of Educational Planning includes significant topics such as the impact of pandemic on school reopening, the management of disability diversity, cultural changes in higher education and the emancipatory pedagogy movement in Ethiopian community schools.

In the first article, Mills and her colleagues explored the preparedness of schools to re-open post-COVID-19 school closure in Ghana. From the findings, it became evident that schools in Ghana were generally prepared to re-open per schedule despite some existing unique disparities by school location.

In the second article, Jimenez and his colleagues were interested in gathering qualitative data to increase their understanding regarding how a shift in departmental values and priorities impacted how faculty felt and assessed their individual experiences during their time within the department. Overall findings reveal the transformational process of a purposeful departmental culture shift from toxic to healthy.

In the third article, Assefa and Adamu claimed that educational leaders at all levels may achieve Disability Diversity Management (DDM) commitment and satisfaction by actively enhancing their institutions' performance through the intentional inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The goal of their study was to investigate the level of commitment and satisfaction of DDM in Ethiopian public higher education institutions (HEIs) so that recommendations can be made for improvement.

The study by Rahnema explored the Jamaican Rastafarian Development Community (JRDC) School in rural Ethiopia. The author examined the school's integration of Rastafarian culture and spirituality on pedagogical practices.

All the articles in this issue touch on current educational issues and are pertinent to planning initiatives. They are aimed at targeting international education challenges and seeking practical solutions in their respective cultural perspectives. Their global experiences could serve as good sources of information for our planning purposes.

Editor: Tak Cheung Chan

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November, 2023

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PREPAREDNESS OF SCHOOLS TO RE-OPEN POST COVID-19 INDUCED SCHOOL CLOSURES IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

The ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic on society affected several facets including formal education. Significantly, the indefinite closure of schools was introduced to control the spread and related fatality of the pandemic making the decision to reopen schools for all learners in January 2021 after several months of closure a preparedness concern. Using a national school-based survey informed by Event Systems and Chaos theories, the paper explores the preparedness of schools to re-open post-COVID-19 school closure. From the findings, it became evident that schools in Ghana were generally prepared to re-open per schedule. However, there existed unique disparities in some school system sub-levels informed by the location of the school. Consequently, we recommend: (1) the need to take advantage of the confidence the school system had regarding reopening for undertaking build-back efforts in future pandemics, and (2) policy and research response, especially for the vulnerable in resilience building post-emergency recovery in schools.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which sprung up in late 2019, all but wrecked global human activity as societies restricted human physical contact and mobility in an effort to control the spread of transmission (Dayal & Tiko, 2020; Grants, Achyut, Akello et al, 2023; Rossiter & Abreh, 2020; Spinelli & Pellino, 2020; World Health Organization {WHO} 2020,) The restrictions on physical contact and mobility resulted in the closure of schools to in-person engagements, such that more than 124 countries closed down schools, affecting an estimated 1.25 billion (90.2%) learners in formal education across the globe (Dayal & Tiko, 2020; Lomborg, 2020; Ministry of Education {MoE}, 2020; Sheikh, Sheikh, Sheikh, & Dhami, 2020; WHO, 2020).

Long-term closures of schools, however, held dire consequences for the development of children, particularly in exacerbating negative cases around access, equity, and equality in education (Ansa et al., 2023; Im Kampe, Lehfeld, Buda, Buchholz & Haas, 2020; Sheikh et al., 2020,). Of most interest to stakeholders was the impact of the school closures on learning losses and increasing psycho-social health cases (Abreh, Bosu, Crawford, et al., 2021). Already, only 2% to 4% of infection-to-death ratios had been attributed to school-related COVID-19 reported cases (Lordan, FitzGerald & Grosser, 2020). This suggested that the continuous closure of schools was no longer tenable relative to the potential losses at hand (Abreh, Agbevanu, Alhassan, et al., 2021; Moro, Sinigaglia, Bert, Savatteri, Gualano, Siliquini, 2020).

Re-opening schools for children in the shortest possible time after restrictions were eased became a compelling option for countries to pursue (American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP],

2020; Schleicher, 2020; Schechter-Perkins, van den Berg & Branch-Elliman, 2020). The case of adult stakeholders in the school including head teachers, teachers, and non-teaching staff, however, remained a concern considering the high incidence of infections and death in adults (Lordan et al., 2020; Sheikh et al., 2020; Spenelli et al., 2020). The need to ensure the health and safety readiness of schools to receive both learners and workers became urgent (Abreh, Bosu, Crawford, et al., 2021; Schleicher, 2020). After all, those were the very reasons that caused schools to be closed. Reporting on the models of school reopening, Di Domenico, Pullano, Sabbatini, Boelle and Colizza (2021) provided different strategies countries employed post-COVID-19-induced school closures. Others also examined the prevalent pandemic preventive/control measures in schools (Di Domenico, Pullano, Sabbatini, Boëlle, & Colizza, 2020; Gokuladas & Sam, 2020). In Ghana, Ampofo, Ampomah, Amissah-Reynolds, Owusu and Opoku-Manu (2020); Bariham, Ondigi and Kii (2020); and Dubik, Amegah and Adam (2020) reported on the experiences of partial re-opening of schools for learners at the terminal levels of schooling. Such reports, however, made no recordings of school-associated increases in infected cases. Before the present paper, the ability of the school system to sustain gains made in the partial reopening of schools in January 2021 remained unknown making it a gap in Ghana's education development literature.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is premised on the following two research questions:

- (1) What is the state of preparedness of schools in Ghana to re-open post-COVID-19-induced school closures?
- (2) What experiences exist in the implementation of intended reopening protocols outlined for schools?

STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL RE-OPENING POST COVID-19 INDUCED SCHOOL CLOSURES

Globally, different models of re-opening of schools post-COVID-19-induced school closures have been adopted by nations in the wake of pandemic (Lordan et al., 2020; Sheikh et al., 2020). Three categorizations of re-opening typologies were identified by Di Domenico et al. (2021) as: partial, progressive, and full-scale. The partial model limited schools re-opening to only a section/class of learners, such as reopening for final-year students only. The progressive reopening adopted incremental jumps in reopening, where some started with few classes and added on overtime. The full-scale reopening of schools implied having all levels/classes in the school system resuming at once. Whichever model was preferred by a context presented some implications for the school and its re-opening.

Alteration to School Calendars and Attendance

Alterations to the conventional academic calendar to become pandemic-ready for the school system were reported widely among nations (Atta & Hagag, 2021; Im Kampe et al., 2020; Lordan et al., 2020;). According to Melnick and Darling-Hammond (2021) and Schleicher (2020), most member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) re-opened schools within two to three months after the COVID-19-induced school closures. In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), most countries continued to close schools for almost a year. For Burundi, however, life continued as usual throughout the height of the pandemic (Association for the Development of Education in Africa [ADEA], African Population and Health Research Center [APHRC]; African Union International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa [AU/CIEFFA, 2021]). Data on the reopening of schools in African countries are widely available (ADEA

et al., 2021; Datzberger & Parkes, 2021). These individual contextual differences in the re-opening dates of schools were also characterized by the adoption of different methods of splitting classes or sessions (Datzberger & Parkes, 2021).

The progressive or partial models of school re-opening impacted attendance to school either in the grade or level categorizations (ADEA et al., 2021; Atta & Hagag, 2021; Di Domenico, et al., 2020; Sheikh et al., 2020; Tadesse & Muluye, 2020). China, for instance, re-opened schools initially for final-year students of middle and high schools. In Norwegian regions with low infection rates, on the other hand, schools re-opened for day-care and preschoolers a week before Grades 1-4 (ages 6-11) were permitted to resume schooling (Melnick & Darling-Hammond, 2021). For countries like Denmark, France, and Germany, the partial mode of reopening schools was adopted, where schools were reopened for students below 12 years, while distance or virtual modes were adopted for older children (Melnick & Darling-Hammond, 2021; Sheikh et al., 2020). Most SSA countries also adopted the progressive model by reopening schools gradually, prioritising students at the terminal grades (ADEA et al., 2021). For example, in Ghana, the reopening of schools for only final-year students in Junior High Schools (JHS) and Senior High Schools (SHS) in June 2020 was to conclude preparations for their terminal national examinations, i.e., Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) (Owusu-Fordjour, Koomson, & Hanson, 2020). The progressive form is subsequently observed in the reopening of schools in October 2020 for two SHS and JHS students, before the full-scale reopening in January 2021 for all learners was scheduled (Darko, 2020; MoE, 2020).

Preventive/control Measures to Guarantee Safe School Environments

As is typical of pandemic management incidences, the determination to reopen schools as COVID-19 infection rates eased up was characterised by the adoption of sustained strategies to control and prevent the spread of the virus (Klaiman, Kraemer & Stoto, 2011). The prerequisite for school reopening, therefore, became the availability of relevant guidelines, requisite logistics, and capacity for implementing safety protocols. A single measure, according to Moro et al. (2020), however, fails to guarantee as much control and prevention as a combination of measures. Understandably, contextual differences may result in varied models of prevention and control measures to ensure the needed safe and healthy space for schooling (Schechter-Perkins et al., 2020; Hoofman & Secord, 2021). Nevertheless, at the core of various models were social distancing, respiratory hygiene, and other enhanced hygiene practices.

Generally, observing social distancing (or physical distancing) in schools meant different things in different contexts (Qian & Jiang, 2022; Reluga, 2010). Whereas some contexts-imposed distance of a meter or two between persons found in shared spaces, others introduced a one-way corridor system for persons accessing or sharing the space of a facility. In other jurisdictions, zoned playgrounds, staggered attendance to school by dividing classes into sub-groups to fit into arranged shift programmes, and re-arrangement of classroom furniture for more spacing were introduced (Moro et al., 2020; WHO, 2020). In terms of enhanced respiratory practice, most contexts imposed the wearing of nose masks (masks worn to cover the nose and mouth) in public spaces, as well as ensuring that enclosed spaces in schools were well-ventilated (Bender, 2020; Moro et al., 2020; Schleicher, 2020). Enhanced hygiene protocols introduced for commonly used spaces informed daily practices like cleaning, washing, and waste disposal. Cleaning and disinfecting of touched surfaces and objects now became more frequent than before (Bender, 2020; Moro et al., 2020; WHO, 2020). At the personal level of the students, hand washing was also to occur more frequently,

particularly after touching surfaces, in addition to the disposal of tissue paper right after use in order to prevent possible contact with another person.

Beyond these practical control measures, the reading of body temperatures was also adopted as a quick surveillance and containment strategy for the virus (Schechter- Perkins, et al., 2020). In schools, the temperature of staff and students had to be subsequently checked daily, with some having temperature readings either in the morning or after school or both (Guthrie Tordoff, Meisner, 2020; Johansen, Astrup, Jore, Nilssen, Dahlberg, Klingenberg & Greve-Isdahl, 2020 & WHO, 2020). Voluntary self-quarantining was also recommended in order to protect “unexposed members of the community” (Warner & Zhang, 2021; p. 1). This caused the practice of ‘Stay home’ to become a common feature to isolate infected persons from spreading the virus to other persons (Warner & Zhang, 2021). The Ghana Education Service (GES) (2021) announced the splitting of huge classes and the ban on social gatherings, including visits to students in boarding schools by family members, during the partial re-opening in Ghana (Owusu-Fordjour et al., 2020).

The observance of these prevention guidelines in schools presented logistical and supply-side imperatives. For instance, enhanced hand hygiene required facilities with a constant flow of water, and an adequate supply of soap, hand sanitisers, paper towels, and waste bins, among others (Guthrie et al., 2020; Moro et al., 2020; WHO, 2022). For example, in addition to wiping wet hands and surfaces, paper towels boosted respiratory etiquette in public spaces. These logistics were to be widely distributed across school compounds and classrooms (Guthrie, et al., 2020; Johansen, et al., 2020; Moro et al., 2020; WHO, 2022). Cleaning agents, disinfectants, and other cleaning materials also became prerequisites to ensure effective cleaning and disinfection of surfaces. In addition, thermometers were deployed that could read body temperature from a distance in order to prevent spread to the health worker and other users. Nose-masking or face shields to enforce safe respiratory measures also became a prerequisite to use public spaces (Schechter- Perkins, et al., 2020; WHO, 2020). The supply of these logistics is however heavily hinged on individual nation’s income levels. Comparatively, low-income countries in SSA, South Asia, and the Caribbean recorded the least supplies of logistics (Brauer, Zhao, Bennitt & Stanaway, 2020). For effective control over the pandemic in schools, planned preventive measures are best captured in approved guidelines or policies (Schleicher, 2020; Hoofman & Secord, 2021).

Guidelines on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in Schools

The global nature of the pandemic generally had international bodies and development partners initiate the development of guidelines to inform country-level guidelines. Prominent among the guidelines developed at the international level are the World Health Organization’s (WHO), the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies’ (IFRC) guidelines and checklist which was promoted to guide reopening of schools across educational contexts post-COVID-19-induced school closures (Box 1) (Bender, 2020). Immediate support for education systems at the country level therefore came from expertise, experiences, and structures made available by national, regional, and global bodies. Some guidelines developed at the national, which included those for school re-

Box 1: Samples of Global Guidelines and Checklists for reopening of schools:

- Checklist to support schools re-opening and preparation for COVID-19 resurgences or similar public health crisis (WHO, 2020).
- Guidance notes and guidelines on safe school reopening: in the context of COVID-19 (UNICEF, 2021).
- Interim guidance for COVID-19 prevention and control in schools (Bender, 2020, for UNICEF, WHO, IFRC)

opening are cited (See Box 2). The development of these guidelines is not pandemic-preventive if strategies fail to give recourse to contextual realities. Thus, UNICEF (2020) recommended that nationally developed guidelines should precede school re-opening in order to adequately inform practice. These nationally developed guidelines were also to have the input of a host of stakeholder agencies representing expertise that are imperative to address the diversity of challenges associated with the pandemic (UNICEF, 2021; Bender, 2020). The WHO's checklist to support schools' re-opening and preparation for COVID-19 resurgence was thus drawn from experts with different backgrounds that could address the concerns of the pandemic (WHO, 2020). Selected stakeholders were generally engaged at the policy, community, organisational, interpersonal, and individual levels (Hoover Heiger-Bernays, Ojha, & Pennell, 2021).

Box 2: Samples of National Guidelines and Checklists for reopening of schools:

- ED COVID-19 handbook: Strategies for safely reopening elementary and secondary schools (Department of Education, USA, 2021).
- Standard operating procedure for the containment and management of COVID-19 for schools and school communities (Department of basic Education South Africa, 2020).
- COVID-19 Guidance for schools in Nigeria (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2020)

Relatedly, stakeholder consultations were encouraged for national-level developed school guidelines (Schleicher, 2020; UNICEF, 2020; WHO, 2020). Major activities for collaborating stakeholders at this level included investigating the context to inform relevant content for the guidelines on prevention and control; disseminating and receiving information; sourcing and distributing requisite logistics and supplies; and assuring compliance to outlined preventive protocol (Carvalho, Rossiter, Angrist, Hares & Silverman 2020; Hoover et al., 2021; Schleicher, 2020; UNICEF, 2020). The benefits of these stakeholder engagements ultimately include developing relevant content for a dissemination strategy that promises an extensive reach, as well as creating an organized front for pandemic management (Hoover et al., 2021; Schleicher, 2020; UNICEF, 2020). Strategies promoted by government agencies and partners, therefore, connote a system that is considered robust, having multiple ownership and being trusted (Hoover et al., 2021; Schleicher, 2020; UNICEF, 2020; WHO, 2020).

In Ghana, the observation of the guideline developed for the final-year students in June 2020 was considered adequate (Bariham, et al., 2020), such that teachers readily assumed frontline worker positions in schools (Ampofo, et al., 2020). The readiness of the schools enabled school stakeholders to equally carry out their conventional activities dutifully (Bariham, et al., 2020; Dubik, et al., 2020; Abreh et al., 2021). Existing studies have explored the issue of readiness to reopen schools after closures. However, the extant literature examined indicators that did not necessarily have affiliation with the case of COVID-19 school closures. The preparedness of schools in Ghana to resume at full scale in January 2021, especially with regards to issues of availability of COVID-19 prevention guidelines and compliance, therefore, remained a concern (Schleicher, 2020; Spinelli & Pellino, 2020), thereby making the current paper unique. The two research questions that guided the study were: 1) What is the state of preparedness of schools in Ghana to re-open post-COVID-19-induced school closures? and (2) What experiences exist in implementing intended reopening protocols outlined for schools?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The uncertainties around the need to reopen schools within a disrupted education system created by the COVID-19 pandemic set this study to draw on the Event Systems and Chaos theories.

In Event Systems Theory, Morgeson, Mitchell and Liu (2015) assert that the level of salience and impact of an event depends on its novelty, disruptiveness and critical state. In Shoss, Horan, DiStaso, LeNoble and Naranjo's (2021) study, which applied Event Systems Theory, the COVID-19 pandemic was depicted as characterised by novelty, criticality and disruptiveness to society. Chaos Theory on the other hand posits that systems can use positive and negative feedback to respond to instability, which invariably results in a non-linear co-evolution and transformation (Keyes & Benavides, 2018; Richards, 2017). The process of transformation takes cognizance of the context and ongoing interactions. As part of establishing the context, co-evolution is created from the combined interaction of positive and negative feedback to culminate in the development of a new policy or system. Aspects of co-evolution include the deliberate actions by lead policy actor(s) to punctuate changes to alter existing decision-making processes for the new. Having originated from physics, Chaos Theory has subsequently been applied to studies in other disciplines, which have revealed that differences in contexts and types of catalysts affect responses, although it is generally agreed that it is inimical for societies to remain in the status quo when change is required (Morgeson et al., 2015; Shoss et al., 2021).

To facilitate the reopening of schools when no control had been gained over COVID-19, the high uncertainties required a departure from conventional practices to plan for the development of a new direction/policy with a higher degree of resilience (Keyes & Benavides, 2018). The change in behaviour and responsibilities by stakeholders of the school to confront the pandemic required guidelines to inform the prevention and control of infections (Bratianu, 2021; WHO, 2020). Based on the need for the comprehensiveness of the study in (i) the development of guidelines, (ii) the provision of prevention protocols, and supplies, and (iii) compliance practices occurring in schools the Event Systems and Chaos theories were applied.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a mixed method design taking the best advantage of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The data reported in this paper were culled from a national survey that focused on the resilience to re-open schools in Ghana post-COVID-19-induced school closures (See PREPARE study per Abreh, Agbevanu, Jangu Alhassan, et al., 2021). The remaining sections of the methodology section present the methodological outlook of the paper: the study area, sample, instruments, data collection, and data analysis methods employed.

Study Area

Drawing from the Ghana Statistical Service's (GSS) (2013) three geographic zones, namely Coastal, Forest and Savannah, the study assumes a national character. The Coastal zone covers the entire coastal area comprising Western, Central, and Greater Accra regions whilst the Forest zone constitutes the Ashanti, Ahafo, and Bono Regions located in the middle geographic area of the country. The Savannah zone on the other hand is made up of the Northern, Savannah, Regions located in the Northern part of the country. This study encompassed Ghana.

Research Sample

A total of 484 schools were randomly sampled from all three geographic zones. All three pre-tertiary levels of schools in Ghana were represented by 225 primary schools, 195 Junior High Schools (JHS), and 30 Senior High Schools (SHS). In Ghana, the primary level constitutes Kindergarten for four-year-olds, and Primary grades One to Six for six to twelve-year-olds. Unlike

the SHS level, the Primary to JHS schools were either sub-levels or stand alone. For instance, a school can be a combination of either the three sub-levels of Kindergarten (KG), primary, and JHS; or one sub-level or a combination of any two. Regardless of the levels, head teachers of sampled schools were purposively engaged to respond to the study.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

The survey was underpinned by a questionnaire Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) platform. The CAPI made it possible to access the data in real-time and to assure quality data collection and management processes across the schools. Additionally, the questionnaire was enhanced with an enumerator observation checklist that seeks to ascertain the presence or absence of requisite logistics and supplies for COVID-19 prevention. The CAPI authenticated the sources of data by identifying each data to a head teacher, as well as tracking the geo-locations of schools. The qualitative data were gathered from policy/guidelines on COVID-19 prevention and management in schools, and enumerator memos on observations and impressions notes on schools visited. The primary documentary resources were the “Guidelines for School Re-opening during COVID-19: A Resilient Education System” (GES, 2021); “COVID-19 Coordinated Education Response for Ghana” (MoE, 2020); and “Ghana COVID-19 Situation Report No.14: 1st January -31st January 2021” (UNICEF, 2021).

Data Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed with descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Whereas the survey-based data were analysed using descriptive renditions, the qualitative data on the other hand were thematically engaged to generate answers to the research questions.

Ethics Observed in the Study

Generally, ethical considerations observed in the study covered the researcher/enumerator-participant’s relationship, selection of relevant documents, observation of ethical principles of respect for persons, and the promise of anonymity in reporting. The study was conducted based on ethical approval sought and gained from the University of Cape Coast’s Institutional Review Board. The ethical clearance identifier is UCCIRB/EXT/2021/08. The research teams’ reflexivity was heavily relied upon throughout the study, particularly in decisions related to the design and the selection of relevant documents and the use of the data from the PREPARE study (Bailey, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2013).

RESULT OF THE STUDY

This section presents the study’s result under three major themes that were generated to provide answers to the two research questions. The major themes are plan and design considerations; prevention protocol supplies and logistics; and experiences around the implementation of protocols outlined for schools.

Plan and Design Considerations

Macro level

Before the reopening of schools in January 2021, a 10-member committee formed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) was tasked to develop the ‘Guidelines for School Re-opening during COVID-19’ (Ghana Education Service [GES], 2021). The task of the Committee for the January 2021 school reopening did not depart much from the work of their predecessors in 2020, except for the differences in the magnitude of students that schools were being reopened to. The “COVID-19 Coordinated Education Response for Ghana” (MoE, 2020) therefore remained relevant

to complement the “Guidelines for School Re-Opening during COVID-19: a Resilient Education System” (GES, 2021).

The ‘COVID-19 Coordinated Education Response Plan for Ghana (2020) received inputs from the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ghana Education Service (GES), National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), Ghana Library Authority (GhLA), Center for National Distance Learning and Open Schooling (CENDLOS), National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) and the University of Ghana (UoG) (MoE, 2020). The work of the 2020 committee, Owusu-Fordjour et al., (2020) asserts, was also guided by UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, WFP, and the World Bank’s Global Framework for reopening schools. In coordination with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ghana Health Service (GHS), the MoE and its relevant agencies developed the guidelines to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic (MoE, 2020). The 2020 team’s work was basically to forecast “the associated risk and response to be taken to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana” (MoE, 2020; p. 2).

From the “COVID-19 Coordinated Education Response for Ghana” (MoE, 2020) and “Guidelines for School Re-Opening during COVID-19: A Resilient Education System” (GES, 2021), the core activities that went into the plan designed at the macro level included the control and prevention of the spread of COVID-19 in schools. The activities were very numerous yet revealed such a level of diversity to characterize issues under public health and safety in ,pandemic situations. Stakeholder groups were tasked with aspects that related to their expertise. Table 1 is an excerpt that outlines some stakeholders and their assigned duties.

Table 1 reveals different stakeholder institutions and activities they undertook to assure the health and safety of schools. Among the stakeholders were those in education, e.g., MoE and GES; in health, e.g., MoH and GHS; in local government, e.g., MMDAs, and those involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring etc. Unlike the 2020 reopening, the January 2021 reopening was preceded by the dissemination of the content of the guidelines, and information on COVID-19 as initiated by the national level actors through various media platforms and public notice boards (Enumerator Memo, February 2021). To ascertain the spread of information and further drum home the message before the full-scale school re-opening on the 15th and 18th of January 2021, the GES, GHS, UNICEF, Mastercard Foundation, and other partners launched the nationwide “Back to School” campaign at the Ga Mantse’s palace on 12th January 2021. This campaign was further extended to days of reopening as some stakeholder groups visited schools to welcome students/pupils (UNICEF, 2021).

Table 1: Example of agencies and assigned response to COVID-19 prevention and management at the school level.

Agencies	Assigned response to COVID-19 at the school level
MoH/GHS	-lead coordination of national response -Map schools to health facilities in response to COVID-19 suspected cases
GHS	-Lead institutional health education training for School Health Education Programme (SHEP) coordinators
MoE	-Monitor plan implementation -Evaluate to improve plan -develop monitoring and evaluating tools for implemented measures
MoE/GES	-Coordinate response with major players in the education sector -Develop strategies to educate students/pupils on the virus -Sensitize stakeholders on medium to obtain information and directives on measures -Appoint a focal person to receive correspondents on COVID-19 -Develop back to school campaign in collaboration with media and other key stakeholders at the national, regional, district, and community levels -supply all staff and students/pupils of schools with face mask - collaborate with development partners to source logistics and supplies
GES/SHEP coordinators	-conduct regular training for teachers and learners on personal hygiene -supervise adherence to safety protocols
MoE/GES/Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs)	-intensify awareness of school hygiene and safety
Schools	-operationalize the safe school guidance -equip schools with minimum hygiene packages

Culled from MoE (2020) and GES (2021)

Micro/School level

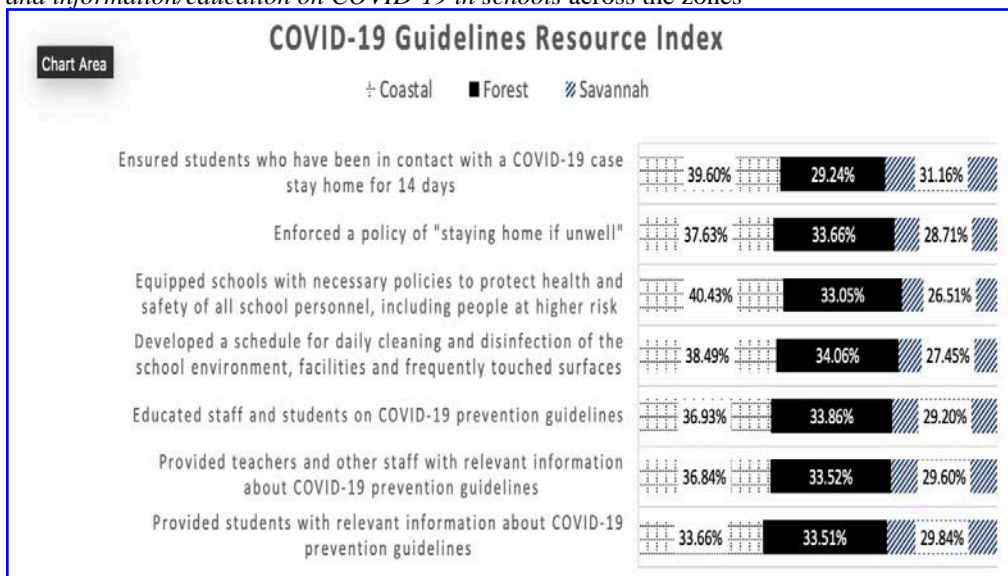
At the school level, the GES promoted strategies to ensure schools had a clear plan for COVID-19 prevention. Critical elements to these strategies included receiving and making available preventive guidelines and information on COVID-19, protocol supplies and logistics; and developing school-level plans and guides to ensure compliance. In order to establish the state of plans and design in the management of the pandemic in schools, this section of the paper presents Table 2 on the distribution of COVID-19 prevention policies/guidelines and information to inform compliance.

Table 2 shows that a greater percentage of the schools had provisions on the needed policies and guidelines to protect the health and safety of all. Apart from the existence of guidelines, KG-only schools report maximum provisions of other items more than even some of the schools at the higher levels. Specifically, except for the KG-only schools, other levels in the school system also overwhelmingly reported to have received the requisite policies and guidelines to at least 95%. This becomes an indication that both student-specific and teacher and other staff-specific resourcing were largely upheld. Across the board, schools were comprehensive in their public education and prevention awareness activities. Consequently, from our enumerator notes, a COVID-19 prevention guideline resource index was put together to give descriptive context across the three zones, Savannah, Forest, and Coastal as shown in Figure 1.

Table 2: Distribution of COVID-19 prevention information resourcing disaggregated by levels in the school system

COVID-19 Prevention Measures	KG only	Primary only	KG and Primary	JHS	KG, Primary and JHS	Primary and JHS	SHS
A. Policies, guidelines and schedules							
Schools equipped with COVID-19 prevention policies/guideline	78%	97%	97%	95%	97%	95%	100%
School guided for schedule for daily cleaning and disinfection of environment, facilities, and frequently touched surfaces	56%	84%	88%	89%	89%	100%	97%
B. Resourcing school stakeholders with relevant information							
Students-specific resourcing	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Teachers and other school staff-specific resourcing	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%	100%	97%
C. Public education and prevention awareness							
Educated staff and students on COVID-19 prevention guidelines	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	100%	100%
Students and parents are kept informed about measures to ensure collaboration and support in times of COVID-19-related incidences	100%	97%	99%	95%	95%	100%	100%
Promotion of channels to address misleading rumours and to reduce the risk of infection	100%	92%	97%	92%	97%	100%	97%
Sample size	N=9	N= 61	N=94	N =110	N=159	N=21	N=30

Figure 1: Distribution of policies/guidelines/developed schedules, and information/education on COVID-19 in schools across the zones



From Figure 1, guidelines/policies and education on COVID-19 prevention (items 1 to 3) were generally distributed across schools in the three zones. The figure however shows that consistently, the Coastal zone recorded higher proportions in all items, with the Forest zone following, except for the 7th item on the “14-day stay at home” for having come into contact with a COVID-19 case. From Table 2 and Figure 1, there was an overwhelming presence of information, preventive guidelines, and education on COVID-19 across schools at various levels across geographical zones.

Prevention Protocol Supplies and other Logistics

To operationalize the design for public safety around COVID-19, other requisite supplies and logistics had to be made available (WHO, 2020). The provision of these prevention protocol supplies and logistics in schools as explored from the data are categorized into enhanced hygiene protocols, respiratory protocols, and early detection protocols. The performance of these categories in schools is presented in Table 3 and Figure 2. Whereas Table 3 reveals the performance across the levels of the school system, Figure 2 shows the same across the geographic zones.

From Table 3, COVID-19 protocol supplies and logistics were generally available to almost all the schools across the three levels, except for the KG-only schools. The KG-only schools, therefore, recorded a lower presence of outlined resources. Unlike the nose masks, which all KG-only schools reported available, there was an abysmal reporting on all the other items, especially of the dustbin. This 33% of KG-only schools having dustbins presents a worrying concern for the disposal and management of waste around little children. The study further analyses the data on the availability of preventive protocol supplies and logistics across the three zones Figure 2.

Table 3: Distribution of COVID-19 Prevention Protocol Supplies and Logistics at the school level

Provisions of COVID-19 prevention protocol supplies and logistics	KG only	Primary only	KG and Primary only	JHS only	KG, Primary and JHS only	Primary and JHS only	SHS only
ENHANCED HYGIENE							
Veronica bucket	78%	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%	100%
Water	89%	98%	99%	99%	99%	100%	97%
Soap	89%	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%	100%
Tissue paper	89%	98%	98%	100%	99%	100%	100%
Dustbin	33%	90%	89%	92%	93%	100%	100%
VENTILATION/RESPIRATION							
Ventilation	78%	95%	100%	96%	99%	100%	97%
Nose mask	100%	98%	98%	97%	99%	100%	100%
EARLY DETECTION							
Contactless thermometer guns	89%	95%	96%	95%	99%	100%	97%
Sample size	N=9	N=61	N=94	N=110	N=156	N=21	N=30

*Veronica Bucket is a Ghanaian-origin mechanism for hand washing comprising a bucket of water with a tap fixed at the bottom, mounted at hand height, and a bowl at the bottom to collect wastewater.

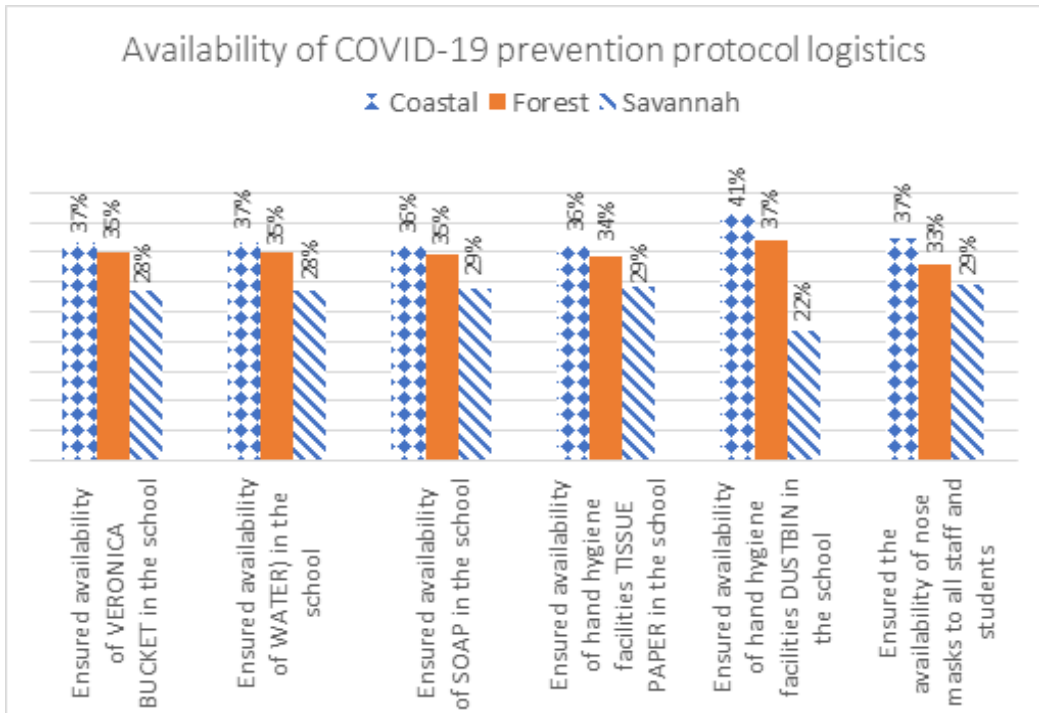


Figure 2: Availability of COVID-19 prevention protocol supplies and logistics organised by Geographical Zones

In Figure 2, the availability of COVID-19 hygiene prevention protocols is generally highest in the Coastal zone, followed by the Forest and Savannah zones. Of the items, the disparities in scores around the dustbin is low for the Savannah zone with marginal percentile proportions for the Forest and Coastal zones.

Experiences of the Implementation of Protocols Outlined for Schools on Reopening

For a holistic picture of Ghana’s preparedness to reopen schools post-COVID-19-induced school closures, this section presents head teachers’ experiences around compliance in implementing COVID-19 prevention and control guidelines in schools. Similar to the presentations in the preceding sections, this section presents the data by the levels in the school system and the zones. Table 4 looks at compliance practices at the levels in the school system under the major thematic areas of enhanced hygiene practices, use of commonly used spaces, and other unclassified practices.

Table 4 reveals generally high compliance to the COVID-19 prevention guidelines across schools except for the KG-only schools which recorded very low percentages for all practices except for the practices related to “wearing nose masks”, and “staying at home when sick”. Physical distancing is however the practice least observed across schools in Ghana. From another dimension Figure 3 presents compliance practices across the zones.

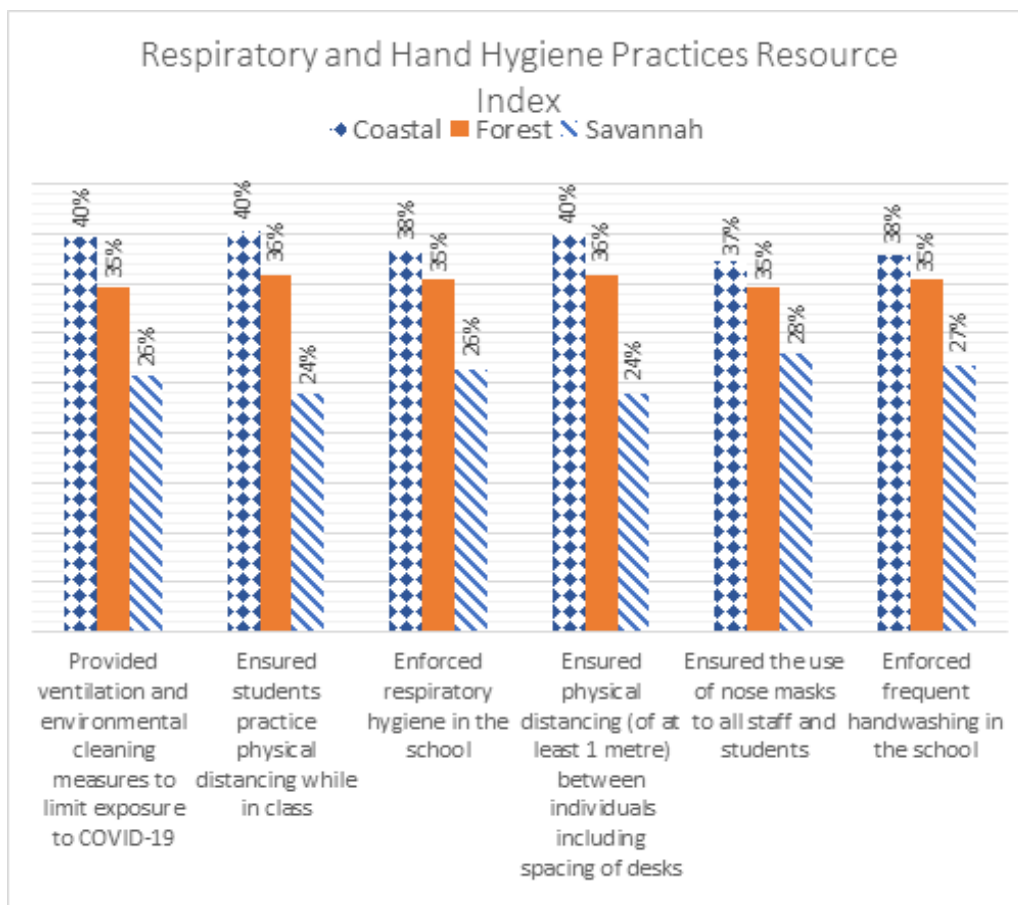
Table 4: Frequency of Enhanced hygiene practices deployment, use of common space in schools, and other practices

	KG only	Primary only	KG/ Primary only	JHS only	KG/ Primary/ JHS only	Primary/ JHS only	SHS only
ENHANCED HYGIENE PRACTICES							
Frequent handwashing	56%	98%	99%	99%	99%	100%	100%
Environmental cleaning measures	78%	95%	100%	96%	99%	100%	97%
HYGIENE IN COMMONLY USED SPACES							
Nose masks	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Physical distancing while in class	56%	89%	90%	89%	90%	95%	97%
One metre physical distancing between individuals including spacing of desks	79%	90%	93%	85%	84%	90%	97%
Respiratory hygiene	79%	98%	100%	97%	97%	100%	100%
Stay home for 14 days if contacted a COVID-19 case	100%	89%	82%	77%	75%	95%	87%
Policy of “staying home if unwell”	100%	98%	100%	96%	96%	100%	97%
OTHER PRACTICES							
Vulnerable students are given special attention during pick-up and drop-off	67%	84%	79%	79%	84%	100%	90%
Sample size	N=9	N=61	N=94	N=110	N=159	N=21	N=30

From Figure 3, the Coastal Zone recorded the highest proportion of practices, followed by the Forest and Savannah Zones. The gap in practices between the Coastal and the Forest Zones is however close, as compared to the Savannah Zone.

The results of the study have generally suggested that schools in Ghana were adequately prepared for the January 2021 re-opening of post-COVID-19-induced school closures. Clearly, information on COVID-19 was widely disseminated across the schools and zones including the requisite guidelines, protocol supplies, and logistics. The result from the study on Research Question Two on experiences around the implementation of the COVID-19 guidelines also reveals compliance as having occurred overwhelmingly across schools and the zones. For both research questions, however, it is evident that KG-only schools and the Savannah zone generally recorded lesser scores in most of the items explored in the study.

Figure 3: Respiratory Hygiene Protocols



DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The current study provides a set of data that has broadly explored the preparedness of schools in Ghana to reopen at full scale in January 2021 post-COVID-19-school closures. The study has focused on the plan and design of the COVID-19 guidelines and their implementation in schools upon reopening. The findings of the study broadly align with expectations around the management of the COVID-19 pandemic which was characterized by such novelty disruptiveness and uncertainties (Morgeson et al., 2015; Shoss et al., 2021). In as much as there was no precedence to take cue from (Taleb, cited in Bratianu, 2021) at the country level, the swift global response from organisations such as WHO and UNICEF to develop guidelines and recommendations to member nations eased the apprehension that accompanies pandemic-induced-isolated contexts (Bratianu, 2021; Jansen, 2020; WHO, 2020). In effect, the preparedness of schools to reopen amidst the spread of COVID-19 suggests an approach that took cognizance of the context, co-evolution and behavioural change. Consequently, Ghana observed the WHO and UNICEF's recommendations to inform the guidelines developed, as well as the process employed to reopen schools. The process employed can clearly be categorized into (i) activities formed around the leadership; (ii) collaboration; and (iii) an agenda to

effect the needed transformation.

In terms of leadership, clearly, the MoE organized relevant stakeholder groups to design, plan and assign responsibilities around the control of the spread of the pandemic in schools (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020; GES, 2021; MoE, 2020; Schleicher, 2020; Hoofman et al., 2021). As part of the plan, we find different stakeholder groups/institutions, both the traditional and non-traditional stakeholders contribute to the efforts. As reported by Owusu-Fordjour et al. (2020), the critical expertise of contributing stakeholders was so diverse, that the context resonates with the WHO's (2020) COVID-19 guidelines for schools that drew from specialists in children's and young people's health, health promotion, education, and emergencies. Also, as recommended, the leadership ensured the implementation of the recommended plan to develop and disseminate guidelines to schools before re-opening in order to prepare beforehand to receive students/pupils and staff of schools (Burgess et al., 2020; GES, 2020; Hoofman et al., 2021; Owusu-Fordjour et al., 2020; Schleicher, 2020).

The study further reveals evidence related to collaboration between stakeholders at the policy level, as well as at the school level consistent with known school management ethos (Abreh, 2017). Collaboration at the policy level is evident in the guidelines, undertaking responsibilities like dissemination of information, and resourcing schools with the protocol logistics and supplies, among others, as witnessed in the nationwide "Back to School" campaign (GES, 2021; MoE, 2020). School-level collaboration is apparent in compliance with the guidelines resulting in the co-evolution of a new guideline for behavioural transformation. In effect, the departure from the status quo is evident in the adoption of a new decision-making process where, (i) for the first time the traditional government agency, the MoE, leads with another government agency, i.e. MoH; (ii) COVID-19 guidelines do not contain only rules around schools, but also on the management of emerging cases; (iii) Government assumes direct oversight responsibility over targeted support to school actors in different situations; (iv) Government and international bodies actively campaign and welcome children back to school. A departure from the status quo is further emphasized by the development of new directions and guidelines to enhance the resilience of the school system in times of emergencies (Keys & Benavides, 2018).

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

The findings of the study present several implications for different actors. We have singled out the implication of the present study for educational planning in three specified areas, namely, the design, implementation and monitoring of practices in schools in times of post-emergency school closures. Since the school system is a miniature of the larger society, the design of any pandemic-related management should draw on expertise from different backgrounds. This would require a move away from the quantitative focus of educational planning to a rather mixed focus. Additionally, the role of leadership to steer, and receive feedback from the field is critical to the success of implementing plans for any form of education. Communication is critical for the reorientation of mindset to receive/accept and commit to educational plans.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the current study point to the fact that schools in Ghana were generally prepared to reopen post-COVID-19-induced school closures in terms of strategies, revealing an uptake of evidence in two primary ways: the prevention protocol supplies and logistics, and the guideline implementation. The few disparities recorded across some sub-levels in the school system and geographic zones, however, suggest an indication of the non-existence of prior emergency planning and rebuilding strategy. On the basis of these findings, we suggest the following recommendations: (1) At the system and policy level, relevant state and non-state actors need to

take advantage of the goodwill and appreciable uptake of guidelines and protocol for building back to advanced education and training prior to pandemic induced closures. (2) policy and research attention should be paid to the vulnerable and other critically impacted groups in order to achieve targets of resilience post-emergency recovery.

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TRANSFORMING A UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTAL CULTURE FROM TOXICITY TO HEALTH: A COLLABORATIVE AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The value and practice of cultivating a departmental culture that supports student and faculty success is critical to its effectiveness and sustainability in institutions of higher education. In this qualitative study, we apply a pedagogy of intentionality as our theoretical lens. Methodologically, we utilized a collaborative autoethnographic approach to explore experiences of departmental culture among educational leadership faculty at a public university in the southeastern United States. We were particularly interested in gathering qualitative data to increase our understanding regarding how a shift in departmental values and priorities impacted how faculty felt and assessed their individual experiences during their time within the department. Overall findings reveal the transformational process of a purposeful departmental culture shift from toxic to healthy. Evidence demonstrates (a) faculty's initial toxic culture experience characterized by a hostile, inequitable, and hierarchical working environment; (b) ways key faculty members utilized the opportunity of departmental personnel change to intentionally envision and effect a cultural transformational shift characterized by community and collegial interdependence and relationships; and (c) evidence of faculty's current experiences within a healthy culture, whose core features are professional, familial, diverse, and authentic. Faculty as guardians of culture was an associated finding.

INTRODUCTION

The value and practice of cultivating a departmental culture that supports both student and faculty success is critical to its effectiveness and sustainability in institutions of higher education (IHEs). The collegial model, underscored by shared governance, consensus-building, and open communication (Manning, 2018), plays a crucial role in this endeavor. In addition, a healthy faculty culture, focusing on trust, collaboration, cooperation, and social capital (Macfarlane, 2012, Tierney, 2006) strengthens a sense of community and fosters innovation and excellence. The Black cultural ethos of community, interdependence and relationships serve to complement this study as it applies these three tenets to further develop a framework of a pedagogy of intentionality, which refers to the intentional steps faculty in a department of educational leadership (EDL) took to build a

department culture characterized by community and collegial relationships undergirded by mutual respect (Croft, et al., 2019). For this study, we operationally define a healthy culture as professional, familial, diverse and authentic. The opposite of a healthy culture is a toxic culture, which we operationally define as hostile, negating diversity, inequitable and hierarchical. This study presents research that demonstrates the shift from a toxic to a healthy departmental culture.

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH FOCI

Between 2004 and 2014, the EDL department had six different chairs or interim chairs. Additionally, there were rival factions in the department, and unsubstantiated negative narratives toward others were present. As a result, some faculty did not feel safe expressing their opinions. Faculty meetings sometimes turned into heightened verbal disputes where certain members used their voices to threaten or silence others' comments, including perspectives and opinions. There was also explicit antipathy and antagonism within the department by some faculty and departmental leadership towards acknowledging the value of diversity within the department or hiring new faculty from diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds. The antipathy and antagonism were coupled with the lack of mentoring and equitable distribution of service opportunities.

Along with the aversions to diversity, members in the department actively followed a hierarchal disposition. Terms such as "junior" and "senior" faculty were prevalent and used as reasons that faculty members could not participate on departmental committees. Also, ideas of "junior" faculty were considered insignificant and unworthy of consideration. At one point, the culture became so fragmented that external consultants were invited to evaluate the department and provide sessions to help promote unity. Although the process provided a venue for the members of the department to express their frustrations and negative experiences, no significant change resulted from this external consultation. The repercussions on faculty within this department are presented in the findings section.

The investigation in this study also encompasses the shift from the cultural context of toxicity to the realization of a healthy culture. Thus, the purpose of this research is to identify, analyze and interpret the shift from a toxic departmental culture to a healthy culture. To this end, the study is focused on the following research questions:

1. What were the faculty's experiences that demonstrated the presence of toxicity in the pre-shift EDL culture?
2. In what ways did a shift in the EDL department culture occur?
3. What were the faculty's experiences that demonstrated a healthy EDL culture after the shift?

PEDAGOGY OF INTENTIONALITY AS A THEORETICAL LENS

To fully understand the premise undergirding the rebuilding of a department, this study utilizes a pedagogy of intentionality (Croft, et al., 2019). While the foundation of the pedagogy of intentionality rests on the pillars of the Black cultural ethos, the intention here is not to focus on the ethnicities within the department. Rather, intentionality exists in using specific principles of the Black cultural ethos including community, interdependence, and relationships to elucidate the intentional steps faculty in a department of educational leadership took to reimagine and rebuild a department characterized by community and collegial relationships and reinforced by mutual respect. The pedagogy of intentionality framework extends the various components of the Black cultural ethos by embodying *purposeful* intentionality. In other words, when used purposefully to build, incorporate, or sustain an entity, they form the foundation of a pedagogy of intentionality.

In this case, EDL formed the unit or entity on which the pedagogy of intentionality was grounded. The purpose was to deliberately create a culture that permeated aspects for the department from the recruitment of faculty, students, and the selection and implementation of curricula.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term *culture* has multiple meanings. For the purposes of this study, we have adopted the definition of culture by Schein and Schein (2016) that includes accumulated;

... shared learning of that group ...; which has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel, and behave in relation to those problems. This accumulated learning is a pattern or system of beliefs, values and behavioral norms that come to be taken for granted as basic assumptions and eventually drop out of awareness. (p. 6)

This review of literature focuses on organizational approaches and differentiates between toxic and healthy workplace environments.

Organizational Approaches

Higher education culture operates dynamically within the department level (Hughes, 2014), and influences the quality and quantity of faculty's academic work (Duryea, 2000; Hearn & Anderson, 2002). The differences in organizational approaches are vast, yet they exist simultaneously at IHEs, and each approach ultimately impacts the culture in any given department. Pifer, Baker and Lunsford (2019) note "the department is the primary location for...the socialization into the norms and practices of the college (p.541)." Organizational approaches reflect ideal models; however, currently, toxicity in departmental culture has been a specific challenge that negatively affects faculty members in various ways (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman 2019) and requires transformation, which can include a new set of values and goals, as well as leadership and faculty personnel. Thus, culture models in their entirety can, and in fact, must be changed under particular circumstances, including toxicity that permeates a department.

Toxic Culture in the Workplace

In general, workplace culture can be described as a set of behavioral expectations for employees in the workplace (Florczak, 2022). As a part of IHEs, departments consist of individuals who are responsible for the workplace culture (Hartel, 2008). The work place is often characterized by language, assumptions, with explicit and implicit rules "that employees use when interacting with one another" (Applebaum & Roy-Girard, 2007, p.19). These workplace norms can often be considered either toxic or positive with each producing various results and can encompass a wide range of subtle behaviors (Applebaum & Roy-Girard, 2007; Florczak, 2022; Tastan, 2017). In higher education, as mentioned earlier, culture operates dynamically within the department level (Hughes, 2014) and influences the quality and quantity of faculty's academic work (Duryea, 2000; Hearn & Anderson, 2002).

Examples of toxic culture may be characterized by "isolation and a lack of belongingness, low morale, no support network, competition, [and] destructive conflict" (Hartel, 2008, p. 1267). Toxic settings often exhibit workplace bullying, including peer-on-peer, a characteristic that is on the rise in colleges and universities (Lester, 2013; Twale & DeLuca, 2008). Fear and trauma can be additional symptoms of a toxic faculty culture (Twale & DeLuca, 2008). According to Keashly & Neuman (2013), the forms of negative workplace behavior comprise an almost inexhaustible list of constructs that includes, but is not limited to, workplace aggression, emotional abuse, incivility,

psychological aggression, petty tyranny, abusive supervision, social undermining, generalized work harassment, scapegoating, workplace trauma, insidious work behavior, counterproductive work behavior, organizational misbehavior, and desk rage. (p.3)

The notion and practice of bullying can become inculcated in a department's culture when "accusations of bullying [are] dismissed as fair comment or 'the way we do things around here', with the person(s) making the accusations themselves accused of bullying those they accuse by making unwarranted complaints" (Tight, 2023, p. 127). Bullying among faculty, moreover, has been found to occur at a higher rate among gender, racial, ethnic, and sexual identity minorities (Gardner, 2012; Sallee & Diaz, 2013). Research literature further suggests that faculty who feel powerful in a toxic department are more likely to engage in isolating and ostracizing behaviors (Simplico, 2012) and new faculty members may feel particularly isolated as they navigate a new space and culture (Boyd, Cintron, & Alexander-Snow, 2010). These expressions of bullying can create an environment that thwarts productive scholarship or collegiality (Hoel, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2020).

Organizational cultures also include interactions that occur within an informal network—referred to as a shadow system (Stacy, 1997)—that can lead "organisations to rethink and refocus their organizational culture in order to obtain the benefits associated with a highly engaged workforce and positive work environment" (Hartel, 2008, p. 1260). In this specific case, our efforts are intentionally focused on transforming a toxic department to a healthy workplace setting and culture.

Organizational Transformation

The landscape of higher education is characterized by internally and externally influenced variation that presents challenges to the leadership and faculty within it. To face and surmount these challenges, the cultivation of a positive departmental culture has emerged as a critical imperative for academic institutions. Such challenges at times demand transformation. In fact, Quan, et al, (2019) assert that "institutional transformation has been a central area of focus in higher education," particularly on the departmental level (p. 010141-1). In this light, a study of organizational change is often focused on the internal dynamic and history of an organization and "derives its force roots from the values and goals of the organization" held by the organization's members. Equally important, an organization's culture is reflected in "what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it" (Tierney, 1988, p. 3). In addition, change aimed at the department level is "more likely to be effective," when work is focused on three principles of organizational change: achieving positive outcomes, collaboration between groups members, and engagement in a continuous cycle of improvement (Quan, et al., 2019, p. 010141-1). Tierney (1988) states that these three principles are undergirded by the organization's sense of trust, particularly necessary "in a changing and uncertain higher education environment" (Driskill, Chatham-Carpenter, & McIntyre, 2018, p. 1). When considering the emotional components of a non-toxic—that is, healthy—culture, Hartel (2008) lists values and goals, high trust, inter-dependence, high compassion, and high cooperation as components of healthy organizations. For the purpose of this review, we focus on values and goals, inter-dependence or relationships, and trust within faculty, as well as high collaboration.

Values and Goals

A strong faculty culture is one that is defined by a unique set of values, beliefs, and assumptions and is critical to the success of any IHE department (Lee, 2007). However, a department may find itself in crisis because the culture is not aligned with the goals of the organization. To meaningfully change a culture, it is critical to first understand how the current one came to be (Schein & Schein, 2016; Tierney, 1988). Pifer, Baker & Lunsford (2019) contend that positive, results-oriented faculty

culture does not come about by chance. Such culture is the result of purposeful planning, reflection, execution, and shared assumptions (Mintrom, 2014; Tierney, 1988). Another key component that drives a positive department culture is identifying the values that support the mission (Driskill et al., 2018). Once identified they become the “shared common philosophical approach to discussion, decision making” taking into consideration “varied perspectives [to make] organizational decisions” (p. 4). Garrett (2019) states that “a healthy culture is one that motivates,” encourages, supports, and helps members “to grow and develop” (p. 69) based on the shared values, goals, and mission.

Importance of Collaboration

A positive and supportive culture can provide a sense of community and belonging, and foster creativity, innovation, and a commitment to excellence while helping to attract and retain talented faculty members (Baker, Lunsford, & Pifer, 2017; Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Factors that contribute to a strong faculty culture include collaboration and cooperation, relationships based on trust, and mentorship (Hildesheim & Sonntag, 2020; Manning, 2018; Tierney, 2006). Additionally, a culture of trust is essential for faculty members to feel a sense of belonging, to feel comfortable taking risks and to speak up (Pifer, Baker, & Lunsford, 2019; Tierney, 2006).

Collaboration and cooperation among faculty members help to create a sense of shared purpose and can lead to increased innovative and effective teaching and research (Baker, Lunsford, & Pifer, 2017; Dahlander & McFarland, 2013; Kezar, 2013; Macfarlane, 2012) with a focus on creating a culture of excellence for students and faculty (Mintrom, 2014; Seymour, Hunter, Laursen, & DeAntoni, 2004). Organizational culture can be changed and transformed by developing and incorporating collaborative organizational activities and interactions that focus on positive communication and continuous improvement (Driskill et al., 2018).

Relationships

Building horizontal and vertical relationships are essential components to intentionality. In this rebuilding, “time becomes significant when it is used to establish and nurture relationships that are emotionally rich. Time derives its meaningfulness from and is largely defined by human interaction” (Parsons, 2008, p. 8). “The centrality of relationship and human interaction make it possible for achieving other outcomes...” (p. 668). Another aspect of the social perspective of time is the purposeful orchestration of relationships and human interactions. Most often these relationships function based on trust and exist because organizational members have used existing structures to build trusting relationships (Tierney, 2008).

Trust

Cases exist in which institutions of higher education exhibit substantive destructive flux and instability (Tierney, 2008). Once the status quo in organizations has been disrupted to the point of no longer being viable, change is imperative. According to Tierney (2008), within this context of change, trust is particularly important, as it plays a pivotal role in sustaining cooperation and ensuring organizational effectiveness. Through shared meaning, trust becomes the foundation of relationships and is the basis on which members engage in the co-creation of a shared vision, and mission (Tierney, 2008), and the goals geared to achieve positive outcomes (Quan, et al., p. 010141-5; Garrett, 2019; Tierney, 2008). Shared vision, supported by authentic collaboration, then becomes the driving force that guides change (Quan, et al., 2019, p. 010141-5).

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore how a group of faculty members intentionally created a supportive departmental culture. We were interested in understanding how the department’s dynamics shifted from one that was described as toxic and full of strife to one that was caring and collegial amongst

faculty colleagues. To achieve this aim, we utilized a collaborative autoethnographic approach where two or more faculty were engaged in autoethnography (Ngunjiri et al., 2010).

Biographical Sketch of Faculty Members in the Department

Various members of the Department of Educational Leadership participated in this collaborative autoethnography. Specifically, there were a total of ten full-time faculty members who vary in rank (from full professor to clinical assistant professor) and have different years of experience in the department, ranging from 19 years to one year. Further, five are identified as Black, three as White, one as multi-racial, and one as Asian. Table 1 summarizes the demographic information of the faculty members who contributed to this paper.

Table 1 *Demographics of Faculty Collaborative Autoethnography Participants*

EDL Colleagues	Rank	Years in the Department	Race	Gender
Barbara	Full Professor	19	Asian	Woman
Adrienne	Associate Professor	9	Black	Woman
Van	Associate Professor	8	Multi	Man
Loretta	Associate Professor	7	Black	Woman
Andrew	Associate Professor and Interim Department Chair	7	White	Man
Beth	Associate Professor	3	White	Woman
Emma	Assistant Professor	1	Black	Woman
Avery	Assistant Professor	3	Black	Woman
Sierra	Assistant Professor	3	Black	Woman
Simone	Clinical Assistant Professor	1	White	Woman

Data Collection and Analysis

Collaborative autoethnography allowed us to co-construct our shared and divergent experiences. In this paper’s context, we implemented a full concurrent collaboration model outlined by Ngunjiri et al. (2010). This model necessitates that collaborators engage individually in autoethnographic writing, reflective practice, individual data analysis and coding, and independent interpretative synthesis. Ngunjiri et al. (2010) categorize these processes as distinct, divergent steps that facilitate the transition from preliminary data collection to report writing. Furthermore, to facilitate the transition from initial data acquisition to the composition of the final collaborative report, we employed convergent processes as described by Ngunjiri et al. (2010), to encompass group sharing and probing, meaning-making activities, theme identification, and joint group writing.

This collaborative approach was intentionally selected and similar to autoethnographies that have focused on common issues that occur within the academy such as roles and experiences (Hernandez et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2014), the intersectionality of racism and sexism (Ashlee

et al., 2017), mentoring (Moore et al., 2013), and incivility in higher education (Higgins, 2023). Collaborative autoethnographies allow the researcher(s) to present their findings in various formats. We used the approach deployed by Chang et al. (2014) and presented a thematic analysis. Further, we approach and present our data as dialogue (Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005).

For data collection, we used the departmental mission statement, documents, and each individual's personal self-writing and reflection. The guiding questions for our self-writing activities included the following: How would you describe the culture of EDL when you joined? How would you describe it today? How have you experienced the culture in EDL? Why did you decide to join the EDL department? Why do you stay? Additionally, we brought in artifacts (e.g., departmental meeting agendas and conference presentations) to facilitate our remote face-to-face conversations via Microsoft Teams. During these conversations, we shared our stories and experiences and probed each other to think more deeply about how our experiences within the department have shaped our perceptions of the culture. These conversations were recorded and transcribed in their entirety and referenced during our collaborative writing process.

All autoethnographic manuscripts were manually coded and analyzed (Saldaña, 2016). Data were precoded (Saldaña, 2016) during the first round of coding, and, in our second review, we color-coded the data (Creswell, 2009). The specific coding methodologies we adopted encompassed values coding, versus coding, and emotion coding, all grounded in Saldaña's (2016) guidelines. We aligned with Saldaña's (2009) code-to-theory model for qualitative research and constructed categories of related items based on the initial codes. We then developed themes from these categories.

FINDINGS

The findings follow the results from our data analysis and address each of the three research questions. In addition, an associated finding is presented at the end of this section.

Research Question 1: What were the faculty's experiences that demonstrated the presence of toxicity in the pre-shift EDL culture?

Our findings highlight a form of negative departmental culture that occurred in the *past* which we term Pre-Shift, as it denotes a specific era in which faculty had negative experiences related to the departmental culture. Faculty narratives described the pre-shift department culture as toxic, comprised of the following elements: hostile, negating diversity and hierarchical in practice. The findings from this particular category reflect the experiences by way of written responses of the department faculty members who were then present and had worked and interacted with other faculty members—now retired, relocated or passed on—during this first stage designated as Pre-Shift.

Hostile Work Environment

During this stage, faculty members in this study collectively did not feel safe within the department, which reflected the department as characterized as a hostile work environment. Adrienne wrote, "The culture *was* toxic, racist, hierarchal, inequitable, and inhospitable to new faculty." This strong sentiment of toxicity in the form of hostility was echoed by all recently hired and senior faculty who were part of the department at that point. In Barbara's reflection, she noted, "I did not feel safe in expressing my perspectives in department meetings as faculty meetings sometimes

turned into verbal disputes or “battle grounds” where certain members used their voices to threaten or silence other voices or opinions.”

The nearly constant disagreements and bickering amongst colleagues greatly impacted some participants’ morale. Van wrote, “After joining [the department], the stories about lawsuits, near physical altercations, phrases like “we can take this to the parking lot” being used, and a general feeling of dislike seemingly floating over the department made me initially question my decision to join.” Barbara added that, “At one point, the culture became so toxic that external consultants were invited to evaluate the department and provide sessions to help resolve the situation.” The lack of safety and trust contributed to the toxic environment for faculty members by adding stressors to already difficult working conditions.

Negating Diversity

In addition to the hostile work environment, department members expressed that the department lacked diversity. One participant shared that they were explicitly told “we don’t do diversity in this department.” Another faculty member was told by a white woman faculty member “get over it” when they questioned the lack of diversity content in a course during an assessment visit. Other faculty members experienced this toxic culture directly in relation to their identities and were marginalized within the department. This was particularly relevant for Adrienne who was at the time the only tenure-track Black woman faculty member in the department. Reflecting on the many inequities she experienced she stated:

I was not assigned a mentor and when I asked about a mentor, I was told that they assumed that ‘since I had so much experience, I didn’t need a mentor’. Admittedly, I had a wealth of experience, but I had no experience in higher education and was essentially left to my own devices to figure out how to navigate higher ed.

Other racialized experiences in the department showed up in hiring processes (i.e., one search committee member referring to a middle eastern applicant as “Saddam” when that wasn’t his name), department meetings, and microaggressions highlighting the prevailing attitude throughout the department that a lack of perceived and/or experienced diversity did not matter.

Hierarchical

In alignment with more bureaucratic organizational approaches (Manning, 2018), faculty also viewed the department as hierarchical, making it challenging to collaborate and feel formally or informally supported by colleagues. Barbara stated, “I did notice that it was hierarchical in the Department, and I was new and did not really feel that I had a voice.” Adrienne agreed, writing, “Members in the department actively followed a hierarchal disposition. Terms such as “junior” and “senior” faculty were prevalent and used as reasons that faculty members could not participate on departmental committees.”

Participants also expressed that there were factions in the department and “there was gossip going around.” According to Van, if the chair did not like a faculty member, the person could be accused of made-up wrong doings as a reason and reported to the college leadership to be fired or sent to another department. These collective experiences further highlight how the use of a hierarchical organizational approach actively worked against building a strong culture of trust and support within the department.

Research Question 2: In what ways did a shift in the EDL department culture occur?

The toxic department culture that faculty experienced was substantively mitigated by pivotal occurrences over a two-year span (2015-2017), which included several personnel changes that ultimately led to dramatic and positive shift toward a transformation in the department culture.

The shift included the following key elements: windows of opportunity for change, envisioning a new EDL culture, and institutionalizing the new culture.

Window of Opportunity for Change

Between 2015 and 2016, two of the original department faculty decided to retire and one senior lecturer left EDL for another university. After these retirements and faculty departure in the department, attrition within the department was heightened as another full professor retired in the next year and an associate professor passed away. Attrition was counterbalanced by the hiring of new faculty over a two-year period; specifically, two assistant professors were hired in 2015 and three assistant professors were hired in 2016, which, as an assistant professor had been hired in 2014, brought the total of new assistant professor faculty to six. Regular discussions occurred between the two assistant professors, the one hired in 2014 and one from 2015, and in one, they recognized there was a window of opportunity to create a distinctive culture within the department. This recognition was pivotal in transforming the department into what became a successful work culture, characterized as healthy, within the department.

Envisioning the new EDL Culture

Department faculty began through subsequent discussions to recognize this *window of opportunity* and joined in the transformation process by intentionally deciding to develop a new culture. Van described the window of opportunity this way:

The upside, many people were deciding to retire. That feels horrible to say but it was an important opportunity. I, another colleague, and the chair met to discuss what we hoped the department might look like 5 years into the future...I would suggest that the goals in that meeting, creating a culture of collegiality, support, one where there is no hierarchy, one where we celebrate each other's accomplishments because we care for one another and those accomplishments raise the profile and reputation of the department we share, and one where we never compete with one another, only against the guidelines is exactly how I would describe the culture today. One in which we are a family.

To begin the transformation, Van and Adrienne set up a meeting with the newly hired chair (previously the interim) in fall 2015 and pointed out the opportunity. One question guided the discussion: "What do we want our department to look like in five years?" Several key points were discussed. First, we described the desired culture, namely one that was supportive, direct, collaborative, and family focused. We intentionally used these terms to characterize the culture needed to be happy within our workplace. We also decided not to use rankings when referring to each other and to value all faculty opinions and voices equally. We agreed that disagreements were a part of the discussion process, and that once a decision was made, department faculty would work as a team in that common direction. Finally, we intentionally set out to build a culture where we did not compete with one another. We believed that the success of any faculty member would raise the department's profile. Adrienne reflected, "Most important, however, we intentionally set out to establish a culture that welcomed diverse people, and a culture that valued everyone equally for their value; all newcomers had a go-to person..."

Institutionalizing the Healthy EDL Culture

Even though faculty members recognized the need for a change in the culture, they also recognized the need to institutionalize these changes by defining their collective core values and then hiring based on those values.

Articulation of EDL culture in department core values. By Fall 2016, EDL experienced four senior member faculty turnovers resulting in the opportunity to hire three new tenure-tracked faculty members. With essentially a new faculty, the two assistant professors that

planted the seeds for this transformation, respectively, realized that to move forward as a cohesive unit, the department's new vision and mission needed to be formalized. Notes revealed that on 8/24/2016, during the departmental retreat from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m., the group of essentially new faculty met "to prioritize our purpose/vision/mission... to provide guidance in crafting our Ed.D. mission statement" (Ed.D. Redesign notes, 8.24.2016). To accomplish this task, they asked themselves four questions about the department: 1) What do I believe about the Department of Educational Leadership?; 2) Who does the Department of Educational Leadership serve; 3) Where is the greatest need in educational leadership; and 4) Who do we want to be [as a department]?

They listed each of these questions on large post-its and displayed them around the room. Faculty members were asked to write their responses on the post-its, which were subsequently tallied. The collected responses to "what do I believe about the department?" and "who do we want to be?" were central to developing our mission and values. The results from department members' collective thinking became the values from which we crafted our existing mission statement and core values. Among the five value statements, two of them relate to the key elements of the EDL Culture:

We value a Supportive and Positive Departmental Culture where we thoughtfully interact with Each Other as Accomplished Colleagues. We acknowledge each other's expertise, and we realize that the success of each of us benefits the Department as a whole.

Likewise, we value Dialogue, Collaboration, and Democratic practice as a Department. We value our relationships with each other, our students, our graduates, and our school and community partners. In our relations, we strive for honesty, integrity, transparency, and inclusiveness.

The explicit role of department culture in the hiring process. Another key aspect of this intentional culture-building was thinking critically about hiring processes. Faculty Retreat participants remember discussing the type of faculty EDL would seek to hire. We agreed that future departmental faculty would be academics who could support our students in their learning and guide quality dissertations, who understood our students as having lives outside of school (careers, family, other obligations, etc.) and who recognized that we are tasked in supporting students' learning as they navigate those challenges. The faculty at that time decided that these characteristics were more than important—they were critical to building a positive departmental culture. As a result, in every faculty search since, we have been clear and upfront about the importance of culture to potential hires and have solicited their thoughts on how they felt about a culture such as ours. For example, in every faculty search, there would be at least one interview question that related to department culture, such as asking each candidate to explain the meaning of collegiality in his or her perspective to better understand each candidate's perspectives and gauge the candidate's goodness of fit. Additionally, many applicants, upon learning of the positive, supportive culture, see said culture as a benefit and reason to consider joining.

Research Question 3: What were the faculty's experiences that demonstrated a healthy EDL culture after the shift?

Based on the accounts of the study's faculty members, the aforementioned key pillars of the intentional departmental culture have been sustained within the department. Specifically, current faculty experience the culture as professional, familial, diverse, and authentic.

Professional Culture

In our initial round of group coding, we identified professional culture as a theme. Colleagues felt that collectively, the department maintained a high-level of professionalism, which led to strong feelings of being heard, valued, and supported by most participants. Beth described the

feeling this way:

I feel really safe in our department bubble and am learning how I fit. I find the culture to be supportive and encouraging. It really is like a family. I think the department would c o m e together to support anyone in need.

Ultimately, the professional culture described by participants exists in stark contrast to the hierarchical structure the department operated in prior to the intentional culture building. Faculty feel supported within the department's setting and trust each other, producing a culture of community and belonging. In our second round of coding, we recognized that this culture of professionalism was not expansive enough to articulate the deep sense of culture experienced by faculty in the EDL department. Therefore, we revisited our initial codes and identified familial culture as a key theme in relation to EDL department culture.

Familial

In our group discussions and written narratives, it was often conveyed that the EDL department was a family. The faculty described this in two ways. First, families may argue and disagree, but they do so at times respectfully, and with a focus on finding solutions. Second, faculty felt supported by the department in both their personal and working lives, leading to increased job satisfaction. Sierra wrote, "I was grateful for the concern and care shown when I had my child." Others echoed this sentiment. Loretta stated,

Colleagues/friends showed up for me from the most happiest moments to the sad. I will never forget the baby showers for my two children - I was enveloped with so much love a n d these are memories that will be forever etched in my heart.

Van's narrative described the culture this way:

I experience the culture in EDL as I experience family. The main word I would use to describe our culture is trust. I trust the people I work with implicitly. They are family. We show up for each other. When both my mom and my dad died, people from the department showed up. They drove 2+ hours to show that I mattered. While I grieved, a colleague offered to handle my courses. I did the same previously when another colleague lost a parent. When colleagues have lost parents and spouses, I show up. We support each other through those life events because we know each other outside of work. We send food gift cards to each other so people don't have to worry about dinner and can focus on their grief. We do our best to take care of one of the most important members of our family.

Regardless of how long they had been members of the department, nearly all participants noted that the departmental culture in EDL was familial, further demonstrating the collegial culture within the department.

Diverse

In addition to the professional and familial culture that was in direct contrast to the pre-shift culture, participants also described the present culture as diverse. Beyond the sheer increase in racially diverse faculty visible in Table 1, in EDL we celebrate that our teaching dispositions collectively prioritize diversity. The diverse culture of the department is not limited to the faculty experience, as students are at the receiving end of the culture, and it changes the way that they engage and experience our department and courses. Adrienne wrote it this way:

When I joined EDL, only one African American student out of about 13 was in the EDD program. Now there are about half as many students of other races... We have a concerted emphasis on diversity throughout our programs and faculty. Students also report that the EDL experience is different. One student commented that when she looked at programs, she noted the diversity in our department. That diversity was attractive to her.

Beyond the student experience, faculty wrote about feeling seen and being able to honor their intersectional identities without fear of being ostracized within the department. Emma wrote: As a Black woman, finding safe spaces where I don't regularly experience the impacts of racism through microaggressions (...) and stereotypes is rare...I joined the EDL department at [IHE] solely because of the community of scholars in the department and the way they talked about their experiences. I stay because these are the types of colleagues I want to continue this work with. I can do research, teach, or serve anywhere, but the community I do those things with matters to me. This is a direct representation of the power of a positive culture in a department!

The diverse culture experienced by both students and EDL faculty is closely related to the authenticity that echoes throughout the department and creates a safe space for faculty members in their working lives.

Authentic

Authenticity was found to be functioning throughout the overall department culture and the department's commitment to hiring faculty who value the newly transformed culture. This was clear in Loretta's statement, "I knew when I interviewed that there was a significant difference in the interactions I saw among the faculty and most especially with the chair. There was a warmth and kindness that was genuine." Beth echoed those sentiments writing,

The Department Chair at the time was unbelievably supportive and welcoming. She was also very real with me about the difficulty I was facing in my P&T process. I was assigned a mentor who was such a blessing; not sure I can even thank her enough...The authenticity and ethics of my colleagues are motivating to me. ...when anyone asks, I honestly say that in the end, it worked out for me.

Simone discussed the authenticity she witnessed during the hiring process,

During my interview process I appreciated how honestly and candidly my questions were answered. As I look back on it, every answer has played out just as it was described. Nobody was trying to make things look shiny and fancy—just real. Even more important was that the team was clear that they were looking for the right fit and would not compromise on that.

These quotations specifically point to the idea that the authenticity within the EDL department was experienced by faculty members first and foremost during the hiring process. The decision to prioritize the hiring process as a key opportunity to model the department culture by remaining authentic was key in sustaining the transformed department culture.

Associated Finding: Sustaining EDL Healthy Culture through Guardianship

The notion of "family" was experienced in the department's culture through shared learning, problem-solving, and internal integration (Schein & Schein, 2016). Faculty members took ownership of the departmental culture leading them to have a desire and a natural tendency to protect it.

Adrienne described her role in sustaining the departmental culture stating, "Over the years I have remained because I see myself as one of the 'guardians of the culture—equity' not just for my colleagues, but also for my students." Sierra recognized engaging in the intentional work to maintain a positive culture stating, "I stay because of the respect I have for colleagues and the focus they have on maintaining a supportive culture regardless of the challenges that exist on the college and university level." Additionally, Van highlighted the intentionality in developing the culture implying his desire and intent to also protect the culture. He noted, "The creation of the culture was

done purposefully, and we cherish it. We hire to it. We believe in it.”

Ultimately, within the department, this collective sense of responsibility and dedication to the culture is key to sustaining its vibrancy and resilience.

DISCUSSION

Our findings highlight an important aspect of cultural transformation during intensely challenging times (Tierney, 2008). Pivotal times of change are distinguished by leaders’ and faculty’s learned ability to question, challenge, change, or support institutional structures. In the context of our EDL department, the pivotal time of change occurred when faculty members left the department for several reasons (death, retirement, relocation, etc.), coinciding with our department’s ability to recognize and respond with intentionality. These two pivotal elements created a window of opportunity to engage in a transformational process of changing a toxic departmental culture to a healthy culture (Quan et al., 2019). According to Tierney (1988), organizational change may occur as a result of a significant crisis.

Initially, faculty members described their experiences within a toxic culture characterized by hostility, inequity, and a hierarchical working environment (Florczak, 2022; Tastan, 2017), which formed the basis for a transformation in the departmental culture over a 2-year period. This finding highlights the critical need for recognizing and acknowledging the existence of toxic cultures within academia. The impact of toxic departmental culture on the overall well-being and productivity of faculty and students cannot be underestimated (Tight, 2023).

Another pivotal aspect of our research was the role of intentionality in effecting cultural change (Croft et al., 2019). In the face of departmental personnel changes, including a new department chair, key faculty members intentionally envisioned and, with the active support and assistance of the collective faculty, implemented a cultural transformation. This finding underscores the importance of proactive leadership in fostering healthy departmental cultures (Driskill et al., 2018; Tierney, 1988). It also highlights the influence that individual actions and intentions can have in reshaping the culture of an academic department. This is particularly relevant regarding hiring practices, as individual hiring decisions play a major role in sustaining departmental culture through continued guardianship.

In alignment with the pedagogy of intentionality, the evidence from our study suggests that the current departmental culture is characterized by a sense of community, collegial interdependence, and authentic relationships. Faculty members described their experiences within a healthy culture as professional, familial, diverse, and authentic. These characteristics emphasize the importance of inclusivity, collaboration, and a sense of belonging within academic departments (Hildesheim & Sonntag, 2020; Lee, 2007; Manning, 2018; Macfarlane, 2012; Tierney, 2006).

Importantly, this study contributes to the literature in organizational transformation in that it relates to a total transformation of a department rather than a particular aspect of a department (Duryea, 2000; Hearn & Anderson, 2002). Our study findings highlight the transformative power of intentionality in reshaping departmental culture within higher education institutions and across all educational planning activities. Findings, moreover, underscore the critical importance of fostering inclusive, supportive, and authentic academic environments. As IHEs seek to create and sustain effective and sustainable cultures, recognizing and acting upon the significance of intentionality and collective effort in achieving these goals by administration and faculty is paramount.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The transformation from a toxic to a healthy departmental culture has significant implications for student and faculty success. A healthy culture can positively impact faculty motivation, job satisfaction, and overall well-being, which, in turn, can enhance teaching, research, and mentorship (Macfarlane, 2012; Mintrom, 2014). Such an environment can also contribute to student success by creating a more supportive and inclusive learning environment. Our department established a mutual understanding of explicitly defining culture for the good of the whole by intentionally building a departmental culture that actively focuses on collaboration and equity. Given the constantly evolving higher education landscape, it is evident that departmental culture will continue to play a significant role in determining faculty recruitment and retention efforts. Therefore, in addition to prioritizing cultures of excellence (Mintrom, 2014), institutions and departments must be willing to prioritize healthy cultures whose central focus comprises collegiality, authenticity, and diversity.

Our study has implications for future research regarding the impacts of a healthy departmental culture on faculty well-being and overall faculty retention rates. Likewise, we sense that the good-of-the-whole mentioned previously extended beyond the faculty to the students we serve, such that leadership candidates can carry forth the ideals of fostering equitable environments, as they have experienced equity first-hand in their own graduate experiences. This area is another area for future research.

An important consideration for the sustainability of a healthy departmental culture is the need for ongoing commitment and vigilance. Leaders and faculty members must continue to be intentional in their efforts to maintain and nurture the positive aspects of the culture and guard against the re-emergence of toxic elements (Driskill et al., 2018; Tierney, 2006). Our study's findings suggest that an intentional departmental culture is essential for the well-being of faculty as well as the students the faculty serves—particularly a culture that is both professional and collegial, values diversity and authenticity, and intentionally protects the department culture. It is evident from this study that, in contrast to departments built on toxicity, departments constructed on an ethos of community, interdependence, and relationships provide a healthy and nurturing environment for which schools of educational leadership may benefit.

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DISABILITY DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN ETHIOPIAN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: COMMITMENT AND SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

Educational leaders at all levels may achieve Disability Diversity Management (DDM) commitment and satisfaction by actively enhancing their institutions' performance through the intentional inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The goal of this study was, therefore, to investigate the commitment and satisfaction of DDM in Ethiopian public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) so as to make recommendations for its improvement. The study was conducted in the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs, namely, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa Science and Technology University, Debre Berhan University, Selale University and Kotebe University of Education.

Convergent parallel mixed research (Quantitative and Qualitative) procedures that adhered to the pragmatic research paradigm was used. To that end, the study engaged the quantitative involvement of (N=247) regular students with disabilities (physical, visual, and hearing disability). Survey questionnaires containing 16 items were created in line with Hurtado et al., (2012)'s Diversified Learning Environment (DLE) model. Mean, standard deviation, correlation, t-test and statistical significance (P-value) were calculated using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 25. A narrative inquiry technique was also employed by conducting semi-structured interviews with thirty-two respondents to relate to their lived experiences.

The commitment of the top management at the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs towards DDM was found to be not enough. On top of it, undergraduate students with disabilities were not satisfied with the DDM of their campuses. The study also gave vital insight on DDM commitment as well as satisfaction. For DDM to be satisfactory, the initiatives must contain a solid mix of commitment at Ethiopian public HEIs. The leadership must be vigorously committed to DDM satisfaction with its equality ideals and societal norms. Providing resources for the committedly implementation of the DDM plan were also recommended.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Across the globe, diversity and diversity management in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have long been a key focus of educational planning research (Lumadi, 2008). In its educational context, Disability Diversity Management (DDM) is institutional management practices used in educational leadership to promote disability diversity and inclusion in education, particularly at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Implementing policies and strategies in curricular and co-curricular activities is the commitment of the top management team. Staff training and other resources are part of this process to meet the needs of students with disabilities (SWDs) satisfied (Phukubje, & Ngoepe, 2017). In this study, DDM refers to the process by which Ethiopian public HEIs create and maintain a positive environment in which the differences of SWDs are recognized, understood, and valued in order to achieve their goal of promoting greater inclusion of students through specific policies, programs, strategies, diversity-related curricular and co-curricular activities, providing training, and other means of satisfying SWDs.

Cole (2017) defines disability as the inability to do a task normally. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) are a disadvantaged and not satisfied part of society, according to UNICEF (2008) and Agarwal and Steele (2016), since they are usually not satisfied, unseen, unheard, and uncounted, and have restricted access to ordinary life.

On the one hand, discrimination based on disability has long been a societal concern in many nations (Azhar, 2014). PWDs are often among society's most dissatisfied members, with significant hurdles in exercising their human rights (Pillay, 2010). Simultaneously, Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006) highlights that PWDs have equal rights in terms of educational needs and different cultural identity.

On the other hand, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres remarked that underestimating or dismissing the contributions of 1.5 billion individuals with disabilities was inconceivable. He also stated that many governments continue to fall short of providing the necessary assistance to people with disabilities, particularly those from low-income families (UN News, 2018). Furthermore, it is vital to ensure that SWDs are satisfied in services, particularly in education (Jaafar et al., 2019).

Regardless of the fact that the United Nations signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2006, PWDs endure discrimination in a number of contexts, most notably at HEIs (Kauffman et al., 2022). Students with disabilities (SWDs) have historically been dissatisfied, and underrepresented at HEIs, according to the research (Hanafin et al., 2007). In a similar vein, Thomas (2002) claims that the majority of students without disabilities have created obstacles that prevent SWDs from participating in social activities which led them to dissatisfaction.

Indeed, DDM satisfaction at HEIs may not exist in a vacuum. It necessitates top management commitment, and individual students are likely to affect the social and overall experience for SWDs (Fleming et al, 2017). Commitment and satisfaction for DDM and inclusion should largely be initiated by top management and should enhance the representation and engagement of all persons in the institutions. A leader's commitment to DDM, on the other hand, cannot be ignored because some leaders are more committed than others (Hayes et al, 2020).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Educational leaders at all levels may attain DDM commitment and satisfaction by actively seeking to enhance their own and their institutions' performance via greater purposeful inclusion of PWDs (Hayes et al, 2020). Despite the fact that much has been published on diversity management in higher education, little to no study on DDM's commitment and satisfaction in Ethiopian public HEIs has been conducted. Furthermore, Bradley et al. (2009) argues that the issue of underrepresentation of disabled students in higher education institutions receives less attention. It is also worth mentioning that little DDM research has been conducted at higher education institutions. Shackleton (2007), for example, explored how disability prejudice affects academic achievement. Furthermore, research on disability segregation demonstrates how social norms and expectations influence gendered employment choices at HEIs (Cech, 2013). Furthermore, in spite of the reality that one-tenth of HEI students have a recognized impairment that affects their cognitive, physical, or psychological functioning, disability is typically neglected as a diversity feature that should be highlighted on DDM (Aquino, 2016b).

Likewise, there is a considerable body of work on diversity management in HEIs (Adamu, 2007; Adamu, 2013; Adamu 2014; Ambisa, 2010; Banks, 2016; Gobena, 2016; Hurtado 2008). However, due to the vastness of the issue of diversity and diversity management features, the stated research did not focus on the commitment and satisfaction to DDM and was confined only to single individual institutions.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main objective of the research is to investigate and provide insight on DDM commitment and satisfaction at Ethiopian public HEIs in order to make recommendations for its development. The conclusions of this study will address the following four research questions:

1. How is the commitment of Ethiopian public HEIs top management to DDM of the students?
2. To what extent are undergraduate regular HEIs students satisfied with the DDM of Ethiopian public HEIs?
3. Is HEIs leadership commitment for DDM significantly related to students' satisfaction?
4. Is there statistically significant difference between male and female respondents on the satisfaction for DDM?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Researchers and stakeholders at HEIs might discover the study findings useful as an outline for developing theory. The study may also serve as a foundation for future research on DDM commitment and satisfaction in Ethiopian public HEIs. Similarly, the study intends to contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of DDM in Ethiopian public HEIs. In accordance with this, the study will evaluate how diversity effects DDM, as well as how the DDM qualities of HEIs are related to commitment and satisfaction in Ethiopia.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The diversified learning environment (DLE) model, as defined by Hurtado et al. (2012), refers to how HEI communities perceive their campus environment in terms of interpersonal, academic, and professional interactions, as well as their attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and expectations regarding gender, disability, age, religion, and ethnicity diversity (Hurtado et al., 2012). In other words, it is a framework that provides a method for examining the environment of HEIs to determine 1) how it supports diverse students' faculty and staff and 2) whether it fosters the types of structures, beliefs, and behaviors that result in a positive impact of diversity on learning for all students (Hurtado et al., 2012). When evaluating HEIs' DDM, two contexts are taken into account: internal (institutional) and external. The institutional environment of the framework is made up of institutional and individual-level characteristics, whilst the external settings are made up of governmental/policy and sociohistorical components. While the institutional level dimension includes the institution's historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion, its compositional diversity of students, faculty, and staff, and organizational structures (institutional policies, curricula, extra-curricular, and processes), Milem et al. (2005) note that this dimension is institution-specific. Individual psychological impressions, attitudes toward diversity on campus, and the behavioral dimension, which encompasses individual behaviors and intergroup encounter experiences, are all addressed at the individual level of climate.

DDM should be made a reality for students, faculty, and institutional success by strengthening the DLE for diversity management (Locks et al., 2008; Wann, 2013). Simultaneously, researchers have identified several diversity management strategies, such as demonstrating a desire to improve the DLE (Brown, 2004), recognizing and including diversity in HEIs mission statements, policies, and plans (Lumadi, 2008), improving students' body composition (Polat, et al., 2017), and providing students with a variety of opportunities, such as offering diversity-related courses, workshops, extra-curricular events, and seminars to learn more about diversity.

Students' experiences with various dimensions of diversity, such as gender, disability, ethnicity, linguistics, age, religion, and educational background, should be considered when assessing the DLE (Hurtado et al., 2012), because these dimensions primarily affect students and the relationships they form with their out-group (Dawson, 2007). According to Professor Hurtado, broadening the curriculum, listening to students' personal experiences, and top leadership commitment are all viable techniques for dealing with the diversity of students present at HEIs (Hurtado, 2008).

In a nutshell, as the author mentioned earlier, while many factors must be considered when examining the DDM of HEIs, for the purposes of this study, two dimensions: commitment and satisfaction of DDM will be considered because they are extremely important factors that should be investigated in HEIs.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A pragmatic worldview was utilized in this study, which allows for the employment of a mixed-methods approach to comprehending a research issue (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). According to Morgan (2007), pragmatism provides for a variety of techniques, worldviews, and assumptions, as well as alternate forms of data collection and analysis, which this study employed. Elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches were combined for the purposes of comprehending breadth and depth, as well as confirmation (Johnson et al., 2007).

Research Participants

The study was conducted in five Ethiopian public HEIs namely, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa Science & Technology University, Debre Berhan University, Selale University and Kotebe University of Education which were sampled for the study using convenience sampling techniques. The quantitative research sample made up of undergraduate students from five Ethiopian public HEIs. Students were chosen using the probability sampling method. The study's purpose was accepted by university administration, and 270 questionnaires were sent to students after permission was obtained. Two hundred and sixty questionnaires were returned, with 247 deemed usable.

The snowball, purposive, and availability sampling procedures were used to choose study participants for qualitative research. It was made up of four vice academic deans (one from each HEI and one from AAU), ten undergraduate students (two from each HEI), ten instructors (two from each HEI), three disability center heads (only three are available), and five student deans, one from each of the five Ethiopian public HEIs samples. As a result, thirty-two qualitative respondents were drawn from the five public HEIs and the MoE. (See Table 1.)

Table 1

Total Participants from Ethiopian public HEIs

Participants	Type of Participation	Total Participants
Undergraduate Students with Disability (SWDs)	Questionnaire (quantitative)	247
Undergraduate Students	Interviews (qualitative)	10
Vice Academic Deans	Interviews (qualitative)	4
Students' Deans	Interviews (qualitative)	5
Instructors	Interviews (qualitative)	10
Disability Center Heads	Interviews (qualitative)	3
	Total	279

Research Instrument**Quantitative Data Collection Instrument**

Research questionnaires having 16 items were created using Hurtado et al., (2012) the diversified learning environment (DLE) model and from contemporary empirical studies on DDM commitment and satisfaction. The questionnaire is divided into two pieces. Section I collects demographic information such as gender, age, school year, and degree level. The DDM commitment and satisfaction survey instrument is included in Section II. A 5-point Likert scale was used, with the options ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The instrument was reviewed using a pilot sample of 30 respondents.

The reliability variable is calculated by dividing the true variance by the obtained variance. If the obtained variance equals the true variance, the result is 1. When alpha is close to one, the reliability coefficient is strong and the surveys are considered accurate. The correlation level for each item is compared to the total for all terms to determine the accuracy of each instrument in respect to the whole. This is an instrument precision measurement. All of the terminologies were accurate in measuring the field of study, and the Byron Correlation coefficients were all below 0.01. This represents a level of accuracy of 99%.

The questionnaire was written in English and translated into Amharic for respondents. The piloting of the questionnaire was done to evaluate how respondents perceived it. Following the pilot, several changes were made as recommended and implemented.

Qualitative Data Collection Instrument

To gain information for the qualitative research section of this study, the researcher employed three data collection approaches: interviews, observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were performed with the aforementioned research subjects. DDM concepts specific to its commitment and satisfaction from the literature review as well as previous research (Abebaw, 2014; Gobena, 2016) were used to create interview guidelines. The in-depth interview guides were used to assist discussions, grasp participant viewpoints on questionnaire items that required in-depth explanation, and explore student demographics and the issues Ethiopian public HEIs face in managing its disability diversity. The interview was utilized in conjunction with materials such as strategic plans, senate legislation, student union legislation, student codes of conduct, and studies such as the Education Development Road Map as supplementary sources of information on a variety of themes.

Data Analysis

All survey data were cleaned to discover and discard improperly answered items, spelling problems in responses, and blank places left vacant by respondents. To give insight into the perspectives and issues at Ethiopian public HEIs, quantitative data on DDM commitment and satisfaction were obtained. SPSS descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages) were used to accomplish this. The t-test was also used in the study to investigate if gender differences in the respondents' opinions for DDM commitment & satisfaction in the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs. On top of it, a Pearson-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the association between DDM commitment and satisfaction at the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs. The qualitative data were coded, and the emerging common issues were categorized. In order to provide knowledge of the phenomena under investigation, data from observations were identified to support the themes associated to the theoretical framework.

FINDINGS

The important findings of the study, as directed by both the research questions (RQ) and the DLE model, are given below. These studies will highlight a few key elements that Ethiopian public HEIs DDM commitment and satisfaction share.

Research Question 1: How is the commitment of Ethiopian public HEIs top management to DDM of its students?

Using data from quantitative survey answers, interview and document analysis, the study group's response to top management's commitment to DDM of its pupils was analyzed in terms of mean and standard deviation values. Table 2 contains information pertinent to the research subjects.

Table 2

Top Leadership Commitment for Disability Diversity Management

No	Items	N	Mean	SD
1	The top leadership is committed to creating a campus environment that welcomes disability diversity.	247	2.67	1.098
2	The top leadership is committed to handling disability diversity matters satisfactorily.	247	2.65	1.220
3	Top leadership shows that disability diversity is important through its actions.	247	3.04	1.263
4	Top leadership responds to instances of disability-based harassment or discrimination with the necessary action.	247	4.28	1.019
5	The top leaders are accountable and responsible for a healthy campus climate.	247	4.04	.953
6	The top leadership establishes the campus vision for disability diversity.	247	4.18	.952
7	The top leadership treats disabled students with equal respect.	247	4.20	.979
	Overall Average	247	3.58	

The majority of respondents agreed, as shown by the mean and standard deviation scores to top leadership commitment for DDM Item 1 in Table 2 (M= 2.67, SD= 1.098), that the top leadership was not committed to creating a campus environment that welcomes disability diversity.

Three of the five interviewees who responded to this question were certain that their HEI's top leadership was unconcerned about creating a campus atmosphere that welcomed disability diversity. For example, this was half-heartedly supported by one of the interviewees in the field, as follows:

They are committed on answering when we ask only. But they are not thinking ahead of time for regarding SWDs diversity. I think they are busy on non-disabled students issue only. For instance, when they maintain café, the road distorted and no alternative means were thought and done for SWDs diversity. [. . .] In planning stage, I do not think they consider us. Therefore, from this perspective, the commitment is lesser. (Interviewee No. 8; May 2023, Own translation).

This suggests that, although DDM is the process of creating and maintaining a more positive learning environment by being the top leadership of the campus committed to creating a campus environment that welcomes disability diversity, unfortunately top leadership of the campus was not as such committed to creating a campus environment that welcomes disability diversity, indicating that DDM needs much more improvement in this regard.

In Table 2 to top leadership commitment for DDM Item 2, respondents were asked if the top leadership is committed to handling disability diversity matters satisfactorily. The mean and standard deviation of the data (M= 2.65, SD= 1.220).

In response to this question, seven of ten interviewees agreed that their campus's top leadership was not dedicated to handling disability diversity issues adequately. For example, one participant gave the following response in the qualitative section: “No, they are not committed at all. There is much gap.” (Interviewee No. 10; May 2023, Own translation).

Here again, identical to the quantitative result, another interviewee (Interviewee, #4) gave her perspective with regard to this issue:

[. . .] If you do not consider it as a blame, I do not believe they are committed. This university is uncommitted, beginning with infrastructure and continuing with brainstorming training. Rather, they solely incorporate SWDs diversity from different departments. There was no dedicated deep thinking. [. . .] For example, today, one SWD diversity had his skull injured and plastered. When I asked, he was lying over the large hole. So, are the people doing their jobs dedicated enough? I don't perceive a singular commitment on their part [on leaders]. Accepting SWDs diversity and having translators[two] is at least 50% up to 60%, but not more than that. (Interviewee #4; May 2023, Own translation).

The above both quantitative and qualitative data imply that, given that DDM is the process of creating and maintaining a more positive learning environment by being top leadership of the campus is committed to handling disability diversity matters satisfactorily, unfortunately the top

leadership of selected five Ethiopian public HEIs are not as such committed to handling disability diversity matters satisfactorily, indicating that, on DDM, there is still a long way to go towards achieving disability diversity matters satisfactorily.

The vast majority of survey participants believed that top leadership shows that disability diversity is important through its actions. The respondents' responses to top leadership commitment for DDM Item 3 in Table 2 had a mean and standard deviation of ($M= 3.04$, $SD= 1.263$). The participants' responses were only average.

Six of the ten interview respondents who replied to this question agreed that the senior leadership failed to demonstrate the importance of disability diversity via its activities at the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs.

This suggests that, given that DDM is the process of creating and maintaining a more positive learning environment (*see the working definition*) by having top leadership that shows disability diversity is important through its actions, unfortunately the top leadership of the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs failed to show disability diversity is important through its actions, indicating that there is still a long way to go towards achieving this.

The top leadership on the chosen five HEIs reacts to cases of top leadership responds to instances of disability-based harassment or discrimination with the necessary action, as seen by the average response and standard deviation to top leadership commitment for DDM Item 4 in Table 2 ($M= 4.28$, $SD= 1.019$).

Three of the five interviewees agreed that their university's top leadership takes appropriate action in cases of disability-based harassment or discrimination.

According to the sample of SWDs questioned, it is clear that luckily, the top management of the five Ethiopian public HEIs takes the required steps in response to cases of disability-based harassment or discrimination, showing that DDM is taking action against disability-based harassment or discrimination.

The majority of respondents agreed, as evidenced by the mean and standard deviation scores to top leadership commitment for DDM Item 5 in Table 2 ($M= 4.04$, $SD= 0.953$), that the top leaders are accountable and responsible for a healthy campus climate. From the sample of students with disabilities surveyed, it is clear that the top leadership on the chosen five HEIs are accountable and responsible for a healthy campus climate.

The majority of respondents' mean and standard deviation scores to top leadership commitment for DDM Item 6: "*The top leadership establishes the campus vision for disability diversity*" in Table 2 was ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.952$). It indicates that, given that disability diversity management in educational institutions is the process of creating and maintaining a more positive diversified learning environment (Hurtado et al., 2012) by establishing the campus vision for disability diversity, the top leadership of the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs established the campus vision for disability diversity, indicating that DDM is working well in this regard.

The respondents were asked about whether the top leadership treats SWDs diversity with equal respect or not, as indicated in Table 2, Item 7. The mean and standard deviation value were (M= 4.20, SD= 0.979). These results indicate that the majority of them highly regards the top leadership treats SWDs diversity with equal respect in the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs.

Referring to the interviewee data, three of the five respondents answered that the top leadership treats students of different SWDs with same regard. This suggests that, fortunately, the top leadership of the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs treats SWDS with equal respect, indicating that DDM is doing a good job on providing equal respect.

Research Question 2: To what extent are undergraduate regular HEIs students satisfied with the DDM of Ethiopian public HEIs?

The study group's satisfaction with disability diversity was measured in terms of mean and standard deviation, using results derived from quantitative survey responses, interviews, and document analysis. Table 3 summarizes the information that study participants must be aware of.

Table 3's mean and standard deviation scores for DDM satisfaction Item 1 (M= 4.04, SD= 0.953) show that most respondents said they are generally satisfied with their contacts with instructors and other students on campus. However, in the qualitative data, the opposite appears to prevail. Interviewee #8 & # 10 respectively corroborated this as follows:

In general, since a lot needs to be done, I cannot say I am satisfied. There are a number of things remained to be improved as a system in this university towards DDM. (Interviewee No. 8; May 2023). Not, I am not satisfied. Since this university failed to assign exam readers, recorders and the like, how can I become satisfied with the top management? If you ask me in percent, I will give it below 50%. (Interviewee No. 10; May 2023, Own translation).

The findings show that, as DDM in HEIs is the process of creating and maintaining a more positive diversified learning environment (Hurtado et al., 2012) in order to bring overall satisfactions with their interactions with other students and faculty at the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs, they are generally satisfied with their contacts with other students and faculty members at the five Ethiopian public HEIs that were chosen.

Table 3

Satisfaction on Disability Diversity Management

No	Items	N	Mean	SD
1	At this campus, I am overall satisfied with my interactions with other students and faculty.	247	4.04	.953
2	I am satisfied with the fair and equitable treatment given for students with disability in classrooms and classroom settings (e.g., labs, recitation sessions, clinical environments, etc.).	247	2.38	.723
3	I am satisfied with overall the campus experience/environment regarding disability diversity management, equity, and inclusion.	247	2.83	1.091
4	I am satisfied with the regulations and laws that protect disability diversity in this university.	247	2.44	1.117
5	I am satisfied with this university's sufficient programs and resources to foster the success of a disability diversity management.	247	2.46	1.232
6	I feel satisfied with the recognition given to disability diversity in this university.	247	2.33	1.145
7	This university's process for investigating acts of disability discrimination or harassment is satisfactory.	247	3.92	1.039
8	At this campus, I am very satisfied with top leadership response for incidents of disability discrimination or harassment.	247	2.88	1.399
9	I am satisfied with commitment of this campus's top leadership to disability diversity and equity.	247	2.57	1.090
	Overall Average	247	2.87	

Respondents were asked in Table 3 DDM satisfaction Item 2 if they were satisfied with the fair and equitable treatment given for students with disability diversity in classrooms and classroom settings (e.g., labs, recitation sessions, clinical environments, etc.) With the data's mean and standard deviation ($M= 2.38$, $SD= .723$), the participants' responses were only average. However, interviewees' dissatisfaction appears to prevail. Interviewee #12 corroborated this as follows:

I can't claim we've completely satisfied them. Because there is no an inclusive policy at the university level. It would have an inclusive policy if it were autonomous. The university has created the policy document, which is being weighted till it is authorized. [. . .] if it is authorized, it will be a useful guidance tool for us. Some government rules that restrict things will be lifted if the university is independent. Because the university has the authority to make its own decisions. For example, we do not have a carrier for sign language interpreters; if the institution were independent, it would create a carrier job with a compensation scale and hire permanent staff. As a result, we cannot claim to have satisfied them. Let me rate the degree of satisfaction as 7 out of 10. Make it 70% out of 100%, and

I'm giving it 70% because of this university's personal endeavors, such as paying money, providing washing service, providing photocopy service, and providing supplies acquired with millions of Ethiopian Birr. A single SWD diversity may have a material budget up to 5,000 (five thousand Ethiopian Birr). So, the remaining 30% of discontent is with the technical left. (Interviewee #. 12; May 2023, Own translation).

The statistics and the interview data revealed that, while DDM in HEIs is the process of creating and maintaining a more positive diversified learning environment (Hurtado et al., 2012) so as to bring satisfactions with the fair and equitable treatment given for SWDs in classrooms and classroom settings at the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs, however, they are generally not satisfied with the fair and equitable treatment given for SWDs in classrooms at the university leadership has a long way to go towards achieving satisfaction on fairness and equitability in DDM..

The vast majority of survey participants strongly agreed that they were not satisfied with the overall experience in terms of disability diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus. Table 3's DDM satisfaction Item 3 responses from the respondents' mean and standard deviation were 2.83 and 1.091, respectively. An interviewee disconfirmed this half-heartedly by saying: *"Since I am getting 500.00 (Five Hundred Ethiopian Birr), fifty, fifty is my satisfaction. The remaining fifty percent needs to be improved". (Interviewee #. 6; May 2023, Own translation).* From the standpoint of disability diversity, equity, and inclusion, it is therefore likely that they are dissatisfied with the overall campus environment and experience. This is consistent with findings in recent local research by Kabtyimer, (2020), who says that the key problem for most SWDs diversity in Ethiopian HEIs is a lack of an inclusive educational setting that seeks to meet the particular needs of SWDs diversity. Most SWDs diversity who enroll in the country's HEIs have significant challenges in obtaining accessible and barrier-free educational services, which can be a significant impediment to their education. This is also consistent with the findings of other countries studies, according to which Armstrong et al., (2010) assert that the concept of inclusion, diversity, and equity in education was popularized by countries in the global North in the latter part of the twentieth century, and has traditionally been given less emphasis in developing countries possibly due to financial constraints, different political histories, and social relations within these countries (e.g., the United States).

This suggests that, since the respondents were dissatisfied with the general campus atmosphere and experience from a disability diversity, equity, and inclusion perspective, DDM still has to go a long way towards achieving satisfaction with overall the campus experience/environment.

The respondents resoundingly agreed that they are dissatisfied with the policies and laws that protect disability diversity in their institution, as evidenced by the average response and standard deviation for DDM satisfaction Item 4 in Table 3 (M= 2.44, SD= 1.117). In this regard, this investigation replicates the findings of similar studies in other contexts where the implementation of diversity policies for all students affected but especially SWDs diversity (Muoghalu & Eboiyehi, 2018; Reay et al., 2002; Resch, 2023).

This suggests that, DDM in HEIs is in the process of creating and maintaining a more positive diversified learning environment (Hurtado et al., 2012) in order to bring satisfactions with the regulations and legislation that safeguard disability diversity in HEIs. However, the research participants are generally dissatisfied with the regulations and laws that protect disability diversity in the five Ethiopian public HEIs that were chosen, indicating that DDM still has a long way to go towards achieving satisfaction with the regulations and laws that protect disability diversity.

The majority of respondents claimed they are dissatisfied with the university's sufficient programs and resources to support the attainment of DDM, as indicated by their mean and standard deviation scores for DDM satisfaction Item 5 in Table 3 (M= 2.46, SD= 1.232).

The findings show that DDM in HEIs is the process of building and sustaining a more favorable diversified learning environment (Hurtado et al., 2012) in order to bring satisfactions with sufficient programs and resources to foster the success of a DDM in HEIs. They are generally dissatisfied with sufficient programs and resources to foster the success of a DDM at the five Ethiopian public HEIs that were chosen, indicating that DDM needs to do more on this regard.

The majority of respondents are not satisfied with the university's acknowledgement of disability diversity, according to the mean and standard deviation scores for DDM satisfaction Item 6 in Table 3 ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.145$). This is in concert with findings in other contexts where SWDs diversity were in reality uninformed of the department's social inclusion policy and support methods for SWDs. One explanation for this is because the department's curricular and policy objectives have not been adequately conveyed, and students continue to rely on common knowledge which is actually not acknowledging SWDs diversity (Tressou et al., 2007).

The findings show that as DDM in HEIs is in the process of building and sustaining a more favorable diversified learning environment (Hurtado et al., 2012) in order to bring satisfactions with the recognition given to DDM in HEIs. They are generally dissatisfied with the recognition given to disability diversity in this university at the five Ethiopian public HEIs that were chosen, indicating that DDM still has a long way to go towards achieving satisfaction with the recognition given to disability diversity.

According to Table 3's average response and standard deviation for DDM satisfaction Item 7 ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.039$), the majority of respondents found their university's process for investigating cases of disability discrimination or harassment to be satisfactory.

The data showed that, DDM in HEIs is in the process of creating and maintaining a more diverse learning environment (Hurtado et al., 2012), in order to bring satisfactions with the process for investigating acts of disability discrimination or harassment in HEIs. However, they are generally satisfied with the process for investigating acts of disability discrimination or harassment at the five Ethiopian public HEIs chosen, indicating that DDM still was doing good toward achieving satisfaction with the process for investigating acts of disability discrimination or harassment.

According to the average and standard deviation ratings for DDM satisfaction Item 8 in Table 3, ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.399$), the campus community is very dissatisfied with senior leadership's response to incidents of harassment or discrimination based on a person's disability diversity. In this regard, this investigation replicates the findings of similar studies in other contexts where students have frequently protested against a lack of response to incidents of harassment or discrimination against SWDs diversity, inclusion, racism, discrimination, or the lack of action and structural transformation for diversity in HEIs (Singh Sandhu et al., 2022).

The above data revealed that at the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs, DDM still has a long way to go toward achieving satisfaction with response to incidents of harassment or discrimination based on a person's disability diversity.

The respondents were asked about their satisfaction with the top leadership of their campus in relation to whether or not they are devoted to DDM and equity, as per Table 3, DDM satisfaction Item 9. As seen by the mean and standard deviation values of ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 1.090$), the majority of respondents were not satisfied with this campus' top leadership's dedication to disability diversity and equity. A study done in support of disability diversity and equity by (Tirussew et al., 2014) reveals that a considerable number of SWDs diversity are not placed based on their first choice. SWDs diversity may not always have equitable access to all fields of study and are frequently assigned to pursue Special Needs Education (MoE's, ESDP V, 2016) which definitely will lead SWDs diversity to dissatisfaction.

Hence, this study adds to the literature by demonstrating that most of SWDs diversity in Ethiopian public HEIs were not satisfied with their campus' top leadership's dedication to disability diversity management and equity although disability diversity management in HEIs is in the process of building and sustaining a more favorable diversified learning environment (Hurtado et al., 2012) in order to bring satisfactions with commitment of this campus's top leadership to disability diversity and equity in HEIs.

Research Question 3: Does HEIs leadership commitment for DDM have significant positive correlation or regression to students' satisfaction?

As stated above, one of the current study's sub basic research questions was to test if HEIs leadership commitment for DDM has any significant relationship with students' satisfaction of DDM. The results provided below try to answer Research Question 3.

For the data presented in Table 4, Cohens normally consider correlations above 0.4 to be rather strong; correlations between 0.2 and 0.4 are regarded moderate; and correlations below 0.2 are considered weak. As a result, Pearson Correlation Coefficient ($r = 0.475$), indicating a moderately high association between DDM leadership commitment and student satisfaction at Ethiopia's five public HEIs. Similarly, as seen in the prior table, if the p-value is less than (0.05), we may conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship.

Table 4

Correlation between HEIs leadership commitment for DDM to students' satisfaction

Correlation between HEIs leadership commitment for DDM and students' satisfaction	<i>N</i>	<i>Pearson Correlations</i>	<i>Sig.(2-tailed)</i>
	395	.475**	.000

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Research Question 4: Is there statistically significant difference between male and female respondents on satisfaction for DDM?

As stated above, one of the current study's sub-basic research questions was to establish whether or not there was statistically significant difference between male and female respondents on satisfaction for DDM at public Ethiopian HEIs. The following results sought to offer solutions to the question.

Table 5

Independent Sample T-Test of Respondents Satisfaction for DDM Based on Sex

Group Statistics						Independent Sample T-test		
T-test of Satisfaction for DDM	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Male	165	26.2545	4.17404	.32495	2.218	245	.027
	Female	82	25.0854	3.28183	.36242			

As shown in Table 5, the means of the male respondents and the female respondents were 26.2545 and 25.0854 respectively. Because $p < 0.05$, there was statistically significant difference in satisfaction on disability diversity management between male and female respondents at the five Ethiopian public HEIs chosen.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The study was conducted in five Ethiopian public HEIs namely, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa Science and Technology University, Debre Berhan University, Selale University and Kotebe University of Education. The major goal of this study was to evaluate and provide insight into the DDM in the context of the five Ethiopian public HEIs chosen for this study in order to provide recommendations for its development. It used convergent parallel mixed research (QUAN + QUAL) procedures that adhered to the pragmatic research paradigm. The research questions addressed by this paper were as follows: How is the commitment of Ethiopian public HEIs top management to DDM of its students? To what extent are undergraduate regular HEIs students satisfied with the DDM of Ethiopian public HEIs? Does HEIs leadership commitment for DDM have significant positive correlation or regression to students' satisfaction? Is there statistically significant difference between male and female respondents on satisfaction for DDM? As a general response to these four research questions, it can be stated that DDM was applied to some level at the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs through policies, programs, and strategies. Nonetheless, top management of the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs was less committed to DDM. Furthermore, undergraduate students with impairments were dissatisfied with their campuses' DDMs. Pearson Correlation Coefficient ($r = 0.475$), indicated a moderately high association between DDM leadership commitment and student satisfaction at Ethiopia's five public HEIs with statistically significant value ($p < 0.05$). The study also provided critical insight into DDM commitment as well as satisfaction, which must comprise a good mix of commitment at Ethiopian public HEIs in order to be satisfactory. To properly administer the DDM, Ethiopian public HEI leadership must be deeply devoted to DDM fulfillment with its egalitarian goals and cultural standards. It was also suggested that resources be made available to ensure that the DDM strategy be faithfully implemented.

To increase the commitment of the top management, DDM knowledge and expertise must be ensured within the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs, as must regular DDM practices such as establishing a diversity task-force, auditing current diversity and disability equality conditions at the selected five Ethiopian public HEIs, developing a diversity and disability equality plan with measurable targets and deadlines, providing resources for the DDM plan's implementation, identifying accountability for actions, and establishing accountability for actions.

IMPLICATIONS TO EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

The outcomes of this empirical study have implications for assisting educational planners at HEIs in establishing course content that incorporates DDM informed viewpoints. If HEIs leaders are serious about recognizing DDM and promoting justice and inclusion, DDM-friendly policies and processes must be developed. An educational leader who creates a varied educational environment at HEIs is more likely to produce students who understand that being equal to someone does not entail being the same as them. Educational planners will also pay close attention to uneven structural imbalances caused by disability. They will attempt to change inequitable relationships in a number of areas by responding to their needs with the best allocation of resources, actions, responsibilities, and power.

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EMANCIPATORY PEDAGOGY AND THE RASTAFARIAN MOVEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE JAMAICAN RASTAFARIAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL IN ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the Jamaican Rastafarian Development Community (JRDC) School in rural Ethiopia. The author explored the school's integration of Rastafarian culture and spirituality on pedagogical practices. Analysis of the perceptions of the school by members of the surrounding community and other stakeholders at the school, including students, parents, teachers, and school leaders, aided in addressing the major research question: How well did the JRDC manifest the vision or shared goal of the Rastafari movement in the form of the K-8 school in the town of Shashamane? Using a conceptual framework based on the work of Freire (1970), this study's author highlighted the process of emancipatory pedagogy within the workings of the school and its influence in the community. An Afrocentric paradigm combined with the theories of West (1993) served as the basis for framing the research process. The author found evidence of the existence of themes developed by the conceptual framework such as Afrocentric and spiritual pedagogy; however, there were opposing factors present at JRDC. These factors were present as a result of the culture of dependency in rural Ethiopia and the post-colonial Western instructional styles predominant in the school. Implications from this study address curriculum planning to support the identity development of students of African descent in developing countries as well as among Diasporic populations.

INTRODUCTION

Oppressed populations resist and challenge their situation within society in varied and complex ways. Resistance to oppression within educational institutions is particularly critical for marginalized populations because education is the realm in which cultural values are reproduced and young people are socialized. Western values continue to dominate education throughout much of the world despite waves of resistance and discourse that have attempted to create a location where oppressed peoples' voices can be affirmed. Creating an educational space, developed by the members of historically oppressed and operated independently of the dominant ideology has proven difficult.

In response to the Western dominance, African leaders have actively resisted and attempted to develop a position that reinforces racial pride, self-determination, and educational liberation. Black scholars (Asante in Dei & Kempf, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1990) have reacted to the hegemonic influence of the Western and post-colonial model in education by creating a discourse that questions pedagogical practices and curriculum that, at best, lacks resonance with Black students and, at worst, promotes an identity of inferiority (West, 1993). Cornel West and Molefi Asante developed theories of oppression and resistance that address the experiences of the African Diaspora. These theories combined with the emancipatory pedagogy of Paulo Freire (1970) address themes of mental subjugation of the oppressed, agency of the oppressed, the spiritual or mystical nature of liberation from subjugation, and the importance of resistance independent of the dominant cultural system.

This case study explored how a community, and a school run by its members, exemplified the convergence of the stated theories of resistance in action or "praxis" (Freire, 1970, p.87). The

community, the Jamaican Rastafarian Development Community (JRDC), and its K-8 school were established by members of the Rastafari faith in rural Ethiopia. They founded the JRDC School to educate and empower their children and the local Ethiopian children who lacked adequate schooling.

Rastafari Beliefs

The Rastafari movement is one of resistance with a belief in redemption from the effects of slavery through self-determination and collective consciousness. It began in the poorest neighborhoods in Jamaica in the 1930s and was aligned to the Pan-African movement, and some may argue that it was formative in the establishment of Pan-Africanism (Payrhuber, 1998). Steeped in a Judeo-Christian identity, the Rastafari openly reject British rule and Western Christianity and pledge their allegiance to the former Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie I. Rastafari ideology incorporates political, spiritual, and symbolic factors to promote the empowerment of people of African descent. According to Price (2001), for Rastafarian identity, “Blackness is a core identity-organizing element” (p. 2). Price quoted Leonard Barrett in defining the Rastafari beliefs as a

Messianic movement [that] believes that Haile Selassie . . . is the Black Messiah who appeared in the flesh for the redemption of all Blacks exiled in the world of White oppressors. The movement views Ethiopia as the Promised Land where Black people will be repatriated through a whole exodus from all Western countries where they have been in exile. (Price, 2001, p.2)

The Rastafari community believes strongly in self-sufficiency, self-determination, and independence, and by 1950 in Jamaica, Rastafari had produced a unique socio-cultural identity incorporating “dietary codes, a sense of shared history, and an attachment to Africa as well as practices and ideologies that juxtapose communal living with self-reliant independence” (Price, 2001, p. 17). For some, fulfillment of their faith was repatriation to Africa, and particularly to Ethiopia, which they viewed as the “promised land.”

The School and the Community: JRDC

Rastafarians from all parts of the world migrate to live in Ethiopia, a land they consider the promised land, and this migration represents the ultimate type of agency that Freire, Asante, and West prioritized. This agency is manifest through the act of repatriating, an act most Pan-Africanists in the West only dream of accomplishing. Freire’s (1970) conception of praxis is further evidenced with the establishment of an NGO and a school led by members of the Rastafari faith to uplift and enhance the lives of the people in the community.

JRDC School is a K-8 school located in the town of Shashamane in the rural Rift Valley about 150 miles south of the capital of Ethiopia. Emperor Haile Selassie I granted the land in Shashamane to the African Diasporic population of the Americas as gratitude for their support during the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in the late 1930’s. The first Rastafari family settled in Shashamane in 1955, and since then many Rastafari have settled there. Today a few hundred reside in the town alongside over 100,000 Oromo ethnic native Ethiopians.

Implications for Current Educational Research

It can be presumed that by the inherent nature of their faith and philosophy, the JRDC School leaders were motivated by the aim of transforming the students at their school and community to become empowered and develop their identities based on historical and cultural pride. The implications of their practice are ripe not only for pedagogy and school leadership in developing countries but for pedagogical practices and school leadership for teaching Diasporic

student populations all over the world. An important consideration for school leaders of students of African descent is curriculum and instructional planning. This relevance takes many forms. For example, it calls for exploring how well the curriculum and instruction support identity development that empowers students. Also relevant to planning is the investigation into whether the students are learning skills that will be useful to their futures in the global market. Imperative to inquire is, if despite being subjected to marginalization, racism, and economic dependency, did the Ethiopian youth internalize a sense of empowerment uttered by Rastafarians? These wonderings formed the basis for the research questions guiding this study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To effectively explore the influences of the Rastafari presence in this rural Ethiopian community, especially the local school established by people of this messianic faith, the author used the following questions to guide her research:

How well did the JRDC manifest the vision or shared goal of the Rastafari movement in the form of the K-8 school in the town of Shashamane? What challenges and successes did the school leaders experience in deploying pedagogical practices that highlight the Afrocentric philosophy of self-determination, identity development, and liberation?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND THEORIES OF RESISTANCE

To be liberated, the oppressed must be seen as humans fully capable of realizing their own independence. Freire (1970) criticized the “banking method” of education because it treats learners as “depositories of information” and perceives them only as recipients, not co-constructors, of their own education and hence liberation (p.72). The banking approach to education has endured as the main form of education in most societies because it serves the “interest of the oppressor” or those in power and keeps the oppressed in a position of “beings for others” (Freire, 1970, p.74). Emancipatory education rejects the top-down system of educator to learner and embraces a partnership approach to pedagogy. Freire (1970) proposed that the educator must align efforts with students to “engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization” (p. 75).

Afrocentric education is one form of emancipatory pedagogy and promotes an identity of African centeredness to students. It offers an alternative to “the preponderant Eurocentric myths of universalism, objectivity, and classical traditions” embedded within Western models of education (Asante, 1987, p. 9). By calling for the elimination of the “colonizer within” (Mazama, 2003, p. 16), people of African descent can become agents of their liberation. An Afrocentric framework attempts to “systematically displace European ways of thinking” (Mazama, 2003, p. 5). Asante critiqued the Eurocentric claim to a universal ideology; however, his aim was not to replace the Eurocentric model, but rather to assert that every cultural perspective is entitled to view the world from its own cultural center (Verharen, 2000). Afrocentrism is also promoted by Cornel West as one aspect of his philosophy of prophetic pragmatism.

West’s critical revision of the American pragmatic tradition of Emerson and Dewey, borrows from African-American Protestant Christianity. West’s prophetic pragmatism supports a worldview based on democratic practices as it echoes Dewey’s belief that democracy is the “only way of living that uses the power of experience both as an end and means” hence, allowing for more free and more humane experiences in which all can contribute to society (Dantley, 2005, p. 662). West (1998) recognized that the institution of “prophetic” Christianity has been a significant influence for people of the African Diaspora, and “stripped of static dogma and decrepit doctrine,

remains a rich source of existential empowerment and political engagement” (West, 1999, p. 171). West’s (1998) driving belief is prophetic pragmatism abets oppressed individuals to perceive their present condition of self-understanding for the purpose of bettering their community and society. Prophetic pragmatism contains elements of:

[A] universal consciousness that promotes an all-embracing democratic and libertarian moral vision, a historical consciousness that acknowledges human finitude and . . . a critical consciousness that encourages a relentless critique and self-criticism for the aims of social change and personal humility. (West, 1998, p.170)

This union of resistance, identity, and spirituality to affect transformation through education echoes the beliefs of the Rastafari movement and served as the conceptual framework for this case study of a school in rural Ethiopia.

BACKGROUND OF EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

Although in recent years Ethiopia’s poverty level has fallen and average household education levels have grown, the country remains one of the poorest nations in the world by some indexes. Primary schools are overcrowded, and facilities and supplies are inadequate. Attempts to explain Ethiopia’s slow progress in educational achievement over the course of modern history are sparse in the literature.

In 1912 and 1924, Baykedagn, an esteemed Ethiopian scholar who was educated in the West, returned to Ethiopia and published two works exploring underdevelopment in Africa. Baykedagn pointed to obstacles such as climate, lack of natural resources, and chronic wars. Baykedagn attributed the underdevelopment in Ethiopia to the lack of social peace and constant wars and pillage, which hindered progress (Kebede, 2006). Kebede (2006) critiqued Baykedagn’s Eurocentric stance in comparing progress in Ethiopia to levels reached in Europe, especially when the Ethiopian civilization is considered one of the oldest and greatest “together with Rome, Persia, and China” (Kebede, 2006, p. 817). Regardless of whether the lag in development is viewed from a Eurocentric perspective, the fact remains that obstacles averted Ethiopia from reaching a certain status of modernity, especially in higher technological and educational levels.

Christianity defined not only the religion, but the culture, way of life, and polity of Ethiopian life. Christianity, in the form of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, was considered the focal point of the traditional educational system (A. Habte, personal communication, April 14, 2007). While this early education system was reserved for the elite, it was a comprehensive and intricate learning environment. Westernizing of the educational system began with the Roman Catholic missionaries and explorers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which propelled the educational sector towards a more European model (A. Habte, personal communication, April 14, 2007). This was intensified by the practice of sending students to Europe and the Middle East to study. As a leader fully invested in the educational system of his country, Haile Selassie I (emperor of Ethiopia from 1930 to 1974) wanted modernization to be aligned with traditional Ethiopian methods of education; however, scholars who were largely educated outside of Ethiopia did not create a system or curriculum to sustain any form of traditional Ethiopian education when they returned home from their studies abroad (A. Habte, personal communication, April 14, 2007).

The above detailing of the pre-modern era educational system of Ethiopia is an attempt to answer the question asked by many scholars (Asante 1991; Bridges et al., 2004): Is there an African philosophy of education? As the sole African country to remain uncolonized, Ethiopia seems a credible place to start in investigating the question. Ethiopia holds a distinctive place in the philosophy of Rastafarians, therefore especially useful for the purposes of this study. Due to the

strong early influence of the Orthodox Christian Church in Ethiopia, the philosophy of the country is couched in the faith. Beginning in the 12th century, long before Europeans colonized African nations imposing their philosophies and educational models on the various nations, Ethiopia was practicing an educational paradigm centered on the Orthodox Christian Church (A. Habte, personal communication, April 14, 2007). What contributions from this tradition can serve educational development today? For movements such as Rastafari, whose members pursue the anti- and pre-colonial virtues, the traditional Church education can be a source of empowerment. The focus on spirituality and faith is a theme that threads through the theories used to develop the conceptual framework for this study and was best explored through qualitative research methods.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this case study was to explore how the ideology of resistance, self-sufficiency, and Afrocentric identity were being applied to pedagogies driven by Rastafarian values; and if the pedagogies could be considered transformative or emancipatory. To adequately understand the JRDC School and answer the research questions, it is necessary to examine its position in the larger community; both the Rastafarian community that controls school governance and pedagogies, and the larger Ethiopian community of Shashamane that surrounds the school and from which many students are drawn. This case study included elements of ethnography to illuminate the relationship of community to school and school to community.

Data Collection

To conduct the case study, the author gained access to the school through her connections within the Rastafarian community. This access facilitated the data collection process. Data collection activities included observations, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations with school and community members, and journaling by the author. Data was gathered daily throughout the five weeks of visiting the community, which integrated continuous observation of the community, school staff meetings, informal community gatherings, and day to day school activities. Participants included school leaders, teachers, parents, students, and community members.

The author used interview protocols that were semi-structured and included open-ended questions designed to elicit in-depth views and perceptions of participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 15-20 participants. The open-ended questions varied depending on which participant was being interviewed; however, each protocol included four to seven questions that provided the author with indirect information and descriptions about the JRDC School and its community through the views of the interviewees. Selecting participants whose perspective and experiences varied regarding the JRDC School allowed for a more holistic view of the school (Merriam, 1998). The participants were initially referred to the author by the school director, a key informant of this study; however, after a certain amount of trust and rapport had been established, the author practiced a more purposeful sampling. More specifically, she employed a snowball sampling strategy. Starting with the convenience of referred participants, she then asked these individuals to refer her to other participants.

Although these semi-structured interviews provided her with rich data, she understood that the informal interviews which happened through her daily encounters with the people in the community produced equally significant data. The author attempted to sway the informal and casual conversations towards the subject of the community's perceptions of the JRDC School. Naturally, journaling and field notes followed these encounters.

The author used an observation protocol to take notes and record information while observing various activities and events. The protocol consisted of two columns; one for descriptive notes on what the author observed, and another for her reflections on and interpretations of what she observed. The author conducted formal observations in classrooms, and during school meetings and activities. Additionally, informal, or exploratory observations were conducted daily through casual encounters with community members. As a participant observer, the author used her role as a teacher trainer to gain a perspective on relationship dynamics, patterns of daily interactions, organization of leadership and hierarchies, and other cultural patterns that were presented but not readily discussed or addressed (Schensul et al., 1999).

Daily reflective journaling was another form of data collection and a critical practice as the author's position straddled between participant and observer. As part of the agreement for access, she agreed to provide teacher training for the school. As a Rastafarian, she had a philosophical investment in the ideologies and work of the Rastafarian community, but as a Middle Eastern-American visitor, she remained an "outsider" to both the Rastafarian and Ethiopian people. Her daily written reflections on her experience in Shashamane helped her adhere to epoché, a moving towards a suspended judgment of preconceived notions (Collins, 2004).

The author identified core themes most dominant in shaping the way the JRDC School came to be. She used ethnographic methods in a qualitative case study because the intent of the study was to see how themes interacted and operated in JRDC and its community. Ethnography entails the study of a community's culture and the themes drawn out during the research are cultural aspects. The players in this culture are the Rastafari, the Ethiopians, and the school stakeholders (i.e., leaders, teachers, staff, students, parents). The interactions and influences of these groups on each other created a dynamic resulting in themes of humanity, unity, resistance; yet, also of survival in a poverty-stricken rural area and the effects of globalization in this remote part of the world. A qualitative study attempts to uncover layers of truths to identify core themes. This research at the JRDC School uncovered many stories laid on top of each other bound by class, nationality, faith, and culture.

Data Analysis

To illuminate the basis for forming the themes found during this research, the author reflected on specific cultural elements of the Rastafarian movement that best align to concepts of resistance, emancipation, identity development, and self-determination. The few scholars (Stanley, 2002; Birthwright, 2005) who have developed an erudite discourse on the emancipatory virtues of the Rastafarian movement based on the "evolution of a liberated identity" have detailed certain facets of the movement. Opposition to neo-colonialism or "Babylon", the Rastafari term for an oppressive White supremacist rule, has evolved into a lifestyle for Rastafari. Many of the conversations among members of the faith as observed by the author centered on politics and more specifically a critique of the Western system; what Rastafarians call "chanting down Babylon" or "reasoning" sessions (Stanley, 2002, p. 92). The movement's customs and cultural practices are of a political and spiritual nature and provide support for the essentials the author used to guide the data collection and analysis process.

The author next worked to capture the "relationships among several themes" and explore the ways in which things appear within the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998, p. 16). This step entailed the coding and analysis of data. Due to the cyclical and nonlinear nature of qualitative research, data collection and analysis are simultaneous activities. Therefore, the technique of epoché was revisited at all stages of research (Merriam, 1998). Epoché, as the suspension of judgment by

the author, was critical in the first stages of analysis, which began with the very first interview and observation, to the last and final stages of analysis and reporting. The author used interview protocols and observation notes and filtered the data through the lens of her research questions throughout the process. She read over the first set of interview transcripts and the first set of field notes as they were completed before conducting the second set to begin drawing out categories and emerging themes from the preliminary round of interviews and observations. The right way of doing data analysis is “to do it simultaneously with data collection” (Merriam, 1998, p. 162). The fact that this study was driven by the conceptual framework facilitated the attempts to narrow the focus of the study. Through this focus and the data collection and analysis process, the author constructed categories and themes, which captured a pattern based on the specific concepts presented through the emancipatory pedagogy framework.

FINDINGS

The author identified core themes most dominant in shaping the way the JRDC School operated within the larger community. These themes were generated from codes and categories based on the interactions and dynamics between the various school stakeholders. The author found that the anti-colonial ideology of Rastafari supported the Afrocentric identity-forming virtues for teachers and students. Although these virtues and values had successfully seeped into the culture of the school and surrounding community, they were often overshadowed or contradicted by a colonial and Western mind state. These opposing elements posed challenges for the school leaders, especially around their desired pedagogical practices when faced with barriers in effective training of, and resources for, their teaching staff.

From the onset of this study, the author had certain preconceived ideas about the Rastafarian faith giving her confidence that she would find certain themes while conducting her research at the JRDC School. Therefore, she developed a conceptual framework, which as previously mentioned was based on the theories of Freire, Asante, and West; a combination that can be described as a prophetic Afrocentric emancipatory framework. This framework not only provided a foundation for her research questions and interview protocols, but also shaped the focus of field notes. What the author chose to observe and note in her journal was inspired by the conceptual framework. She began her research knowing she would find elements of a collective consciousness in the vision of the school based on Afrocentrism, spirituality, and transformatory identity development. Her practice of *epoche* allowed her to observe other unavoidable and opposing themes that also existed at JRDC School; specifically, that of a neo-colonial and unilinear form of pedagogy. The evidence to support this dichotomy will be described in more detail next.

Afrocentric Values vs. Neo-Colonial Pedagogy

The author found that within the school community, there was much evidence to support the theme of Afrocentric values in child rearing and education. This theme played out in two dimensions. One was the traditional and teacher-led manner of dealing with children common in developing countries and the second was the pedagogy based on the values of the Rastafari school leaders raised and educated in the West had brought with them in their journey to Shashamane. The author observed these layered and multi-dimensional Western pedagogical influences at play in the school. The research illustrated the neo-colonial Western teaching styles prominent at the JRDC School, particularly by Ethiopian teachers. This pedagogical style is one defined as a unilinear and teacher-led model of education (Watson, 1994). Yet, the second aspect and dimension of Western pedagogy found at the JRDC School was the Rastafarian school leaders’ desired approach, which

was progressive and child-centered. This latter style of education was derived from the leaders' training in the West and from the Rastafarian values of humanity, love, and democracy. Evidence of this dichotomy was clear in field notes on the days spent at the JRDC School. For example, at recess the author saw very little interaction between the Ethiopian teachers and students and although this is not behavior exclusive to JRDC School or schools in developing countries, it was illustrative of the lack of communication and bonding between the Ethiopian teachers and students. In formal and informal interviews, the students often expressed dismay at the treatment received from the Ethiopian teachers because they do not encourage communication with the students, and some hit the students. Interviews with students revealed a distinction between the way the Ethiopian and the Rastafarian teachers were perceived. The Rastafarian teachers "listened" to the students and cared for them, while the Ethiopian teachers were not as caring. During a staff meeting, Sister Marcia, who was raised and educated in the U.K., had to address this issue with the teachers:

These are our children; they are Ethiopia's future. We have to be caring. If they come up to you, talk to them, touch them. If their nose is running, give them a tissue and show them how to clean their face. We have to be more caring towards the students, especially the young ones. That's how we are different from the government schools.

As results illustrated, the author believed that the JRDC School leaders aimed to instill Afrocentric virtues in their students; however, they were also carrying with them the Western values they were reared in, growing up in the Caribbean, UK, and US. These values included those learned in their own school experiences. Many of the Rastafarian school leaders were trained in the West at institutions of higher education in the area of teaching and school administration and were well-versed in modern child rearing philosophies which tended to be more child-centered than the more traditional teaching styles found in developing countries such as Ethiopia.

Spirituality

A "true form of education" (Watkins, 2008) for people of African descent which according to Hilliard (1997) included "restoration of memories, the rebuilding of the self, the rebuilding of spirituality, wholeness, and belonging", was evident among the vision of JRDC School leaders and the pedagogical styles of some teachers. Most scholars of ancient African education (Habte, n.d.; Hilliard, 1997) agreed that spirituality was the core component of educating the youth; however, JRDC leaders and teachers disagreed on how to convey spirituality to the students. The interview with Sister Marcia, a JRDC board member, revealed the reason for the apprehension in teaching spirituality or religion:

The topic of spirituality in the school comes up a lot but Ethiopia is strictly Islamic *and* Christian, and we wouldn't want to upset anyone. Rastafarian faith is diverse so we could teach manners and character building. Spirituality would be a personal, individual endeavor and we don't want to upset the parents. Moral character is taught along with social and personal skills. For the most part, Ethiopia does see us as humble, peaceful, and loving. Rastafarians have been good for all of Ethiopia. We think well of Ethiopia.

Brother Matthew, a Rastafari teacher at JRDC School, reiterated this point but also explained the ways in which spirituality was still conveyed to the children and other community members:

We can't teach religion because of the many different religions. We still try to create a fundamental religious environment and create spiritual awareness in the students. I teach my students to pray the prayer of gratitude, 'Let us not forget to express our gratitude to God', and we teach them to keep the spirit of God alive, Jah Rastafari. We make students have that consciousness. By and large all the students and parents know what we represent.

These quotes demonstrate the distinction made between spirituality and religion among the Rastafari educators at the school. Additionally, they show the organic manner in which the teachers and leaders conveyed spiritual values without imposing their beliefs onto the school community.

Afrocentric Education

Brother Matthew and the teachers who he mentored maintained a focus on teaching Afrocentric values and history. Teacher Afework, an Ethiopian teacher who credited Brother Matthew with teaching him, asked the author to support him in administering an exam and asked her for her opinion on the test questions. The questions centered on Africa, specifically the history of Egyptian and Ethiopian civilizations. The teacher was proud of the exam and told the author that it was “African history” with enthusiasm evident in his voice and face. The multiple-choice questions included historical facts regarding Ethiopian history, such as “What was the name of the ancient Ethiopian civilization?” the correct choice being “Nubian”. Another question was about the ancient capital of Ethiopia and the correct answer was “Aksum”. There were also questions regarding current facts such as mortality rates, birth rates, and prevalent diseases in Ethiopia.

Teacher Desta, an Ethiopian teacher who conveyed his gratitude for Brother Matthew and past Rastafarian teachers for imparting pride in Africa to the students, wanted to be able to do the same for his students. He credited his initial interest in Afrocentric history to his high school teacher in an Ethiopian school. This teacher’s African history lesson included the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism. As Desta explained, “This made me wonder why the Europeans would do such cruel things to Africans”. Also, he began to learn about “great people” like Emperor Haile Selassie I, Kwame Nkrumah, and Jomo Kenyatta, wishing to take their struggle further. His hopes were that students will want to learn in the West then come back to help in Africa and Ethiopia. He affirmed that because of the mentoring and teachings of the Rastafari in Shashamane, he became “. . . a Pan-Africanist!” Interestingly, when speaking to Sister Melody, the school director, the author reflected on how dedicated and smart Teachers Desta and Afework were and she attributed their dedication to their religious natures. These two teachers had internalized the vision of Rastafari by learning from the Rastafari teachers at the school. They considered themselves Pan-Africanists and this ideology shaped their teaching philosophy and pedagogical practices.

Sister Melody’s goals for the students at JRDC also supported the desire to instill Afrocentric values in the students. As the director of the school, she stated the goals of the school leaders:

The goals for students at JRDC are that graduates will be: (a) able to read and write in English and perform well enough to move on to higher grades, (b) aware of the importance of Ethiopian history and religion in the history of Africa and all people of African descent, and (c) able to use art to express themselves and the culture and history of Ethiopia.

These goals reinforce the desires of the school leaders to balance the development of an Afrocentric identity in students, while operating under an educational system that prioritized a Western, neo-colonial philosophy and language.

Neo-Colonial Pedagogy

The author’s stay in Shashamane began with the teacher training workshops for K-2 teachers taking place over two days. Sister Melody asked the author to focus on differentiated assessments, flexible grouping, and visual aids as pedagogical strategies that would best serve the teachers and students, as well as enhanced teaching and learning to increase student engagement. Sister Melody and many of the other Rastafarian school leaders wanted to move towards employing these more progressive methods of instruction at the school.

From the author's observations in the K-2 classrooms taught by local Ethiopian teachers, she could tell the common teaching style was a rote memorization method with students copying what the teacher wrote on the board. One of the teachers showed the author the students' notebooks and the students had very neatly copied what the teacher wrote on the board. The notes included matching exercises, cloze tests, and spelling activities. Board work consisted of a student standing in front of class and reading the words on the board while the rest of the class repeated them.

In conversations with the Ethiopian teachers, the author noted that they did not complain of student discipline problems and in fact, during one of the training sessions they asked how to combat the problem of lack of student engagement. They stated that during instruction all the students seemed to be listening, but the teachers later realized that the students had not comprehended the lesson. The author responded that strategies such as grouping, the use of student-centered activities, and class discussions were ways to increase student engagement.

For the most part, however, the author noticed that the child-centered Western educational values, which were primarily transmitted by the Rastafarian teachers, had a positive effect on student engagement. Brother Jeremiah, a Rastafari teacher, described the difference between the Ethiopian and Rastafarian teachers and pointed out positive attributes of progressive pedagogies that can be adopted by educators in developing countries, "The Ethiopian teachers don't have that animated nature, to become like a child. In my opinion, it is a Western way to become like a child and interact with kids that way." Brother Jeremiah was describing a student-centered and democratic approach to teaching that blurs the lines of traditional power dynamics between students and teachers.

Western Standards

On the other hand, the Rastafarian school leaders somehow understood that in a global economy, their students' success depended on their ability to navigate in a Western-dominated world. As Brother Robbie, a former Rastafari JRDC board member, mentioned when referring to the English language taught at JRDC:

Yes, it might be good that JRDC teaches English, but what good is it if all the students leave JRDC speaking English with a Jamaican accent? They need to change that because they even write English with the Jamaican dialect. This may be a problem when they try to go on to high school or college.

Despite Brother Robbie's question, the students of JRDC were learning English at a much higher rate at the JRDC School when compared to the government-run schools. Sister Marcia informed the author that the school's five-year evaluation by the local Ethiopian educational authorities was scheduled in a few weeks. She said that the original proposal that she wrote was "very ambitious", yet the authorities expected the goals stated in the proposal to be met. Sister Marcia stated that not all the goals were met but the school had done very well on their eighth-grade test scores, higher than the government schools in the region. The eighth-grade tests were developed by the Ethiopian education ministry and were in English. Additionally, there were three major high school exams at the national level. Eighth grade exams were prepared in English, Amharic, and Oromifa, the local regional language. Grades 10 and 12 exams in subjects such as math, chemistry, physics, civics, geography, history, and biology were all given in English. The process allowed children who passed the grade 12 exams to enter university where the only language of instruction is English.

Many of the school teachers and leaders were invested in wanting to help JRDC move forward and progress within the Western concept and standards of what success means; high

test scores, mastering the English language, using Western pedagogical practices, and accessing technology imported from the West. Even the Rastafarians in the community admitted to the fact that their own progeny were more privileged due to their connection to the West and the associated resources. Sister Marcia pointed out the difference between the younger Rastafarian generation and the Ethiopian youth:

The Rastafarian youth, those under the age of twenty, are used to having things given to them and have more (materially) than the Ethiopian youth. Older Rastafarian children were brought up with more discipline. Twenty years ago, Shashamane was like a village, and everyone helped to raise a child but now you can't say anything to other Rastafarians' children. Now with more children coming here and the repatriation taking momentum, the young generation expects things from outside.

Earlier the author mentioned the apprehension of many Ethiopian scholars (Habte, 2007) regarding the gradual replacement of an Ethiopian Christian curriculum with a Western curriculum. This curriculum was imported to Ethiopia by young scholars educated abroad. The new curriculum led to the diminishing importance of traditional Ethiopian pedagogy because the young scholars brought back Western philosophy not well aligned with the traditional Ethiopian learning process and curriculum. Additionally, curriculum from the West was developed within a Eurocentric paradigm and contained colonial elements of schooling. The author recognized a parallel in the diminishing influence of Rastafari values at the JRDC School and the drive towards preparing children for a global market within a world stage still wrought with colonial practices and philosophies.

SUMMARY

The Rastafari school leaders and teachers imparted knowledge to the school and surrounding community that was an integration of progressive Western pedagogy, traditional teacher-led practices, and a resistance-oriented philosophy. The reciprocal relationship between school and community resulted in a nexus of teaching approaches. It created a school brimming with potential lessons for students of historically oppressed populations, specifically those of African descent. The school leaders were cognizant of the ways they had to prepare their students to compete at higher levels of education locally and globally. A tension existed between remaining true to their spiritual vision as Rastafari school leaders and being accountable for standards set by the Ethiopian school authorities; standards that were rooted in neo-colonial philosophies and schooling structures. The students and teachers like Desta and Afework, who were mentored by the Rastafari school leaders, demonstrated an understanding of Pan-Africanist philosophy and were keen to share this with their students. Their approach to teaching aimed to instill pride in identity and a sense of self-determination in their students and was rooted in an anticolonial and Afrocentric paradigm.

DISCUSSION

The school established by the JRDC can be seen as evidence of a site where theories of Afrocentricity, emancipatory pedagogy, and spiritual consciousness converged to educate Rastafarian and Ethiopian children. The interest in capturing these themes was to learn lessons from JRDC on how to plan for and educate children of African descent in a manner that transforms their consciousness and identity from marginalized to self-determined.

The Rastafarian values inherent in the daily lives and culture of the members centered on consciousness and spirituality. There was significance and worth in exploring how these values may influence the pedagogical practices of the school. As adherents to an Afrocentric culture, the Rastafarians consider their African roots an important component of their purpose. Theorists (Asante, 1991; Hilliard, 1997) agreed that an Afrocentric perspective instituted in planning practices

and curriculum could orient children of African descent to a different viewpoint, identity, or “sense of belonging and a purpose in life” (Watkins, 2008, p. 1004). An Afrocentric perspective combined with the Freirean concept of emancipatory pedagogy provided a pertinent framework to extract themes through the experiences of the community surrounding the JRDC.

The discussion of findings in this study is organized around the unexpected preponderance of a post-colonial Western pedagogy. It should first be noted that the Rastafari influence that launched the development of the school had diminished overtime due to changes in the leadership. Although many Rastafari school board members, teachers, and students had left the school, the school board and leadership remained predominantly Rastafari. The reduced influence resulted in the overriding of the efforts of the leadership to foster child-centered and democratic practices with post-colonial and unilinear teaching methods. The Ethiopian teachers represented most of the school staff and their instructional style predominated. For the leadership to train the teachers in a child-centered pedagogical style would require more resources, time, and space. According to Oplatka (2004), teacher training in schools in developing countries is not generally prioritized in face of so many dire needs such as lack of resources, facility inadequacies, as well as lack of cooperation and increased demands from educational authorities. Hence, teacher training became less of a priority at the JRDC. The school leaders wished to train the teachers and were appreciative of the training the author provided, yet a three-day training was not enough to build the capacity of teachers in the more progressive practices.

Although the school leaders somewhat succeeded in providing instruction containing pre-colonial elements the spiritual values of their faith proffered, many of those values were overshadowed by the desire to help the students succeed in a global society driven by Western ideals. According to Watson (1994), the predominance of a “formal, linear school system” imposed upon developing countries by the West, has resulted in a “colonial educational transfer” (p. 86). Hence, the JRDC School leaders focused highly on the elements of instruction, which were not only Western in origin but also mandated by the Ethiopian educational authorities, resulting in multi-layered pedagogical styles and goals.

Hilliard (1997) argued that the traditional Western practices, more dominant in the classrooms of schools in developing regions, worked against humanity and traditional African principles that highlight the spiritual nature of being (Habte, n.d.; Hilliard, 1997). The JRDC School leaders struggled to balance the desire to remain an anti-systemic and spiritual movement yet provide students with the tools necessary for survival in this Western-dominated global system.

Rastafarian values integrate the desire for equity in face of colonial and racist hegemony and they do so within a spiritual framework. Dantley (2005) eloquently explained the way in which spirituality invokes faith in an oppressed population. This faith is what has historically offered a vision of a better situation in the face of oppression. According to Dantley (2005), “[s]uch a spiritual footing has grounded many African-American projects of resistance . . .” (p. 656). When school leaders plan for curriculum, doing so from an Afrocentric perspective holds the potential to draw on spirituality and focus on student achievement within the sphere of justice and equity in society; precisely what school communities such as JRDC or other schools with high poverty, high African-American populations require.

IMPLICATIONS

The values promoted by the conceptual framework of this study prioritized anti-colonial ideas. Freire, Asante, and West offered an alternative perspective and motivation for success for marginalized students. This alternative rests on the foundation of transforming oneself and going

against the grain of mainstream and Western philosophies of being, teaching, and learning. Similarly, resistance-oriented groups such as the Rastafarians embrace an alternative way of being that negates White supremacist ideologies.

Although the banking method that Freire (1970) so clearly criticized was apparent in the classrooms of the JRDC School, there nevertheless was evidence of emancipatory philosophy within the youth of the community in Shashamane. This philosophy stretched beyond the confines of the school building. Those in the community exposed to the Rastafarian values and lifestyle were affected and at times transformed. These values encompassed a sense of unity, spirituality, and compassion towards others. In face of marginalization, racism, and an economic dependency, the Ethiopian youth in the JRDC community internalized some sense of empowerment by learning these values. Evidence of the Rastafarian message of African pride and the spiritual significance of Ethiopia in aiding the transformation of the youth in Shashamane was clear.

As educational leaders across the globe continue to plan for teaching and learning in the 21st Century, the need for a curriculum that addresses the legacies of colonialism, slavery, and racism is apparent. The values evident in the JRDC School and community provide principles that when integrated within curriculum can support a process of emancipation for students of African descent. Embedded in this curriculum would be the goal of decolonizing the colonized mind and transforming the identity of marginalized youth to an empowered one filled with agency.

Implications from this study point to planning for and creating a curriculum framed within an Afrocentric ideology, and more specifically the African principle of spirituality and self-determination, core elements of the Rastafarian philosophy. Planning by school leaders to embed these principles in curriculum can demonstrate the ability to transform the identity of a learner. Teaching and learning within an emancipating framework can have significant effects on escaping the cycle of dependence present in developing countries, especially those in the sub-Saharan region of Africa. In fact, an Afrocentric anti-colonial curriculum holds emancipatory promise for youth of the African Diaspora.

LESSONS LEARNED FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNERS

Educational planners in developing countries will undoubtedly encounter tensions between the neo-colonial standards imposed on their school by educational authorities, who continue to follow a Western model of schooling, and their own local cultural values and visions.

In planning curriculum that can support the identity development and transformation of their learners, school leaders can align their planning with resistance-oriented strategies. Borrowing from the Rastafari philosophy, these strategies would incorporate ways to instill critical thinking to build self-determination, a spiritual collective consciousness, and transformatory identity development.

A spiritual collective consciousness invokes school leaders to recognize the reciprocity between schools and their surrounding community. The identity of the leaders is reflected in the identity of school stakeholders, and the identity of the school folk is reflected in the school leadership (Norris, 2022). When planning for ways to meet goals, school leaders can glean from the local community the best ways to instill the values necessary for sustained self-determination and collective growth. This is particularly important in rural areas of a developing country that face many barriers in education (Aref, 2011; Oplatka, 2004). As the school leaders at the JRDC School were cognizant of, planning for curriculum and pedagogical practices must meet the needs of all the people in the community. When a school is representative of the local community's multilayered and diverse backgrounds, the priorities, needs, and desires of the people living there inform planning and aiming for the lived vision of the leaders. The population in and around JRDC was a combination

of various religions, nationalities, languages, and ethnicities. The school leaders understood that a collective consciousness based on Rastafari values was possible if they maintained a focus on their vision and goals specific to their context, and at the same time respected the range of perspectives and backgrounds in their community.

Freire (1970) theorized that leaders are responsible for the “coordination, and at times, direction” of action and planning (p. 126). He warned that within the planning process, leaders must not deny praxis to their students, teachers, and mentees. When leaders impose their vision on their stakeholders, they go against or “falsify” their own vision (p. 126). Freire affirmed that leaders and followers together and “in communion liberate each other” (p. 133). This is particularly true of people of the Rastafari faith, for whom unity and a collective consciousness are highly valued.

The characteristics of successful praxis (i.e., dialogical action) include cooperation, unity, organization with the community, and cultural synthesis that centers and enriches diverse views. Organizing with the people in the community is the sharing of planned achievement and a true form of praxis is one in which the planning process includes the needs, participation, and cooperation of the people impacted most in the community. This type of participation supports the vision of creating greater self-determination and independence within a space that otherwise marginalizes the participants and renders them dependent.

CONCLUSION

According to the Rastafarian school leaders, the youth in Shashamane were affected by the global marginalization of the African identity and the leaders strove to combat this marginalization. Leaders like Sister Melody and teachers like Brother Matthew were focused on helping the students break out of the colonial mindset and liberate themselves. What the author witnessed through her interviews and observations was the Rastafarian presence facilitating a transformation of the reality in many of the community members, mainly through dialogue emphasizing pride, self-determination, and collective progress.

Rastafarian school leaders are well equipped to support a transformatory curriculum because they are already part of a movement aware that they and their students are “situated in a broader social and political context” and in this way conscious of colonial and racist power structures and policies that they are up against (Dantley, 2005, p. 659). The leaders imparted a pedagogical style that was steeped in spirituality yet aimed to prepare the students for the global market. Despite the lack of resources, these leaders were effective in spreading an anti-colonial mindset that reached beyond the confines of the school and impacted many in the community. These elements can empower school leaders of marginalized communities to create and plan for curriculum frameworks that support an emancipatory identity development process for their students.

Another significant finding was the paradoxical application of Western pedagogy in a school run by Rastafarians. A post-colonial model of teaching contradicted attempts at a more child-centered and progressive Western model of education. Nonetheless, the Rastafarian leaders desire this latter Western model. This is surprising considering the anti-Western, anti-systemic, and highly spiritual sentiments of the Rastafarian movement. This leaves the author to ask if there is a way to reconcile progress, in the Western and scientific way with the concept of spirituality. To respond, she will conclude with a quote from Haile Selassie I:

Time was when strength and endurance, courage and faith, were sufficient to make leadership equal to the task. But times have changed and these spiritual qualities are no longer enough. Today, knowledge and training, as provided largely in the universities of the world, have become essential . . . nor can we ignore the importance of the spiritual in this

academic life. Learning and technical training must be nurtured by faith in God, reverence for the human soul, and respect for the reasoning mind. There is no safer anchorage for our learning, our lives, and our public actions than that provided by Divine teachings coupled with the best in human understanding. (His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, 1961)

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