Decolonizing museum education

Descolonizando la educación en museos

Simbarashe Shadreck Chitima
Decolonizing museum education

Simbarashe Shadreck Chitima
Midlands State University, Gweru, Zimbabwe

Abstract

When Zimbabwe attained political independence in 1980 it was anticipated that national museums would decolonize all colonial epistemologies, taxonomies, iconography, and infrastructure. However, the pace of decolonizing colonial frameworks and operational culture in museums has been painfully slow. This study examined the effectiveness of colonial frameworks employed in museums, particularly the behaviorist educational philosophy in facilitating effective learning of curriculum content among the current primary school students in Zimbabwe. This study employed qualitative and hermeneutic research approaches. It is revealed that in the post-colonial period national museums in Zimbabwe continue to mimic the colonial behaviorist educational framework that is restrictive to effective learning hence creating a situation where students become epistemological slaves. So far very little has been done to refocus colonial permanent exhibitions, narratives and interpretations as well as methods of content delivery. It is concluded that there are few opportunities for school students to learn curriculum content. Thus, there is need to decolonize museum education service.

Keywords: behaviorism, curriculum, epistemological slaves, decolonization of museum, education.
Descolonizando la educación en museos

Cuando Zimbabwe logró la independencia política en 1980, se anticipó que los museos nacionales iban a descolonizar todas las epistemologías, taxonomías, iconografía e infraestructura coloniales. Sin embargo, el ritmo de descolonización de los marcos coloniales y la cultura operativa en los museos ha sido laboriosamente muy lento. Este estudio examinó la efectividad de los marcos coloniales empleados en los museos, particularmente la filosofía educativa conductista para facilitar el aprendizaje efectivo del contenido del plan de estudios entre los estudiantes de primaria actuales en Zimbabwe. Este estudio empleó enfoques de investigación cualitativos y hermenéuticos. Se revela que en el período poscolonial, los museos nacionales de Zimbabwe continúan imitando el marco educativo conductista colonial que restringe el aprendizaje efectivo, lo que crea una situación en la que los estudiantes se convierten en esclavos epistemológicos. Hasta ahora se ha hecho muy poco para reenfocar las exposiciones, narrativas e interpretaciones coloniales permanentes, así como los métodos de entrega de contenido. Se concluye que hay pocas oportunidades para que los estudiantes de la escuela aprendan el contenido del plan de estudios. Por tanto, es necesario descolonizar el servicio educativo de los museos.

Palabras clave: behaviorismo, currículo, esclavos epistemológicos, descolonización del museo, educación.

*Background – setting the stage*

This study is about the decolonization of museum education. Since museums are information centers, the study establishes the areas of museum education service that need to be decolonized in order to facilitate effective learning among school students. Using five national museums in Zimbabwe as case studies the data used to inform this study is based on a longitudinal study carried out by the researcher from 2013-2019. The study involved primary school students who visited Zimbabwean national museums under Structured Class Visits (SCV) and School-Museum Visits (SMV) educational programs.

National museums in Zimbabwe are a colonial inheritance. Zimbabwe is a former British colony that was annexed in 1890, after which the colony was administered by several white settler regimes until 1980 (Mataga, 2014; Zvobgo, 1994). The colony was named after Cecil John Rhodes whose British South...
African Company’s (BSAC) administration spanned from 1890–1922, followed by the Responsible government from 1923–1953, the federation from 1953–1963 and the Rhodesian front headed by Ian Douglas Smith from 1964–1979 (Fisher, 2010; Mataga, 2014; Zvobgo, 1994). During the colonial period white settlers controlled the levers of political and economic power and this resulted in the construction of infrastructure and, from 1901, the formation of museums. Museums were used as strategic vehicles to perpetuate colonialism that strategically otherized indigenous people and their cultures. Otherization is a process implemented by the colonizer with the intent to separate and denigrate a person or people so that they are seen as barbaric, backward, evil and uncivilized (Chipangura, 2020). Museum education services during the colonial period were an extension of colonialism whose aim was to elevate dominant cultures at the expense of indigenous cultures (Chipangura, 2014; Ucko, 1994).

With the use of real objects in exhibitions there is great potential for museums to contribute towards the realization of national education standards, as well as some of the 2030 United National Sustainable Development Goals. Museums can provide accessible inclusive quality education to children, and lead in research, innovation and economic regeneration, hence promoting sustainable development. The Zimbabwean government in 1980 initiated several educational reforms which saw an 80% increase in the number of Black children utilizing museums for educational purposes (Pwiti, 1994). As a result of these reforms, the largest audiences for national museums in Zimbabwe are school students. For example, from 2010–2015 national museums received 320,560 junior school students (Chitima, 2019). In fact, the primary and secondary education curriculum in Zimbabwe obligates school teachers and students to visit museums for educational purposes. However, not all museum trips end up with school children learning effectively, as this is dependent on a number of factors including the nature of museum educational programming and the manner in which it is delivered. Chitima (2019) indicates that national museums in Zimbabwe continue to mimic and employ the colonial behaviourist educational framework in its museum education service. Therefore, the specific and major research questions probed by the study are: how, and to what extent, are Zimbabwean national museums based on the behaviourist educational framework facilitating effective learning of curriculum content among school students? Which parts of museum education can be decolonized?

The primary school curriculum in Zimbabwe covers several subjects, including: Languages, Information Communication Technology, Visual and Performing Arts, Physical Education, Sport and Mass Display, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Family, Religion and Moral Education, Agriculture, Heritage, and Life Skills (Social Studies). The curriculum is a combination of instructional practices or course outlines, and students’ performance assessments and learning experiences that are designed to bring out and evaluate the target learning outcomes of a particular course.
The colonial legacy

Colonization occurs between two entities that are: the colonizer who is usually a dominant group or society and the subaltern (weak social groups and these have mainly been indigenous cultures). Colonization is conceptualized as a worldview, process, and practice (Ahuja, 2017; Böröcz & Sarkar, 2012; Oliver & Oliver, 2017). As a worldview, colonization is defined as a doctrine and belief grounded in a feeling of racial superiority, existing particularly in the powerful dominant groups (Böröcz & Sarkar, 2012). As a process and practice colonization denotes a principle of statecraft that involves dominating a colony within the spheres of economics, politics, religion, and education as well as cultural life (Ahuja, 2017; Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). This study discusses the legacy of colonialism in the cultural and education sector.

Colonialism has its roots in the imperialistic tendencies of Western or European countries that sought to colonize African and Asian countries in the 18th century. The colonizer knew well that the major weapon to colonize indigenous people was the imposition of Western ontologies (nature of being) and knowledge systems (Fanon, 1963; Freire, 1972; Wa Thiong’o, 1986). In order to control and influence issues of identity and knowledge production, Western colonialists in Africa built formal schools, vocational training centers and museums to advance notions of European civilization and modernity. Colonial settler administrations, particularly those under British rule, developed educational systems that were grounded in racial segregation and a curriculum that promoted epistemecide and linguicide. Epistemecide and linguicide are words derived from epistemology and linguistics. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy concerned with the study of knowledge whilst linguistics is concerned with understanding and analyzing languages. Thus, in order to brainwash and colonize indigenous people, white settler colonizers employed epistemecide which involved the suppression and destruction of the indigenous knowledge systems that existed before colonization (De Villiers, 2018; Hall & Tandon, 2017), whilst linguicide involved a systemic drive to eradicate indigenous languages in favor of English (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). This involved emphasizing Western ontologies and knowledge as the only valid world views and methodologies whilst placing little emphasis on indigenous knowledge, methods, and culture. The colonial administration implemented a racialized curriculum where indigenous children were given vocational training with the aim to produce laborers for white industries and enterprises. Thus, colonial education for natives only served to brainwash them into discarding their own cultures, education and knowledge systems whilst embracing Western ontologies and epistemologies.

During the colonial period museum displays advanced the notion of indigenous cultures being backward, evil, and barbaric whilst Western museology that elevated white dominant cultures as superior deployed. Thondhlana (2015) posits that national museums in Zimbabwe are ‘old wine in new wine skins’. Even after attaining political independence in 1980 Zimbabwean museums
still operate in a colonial shell. Educational frameworks, methods of content delivery and some operational cultures still display colonial tendencies. Colonial systems have, thus, been found to linger in the current education systems. There is a need to decolonize museum education so that content and the manner in which it is delivered speaks to the educational needs and learning styles of current museum audiences.

Methods

This study employed qualitative and hermeneutic research approaches. Qualitative research enabled a full understanding of the perception, breadth, and depth of students' learning in museums. Hermeneutic phenomenology was the research design; hermeneutic phenomenology is a human science which studies individuals and the way they view things (Sloan & Bowe, 2014), and seeks to understand how primary school students learn from museums that are phenomenological enterprises (Roberts, 2013). The study made use of the generic learning outcomes to measure students' learning (Research Center, 2003). The study was done from 2013–2019 at five national museums in Zimbabwe: the Zimbabwe Military Museum (ZMM), the Natural History Museum (NHM), the National Museum of Transport and Antiquities (NMTA), the Zimbabwe Museum of Human Sciences (ZMHS) and the Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site (GZWHS). The primary school education system in Zimbabwe is constituted by early childhood development (children aged 3–7 or ECD up to Grade 2) and junior school students (Grades 3–7 or 8–12 years). The study population included 800 ECDs, 1500 school students, 1700 school teachers, 38 museum tour guides, 6 museum education officers, 8 curators and 3 Provincial Education Officers from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Permission to involve school students was obtained from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), school heads and teachers, as well as from parents via a letter distributed by teachers on behalf of the researcher, and this worked effectively with schools that booked museum visits in advance. Research methods employed included interviews, observations, focus group discussions, listening to students’ gallery conversations and analyzing students’ ‘after the museum visit written compositions’, as well as the accessibility of museum facilities and educational activities. Student learning was analyzed through two major museum educational programmes which are the structured class visits and the school-museum visits because these are provided throughout the year.

Students’ learning of curriculum content

Students' learning from museums is influenced by primary and secondary factors. Primary factors are the quality of school teachers and museum tour guides, the nature of destination site (physical orientation, exhibitions, facilities and equipment) and educational activities done. Secondary factors influencing
students’ learning included the parental context, student attitudes and post-trip scaffolding experiences.

It was revealed that school teachers influenced student learning at different levels. First, enthusiastic school teachers who researched in advance what their students were going to learn from museums prior to the actual trip contributed to effective learning. From a population of 1700 teachers only 63 confirmed that they made reconnaissance visits to museums in order to establish what and how their students would learn. Second, teachers who revised curriculum topics prior to a museum tour contributed to strong indicators of learning. Third, school teachers who provided pre-orientation, including explaining to students what they were going to see, how they were going to use museum knowledge and how it linked with their curriculum, which prepared students for learning. This provided physical and intellectual orientation contributing to students displaying strong indicators of knowledge gain and understanding as well as enjoyment outcomes. From a population of 2300 students only 252 students indicated that they received teacher pre-orientation. School teachers who accompanied students and actively participated during guided tours contributed to effective learning among students, unlike those who did not. Passive and opportunist teachers only managed to leave students in the hands of tour guides whilst they sat in reception, marked assignments or conducted private business in the central business district. Passive and opportunist teachers assumed that students would learn from tour guides and museum exhibitions.

It was also gathered that museum tour guides regarded school students as blank slates in their approach which negatively affected student learning. For example, 34 Grade 7 students at the GZWHS and 57 Grade 5 students at the NHM mentioned that tour guides determined the pace taken, the features and stories to explain about and there was little room for students to view displays of their choice. Students felt they did not have any choice or control over the learning process. Observations done show that the majority of tour guides control the learning process whilst students become passive recipients of information. Only three tour guides perceived the knowledge gap that existed between them and students which facilitated the provision of relevant explanations. The majority of students in the study were repeat museum visitors and thus, there was a likelihood of tour guides repeating explanations and making assumptions that students were learning from the stories they provided. MoPSE mainly approves field trips at the end of school terms and hence this overwhelmed and understaffed museum education department found it difficult to satisfactorily provide guided tours and assistance to students. Further, tour guides struggled to provide guided tours to mixed groups of students because of their different cognitive, physical, emotional, and communicative capacities. As a result, many students simply took the tours for sightseeing.
National Museums in Zimbabwe have expended little effort on refocusing and changing museum exhibitions. Out of eight galleries the ZMM only refocused some display units in the Zimbabwe Military History gallery and the Zimbabwe Republic Police gallery. The NMTA managed to change and replace the geology exhibition with the Eastern Districts cultures while some vintage vehicles were re-stored. Post-independence displays at the ZMHS include an open habitat display, while parts of the Stone Age and Iron Age exhibitions were refocused to avoid the racist narratives that were there before 1980. The NHM has changed and refocused the Hall of Chiefs gallery to Hall of Kings, the snake exhibitions by adding live snakes. The NHM has also enlivened the mammals gallery to have a display of hippos in the wetland and wildlife in the wet as well as dry seasons. Although museums in Zimbabwe have done some work to try and change a few museum displays, the majority of permanent displays remain colonial, inaccessible and out of sync with the current needs of students. The majority of permanent exhibits are typical 18th-century cabinets of curiosity where some displays are mounted one meter above the ground, containing haphazardly and mixed objects and without adequate documentation. Thus, such displays were physically and intellectually inaccessible, causing visual discord and, in some instances, information overload. Students bemoaned the use of scientific language, jargon and captions utilizing small texts as detrimental to effective learning. The most marginalized audience are students with disabilities. There are very few facilities for students with disabilities, such as Braille captions and tour guides trained in sign language in museums, hence they spend little time before proceeding to other destination sites. However, it was observed that students enjoyed and learned effectively through live snakes at the NHM and NMTA. Students also learned more from life-sized artifacts and those which they were able to handle or operate, such as the train engines at the NMTA and Vickers Viscount as well as the armored vehicles at the ZMM. Museum films were also cited as contributing to effective learning because they involved motion picture and sound that captured students’ attention, except for films that lasted more than one hour. Films are only provided at the ZMM and NMTA. Thus, educational activities that sought to actively involve students were recorded as effective in facilitating learning, but these opportunities are very few in museums.

Secondary factors cited and observed as influencing student learning are the perceptions of parents, the student’s disposition and post-visit scaffolding experiences. Students whose parents or close relatives had negative perceptions about heritage and museums negatively influenced their learning. For example, a Grade 6 student interviewed at the ZMM mentioned that his parents perceived the museum as a Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) political party institution because of the exhibitions that seem to celebrate ZANU PF heroes and party members. The student came to the museum with negative perceptions. Contrary to that, another student in the same group indicated that he enjoyed learning from the police gallery because his father was a member of the Zimbabwe Republic Police hence had interests
in joining the force himself. Thus, parents are children’s first life teachers and when they pass negative or positive comments about heritage and museums children tilt towards these biases. Students who were intrinsically motivated to learn and prepared learned effectively. Students willing to learn had all the necessary stationery like notebooks and pens, cameras and other equipment used to document what they learned. In some instances, these students were observed asking questions, actively participating in guided tours and logically engaging in critical thinking and answering questions. The majority of students observed treated the tours as sightseeing adventures because they did not bring with them any stationery or equipment used in the learning process.

It was also revealed that students who received scaffolding experiences after museum trips learned effectively through reinforcement. A sample survey from Gweru district indicated that out of 30 schools that visited the ZMM only 5 provided post-visit scaffolding experiences. This included making students write reports, compositions, give presentations and have tutorials. Post-visit scaffolding is important because some students forget what they learned after a few weeks. Museums may develop teacher study packs to help them to reinforce what students have learned after field excursions. Generally, it was revealed that the majority of students displayed more affective outcomes, such as enjoyment, compared to hard outcomes such as knowledge gain and understanding. Museums in Zimbabwe are to a large extent promoting soft outcomes (change in attitudes, perceptions, inspiration, enjoyment, creativity) more than hard outcomes (knowledge gain and understanding, skills, activity). The primary school curriculum in Zimbabwe is tested at the end of the Grade 7 level. The Grade 7 Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) examines the competence of students on hard outcomes (knowledge gain and understanding) of curriculum issues and concepts. ZIMSEC is biased towards the display of hard outcomes as an indicator of excellence in academia. Therefore, the educational programs in Zimbabwean museums are not effective in facilitating the achievement of hard outcomes. Therefore, national museums in Zimbabwe are mainly impacting on the social and environmental studies subjects. There are fewer opportunities for students to learn content related to Mathematics, local languages, English, Visual and Performing Arts, Information Communication Technology, Physical Education, Sports and Mass Display and Agriculture subjects from museums.

**Decolonization of museum education service**

Decolonization does not happen by magic, naturally or by natural understanding but through the action of citizens (Fanon, 1952/2008). Decolonization has been conceptualized as an engagement in projects that aim to dismantle relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that generate racial, gender and geo-political hierarchies that came into being during colonization (Maldonado-Torres, 2011). During the colonial period museums were used as vehicles to project the Western museology which sought to validate Western
ontologies and epistemologies whilst denigrating local or indigenous cultures and their knowledge systems. Thus, decolonization advocates an inclusive and pluriversal approach to knowledge production where indigenous people should be part and parcel of that knowledge production. It involves redefining knowledge from the vantage point of indigenous people who have experienced epistemecide and linguicide.

The first port of call is to decolonize the mind (Brenner, 2020; Fanon, 1963, Freire, 1972; Wa Thiong'o, 1986). Some museum personnel such as tour guides have a belief that students are blank slates who need to be educated about cultural heritage issues. This mentality is colonizing because it places students in the periphery where they have no control over the learning process. This is the same mentality that white colonial curators had when they created the current permanent exhibitions and delivered museum content. However, it has been gathered that exhibitions which are developed without the inclusion and involvement of target audiences are ineffective (Chitima, 2019). Dascal (2007) posits that the primary aim of colonization was to introduce new thought patterns about reality: to twist the logic of the colonized so that they were not resistant to colonial rule and ideologies. Colonization of the mind had several impacts that included affecting the psyche and mental sphere of the colonized and to think of themselves as inferior, and this thinking was enduring and hard to remove. Colonization of the mind robbed the colonized of their common purpose, dignity and identity; hence they became rootless and nameless as well as thinking of Western epistemologies as the only valid world view (Hotep, 2008; Mveng, 1994). The only way out of the colonization of the mind is to inculcate change in the minds of the colonized so they can embrace self-determination, self-affirmation, and self-definition in new positive terms and rediscover themselves (Hotep, 2008; Wa Thiong'o, 1986). Biko (2004) proposes that the decolonization of the mind can also occur when the colonized remove the fear and shackles of colonial images in their minds. Those once oppressed should never be afraid to review colonial systems, introduce relevant forms of knowledges and practices that speak to the needs of their lives and current generations.

The second port of call is to review colonial educational philosophies underpinning museum education. As Mbembe (2015) points out, there is something wrong if museums continue to provide educational content designed to meet the needs of the colonialist in the post-colonial era. National Museums in Zimbabwe employ the behaviorist educational framework and this is seen by tour guides taking centre stage while students are relegated to passive recipients of information; exhibitions are used as stimuli and were created without the input of students as target audience, hence promoting operant conditioning. Museum exhibitions are typical cabinets of curiosity that utilize the 17th-century Carl Linnaeus documentation system and educational activities that promote rote learning. The behaviorist framework could have been effective during colonization because it was intentionally deployed so that
Western museology was maintained and promoted. It was deployed because the colonial administration intentionally wanted to portray indigenous people as backward, hence it was the responsibility of the white man to spread European modernity, civilization and knowledge. The behaviorist educational philosophy is a late 1920s educational framework that was popularized by psychologists and physiologists such as Edward Thorndike (1874–1949), John Watson (1878–1958), Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936) and Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1904–1990). This framework argues that learning is observed when there is change in behavior produced by a learner's response to stimuli (Carbonell, 2012). Behaviourism views children as born blank slates or ‘tabula rasa’ and hence the primary role of an instructor is to teach children who are assumed to lack knowledge (Hilgard & Atkinson, 1979). Learning is assumed to occur through conditioning where a stimulus is paired with a response. Responses to stimuli can be reinforced with positive or negative feedback to condition desired behaviors; therefore undesired behaviors are punished whilst desired behaviors are rewarded. Behaviorism works with rewards where students who behave positively and predictably are complimented, given good grades and certification. The behaviorist educational framework has been widely employed in formal educational establishments where students go through a structured course of study, bound by a code of conduct and after completing the course are given course certificates and awards. Thus, behaviorism places the curator and tour guide at the helm of the teaching process whilst museum visitors are to be educated about the exhibits and artifacts in the museum.

Behaviorism is similar to Freire’s banking concept where the teacher is seen as depositor whilst students are containers (1972). This analogy mirrors an oppressive society where the teacher knows everything while students are blank slates, the teacher chooses content and students adapt to it, the teacher is the subject in the learning process while students are mere objects. Progressive educationist Giroux (2004) indicates that behaviorism teaches one world view and objective truth as unchanged yet there are many factors that influence learning among students in museums. Museums that employ behaviorism promote the idea that the centre of power lies in the tour guide or curator and this leads to students becoming epistemological slaves, subject to the pedagogy of indoctrination. Epistemological slavery is a condition where learners are subject to the biases and indoctrination of tour guides and curators. When students are subjected to a behaviorist museum they end up being slaves of knowledge from tour guides and curators hence this make them become colonized, subjugated and disenfranchised. When students are treated as passive recipients they are seen as objects that need indoctrination to understand the information about museum objects (Carbonell, 2012). Further, behaviorism assumes that students will understand the messages in the same way yet students have diverse learning styles (Chitima, 2019; Carbonell, 2012; Gardner, 1993).

In the 21st century, knowledge is supposed to be shared among students in the learning situation (Giroux, 2004; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007; Hein, 1998). The ins-
structors (in this case tour guides) should be facilitators in the learning process (Carbonell, 2012). There are other learning frameworks suitable in facilitating effective learning among students during museum trips. The socio-cultural framework is a suitable basis for museum education as compared to behaviorism. The socio-cultural framework is an educational theory whose roots can be traced from the writings of Lev Vygotsky (1978), Falk and Dierking (2000), Bangura (2005), Hooper-Greenhill (2007) and Illeris (2009). The premise of this framework is that learning is a social construct, a process and a product. Learning in museums occurs with others through interaction, discussion, collaboration, problem solving, experimentation, exploration and active handling of material (Bangura, 2005; Chitima, 2019; Falk and Dierking, 2000; Griffin, 1998). Unlike behaviorism that relies on stimuli and the teacher’s ability to teach, the socio-cultural framework employs multi-modal formats and active methods of content delivery such as handling of artifacts, song and dance, games, poetry, music, visual art, video and audio as well as interactive displays. The socio-cultural educational framework refutes the fact that learning is only an individual process or simply change in behavior. Unlike behaviorism that offers limited opportunities for effective learning, the socio-cultural framework has been shown to lead to hard and soft outcomes such as knowledge gain and understanding, skills, enjoyment, inspiration, creativity, and a change in attitudes and values (Research Center, 2003).

The third aspect in decolonizing museum education is to review the methods of content delivery. Currently, Zimbabwean national museums provide limited methods of content delivery and these are study sheets, guided tours and films. Guided tours and study sheets have been cited as providing little room for students to view exhibits of their choice and give students little control of the learning process. Semi-structured educational activities, hands on-minds on activities, activities that involve play, dance, song and performance arts are effective in facilitating the learning of curriculum content. Museum educational programming is mainly provided in English and this is a barrier to effective learning because students have been observed to learn meaningfully through indigenous languages (Chitima, 2019; Chipangura, 2014).

The fourth stage is to decolonize museum exhibitions, narratives and interpretations. Datta (2018) indicates that the only way to have balanced narratives is to include all citizens, especially having on board indigenous cultures to re-interpret their histories and heritages. This avoids controversies and promotes inclusivity and cultural rights in a nation. Although museums in Zimbabwe have managed to refocus a few displays the majority of permanent exhibitions remains and tells colonial stories. The pace of redesigning exhibitions is very slow and requires museums to be proactive at resourcing and fundraising in order to manage change. Museums can also engage in contemporary collecting which may facilitate the acquisition of new and relevant collections that can be used for study and public exhibitions. Contemporary collecting has
the potential to ensure that museums have relevant and diverse collections promoting sustainability issues.

Many colonial exhibitions and artifacts lack adequate documentation and hence are often found haphazardly piled in storerooms and in displays. Many African museums are characterized by having inadequate documentation on displayed artifacts. For example, many permanent exhibitions in Zimbabwe only provide the name of the displayed artifact which is not enough to learn in detail about it. The reality is that many public museums utilize the Carl Linnaeus type of categorization used during the late 17th and 18th centuries and this is associated with cabinets of curiosity displays. There is now a need to follow conventional documentation standards such as those provided by AFRICOM, CIDOC, SPECTRUM and ICOM among others. There may be room to develop indigenous documentation standards that can be implemented. There is also a need for museums to consider using advanced computer records management systems. The colonial documentation schemes such as the Linnaean system and card catalogue have yielded weak outcomes and are ineffective. For museums to have updated documentation there is a need to conduct extensive research. Another area suggested for decolonization are the methods used for research. Decolonizing research methods is about providing indigenous people with space and a voice, following their protocols and recognizing them as stakeholders in research outputs (Zavala, 2013). In most cases, as Datta (2017) observes, indigenous people are treated as subjects of study and usually given a token of appreciation when research about them is conducted. Datta highlights that since research outputs benefit scholars academically and financially there is a need for indigenous people to share in these benefits.

**Conclusion**

Since national museums in Zimbabwe developed during the colonial period, educational programming was formulated for the white settler and founded on racist principles. During the colonial period the mission of national museums was to cater for the preferences and tastes of the colonial administration. Museum education in Zimbabwe utilizes the behaviorist educational framework that is a barrier to effective learning among students. Thus, the museum education service is obsolete and out of sync with the realities and learning needs of primary school students. Decolonization of museum education is not only about restoring indigenous people’s rights to and control over the management of museums and in redefining narratives. It is about providing balanced narratives at any period of time and offering realistic as well as relevant content that contemporary societies may find meaningful. Decolonization of the museum education service includes multiple voices, representing a broad range of perspectives and bodies of knowledge. School students stand to learn effectively when museum education in Zimbabwe is decolonized and when it is grounded in socio-cultural learning frameworks that afford learning through multimodal formats.
References


