

# Zimbabwe: Seeking a Best-Fit Education System

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## Abstract

Since its independence, Zimbabwe has developed various education systems that address various post-colonial questions. Still, these education systems have been disputed due to their inadequacy in tackling the real problems that the country faces. The study explores the best-fit education system for Zimbabwe that can respond to the current challenges that the country faces. The study is anchored on the argument that there is a need for an education that revitalizes the economy of Zimbabwe while repositioning the country through its rich heritage and decolonizing the education system by breaking the ceiling glass of research, teaching, and community service of Education 3.0 and adding innovation and industrialization as in Education 5.0. The study used a qualitative approach with a case study research design based on secondary data. The study found that in Zimbabwe, the best-fit education is the education that bridges the knowledge-skills gap by bringing classroom knowledge to the real world of work and bringing about economic prosperity. The study found that the best education system brings a harmonious equilibrium between theory and practice. The study concludes that heritage-based Education 5.0 is the best-fit education for Zimbabwe as it provides a post-colonial narrative of prioritising heritage while enhancing the three colonial education pillars by bringing about industrialisation and innovation. The study recommends collaboration between learning institutions and industry.

## Keywords

Real-World, Post-Coloniality, Heritage-Based Education, Industrialisation, Education 5.0

## 1. Introduction

A functional education system should be periodically reformed, reviewed, or innovated to achieve transformation in tandem with shifting societal needs, demands, and expectations at independence, Zimbabwe inherited a colonial educa-

tion system that aimed to produce African graduates at all levels devoid of entrepreneurial skills, rendering them job seekers at the expense of job creation. At higher and tertiary education levels, colonial education was anchored on three pillars: teaching, research, and community service. [Martínez et al. \(2020\)](#) asserts that, by design, Education 3.0 produces a worker, not a person who produces goods and services. This colonial design served its purpose and cannot be used by a nation that wishes to industrialise. Education 3.0 was modeled in a white supremacist philosophy meant to produce a worker, liable to be fed into the non-productive sector owned by the colonial system ([Mitchelle, 2023](#)). Zimbabwe faces a crucial task in finding the “best fit” education system for its diverse needs and aspirations. This quest involves navigating various discussions and potential solutions. The paper aims to propose an education system that can respond to the socio-economic problems challenging Zimbabwe: lack of industrialisation, poverty, high crime rates, and lack of skills. The paper is premised on the argument that Zimbabwe needs an education system that best solves the problems confronting the country: skills shortage, lack of production, and economic volatility, causing a mass-skills exodus. There is a need for crafting an education system that can respond to the socio-economic problems bedeviling Zimbabwe while catching up with the 21st-century requirements of a globalised workforce.

## 2. Background of the Study

A functional education system should adapt to societal shifts ([Mitchelle, 2023](#)). Zimbabwe’s inherited colonial system produced job seekers, lacking entrepreneurial skills, and a best-fit education system should address this and aim to produce skilled end products of an education system, [Chiziwa, W. \(2022\)](#). [Fleck \(2018\)](#) contends that education should provide skills that can enable students to be agile learners, able to adapt and learn in a fast-changing environment. Most developed and developing countries are confronted with the 4.0 Industrial Revolution, a topic in many fields. The unresolved difficulties have led to the 5.0 Innovation and Industrialisation era. [Zawada \(2020\)](#) posits that the solution to the problems of the Zimbabwean education system should answer the country’s diverse needs and aspirations, such as creating an upper-middle-income economy by 2030. This lies in the teaching of entrepreneurship in schools. [Nyoni & Botma \(2020\)](#) observes that entrepreneurship education in developed countries is taught at preschool, primary, lower secondary, and tertiary levels. [Berry et al. \(2020\)](#) assert that in most parts of the world, concentrated entrepreneurship programs are introduced in higher institutions, whereas introducing the subject at the primary level is believed to lay a good foundation for learners to acquire knowledge and skills that will help them to take on life challenges.

### 2.1. Entrepreneurial Education

[Fleck \(2018\)](#) states that entrepreneurial education must be taught as a subject in different disciplines. The fast-growing changes in the global village have made

white-collar jobs obsolete and have created the demand for entrepreneurial skills (Zawada, 2020). Entrepreneurial education can provide solutions to the needs of the Zimbabwean education system to respond to the country's challenges and provide a competent workforce in the global market. Zimbabwe faces a crucial task in finding the "best fit" education system for its diverse needs and aspirations.

A best-fit system allows for individualized instruction and personalised learning that caters to a student's learning pace and style. This is particularly beneficial for students with learning differences or those who excel in specific areas. Development of strengths is enhanced. When a system fosters students' natural talents and interests, it allows them to develop their strengths and reach their full potential. This leads to increased confidence and a sense of accomplishment. A supportive and nurturing environment, tailored to a student's needs, can contribute to their social and emotional well-being. This can lead to better mental health and a more positive outlook on school. A best-fit system can equip students with the specific skills and knowledge they need to be successful in their chosen path, whether it is college, vocational training, or entrepreneurship.

## 2.2. Benefits of a Best-Fit, Competence-Based Curriculum

The best-fit education system also benefits in many ways. When students are engaged and learning is personalized, the overall academic achievement increases. This leads to an improved school ranking and a more positive reputation for the education system. Students who feel supported and challenged are less likely to drop out. This saves the education system money and ensures that students get the opportunity to reach their full potential. More efficient use of resources can be achieved. By tailoring instruction to individual needs, resources can be used more effectively, reducing the need for one-size-fits-all programs that may not benefit all students from different ecological settings.

When parents feel their child's needs are being met, they are more likely to be involved in their education. Similarly, communities can better support schools that cater to diverse student needs. A best-fit education system encourages educators to explore new teaching methods and curriculum options, leading to a more innovative and adaptable instruction. By fostering a best-fit approach, the education system can create a more enriching experience for students, leading to a more successful future.

## 3. The Right Curriculum Balance

Luckett & Shay (2020) asserts that finding the Right Curriculum Balance for students from different socio-economic backgrounds takes cognizance of academic-oriented students versus their practical-oriented counterparts. Thus, the education system struggles with striking a balance between academic foundations (critical thinking, problem-solving) and practical skills (vocational training, real-world application). Mondal & Chandra Das (2021) observes that due to the technical direction of teaching complex disciplines compared to the science direction,

there has been development in the education system. In 1977, the F1 and F2 System of education was introduced, where F1 was for academic subjects, while F2 was more on vocational and skills training in high schools in Zimbabwe. This debate centers on the two existing systems. F1 Focused on core subjects like Science, Technology, engineering, and Mathematics, (STEM), preparing students for university entrance exams, F2 offered a broader curriculum, including practical subjects like Agriculture, metalwork, building, plumbing, food and nutrition, fashion and design, Art, and Music, aligning with diverse career paths and real-world relevance but meant for white man's servant and work scheme. A negative attitude arose among stakeholders who stratified the concept and made it look like those taking the academic route were superior and that practical subjects were inferior and meant for the white man's servant and work scheme. Practical skills development has produced most self-employed artisans who have become job creators and self-reliant citizens.

At the grade seven level, there were several subject number adjustments from two subjects only to seven subjects tested at the end of the seven years. At one time, grade seven subjects were reduced to as few as two to reduce learner burden. The belief was that addressing the issue of student overload would promote deeper learning in fewer subjects. Increased flexibility allows specialized learning paths catering to individual student interests and talents. Grade seven subjects changed from four to two, to five, to six, then to seven, hoping to find the best-fit education system to cater to learner output at the primary level. [Sithole et al. \(2021\)](#) indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for virtual learning in Polish education. Finding the right balance between academic and practical skills is crucial to cater to individual needs and prepare graduates for the ever-evolving job market.

### Challenges and Considerations

Teacher training and adequate resources are required for implementing any system effectively. Qualified teachers ensure efficient knowledge transfer and effective guidance, and the provision of adequate resources provides the tools and materials for optimal learning experiences.

[Strachan et al. \(2021\)](#) observe the relationship between intercultural communication and international representation in formerly colonised countries, with the stereotypes associated. Ongoing professional development equips teachers with the latest pedagogical approaches and subject-matter expertise while continuously monitoring and evaluating, and assessing the system's effectiveness through data collection and feedback. This allows for necessary adjustments and improvements based on real-world results. Moving forward, Zimbabwe's journey towards the "best fit" education system requires open dialogue through engaging stakeholders like educators, parents, students, and industry experts in discussions. Considering different perspectives and acknowledging the potential benefits and drawbacks of various approaches is important. Adaptability and flexibility in recognizing that

the education system needs to evolve and adapt to changing needs and global contexts help in the selection of the best-fit education. Utilizing data and feedback to inform continuous improvement and innovation ensures data-driven decision-making. By actively searching for the best fit and addressing the challenges involved, Zimbabwe can create an education system that empowers its citizens and fuels national development.

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

Post-colonial theory is one of the cultural and critical theories used in this study of literary texts. [Nkala \(2019\)](#) argues that the post-colonial theory critically examines the political, cultural, aesthetic, economic, linguistic, historical, educational, and social impacts of colonialism and the legacies on formerly colonised countries. It deals with the reading of literature written in previously colonised countries. [\(Masenya, 2021\)](#) continues to argue that the theory focuses on the way literature or education systems created by colonisers in colonised nations distort the experiences, progress, and realities of the colonised and inscribes the inferiority of the colonised while at the same time promoting the superiority of the coloniser.

Post-colonial theory critiques colonialism, its effects, and its legacies on colonised countries' development. The theory critiques the paraphernalia of colonialism and seeks to deconstruct its premises. [Maharajh& Musikewa \(2021\)](#) asserts that post-colonialism deals with the effects of colonialism on cultures and societies, as colonialism left colonised states with dysfunctional education systems anchored on foreign-imposed cultures with nothing to offer but subjugation. [Kapambwe \(2010\)](#) suggests that the goal of the post-colonial theory is to combat the residual effects of colonialism on cultures and societies, as it is not merely concerned with salvaging the past but learning how the world can move beyond this period together, towards a place of shared respect. In a discussion with Dr Nziramasa on August 12, 2024, he argued that some of the colonial legacies in post-colonial Zimbabwean society have remained in the education system, causing the Zimbabwean education system to hop from one educational framework to another, in search of long-lasting educational innovation and industrialisation that can bring about economic transformation and growth.

[Martínez et al. \(2020\)](#) alludes that at higher and tertiary education levels, colonial education was anchored on three pillars, teaching, research, and community service, and he further asserts that this system, designed Education 3.0, produces a worker, not a person that produces goods and services. [Mitchelle \(2023\)](#) posits that this is a colonial design that served its purpose and cannot be used by a nation that wishes to industrialise, as Education 3.0 was modeled in a white supremacist philosophy meant to produce a disposed of worker suitable to be fed into the productive sector owned by the colonial system. These colonial legacies resulted in several vices that Zimbabwe endured due to the lack of production of graduates with job-relevant training in industrialisation, resulting in the country's industry

collapsing. Colonial education was designed to create these failures in the absence of the white community.

Masenya (2021) posits that the post-colonial theory is not just about the formerly colonised people's response to the colonial legacy by writing back to the center or by even moving the center (Simkus, 2023) as they are also about the formerly colonised proposing to move forward to a place of mutual respect and peace where there is a creation of systems for the colonised by the colonised.

## 5. Literature Review

Zimbabwe has had educational policies foraging for the past four decades since independence, in search of an education that fits the needs of the country, while responding to the challenges that are being faced in various sectors, such as lack of skills, innovation, industrialisation, and modernisation. This section of the study presents the literature review relevant to the study, both from other countries and from within Zimbabwe, to understand the types of education that have brought about socio-economic transformation elsewhere to analyse if Zimbabwe can take a leaf from the developed countries' education systems. Fleck (2018) observes that the use of technologies has become one of the driving forces in the delivery of instruction in present-day Vocational Education and Training (VET) and technologies can be pivotal to the Zimbabwean economic landscape, especially through the provision of basic services that include policy formulation, quality control, preparation of competency-based curriculum, developing skill standards of various occupations and testing skills of the people (Dana et al., 2013). Thus, providing high-quality education and Vocational Training Colleges (VTCs) is imperative. Around the world, all economically advanced democracies place a high value on the quality of their vocational education and training (Campbell et al., 2020).

Vocational education and training can be the best education fit for Zimbabwe as they equip the learners with the job-relevant skills to meet and match the demands of the industry and solve the skills shortage that the country currently experiences. Mawere (2015) argues that financial and infrastructural limitations in rural areas could hinder the successful implementation of practical or vocational curricula. Most schools in rural areas are poorly resourced. Classes are very large with over 50 students in a class. The fees they pay are very low and are not enough to fund all the learners' needs. Infrastructure is not up to standard, and there is an urgent need for government intervention. Internet access is poor, or it is not accessible at all. These challenges are mainly faced by those in rural areas, while those in urban areas are better placed, and this could hinder the successful implementation of a practical or vocational curriculum.

For Zimbabwe to find the best-fit education system and solve problems facing the country, there is a need to embrace technology in the education sector in Zimbabwe. Educational Technology (Ed-Tech) refers to the use of technology in academic settings, within the classroom, at home, or elsewhere (Reddy, 2018). ED-

Tech encompasses educational tools like flashcards and applications to more complex technologies like online learning platforms and virtual reality simulations (Strachan et al, 2021). It is used in formal and non-formal education settings, and by learners of all ages, as it supports various learning goals, including enhancing student engagement and motivation, improving increasing access to qualifying education resources, and supporting blended or online or offline learning program Dana et al. (2013), observe that in Uganda Ed-Tech has been used in promoting girls' education through PEAS (Promoting Education in African Schools) in rural areas to ensure that girls are equipped with technological support to learn and have practical education.

Holmes (2018) assert that the adoption of lifelong skills learning can generate an improvement in the country's economy by equipping students with graduate attributes that make them skilled in job-related skills. Berry et al. (2020) posit that in Malaysia, the Ministry of Higher Education realised that unemployment would continue if lifelong learning were not joined with something that would act as a pull factor; hence, technology was partnered with lifelong learning to produce graduates who are innovative and opportunity creators, not job seekers. Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE, 2023) Lifelong learning in partnership with technology can be the best-fit education system needed to address the challenges of poverty, unemployment, skills shortage, and lack of industrialisation in Zimbabwe.

The best education to address socio-economic challenges in developing countries is an education anchored in entrepreneurship, since this education equips the students with innovative mindsets to exploit the markets. Strachan et al. (2021) indicates that entrepreneurship education has been massively provided in higher education since 1987 in both the US and Europe. Entrepreneurship is recognised as one of the so-called 21st-century skills that are required to succeed in learning, working, and living in a knowledge society. Campbell et al. (2020) argue that entrepreneurship can help graduates create employment, rather than waiting to be employed through government initiatives. Ryan & Deci (2018) argues that the ability of graduates to start their businesses depends on their years of learning, Nyoni & Botma (2020) contends that the goal of tertiary education among others is to contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training development and inculcation of proper values for the survival of the individual and society and to impart physical and intellectual skills that will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of society. Essentially, entrepreneurship joined with technology can offer salvation to Zimbabwe as it can aid the thrust of Zimbabwean education, innovation, and industrialisation. The education that can fit Zimbabwe in responding to the current challenges that the country is facing is a locally based education system that is crafted cognisant of the national culture, values, and skills needs of the country.

## 6. Research Methodology

The study used a qualitative methodology, with a bias towards a case study re-

search design, to understand the best education system framework that can be used in Zimbabwe to respond to economic challenges in the country. To craft the discourse for the study, the researcher engaged literature from different articles and newspaper articles to understand the best-fit education system that can respond to the challenges in Zimbabwe. Dana et al. (2013) observe that a literature review-based study gives direction on where the study is interdisciplinary and directs the researcher toward gaps within the process. The study used narrative data analysis to analyse the findings of the study.

## 7. Findings

Zimbabwe faces a crucial task in finding the “best fit” education system for its diverse needs and aspirations. By navigating potential solutions, which include finding the right curriculum balance between academic and practical education, there are several findings. The education system wrestles with striking a balance between academic foundations (critical thinking, problem-solving), and practical skills (vocational training, real-world application). Findings from the study reveal that contemporary Zimbabwe education from primary to tertiary level lacks emphasis on practical skills, yet practice in any subject is the fundamental cornerstone of sustainable productivity and socio-economic development, hence the need to strike a balance between theoretical and practical subjects. The findings of the study are that the motive behind implementing school-based projects of practical application is to enhance school children’s learning experiences and promote a more firsthand approach. Practical projects bridge the gap between theoretical and real-world applications, providing learners with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in practical settings.

From a sample of four schools, all four heads, two teachers from each school, two students from each school, and two parents, one of the heads agreed that “The government made the right call in creating a practical-oriented curriculum as education had long been theoretical and as such, lagged in many aspects. There was a need to align our education system towards practical skills and appreciation for industrial competencies. The actions of the Government are in line with correcting the education system in Zimbabwe, which tended to be theoretical and irrelevant to industrial development in the past.” Participants suggested that all Ordinary Level students attend a five-monthly, life skills orientation program between completing their November examinations and beginning their A-Level studies.

The findings were that the addition of practical subjects, including Mining, Agriculture, and Heritage Studies, in the education system of Zimbabwe equips students with practical knowledge and an appreciation of the country’s deep history, and should start from preschool to A-level. These findings concur with Fleck (2018) that increased flexibility allows for more specialized learning paths catering to individual student interests and talents. One of the parents expressed his interest in continuous assessment and said, “It is important to eliminate Grade Seven Examinations and continue with encouraging practical skills even without any as-

essment, as this will eliminate exposure of students to drugs after long stay-at-home post-examinations.” 7 participants agreed that the Government did well by considering complaints from parents and teachers to reduce the number of learning components for learners, as this was causing students fatigue. Findings show that the move to a Heritage-based curriculum was accepted by most of the stakeholders of the education system.

## 8. Presentation and Analysis

The study shows that Zimbabwe faces an uphill task to develop the best-fit education system that can respond to the challenges faced by the country since independence, which is the shortage of skills that has led to stagnation of the industry and low production. As observed by [Kaviya et al. \(2022\)](#) Zimbabwe’s education system has led the country to become an importing country, with no balance of trade, as there are too many exports of raw products out of the country. Through the new knowledge acquired in the education system, learning institutions will play a crucial role in improving business, providing research and innovative ideas that will bridge the gap between academia and businesses, increasing exports, and creating a balance of trade. The bridging of the gap between academia and business has been the missing link in industry. There was no evidence-based research on businesses from learning institutions that can revitalise the manufacturing sector while doing away with the residue of colonial legacies from Education 3.0, which did not allow innovation and industrialisation from Africans. In support of the study is the theoretical framework of the post-colonial era. [Chiziwa, W. \(2022\)](#) observes that the goal of post-colonial theory is to combat the residual effects of colonialism on cultures and societies, as it is not merely concerned with salvaging the past, but learning how the world can move beyond this period together, toward a place of mutual respect.

The dilemma of curriculum development in Zimbabwe is that there are shortages of certified and licensed professionals to teach technical subjects. Adequate resources that provide the necessary tools and materials for optimal learning experiences are required. In my view education is trying to strike a balance between theoretical and practical subjects, hence the need for technical teachers. This is the divide between critical thinking and vocational training, which is real-world training. Education in Zimbabwe, as alluded by [Chiziwa \(2022\)](#), has long been theoretical, lacking real-world training to respond to the problems and challenges in the country, including the economic meltdown, poverty, and unemployment. The study shows that the education system in Zimbabwe is not practical; there is much emphasis on critical thinking and fewer practical subjects, showing that students graduate from the education system without the practical life skills that the world needs for industrialisation and innovation to turn around the economy through employment creation. An increasing trend in the Arab world toward reassessing the longstanding conflict between theory and practice to achieve a harmonious equilibrium that brings in national and regional transformation has been ob-

served.

The study indicates that implementing school-based projects aims to strike a balance between theory and practice in the earlier stages of students' education while bridging the knowledge-skills gap. The study shows that in Zimbabwe, the best-fit education system is the integration of the competency-based approach and the heritage-based approach to bring a balance between a practical-oriented approach and theoretical-based teaching, allowing students to have both critical thinking and practical competence as exit attributes from school to help in the industrialisation drive. Fleck (2018) agrees that competency-based education and training are mechanisms for imparting skills to learners to create employment and sustainable economic growth. In my view, competency-based education can bridge the knowledge-skills gap that Zimbabwe needs by combining practical-oriented education and theoretical-based education, to create sustainable economic growth while eradicating poverty, unemployment, and high crime rates.

The study shows that the Education 5.0 curriculum has been received by captains of industry as a step in the right direction, as it prioritises practical orientation, negating the much theoretical approach that has long been the mainstay of the Zimbabwean education system. In my view, Education 5.0, a reform that has mainly been adopted in tertiary institutions, can be the best-fit education system in Zimbabwe even for lower levels of school, as it moves away from teaching, research, and community service to pursue innovation and industrialisation, which were lacking in the revitalisation of the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe. Chiziwa (2022) observes that Education 5.0 offers a competency-based approach that targets innovation and industrialisation by bridging the gap between classroom practice and real-world work. In my view, education 5.0 has proved to have the best-fit attributes for education in Zimbabwe as it can revitalise the industry while embracing innovations and technology to create a 21st-century globalised workforce, competent in any situation.

In my view, there are not so many specific components of Education 5.0 that have already been implemented in Zimbabwean schools; most of "Education 5.0" has been implemented in higher & tertiary institutions (universities, polytechnics, teachers' colleges). MoPSE (2023) clarified that primary and secondary schools are aligning through the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC, 2024–2030), but Education 5.0 itself is a Higher & Tertiary Education policy. HBC was officially introduced in May 2024, reframing outcomes as competences, entrepreneurship, heritage, and problem-solving—intended to feed into Education 5.0 pathways. Measurable outcomes are yet to be established since it's a recent curriculum reform that was rolled out and has not been observed and recorded so far.

The study reveals that there have been changes in the Grade Seven subjects, that is, the addition of agriculture as a subject to equip students with a practical-based orientation at an early stage. Kaviya et al. (2022) perceives that the addition of heritage has been one of the achievements of the education system in Zimbabwe, as it gives an appreciation of the country's history and encourages an education

that can lead to the production of local goods using locally available resources. The study findings are that CALA has helped to sharpen research skills, while improving practical problem-solving and creative skills, in learners. Some said there was a greater bond between parents and their children as they assisted their children in research. However, some thought that CALA was not well received by the stakeholders because of the implementation flaws, lack of resources, lack of training on implementation strategies, and the extra work on the students and teachers. Participants agreed that the 2024 heritage-based curriculum was introduced at the right time, to address the limitations and flaws of the competence-based curriculum and to add special emphasis on cultural heritage.

The study shows that there are challenges in finding the best-fit education system, and the dichotomy between academic and practical skills is crucial to prepare students to become competent students who are ready for the 21st-century globalised job market. The study shows that limited teacher training and poor resources for implementing new curricula are major challenges. Implementation of any education system requires qualified teachers to ensure efficient knowledge transfer. Consistent with the study, [Kaviya et al. \(2022\)](#), perceives that there is a lack of qualified teachers in rural areas, hence the failure of practical and technical subjects in these areas. In my view, the lack of monitoring and evaluation for the education systems to assess effectiveness is a drawback faced by the education system in Zimbabwe and must be addressed for an improved education system. Lack of information on CALA, and a lack of process monitoring and evaluation of its effectiveness, especially in remote areas, have contributed to its failure. The evaluation that came to an end proved that the uptake of this innovation by stakeholders was poor.

## 9. Conclusion

Zimbabwe's journey towards the "best fit" education system requires open dialogue engaging stakeholders like educators, parents, students, and industry experts in discussions and deliberations. Different perspectives acknowledge the potential benefits and drawbacks of various approaches. The education system must evolve and adapt to changing needs and global contexts by utilising data-driven decision-making and feedback to inform continuous improvement and innovation. By actively searching for the best fit and addressing the challenges, Zimbabwe can create an education system that empowers its citizens and fuels national development. This allows for necessary adjustments and improvements based on real-world results. In support of this, I can safely conclude that an education that bridges the knowledge-skills gap that Zimbabwe has been struggling to balance is the best-fit education system as it bridges classroom work and real-world work, creating a harmonious equilibrium between theory and practice. It can be concluded that all the education systems that Zimbabwe has implemented have fallen short or been inadequate after implementation.

There might not be a single "best" education for entrepreneurial development

in developing countries, but a successful approach often combines elements from various fields. Adult education in public institutions should offer vocational training and innovation to achieve educational proficiency. Problem-solving and critical thinking are mindset-changing, thought-provoking skills for entrepreneurs to identify problems within their communities and develop creative solutions. Finding the best-fit education system requires a good dose of problem-solving and critical thinking.

It is important to consider whom we intend to educate, their age, and their learning style (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic). Their academic strengths or weaknesses all play a role in finding the best-fit education system. Educational goals for the country need to be researched to discover the needs of students at pre-school, primary school, high school, vocational training colleges, and university levels. According to Kaviya et al. (2022), to identify a system that fosters creativity, imagination, and innovation, it is important to research options such as traditional public schools, private schools, homeschooling, and online learning. Consideration of factors like class size, curriculum, extracurricular activities, and standardized test scores is vital. Exploring their unique focus areas (e.g., STEM, arts) and enrolment processes and research curriculum options, consideration for socialization, and parental involvement is required.

Financial literacy in Zimbabwe is a key skill for the best-fit education. Zimbabweans of all ages must make it a vital component of the best-fit education system. Financial literacy can be integrated into skills development through equipping individuals with fiscal management skills to navigate economic challenges. My observation is that, currently, because of the scarcity of jobs in Zimbabwe, the informal economy has the potential to boost the economy. Many Zimbabweans operate in the informal sector, where financial literacy is essential for business success, and economic growth and stability. Financial knowledge empowers individuals to make informed decisions about borrowing and saving, hence the need to train learners on debt management and financial literacy. There are ways to integrate financial literacy across all existing academic subjects. Weaving financial concepts into existing subjects like Maths (budgeting, calculating interest), Social Studies (entrepreneurship, economic systems), and life skills (saving, responsible credit use), etc, is essential. My observation is that offering age-appropriate financial literacy courses at all levels, from primary to secondary school, can be worth considering as policy. Practical applications like incorporating simulations, case studies, and project-based learning that involve real-life financial scenarios are of vital importance. Tailor-made curriculum content to the Zimbabwean financial system, including local banking options, mobile money, and microfinance, must be seriously considered for the local context.

The benefits of finding the best-fit system can never be overemphasized. Understanding fiscal management, budgeting, and basic accounting is crucial for running a business (Kaviya et al., 2022). It is essential to clearly communicate a product or service and effectively market it for any business growth. Including

communication and marketing skills in a best-fit education system offers many benefits for students, regardless of their chosen path. These skills can be integrated into the school curriculum to contribute to a well-rounded education system.

## 10. Recommendations

This study recommends culturally responsive teaching incorporating Zimbabwean history, cultural values, and traditional Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) to foster a sense of identity and belonging. The current heritage-based curriculum initiative will help learners not to shun their culture in preference to Western culture or any other cultures they are exposed to in their communities. Learners will be made to understand the beauty of the Indigenous norms, values, and beliefs, and to incorporate these into their activities for innovation and industrialisation in their different ecologies. Empowered Students who are resilient and adaptable can navigate challenges, embrace change, and thrive in any environment. My view is that there can be reduced vulnerability, and these skills can help students cope with economic hardships, personal setbacks, and future uncertainties. Chiziwa (2022) agrees that a generation equipped with coping skills is better positioned to solve problems, create new opportunities, and contribute to Zimbabwe's development. By prioritizing resilience and adaptability in the best-fit education system, Zimbabwe can prepare its students to be lifelong learners, effective analytical people, and active contributors to a brighter future. The heritage-based curriculum accommodates learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds within Zimbabwe through the project-based assessment, the inclusion of lived experiences, and the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge. This has helped with acquiring local resources required for research and innovation.

Zimbabwe's vibrant learning landscape offers a unique opportunity to create a best-fit education system by integrating formal and informal learning approaches at all levels of learning. Considering formal learning, the core curriculum provides a solid foundation in essential literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and ICT skills. The study recommends the following:

1. That local businesses for informal learning through apprenticeships and mentorship can foster traditional skills and knowledge passed down through mentorship programs and apprenticeships with experienced craftspeople, entrepreneurs, and artists. Integrating such knowledge systems into the curriculum is crucial for skills development and passing essential knowledge and training. Local organizations, cultural centers, and historical sites can provide rich learning experiences that connect students to their heritage and community.
2. That community engagement fostered teamwork and improved social interaction between learning institutions and the community should be encouraged. Management of the environment can be improved, and an understanding of cultural values can be enhanced.
3. That policymakers make Financial Literacy a requirement for the Heritage-based curriculum to produce a product that can stand alone as an informed en-

trepreneur. Financial literacy is required by every learner, including those taking the pathway of vocational skills and agricultural techniques, and can be learned through workshops and community-based programs.

4. Project-Based Learning. Formal classroom learning can be enriched with projects that leverage informal learning opportunities. For example, a history class could culminate in a project where students research and present on a local historical landmark.

5. That Community Partnerships be used as a strategy, where schools can collaborate with local businesses, NGOs, and cultural institutions to create internship programs, guest speaker sessions, and field trips that bridge the gap between formal and informal learning. Technology Integration, where digital tools and online platforms can document traditional knowledge, create interactive learning experiences, and connect students with mentors and learning resources beyond the classroom walls, can be another strategy for integrating formal and informal learning.

6. That Teacher Training must cater to the educators' need for guidance on integrating informal learning methods and effectively assessing these experiences. Without such training, teachers tend to interpret and implement initiatives in numerous dissimilar ways to the detriment of policy expectations.

7. That resource availability and allocation be balanced between formal and informal learning components, which requires careful planning and collaboration. By embracing a blended approach that leverages the strengths of both formal and informal learning, Zimbabwe's education system can create a best-fit model that equips students with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to thrive in the 21st century.

8. That monitoring and evaluation be improved, and quick feedback be given to address any challenges that are observed. A monitoring and evaluation policy is recommended to improve the education system.

## **11. Recommendation for Further Studies**

Further studies are recommended in staff training in technical fields, technology assimilation, inclusion of financial literacy in the curriculum, and shaping policy to reemphasize skills development at all school levels.

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### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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