

Editorial Comment: Education, health, and spiritual wellbeing

Eno Akpabio

University of Namibia

Managing the corporate world and the individual in every sphere of life remains a work in progress. Even when the tried and tested is adopted, new issues seem to crop up requiring a rethinking and adaptation to present challenges. This issue of the *Journal for Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences* tackles this from a multifaceted angle – education, health, and spiritual wellbeing.

The received wisdom that mother-tongue education is best at the early childhood and primary/elementary stages (Kamwangamalu, 2005) faces a conundrum in the Zimbabwe environment. Eventhough and Bowa’s article titled *A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Zimbabwean Education Amendment Act, 2019* question the implementation of mother tongue education in the country pointing to the fact that the nod to the officially recognized languages do not go far enough as English is still the language of instruction, in most instances, and examination except when the examination involves a local language. So how do learners reap all the touted benefits of being taught in their mother-tongues? The authors call for a revamping of the policy environment by putting these in place: access, curriculum, community, methods and materials, evaluation and personnel policies.

This is to avoid what is taking place in the South African context where the language of the colonizers - English and Afrikaans – “have continued to be used in pretended implementation of indigenous official African languages in the

curricula of education” (Ramoupi, 2014, p. 53). Which brings us to a focus on the community as well as personnel policies that form the fulcrum of Lwendo and Isaac’s paper titled *An assessment of the delegated education and training function of the Kunene Regional Council*. The idea of delegating the education function to regional councils to make pedagogy relevant to the communities being served is all well on paper but the sticking point is the implementation. Hence they call on all stakeholders to make the operational manual relevant as well as ensure proper coordination and cooperation between the Regional Council, the Education Directorate within the Regional Council, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development.

Prevention is clearly better than cure but this does not seem to be the case with women attending the postnatal clinic at Windhoek Central Hospital as they were either unaware of cervical cancer screening or are not interested in its uptake. This is despite the fact that this form of cancer is one of the most debilitating diseases affecting women. This is the central thesis of Smith, Kimera and Lukolo’s *Factors Affecting Cervical Cancer Screening Amongst Women Attending Postnatal Clinic at Windhoek Central Hospital, Namibia*. They recommend that such fears and misconception such as cancer being a punishment from God be addressed as well as call for intensification of awareness efforts.

Even when one is diagnosed with cancer, spiritual wellbeing (happiness and satisfaction with life) does trump the pains (Riklikienė et al., 2020) but lack of knowledge according to the Good Book is still a recipe for disaster (Hos. 4:6). This lack of knowledge is also evident in the poor deployment and use of partographs which can assist in stemming the tide of maternal and neonatal deaths based on the study by Nghifikwa and Lukolo titled *Retrospective Study of Quality Care During Labour in Maternity Wards in Khomas Region, Namibia*.

This spiritual dimension which can assist to cope with the pain of cancer as well as life in general is the focus of Tjibeba's article titled *Doing Theology in my context: Sharing my Theological Method* that reflects on his pedagogy and ministry. The "interconnectedness of the body-mind-spirit [that] leads toward a state of mature spirituality" (Riklikienė et al., 2020, p. 2883)) is clear from the article as Tjibeba draws from his African and Namibian roots to make the Christian faith relevant and responsive to the Namibian context. This as well as living and breathing the gospel should make for the salvation of a world that is clearly in need of the saviour (Joh. 14:6).

Clearly, this issue of the journal cares for and makes recommendations to improve the education system, our health and spiritual wellbeing; a more holistic approach than the current WHO definition that leaves out an important component like spirituality.

References

Contemporary English Version, (2000). American Bible Society.

Kamwangamalu, N. M. (2005). Mother tongues and language planning in Africa.” *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(4), 2005, 734–38. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588533>..

Ramoupi, N. L. laga. (2014). African languages policy in the education of South Africa: 20 years of freedom or subjugation? *Journal of Higher Education in Africa / Revue de l'enseignement Supérieur En Afrique*, 12(2), 53–93.

Riklikienė, O., Kaselienė, S., Spirgienė, L., Karosas, L., & Fisher, J. W. (2020). Spiritual wellbeing of cancer patients: What health-related factors matter? *Journal of Religion and Health*, 59(6), 2882–2898.