The African Ant Leadership Paradigm in an Inclusive Regional Quality Framework for Cross-Border Higher Education in the SADC Region

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ABSTRACT

The noble notion of the regional collective rationalisation of accreditation, quality assurance (QA) and audits within Southern Africa borders is affirmed by the desire to encourage adherence to quality assurance standards or protocols, that should result in believability and authenticity of university qualifications. The study employed a qualitative research approach, underpinned by an African ant leadership philosophical overview to analyse experiences and views of 12 university professoriates' readiness to facilitative the smooth implementation of Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework within Southern African Development Community region. I used Structured Online Mediated or Facilitated Conversations as a method and a computer as a tool to collect data. Thematic analysis was preferred to analyse data. Findings indicate that Southern African Development Community member university professoriates are hamstrung by archaic colonial self-caging and partitioning quality assurance audit modalities that promote so-called "institutional independence" over the prioritisation of regional "collective independence". I propose that Southern African Development Community universities' academic bodies should prioritise the establishment of an independent inclusive Communalities of Regional Quality Framework body that will craft a quality assurance audits design model to be used by higher education institutions to benchmark educational programmes. I further posit that the persistent employment of self-caging, colonially inherited quality assurance frameworks that continue to compartmentalise Southern African Development Community higher education institutions within the confines of colonially drawn borders denies all in sundry equal education opportunities and promotes regional exclusion.

Keywords: Quality assurance audits, African ant leadership approach, communalities of ethical peer review, de-borderisation of quality assurance protocols

INTRODUCTION

Nearly every nation has recognised the importance of quality higher education to its economic prosperity as well as the economic well-being of its citizenry (Lane, 2012). There were approximately 178 million students enrolled in tertiary education in 2010. Some have estimated that this number will increase to 262 million by 2025 (Goddard, 2015). Students also study in other countries, with nearly 4.5 million studying outside of their home country in 2012 (OECD, 2016). Higher education institutions (HEIs) have emerged as multi-national organisations with branches in multiple countries (Lane & Kinser, 2011). By the same token, the high level of outbound mobility takes place in a context of explosive growth in tertiary enrolments across the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Currently, over 4.8 million students are enrolled in higher education institutions (HEIs) in sub-Saharan Africa (Irfan and Magolese-Malin (2011). The critical aim of

this narrative article therefore is to analyse the potentialities for the establishment of a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) for higher education in the SADC region with reference to qualifications benchmarking, peer review mechanisms and qualitative improvements while at the same time creating opportunities for the de-borderisation of higher education for students and regional inclusion. This was done by analysing the experiences and views of SADC member university professoriates obtained by means of structured mediated online conversations.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK PROTOCOL BACKGROUND

Article 4 (c) on cooperation in policy for education and training (CPET) from SADC's protocol of education (1997) and training document stipulates thus, "Rationalising admission requirements to education and training institutions and accreditation of qualification". The task of developing and recommending policy guidelines, instruments, structures and procedures that would facilitate equating, harmonising and eventual standardisation of accreditation and certification of qualifications in SADC was designated to the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA).

Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) was established in 2011 by the Ministers of Education in the SADC region. The purpose of the SADCQF was to enable easier movement of learners, professionals, and ordinary workers across the SADC region and internationally. The SADCQF is a reference framework consisting of ten Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) Levels based on learning outcomes which will provide a regional benchmark for qualifications and quality assurance (QA) mechanisms in SADC. However, the SADCQF has never been formally launched despite being approved in 2011 to date.

The study explored experiences and views of universities of Africa professoriates of their readiness in playing facilitative role in the smooth implementation of SADCQF in the SADC region.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

In 2000 a SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) was established, comprising nominated qualifications and quality assurance experts from Member States and with support from the SADC Secretariat. The purpose of the TCCA is, "to develop and recommend policy guidelines, instruments, structures and procedures that would facilitate equating, harmonising and eventual standardisation of accreditation and certification of qualifications in SADC".

The SADCQF is a regional mechanism whose purpose is for comparing and recognising of full qualifications, credit transfer, creation of regional standards and facilitation of quality assurance (QA). It consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures and standardised terminology intended to ensure effective comparability of qualifications and credits across SADC, facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications among Member States (MS), harmonise qualifications, and create acceptable regional standards.

The main purpose of the SADCQF then includes:

- Providing a mechanism for comparability and recognition of qualifications in SADC,
- Facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications in all Member States,

- Harmonising qualifications wherever possible,
- Promoting the transfer of credits within and among Member States and even beyond, and
- Creating SADC regional standards where appropriate.

Southern Africa Development Community Education and training protocol

A protocol is a legally binding document committing member states to the objectives and specific procedures stated within it. For a protocol to enter into force, two-thirds of the member states need to ratify or sign the agreement, giving formal consent and making the document officially valid. Any member state that did not become party to a protocol initially can accede to it at a later stage.

The Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) is a reference framework consisting of ten Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) levels based on learning outcomes which will provide a regional benchmark for qualifications and quality assurance (QA) mechanisms in SADC. At a meeting of the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation TCCA held from 20 to 23 September 2016, the SADCQF was revived and positioned for implementation. A clear two-year milestone plan was developed, and an implementation model comprising three areas, namely (1) development and alignment, (2) quality assurance and (3) verification was adopted.

All SADC member states have articulated their education policies, but only a few have done so by directly taking into consideration the SADC Protocol on Education and Training and the African Union Second Decade of Education. Mozambique is one of the exceptions, with laws aimed specifically at incorporating the protocol into the education legal system (SANF 10 No 17). The slow pace experienced by implementation agency could be alluded to the fact that individual countries find it difficult to shift from their individual historical colonial education legacy systems that prevailed in each country before in independence.

History of colonial government, missionaries, and political control in education

The current formal university structure in South Africa began with the establishment of the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1873. Receiving its Royal Charter in 1877, it was modelled on the University of London. Prior to the founding of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, there was no higher education in southern Africa, and even proper basic schooling was generally lacking. If they could afford it, colonial settlers would send their children to study abroad. Higher education was not a priority in the republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State or even in the colony of Natal, but the educated community in the Cape perceived the lack, particularly after that colony had received a measure of independence from Britain with responsible government in 1872. Neither of the universities in London or Cape Town had campuses or resident students. Instead, they were examining bodies that guaranteed quality by setting examinations and conferring degrees on students who passed the required examination no matter where they had acquired the appropriate knowledge. The University of London was founded to oversee the examination process as a new and neutral body (Phillips, 1993)

Soon after the end of World War 1 more higher education institutions were established in Africa, including Makerere University in Uganda (1922), Egerton University in Kenya (1939), the University of Ghana (1948), the University of Ibadan in Nigeria (1948), Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia (1950) and the University of

Zimbabwe (1952) (Damtew, 2003). The establishment of higher education institutions in Africa, however, was concentrated mainly in the Northern African countries and South Africa. By the end of the 1960s, for example, Sub-Saharan Africa had only 6 universities for a population of 230 million and some countries, including Cape Verde, Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Seychelles, and Sao Tome and Principe, had no universities at all (Teferra & Altbach, 2004). In all the universities listed above, quality assurance audits were conducted by host colonial universities, who had an influence on their establishment and operations. Even though these universities were granted autonomy soon after independence, quality assurance standards remained a replica of those of the universities on which they were modelled, usually the universities of London, Cambridge, and Oxford.

However, SADC has taken a huge step towards the harmonisation of its education system by approving the development of a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF). The RQF (2011), which was initiated a few years ago, seeks among other things to enable SADC member states to compare and recognise qualifications obtained in the region.

In the long run, the establishment of a standardised educational system should promote deeper regional integration, as it has the potential to help facilitate the movement of students and professionals in southern Africa.

However, there is divergence rather than unity in the operation of the regional grouping, with each SADC member state tending to promote its own economic and political interests, contrary to the vision encapsulated in the protocol, in which each member state has committed itself to (Jafta and Samuels, 2017), "operate, coordinate, harmonise and integrate policies and strategies in one or more sectors". The

ratification of the protocol by 9 out of 20 SADC member states has further confirmed that regional integration is in jeopardy, since not all member states have shown the same degree of commitment to regional integration, to be achieved by:

- Spearheading the development and harmonisation of education policies and programmes on the continent towards achievement of the SADC vision of prosperity, peace and integration;
- Contributing to the development of revitalised, quality, relevant, harmonised education systems through intra-African networking;
- Facilitating the contribution of education and research to the African renaissance and the empowerment of the people of Africa to generate Africa-led solutions.

African Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF), whose goal it is to catalyse improvement in quality in higher education in Africa. It aims to bring Africa under one umbrella in quality assurance in higher education by setting minimum standards. This, however, does not mean that it is a single, one-size-fits-all quality assurance currency for Africa. Despite the linguistic diversity that groups African countries into Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone and Arabophone regions, linguistic barriers in the QA process need to be dismantled. The QA process should be aligned with the goal of sustaining Africa's economic growth through the production of quality graduates.

In 2008, the African Union Commission proposed the creation of the Pan African University (PAU), which would require the promotion, networking and development of programmes and research centres within selected existing high-quality universities in the five geographic sub-regions, namely: Northern, Western, Eastern, Central Northern and Southern Africa. Each sub-region would

host a thematic component of the PAU, which would be committed to selecting and networking with centres of quality developing similar programmes, and to serving as a coordinating hub for those institutions. Thus, Algeria in the Northern region would host Water, Energy and Climate Change; Nigeria in the Western region would host Life and Earth Sciences; Kenya in the Eastern region would host Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation; Cameroon in the Central Northern region would host Humanities, Social Sciences and Good Governance; and South Africa in the Southern region would host Space Sciences.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

A separate initiative has been taken jointly by the OECD and UNESCO to develop guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education. The OECD–UNESCO guidelines were finalised in 2019, and the drafting process identified the contrast between the need to regulate the internationalisation of higher education and the fact that existing national quality assurance capacity often focuses exclusively on domestic delivery by domestic institutions. Therefore, the current quality assurance systems face the challenge of developing appropriate methodologies and mechanisms to cover foreign providers and programmes in addition to national providers and programmes to maximise the benefits and limit the potential disadvantages of the internationalisation of higher education.

This interest has been directed towards the development of three initiatives, namely: The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Good Practice Guidelines; the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross Border Higher Education; and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, which were developed as part of the Bologna Process.

Educational accountability has traditionally been premised on the sovereignty of nations and immobility of institutions. While students, scholars, and knowledge have long been mobile, the institutions themselves and the educational opportunities they provide have not. In fact, where an institution is located, either in a national or sub-national context, has long influenced its evolution, with governmental preferences relating to public subsidy, research support, cost to students, hiring practices, and even the level of academic freedom guiding institutional development. Alongside these governmental preferences there have developed external quality assurance and accountability mechanisms intended to ensure that the institution is operating in the public interest (or at least the students' interest), and these interests are typically defined by the government. Member states agree that universities must ensure that the content, quality and relevance of their undergraduate degrees is acceptable to graduate schools and employers in the region for further study and for employment.

Yet, higher education institutions are increasingly multi-national in scope. Not only do they cross borders to deliver educational programmes to local students, but also have established joint and dual degree programmes, international research partnerships, and extensive global student recruiting networks. These developments pose new challenges in terms of accountability and quality assurance efforts, as they raise issues of sovereignty, legal jurisdiction, and geo-political dynamics that cannot necessarily be attended to by means of traditional accountability frameworks.

There is no data on the totality of the Cross-Border Higher Education (CBHE) activity globally; however, there are 33 countries exporting 247 international branch campuses to 76 countries (Cross-Border Education Research Team (2017)). Twenty-two international branch campuses (IBCs) are known to be in development, and at least 42 have been closed – demonstrating a great deal of instability in the global market. The university of South Africa has successfully opened some campuses outside South African borders. The other largest exporters of IBCS are developed countries, and most are in the Western world (i.e., the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and Germany). The largest importers are largely developing nations in the Middle East and Asia (e.g., China, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Malaysia, and Qatar).

According to Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) in South Africa, quality management entails several elements of institutional planning and action to deal with issues of quality. These include institutional arrangements for:

- Quality assurance – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to satisfy itself that its quality requirements and standards are being met;

- Quality support – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to support and sustain existing levels of quality;

- Quality development and enhancement – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to develop and enhance quality; and

- Quality monitoring – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to monitor, evaluate and act on quality issues.

The disharmony that exists in national policy differentiations on quality assurance protocols and audits in education ecosystem in the SADC region require a collective approach in their design and implementation. A regional collective policy design contributes to and support the harmonisation of higher education programmes and the creation of a revitalised, distinctive, attractive, and globally competitive African higher education space, through enhanced intra-African collaboration and development of a harmonised quality assurance and accreditation system at institutional level, national, regional and SADC level. The collective regional approach requires arguably, the employment of an African leadership theory or paradigm.

AFRICAN ANT LEADERSHIP PARADIGM IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS UNDERPINNING THE STUDY

Theory of paradigms is introduced, and the radical verificationist and radical emergence paradigms are considered as extensions of the schema, based on ontological and epistemological characteristics grounded in relatively more recent societal and scientific changes and the emergent properties of these changes (Burrell and Morgan (1979). The ant leadership paradigm ontology is a set of leadership styles and characteristics displayed by ants that can be adopted by humans to enable organisations or entities such as Southern African Development Community (SADC) to excel in their collective operational foci and practices of interests. This paradigm focuses on teamwork (the collective) and what a small creature or a small organisation can achieve by harnessing the leadership style and characteristics of ants. The aim of this paradigm is to explore the true nature of ants so that political leaders and education leaders can benefit from their admirable characteristics.

Nyoni (2013): African ant leadership model: This model allows for authentic stakeholder consultative processes, transparency, and division of labour, and demands total commitment to ethical values and organic rule of law. SADC Region Education Quality Assurance policies can be ratified and/or modified to dovetail towards achieving one regional quality assurance standards.

African ant leadership (AAL) theory seeks to explain how and why certain people become leaders. Such a theory often focuses on the characteristics of leaders, but some attempt to identify the behaviours that people can adopt to improve their own leadership abilities in different situations. Research has established that leadership is practised universally among all people, regardless of culture. Bass (1995) notes that the earliest literature on leadership was concerned almost entirely with theoretical issues. Theorists sought to identify different types of leadership and to relate them to the functional demands of society. In addition, they sought to account for the emergence of leadership by examining either the qualities of the leader or the elements of the situation. The functionality of the concept "traditional" is not intended to invoke a philosophical binary with "modern" or "modernism," but rather to denote indigenous forms of African cultural group identity formation and nation-state governance that predate substantial European colonial influence, which is to say, pre- late 18th and early 20th century. Richards and Engle (1986: 206) define leadership as, "the process about articulating visions, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished". SADC Leadership seeks to develop and share their vision(s) with others in the region. For the shared vision to be pursued with focus, a regional value system based on a collective participatory leadership approach is necessary. SADC region needs to wean itself of global north (Western countries) influences that impact post political, educational, and administrative models that have no relevance with decolonial projects.

AFRICAN POLITY IN DECOLONISED EDUCATION IN THE SADC REGION

European colonial officials established secular schools for Africans in the early 20th century. Whereas French educators promoted educational "assimilation," British territories introduced the "adapted education" system for Africans in the 1920s, a policy modelled after the American segregated school system. Africans made demands for more schools and a more literary curriculum in the 1930s and 1940s and, in some cases, even established their own schools. This period also saw the development of higher education for Africans. During the

nationalist era, the educated elite were at the forefront of demands for independence, and many of the leaders of new nations in the 1960s were Western-educated elites.

In his review of post-colonial African leaders, (Mazrui, 1986) (15) asserts that their leadership behaviours were characterised by monarchical tendencies, describing these tendencies as a combination of elements of political style including the quest for aristocratic effect, personalisation of authority, sacred authority and the quest for a royal historical identity. The tendencies illustrate the extent to which leadership paradoxes and contradictions have existed from the post-colonial era through to present-day African democratic states. Mazrui, (1986) believes that with few exceptions, the rest of Nkrumah's generation of leaders tended to demonstrate monarchical tendencies, manifesting these over the years.

Salim (2015) contend that pan-Africanists must accelerate the pace of integration as well as strengthen a Pan-African identity among, "our people across borders". He goes to say, "We continue to linger in an era of prejudices and stereotypes, keeping our people further apart instead of moving closer together through our shared history and shared aspirations for our individual and collective prosperous future" in line with African ant leadership model (AALM) (Salim, 2015).

REJIG AND HARMONISE AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Education is seen as a catalyst for equity, meritocracy, employability, economic performance, happiness and sustainable development. Harmonisation fosters trust. It makes possible the consolidation of African systems of education and assures the quality of educational provision against locally, regionally and eventually internationally agreed benchmarks of excellence, ultimately leading to regional integration.

In a harmonised environment, there is transparency in terms of curriculum development, and a synchronised understanding of definitions relating to HE, the learning load, the duration of courses, credit accumulation and recognition of experiential learning. There is also improved visibility concerning how individuals progress along and across educational systems. Regionally approved credible QA processes are critical in the authentication and believability of qualifications awarded thereof.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An initial desktop research exercise was undertaken to identify QA practices in each SADC member state, followed by more in-depth research conducted via online mediated conversations to understand external and internal QA systems in higher education, focused on QA-related needs, demands and priorities in each member state. I drew on Braun and Clarke's (2006) and Creswell's (2014) thematic analysis (TA) framework and applied it in a systematic manner to describe and explain the process of analysis within the context of QA research. There are many other different ways to approach TA (cf. Alhojailan, 2012; Boyatzis,1998; Javadi & Zarea, 2016); indeed, one of the advantages of TA is that it is flexible from a theoretical point of view. This means that it can be used within different frameworks, to answer widely differing types of research question. It suits questions related to people's experiences, and those relating to people's views and perceptions.

Structured Online Mediated or Facilitated Conversations (SOMEC)

SOMEC are a useful way for people to work through their issues and arrive at solutions that are mutually satisfying to everyone. A mediator, or some other neutral party, facilitates or helps to structure the conversation, thereby helping people to move from conflict to agreement. It is easily manageable with between five

and twelve participants. A topic or a question is introduced by the mediator, and participants are free to respond. By focusing on discourse and conversation analysis of the views shared online by university lecturers, it was possible to show that practising professoriates steadfastly protect individual institutional QA audits, and are not willing to shift to accommodate regional collectivism. Profoundly ingrained colonial ways of thinking continue to dominate individual institutional QA systems and sub-systems. Responses were grouped according to themes identified during analysis of the data. Mediated interactions such as SOMEC should not be analysed as though they were simply a form of talk-in-interaction, but instead key views that locate critical thought should be identified.

Conducting the Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a six-phase guide which is a very useful framework for conducting this kind of analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1: Six-phase framework for conducting thematic analysis

Step 1: Become familiar with the data	Step 4: Review themes
Step 2: Generate initial codes	Step 5: Define themes
Step 3: Search for themes	Step 6: Write up

Braun and Clarke (2006): sequential six-phase framework for conducting thematic analysis.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Quality Assurance Parity in the SADC Region

SADC member states realise the urgent need for the development and promotion of QA in higher education in the African continent through sharing information, experience, good practice and innovations with members and other stakeholders by means of platforms such as conferences, workshops, seminars, publications, projects and websites. SADC chapter 3 of 1997 (consisting of 7 articles) acknowledges, among other objectives, that while each member state has its own policies for education and training, and while cooperation and mutual assistance in education is desirable, this can be facilitated more effectively through the development of harmonised and eventually standardised policies regarding education and training.

The Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) (2011) that was initiated a few years ago seeks among other things to enable SADC member states to compare and recognise qualifications obtained in the region. However, professoriates noted that several targets that the SADC regional bloc intended to attain over a period have not been achieved. This is confirmed by Hancock (2010), who argues that the SADC has forged ahead with setting targets "but has barely made a dent into realising those goals," with some targets having been missed. Professoriates agreed that pathways for RQF design were clear, but that there was a lack of commitment to financing processes, as there were marked differences in levels of economic development of the various member states. As things stand, each university relies on its own national quality assurance (NQA) and accreditation agency (AA). SADC member states insist on parity instead of putting their shoulder to the wheel in arguing for the establishment of a SADCQF that harmonises RQF levels based on learning outcomes which will provide a regional benchmark for qualifications and QA mechanisms in the region.

Table 2: National quality assurance and accreditation agencies in Africa

Country	Agency	Date established
Cameroon	National Commission on Private Higher Education (NCPHE)	1991
Ethiopia	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance Agency (HERQA)	2003
Ghana	National Accreditation Board (NAB)	1993
Kenya	Commission for Higher Education (CHE)	1985
Mauritius	Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)	1997
Mozambique	National Commission of Accreditation and Evaluation of Higher Education (CNAQ)	2003
Nigeria	National Universities Commission (NUC)	1990–91
South Africa	Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE)	2001
Sudan	Evaluation and Accreditation Corporation (EVAC)	2003
Tanzania	Higher Education Accreditation Council (HEAC)	1995
Uganda	National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)	2005

Table 3: Universities in the SADC Region as of 2019

Member state	Number of universities
Angola	7
Botswana	1 (a new science and technology university is being established)
Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	38
Lesotho	1
Madagascar	8
Malawi	5
Mauritius	2 state universities, and numerous branches of foreign universities from Australia, India and the UK
Mozambique	3
Namibia	2
South Africa	23
Swaziland	1
United Republic of Tanzania	27
Zambia	3
Zimbabwe	12
Total	132

During the mediated conversation exchanges, the professoriates continued to demonstrate a silo mentality in defence of their individual institutional QA processes instead of advancing regional efforts in line with SADC chapter 3 of 1997. Both Tables 2 and 3 clearly show how each country prioritises the establishment of universities and national quality assurance and accreditation agencies but devotes little effort to country-to-country or regional integration.

Decolonial Quality Assurance Audits in the SADC Region

Regrettably, the views of those who peddle neoliberalism are not capable of unifying members in developing a logic that counterplots colonial development projects. "Counterplots" derive from, and are rooted in, indigenous colonial conditions that inform the identity and politics of the colonised mind. A decolonial alternative denaturalises assumptions about development being attained by adopting a one-size-fits-all theory of development by privileging human dignity – even though this is constantly denied by the rhetoric of (Western) modernity, in which human dignity takes second place to progress. The critical thought of the professoriates of SADC regional universities relating to QA remains captured within the academic frames of perceived acceptable Western approved assessment and QA standards. QA standards undoubtedly remain transfixed and a microcosm of quality Western education.

The SADCQF embodies the commitment to the development and implementation of a quality assurance system which is suited to the regional needs and realities of SADC higher education and which is premised on the need for harmonisation, fairness and social justice. Professoriates strongly emphasise an institutional integrated framework for QA. One could argue that post-independence, African states simply assume the reins of power and continue along the path laid down by colonial rulers, remaining captured within technocratic and political dispensations and unable to dismantle systems that kept indigenous people separate and borderised. There is a need to adopt a "decolonial turn" in the way in which curricular and QA processes are carried out at university level. The decolonial turn, according to Grosfoguel (2007:211), is a project that aims to, "epistemologically transcend, decolonize the Western canon and epistemology." Professoriates need to re-think how to rid themselves of "colonially embedded

critical thought capture" and embrace a communitarian, collective approach to QA and curriculum designs. A concerted disruptive decolonial turn endeavours, through the professoriates and other lecturers, to decolonise, de-borderise, and communalitarise QA and curriculum designs to unify organically linked ethnically diverse groups of people.

Appropriateness of the African Ant Leadership Model

The African ant leadership model helps to maintain some consistency in a complex multidisciplinary field and reinforces a particular way of thinking about culture that seems particularly ill-suited to understanding multicultural societies such as those found across Africa (Jackson, 2004) and, increasingly, elsewhere. Individualistic nations such as the UK and France demonstrate collectivism under certain circumstances, whilst collectivist cultures, such as Japan, demonstrate individualism under others. If, indeed, dimensions such as those identified by Hofstede, (1980/2003) do exist, then perhaps they should be considered less like a unitary scale and more like the Chinese principle of dualism typified by yin and yang (Lowe, 2001; Fang, 1998). Thus, just as the Chinese believe that yin and yang exist in everything, so to, must the seed of collectivism reside within individualism, and vice versa. Such an approach encourages a shift from simplistic objectivist representations of culture to a more complex social constructivist appreciation of the myriad possibilities and perceived realities.

The African ant leadership model emphasises intra-collectivism and synergies of mutual interaction that assist in achieving collective objectives and seem to avoid silo mentalities. Despite the call by former South African president, Thabo Mbeki (1996), for Africans to embrace renaissance projects, colonially inspired psychological capture overtures restrict the

critical thought of university professoriates, who therefore continue mimicking Western-inspired values. Cutting the metaphorical umbilical cord that has tied Africa to its colonisers since they arrived on the continent is by no means an easy feat: the research methodologies and teaching approaches of African university lecturers remain entrenched within Eurocentric theories and epistemologies.

Colonial legacies are still to be encountered in the education systems of administration and planning. The SADC region has not transformed itself over the years to ensure sustainable de-borderised social inclusion and development. It is more of a settler episteme meant to last forever, which is a situation that should not be allowed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

African scholars must outgrow colonially embedded psychological barriers that continue to influence the way in which professoriates teach, assess and quality assure at universities. Exiting the black box will allow them to offer advice to SADC political elites about how to decolonise QA audits in the SADC region for the benefit of students who want to obtain skills and competences from the universities of their choice.

African scholars must continue critiquing those entities who seek to divide and polarise African nation states by deconstructing the deeply entrenched edifice of Eurocentrism embedded in the disciplines created in the 19th and early 20th centuries when the Western world was hegemonic politically, economically, and intellectually. African scholars must continue to work with African political elite in conscientizing them to work towards harmonising quality assurance system in the region for the good of the African people irrespective of border barriers.

CONCLUSION

Professoriates are constrained by psychological barriers set up during the colonial education era. Africanisation was popular among African nationalists in the sense of retaining ownership and reclaiming colonial institutions in the 1960s and 1970s (Ki-Zerbo, 1973). The political commitment to localising not only universities but also other public institutions was high. At the same time, decolonisation was not immune to criticism as an Afrocentric project with the potential to end Africa's isolation from the rest of the world (Bankole, 2006). Fanon (1952) speaks of the fatal internalisation of colonialism by the colonised, how an inferiority complex is inculcated, and how, through the mechanism of racism, black people end up emulating their oppressors (Fanon, 1952). Findings indicate that colonially psychologically captured professoriates from different universities located within SADC region operate within the educational and QA framework bequeathed by former colonial technocrats and administrators. Divergent views emanating from colonised minds on the inclusive communality of a Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) with reference to qualifications benchmarking, peer review mechanisms and qualitative improvements will hamper all efforts to de-borderise QA harmonisation projects. To successfully dismantle colonially embedded political and educational policy ecosystem, SADC must use the tried and tested African ant leadership theory to decolonise political, educational and administrative paradigms that continue impair university education QA reform. The biggest challenge lies in decolonising the captured mind before seriously engaging in regional QA reforms.

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