

The Sustainability of Ubuntu as a Philosophy of Education in a Postcolonial and Globalising Zimbabwe: A Hermeneutical Study

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Abstract

This inquiry was motivated by a great deal of debate that surrounds Ubuntu (also called ‘hunhu/unhu’ in Shona or ‘botho’ in Sotho), a philosophy specific to Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. The study was, therefore, a critical examination of the sustainability of Ubuntu as a philosophy of education in a postcolonial and globalising Zimbabwe. The current inquiry took a qualitative research approach, which is informed by the interpretivist research paradigm - a research worldview considered more successful in inquiries of a human-social nature. As a case study, the field inquiry was conducted in 3 schools and a university within Masvingo Urban, Zimbabwe. The research participants included 3 school teachers, 3 deputy heads, 3 heads, and 4 university lecturers. Despite the criticism that the Ubuntu philosophy is a postcolonial utopia invention as well as narrow Bantu philosophy without continent-wide resonance, the current inquiry discovered that the said philosophy is well-positioned to salvage Zimbabwe’s education system from the negative influences of globalisation and Euro-American modernity. It was, therefore, concluded that Ubuntu remains a sustainable philosophy guiding instruction in a postcolonial and globalising Zimbabwe. This inquiry, thus, recommends the escalation of education for Ubuntu in order to advance the social-cultural-moral formation of the Indigenous Zimbabwean learners.

Introduction

Ubuntu (also called ‘hunhu/unhu’ in Shona or ‘botho’ in Sotho) is a wellspring flowing with African ontology and epistemology (Ramose, 1999). Ontology is the science of being (the existence aspect) whereas epistemology is the theory of knowledge (the knowledge aspect). The ontological position of Ubuntu is located within the ‘onto-triadic structure of being’ which articulates human existence in the three levels of ‘the departed’ (African past), ‘the living’

(African present), and the ‘yet to be born’ (African future) – the golden principle being the maintenance of ‘virtue’ (ethical or moral probity) throughout the three levels of human existence (Ramose, 1999; Manda, 2009). The epistemological element of Ubuntu manifests in African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKSs). Hence, the Ubuntu philosophy is on the whole the torchlight of life and certainly of education in Sub-Saharan Africa. It should, however, be reminisced that this home-grown philosophy is not without critics. For instance, some Africans conversant with it (Ubuntu) may tend to dismiss it as an overly abstract, idealistic, romanticist, illusory, and impractical philosophy (Nabudere, 2005). The current inquiry, therefore, sought to glean fresh and critical insights from the relevant participants on the sustainability of Ubuntu as a philosophy of education in a postcolonial and globalising Zimbabwe.

Background

The year 1890 marked the onset of exploitative settler colonialism in the land between the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers which is now known as Zimbabwe. From 1890 to 1980, Zimbabwe was under full-blown colonialism, the British being the colonisers. This colonial epoch can be further broken down into the British South Africa Company rule (1890-1922), the Settler or Responsible Government (1923-1964), and Smith’s Rhodesia Front Government since the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (1965-1979). Thus, colonial education, as informed by the Western philosophies whose roots had been laid by missionaries well before 1890, was in place in colonial Zimbabwe then known as Rhodesia from 1890 to 1980. Before the onset of colonialism, Zimbabwe’s precolonial customary education was informed by the Ubuntu philosophy. However, education for Ubuntu was interrupted by the onset of colonialism. In fact, education for Ubuntu was replaced by colonial education. It is this colonial experience which occasioned the de-traditionalisation or de-Africanisation of Africans, cultural dissonance,

uprootedness, alienation, mimetic philopraxis, and existential vacuity (Wuta, 2020) – cancers that continue to threaten Africanness in Zimbabwe even in the postcolonial dispensation.

Globalisation and neo-colonialism, thus, serve to exacerbate this alienation and uprootedness of Africans in contemporary Zimbabwe.

At the dawn of the Third Millennium (Year 2000 going forward), the Government of Zimbabwe realised that the country needs a decolonising philosophy to inform her education, which was and still is bedevilled by the colonial logic (coloniality) – the darker side of the Euro-North American-centric modernity. Building upon Nziramasanga's (1999) recommendation that Zimbabwe's education be informed by the home-grown philosophy of Ubuntu, the Government embarked on a curriculum review exercise in 2014, an undertaking that birthed the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022, which decreed the Ubuntu philosophy to provide the philosophical foundations for education in postcolonial Zimbabwe. The Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 later morphed into Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2024-2030, which, according to Secretary's Circular No.4 (2024), aims to "strengthen measures to mould the pupils to cherish and practice the Zimbabwean philosophical orientation of Ubuntu" (p. 3). This Heritage-Based Curriculum Framework, thus, maintains Ubuntu as Zimbabwe's decolonising philosophy of education within the postcolonial dispensation.

However, scholars are caught on the horns of dilemma as they endeavour to evaluate the Ubuntu philosophy in terms of sustainability amidst the unrelenting and ever-intensifying forces of globalisation. Hence, this philosophy is couched in ambiguity and shrouded in mystery since it is at the epicentre of debate, which is worth the effort of academic engagement. Whilst some scholars view the Ubuntu philosophy as a true African voice within the globalisation agenda,

others deride the said philosophy as a postcolonial utopia invention and nebulous Bantu philosophy of no continental resonance. Those who allege that Ubuntu lacks continental resonance predicate their position on the understanding that the Khoisan (the earliest inhabitants of Sub-Saharan Africa), and the Bantu (who, through migrations from the North, arrived later and became the dominant people of the said region) are the originators of the Ubuntu philosophy. It is against this background of dialectical scholarly contestation that the current field-based inquiry weighed the evidence with a goal of estimating the sustainability of Ubuntu as a philosophy of education within the current world order driven by Western influences under the guise of globalisation.

Problem Postulation

The sustainability of Ubuntu as a philosophy of education in contemporary Zimbabwe is a topical subject worth the effort of academic contemplation and dialectical contestation, that is to say, it is worth the effort of scholarly engagement and rational argumentation. Hence, scholars (at global, regional, and local scales) have not yet reached a discernible point of convergence pertaining to the degree to which Ubuntu is sustainable as a philosophy informing the education systems extant in Sub-Saharan Africa in general, and Zimbabwe in particular. The current research endeavour, therefore, sought to estimate the sustainability of Ubuntu as a philosophy of education in a postcolonial but globalising Zimbabwe.

Conceptual Framework

Since the current reflection comes amidst the preponderance of Occidental philosophies in Afro-Zimbabwean education, it is, therefore, conceived within the purview of African renaissance. African renaissance is a window for Afro-Zimbabweans to reclaim the status of

their native meaning-making (African epistemology). In line with African renaissance, which harmonises significantly with critical theory, Msila (2009) argues that an African philosophy should be the foundation for education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa - a geopolitical region which incorporates Zimbabwe. This expresses a call for the rebirth and rejuvenation of African philosophy in general, and of African philosophy of education in particular.

According to Makgoba et al. (as cited in Msila, 2009), “African renaissance is a unique opportunity for Africans to define themselves and their agenda according to their realities and take into account the realities of the world around them” (p. 311). This demonstrates that African renaissance seeks to combat what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) refers to as ‘coloniality’ or the ‘colonial logic’ (the darker side of the Euro-North American-centric modernity) and hence it (African renaissance) is a decolonial ideal which carries with it the liberatory-emancipatory project, of course, within the purview of globalisation.

Likewise, Makgoba et al. (as cited in Msila, 2009) declare, “African renaissance is about Africans being agents of their own history and masters of their destiny” (p. 311). This emancipatory inclination of African renaissance is endorsed by Mbeki (as cited in Marumo & Chakale, 2018) who states:

African renaissance should reflect the need to empower African peoples to deliver themselves from the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism through the advancement of African economic, political, or other pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies, and to situate themselves on the global stage as equal and respected contributors to, as well as beneficiaries of, all the achievements of human civilisation. (p. 180)

The notion of African emancipation, as inscribed and proclaimed in African renaissance, is in sync with the thrust of redeeming Ubuntu - a decolonising African philosophy of education and life. Thus, Makgoba et al. (as cited in Msila, 2009) advocate the reclamation of Ubuntu from undue trivialisation, condemnation, and epistemic oblivion as orchestrated from the Euro-

Oriental perspective. For genuine African renaissance to materialise, an investigation into the sustainability of Ubuntu as a philosophy of education in a postcolonial but globalising Zimbabwe remains an exigency, not an option.

A Brief Review of Related Literature

The review of related literature was undertaken in order to unpack the dialectical contestation about the sustainability of Ubuntu as a philosophy of education in a postcolonial and globalising Zimbabwe.

On the one hand, Ubuntu is poised to continue guiding African education in the postcolonial dispensation and within the current world order driven by globalisation. For Tirivangana (2013), local education has to be guided by Ubuntu since this philosophy is the controlling ideology of Africans. Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza (2014) also recognise the power of education for Ubuntu and argue that the home-grown philosophy of Ubuntu should provide the philosophical foundations for education in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. Likewise, Makuvaza and Gatsi (2014) maintain that education underpinned by Ubuntu is strategically positioned to salvage African youths and/or learners from the negative influences of globalisation. In the same vein, Bondai and Kaputa (2016) hold that the Ubuntu philosophy is a panacea for educational development in Sub-Saharan Africa. This connotes that Ubuntu is the answer to most of the challenges afflicting education in Sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, the aforementioned authorities are of the conviction that Ubuntu as a philosophy is worth adopting to guide contemporary education in Sub-Saharan Africa in general, and Zimbabwe in particular, because of its conceivable virtues and values. This Afrocentric thesis, therefore, affirms the view that the home-grown Ubuntu philosophy is sustainable and worth revitalising in a postcolonial and globalising Zimbabwe.

On the other hand, Nabudere (2005) and Manda (2009), observe some shortfalls in Ubuntu, notwithstanding the fact that they fundamentally acknowledge the centrality and primacy of this philosophy in education within Sub-Saharan Africa. “Indeed, some of those who are aware of it (Ubuntu) sometimes dismiss it as a post-colonial ‘Utopia’ invention and/or a ‘prophetic’ illusion crafted by the African political elites in the age of globalisation” (Nabudere, 2005, p. 1). This portrays Ubuntu as an abstract, idealistic, romanticist, illusory, and impractical philosophy, which, according to Manda (2009), has failed to provide pragmatic solutions to some of the socio-political challenges vexing Sub-Saharan Africa today. Implicit in this viewpoint is the position that this philosophy is to some extent unsustainable in the contemporary African context. The author, therefore, views this critique of Ubuntu as emblematic of the Eurocentric thesis.

It is this dialectical contestation that presents the author with a cloudy situation – a knowledge gap which warrants the undertaking of a field research, *id est*, gathering ideas directly from the field in order to confirm or disconfirm the foregoing divergent viewpoints. Informed by the ideal of African renaissance, the author sought to gather views from relevant participants, views with which to ascertain the degree to which the Ubuntu philosophy is sustainable in contemporary Zimbabwe. It is these views that have the potential to guide the re-vitalisation of the home-grown philosophy of Ubuntu within the current world order driven by the forces of globalisation.

Ubuntu: The Fundamental Philosophy as well as a Philosophy of Education

Samkange and Samkange (1980) translate the term Ubuntu to ‘personhood’, whereas Ramose (1999) defines Ubuntu with the use of alternative English words ‘humanness’ and ‘being’. Beyond the use of synonyms, Ramose (1999) defines Ubuntu as “the root of African

philosophy...the wellspring flowing with African ontology and epistemology” (p. 49). This parades Ubuntu as the fountain of African essence, existence, and knowledge, which provides some justification as to why Ubuntu is referred to as the African philosophy of life. Ubuntu, therefore, is a controlling philosophy of Africans which essentially speaks to African values.

In the realm of education in particular, the philosophy of Ubuntu is underpinned by the following principles: holism, functionalism, communalism, preparationism, essentialism-perennialism, and humanism (Hapanyengwi, 2011). In terms of ‘holism’, which subsumes all the other philosophical principles, Ubuntu is a trinity. The trinity of Ubuntu is articulated by Nziramasanga (1999) where he declares, “the curriculum should provide for the education of ‘the head, the heart and the hand’ in developing Ubuntu” (p. 75), an ideal which constitutes holistic education. This is endorsed by Hapanyengwi (2011), who conceives ‘education for Ubuntu’ as “an education that addresses the felt needs of the people by focusing on *kurodza pfungwa* (developing the intellect), *tsika* (ethics, tradition, moral values, and customs), and *dzidziso dzemibato yemaoko* (the development of psychomotor skills)” (p. 31). This translates to academic-cognitive-intellectual development, moral-ethical-social development, and physical-psychomotor-vocational development, respectively.

In other words, the fact that education for Ubuntu was geared towards ‘addressing the felt needs of the people’ manifests functionalism or instructional relevance whereas *Kurodza pfungwa*, *tsika*, and *dzidziso dzemibato yemaoko* coincide with the education of the ‘head’, the ‘heart’, and the ‘hand’, respectively. It is, therefore, permissible to argue that the Ubuntu philosophy is a ‘Grand Trinity’, akin to Booker T. Washington’s philosophy of the Grand Trinity, which he practically implemented at Tuskegee Institute, USA (Siyakwazi &

Machingura, 2018). Thus, Ubuntu and Washington's Grand Trinity are both versions of holistic education in different but comparable contexts.

Critiquing Ubuntu: The Debates

At a continental level, Nabudere (2005) argues, "it does not follow that all the African people propagate or are even consciously aware of the philosophy (of Ubuntu) as such" (p. 1). This implies that Ubuntu is not a continent-wide philosophy. Hence, other sections of the African society(s) question the practicability of the Ubuntu philosophy. The fact, however, remains that in one way or the other all African groups of people *viz* the Bantu, the Khoisan, and the Nilo, among others, subscribe to Ubuntu as their philosophy of life because of common beliefs, norms, and values of family and community.

Nabudere (2005) reports, "some of the cynics even question the philosophy (Ubuntu) on the grounds that, at best, it is a 'Bantu' philosophy not related to the ways of life and outlook of other 'tribal' groupings of Africa" (p. 1). This cynic view implies that Ubuntu is nothing more than a Bantu African worldview. In fact, the censure is that Ubuntu is not as pervasive as it purports. Hence, Ubuntu is denigrated for being peculiarly a Southern (Bantu) African philosophy. However, Professor Cheick Anta Diop of Senegal (as cited in Nabudere, 2005):

...has traced the generic term for man or *ntu*, to be the same on other African languages with similar term *nit* in Wolf, *nti* in Egyptian, *neddo* in Peul. He argues that the designation of a people by a generic term meaning man has been general throughout Black Africa, starting with Egypt. (p. 2)

This, thus, suggests that Ubuntu is a continent-wide philosophy which is applicable, recognised, and celebrated all over Africa.

At a regional level, Ubuntu is also under severe criticism for its failure to abate upheavals in Sub-Saharan Africa where this philosophy is claimed to be the torchlight of life. This finds testimony, for instance, in Rwanda, where there are people who are relatively conversant with

the philosophy of Ubuntu yet they allowed genocide to occur (Manda, 2009). On the one hand, this philosophy may not be a foolproof remedy to socio-political challenges vexing Sub-Saharan Africa, a viewpoint which serves to dismiss Bondai and Kaputa's (2016) claim that Ubuntu is the panacea for sustainable educational development in Sub-Saharan Africa. On the other hand, the problem may not be the philosophy but the people who fail to appreciate its importance and what it requires if one is to truly be guided by its principles.

Further analysis shows that human tragedies have always occurred in other philosophies, not just in Ubuntu. For instance, warfare is rampant in the Global North where there are people who subscribe to philosophies other than Ubuntu - the Russo-Ukrainian War (since early 2022) bearing good testimony. This salvages the Ubuntu philosophy from the criticism that it has failed to solve the socio-politico-economic problems vexing Africa.

With the understanding that the humanistic philosophy of Ubuntu abhors wanton termination of human life, the outbreak of the Rwandan genocide may not be attributable to the failure of Ubuntu philosophy per-se but to the works of the foreign hand - although this line of argumentation could sound like a conspiracy theory of some kind. According to Atkinson (as cited in Wuta, 2020), the Belgians are accused of having given all sorts of privileges to the Tutsis and discriminated against the Hutus whom they treated as inferior. This 'divide and conquer' tactic in colonial Rwanda, therefore, created a time-bomb as it fanned ethnic resentment between the Hutus and Tutsis. The Rwandan genocide is also known to have erupted due to the increasing poverty provoked by the economic policies imposed on Rwanda by the World Bank and the involvement of other Western countries (France, among others) in propping up the extremist Hutus (Atkinson, as cited in Wuta, 2020). Therefore, attributing the outbreak of the Rwandan genocide to the so-called weaknesses of the Ubuntu philosophy misses the point.

At a local level, Louw (as cited in Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Makuvaza, 2014) argues, “Ubuntu has a potential dark side in terms of which it demands an oppressive conformity and loyalty to the group” (p. 8), meaning that the philosophy represses individuality. However, Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza (2014) dismiss this submission because tolerance of particularity and individuality is a virtue cherished in Ubuntu, a philosophy which goes against oppressive conformity. The foregoing is substantiated by Shutte (as cited in Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Makuvaza, 2014) who argues, “in Ubuntu, the community is not opposed to the individual, nor does it simply swallow the individual up, it enables each individual to become a unique centre of shared life” (p. 7). Thus, the Ubuntu philosophy is absolved from the allegation that it over-emphasises the superiority of the group over the individual.

While the concept of Ubuntu “sounds easily attainable at surface level, its identifiability and definability may not be as easy. This is due to lack of laid down standards or parameters for its enculturation” (Sibanda, 2014, p. 27). Thus, the concept of Ubuntu has remained a paradox, if not a mystery, to the younger generations. The above is affirmed by Ter Haar, Moyo, and Nondo (as cited in Sibanda, 2014) where they “complain of the vagueness and mystification of traditional African belief representations” (p. 27). Thus, Ubuntu is shrouded in mystery as evidenced by the obscurities that surround its definition. However, the foregoing deliberations do not suggest denial of the centrality as well as credibility of Ubuntu to the cultural philosophy as well as the education system of Zimbabwe.

Research Methodology

The field inquiry was informed by ‘interpretivism’ or ‘hermeneutics’, a research philosophy which seeks to understand situations through the eyes of the speaking and acting participants, *id est*, understanding phenomena from the perspective of research participants as

they are immersed in their natural settings. Hence, hermeneutics involves meaning-making in a social context. According to Habermas (as cited in Cohen et al., 2007), interpretivist-hermeneutical research simply seeks to understand situations and phenomena but does not necessarily seek to transform them. To bridge this transformational gap, the researcher engaged ‘critical theory’, a school of thought which seeks to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them (Marcuse, as cited in Jessop, 2012). The circumstances, which, in this context, seem to enslave Africans in general and Zimbabweans in particular revolve around the negation of the African worldview embedded in Ubuntu. Critical theory, therefore, was applied with a purpose of redeeming the Ubuntu philosophy from the margins and bringing it to the centre of discourse on education in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is in accordance with the ideal of African renaissance, which happens to be the conceptual framework of the current reflection.

Since the topic is predicated on human-social phenomena, the most appropriate *modus operandi* was to use research methodology within the qualitative approach informed by interpretivism-hermeneutics. Qualitative research, thus, exhumes complete and in-depth information as it seeks to study human beings in their natural settings, not under laboratory conditions as in quantitative research. The field inquiry was conducted in 3 schools and a university within Masvingo Urban, Zimbabwe. Therefore, as a case study which is qualitative in outlook, the author employed the purposive sampling technique in which he handpicked the participants that were included in the sample. In this technique, participants are selected on the basis of the author’s judgement of their typicality (Chiromo, 2006). Thus, the researcher selected participants whom he deemed information-rich. The sample had a total of 13 participants. Such a small and manageable sample size allowed for thorough interviews that were in a position to

elicit in-depth information. Broken down, this sample consisted of 3 schoolteachers, 3 deputy heads, 3 heads, and 4 university lecturers. These were interviewed individually and qualitative data was elicited. Textual analysis accompanied and buttressed these individual interviews thereby allowing for triangulation of research findings.

Data analysis was done in accordance with the thematic approach, which focuses on explaining research findings and concepts through identification and description of themes reduced and deduced from qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, there was familiarisation whereby the author immersed himself in the data. Thereupon, the author embarked on theme identification, theme review, theme refinement, theme interpretation, and reportage.

Indigenisation Statement

Being a local educator (lecturer in Zimbabwean institutions of higher learning), the author collaborates and identifies with fellow Indigenous educators *viz* the teachers, deputy heads, heads, and lecturers who participated in the current study. Pursuant to the agenda for indigenising education in a postcolonial and globalising Zimbabwe, the author undertook this work to glean fresh insights from fellow Indigenous educators about the sustainability of Ubuntu as an Indigenous philosophy of education. These Indigenous practitioners are sincerely acknowledged and credited for the valuable insights that they contributed towards the development of this study.

Findings

The interview question was: What is your comment on the sustainability of the Ubuntu philosophy in a postcolonial but globalising Zimbabwe? The theme deriving from this question

is ‘*sustainability of the Ubuntu philosophy in a postcolonial but globalising Zimbabwe*’. Here is the key for participants’ contributions: *T* – teacher, *DH* – deputy head, *H* – head, and *L* – university lecturer.

To begin with, the 3 teachers’ comments are:

T₁: A sober and normal African country should adopt Ubuntu as the bedrock of education. Even the Ten Commandments are related to Ubuntu. People with Ubuntu will be shining stars in the global village as the philosophy itself conditions them to shun vice.

T₂: The philosophy of Ubuntu is sustainable in as much as the global village requires our contributions as Africans.

T₃: The philosophy of Ubuntu is viable in this age of globalisation since it prepares us as Africans to tolerate foreigners. Ubuntu propagates the oneness of humanity as it shuns racial and ethnic discrimination.

The philosophy of Ubuntu, thus, remains viable in a perpetually globalising Zimbabwe.

T₁ in particular relates Ubuntu to the Biblical Ten Commandments that prescribe how a God-fearing human being ought to behave. Ubuntu, therefore, emblematises the humanness of Zimbabweans as Africans in a perpetually globalising world. Contributions from *T₂* and *T₃* value social intercourse of peoples around the globe, which concurs with the oneness of humanity. This is embedded in the principle of communalism which, in itself, is entrenched in the philosophy of Ubuntu. In congruity with the ideal of African renaissance, this home-grown Ubuntu philosophy is worth revitalising in a postcolonial and globalising Zimbabwe.

Comments from the 3 deputy heads are:

DH₁: The philosophy of Ubuntu is quite relevant and sustainable because it gives us as Africans our real identity, with which we can tell who we are and what we are meant for.

DH₂: The philosophy of Ubuntu is relevant and useful because it unites individuals. There is a sense of identity as we cherish our own values and morals.

DH₃: To some extent education for Ubuntu is viable as it cultivates moral probity among learners. However, to some learners Ubuntu may not take root because they may have been adulterated and corrupted by the negative influences of globalisation.

The consensual position emerging from the foregoing responses is that the decolonial and decolonising philosophy of Ubuntu is sustainable as a guiding epistemology of education in contemporary Zimbabwe, and the overriding theme is ‘Ubuntu as a mark of Zimbabwean identity’ in a globalising world. However, *DH₃* exhibited a measure of scepticism about the viability of Ubuntu when they expressed that Ubuntu may not help some learners who would have been adulterated and corrupted by global forces. Nevertheless, the philosophy in question is overall inclined towards counteracting coloniality or colonial logic and the related neo-colonial forces that continue to grip Zimbabwean societies within the postcolonial dispensation. In view of this submission, one can advocate for the re-vitalisation of Ubuntu as a deconstructive, decolonising, de-rooting, and reconstructive African philosophy of education.

Comments made by the 3 heads are:

H₁ : With our vibrant philosophy of Ubuntu, we must interact with others but with our own culture in hand. Even during the inauguration of the president in Zimbabwe in November 2017, he (in his speech) touched on Ubuntu and the dignitaries who attended the inauguration ceremony took the philosophy across the globe so that the world comes to have the socio-philosophical view of Zimbabwe. Countries of the world might want to research on this philosophy. Ubuntu, thus, cascades to other parts of the globe where it ignites further inquiry.

H₂ : The philosophy of Ubuntu is sustainable because it gives us our identity as an African country. It differentiates us from foreigners. We must value this philosophy because it fortifies us as Africans against identity crisis.

H₃ : The viability of the philosophy of Ubuntu is being threatened by globalisation but if we stand up to our virtues and ethos as Africans then we are bound to see it become sustainable. That way we are destined to be successful...Considering the way we distributed our land in Zimbabwe, we went against the global forces, we went on to distribute our land because to us it matters. We should be fortified against being swallowed by the forces of globalisation if at all Ubuntu is to be viable. There are certain elements of our culture which matter, which we should be able to defend because these are the ethos, the virtues, the values which make us a people and we should be able to defend them in the face of the global forces.

The sustainability of Ubuntu as a philosophy of education is, thus, appreciated unanimously. The response from *H₁* implies that the philosophy of Ubuntu could be subjected to

a ‘global’ or ‘immortal’ conversation whereby it is offered to other people so that they interrogate it, thereby enhancing its feasibility and sustainability. *H₂* envisions the sustainability of Ubuntu in that this philosophy has the vast potential to fortify the young African indigene against adulteration and the concomitant identity crisis. In other words, *H₂* envisages the viability of the Ubuntu philosophy in that it fosters African identity among Africans. *H₃* is of the view that Ubuntu could be more sustainable when Africans stand their ground against the advancing forces of globalisation. Ideally, the emancipatory ideals embedded in Ubuntu should be cherished by the Zimbabwean society, especially within the postcolonial dispensation. On the strength of its decolonial, decolonising, and liberatory predispositions, the Ubuntu philosophy is deemed worthy of revitalisation in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular.

The 4 university lecturers also offered the following comments:

L₁: Virtues like respect, hard work, honesty, and other attributes of Ubuntu are universal, meaning that the philosophy itself is sustainable. We can fortify ourselves against being swallowed by the global village although we are a part of it. As Zimbabweans, we can borrow from the wider world but with Ubuntu we can guard against being swallowed by the global village. We can maintain our identity as Africans and still be part of the global village. The philosophy of Ubuntu has high chances of survival amidst the forces of globalisation because we can promote and expound it and still be a part of the global village.

L₂: While the debate on Ubuntu philosophy is quite contentious, in essence, this philosophy is quite relevant as a conduit to restore moral and character education. The key tenets of Ubuntu such as honesty, respect, love, and trust, among others, have the potential to develop more democratic and progressive citizens who can build better societies. Furthermore, through Ubuntu, African identity and legacy as responsible people may be appreciated provided it is taught by knowledgeable people.

L₃: Probably if we are looking at Ubuntu as a philosophy reflective of the desire to uphold humanness in whichever context, whichever group of people in a multicultural society, I find that worthwhile as a philosophy, at least the appreciation of the end product we target. Who is committed to Ubuntu? That will determine whether it will stand the tide of globalisation... is anybody committed to Ubuntu or it is mere rhetoric? Do we have the commitment from different groups of people in a multicultural society? If we look at it as reflective of a people desiring to come up with graduates who are sensitive to the ethos, the values of their given group, then it survives...

L₄: Ubuntu becomes relevant in giving us the link with our past identity, our past voice. The question could be re-phrased as: Can Ubuntu be the true African voice within the globalisation agenda? The answer will be a resounding 'yes'. The survival of Ubuntu lies in the survival of the African, thus, it is within the bosoms of the Africans. This philosophy should be adapted to the modern concepts. Like any system, it will get better if and when it is truly aware of things against which it should guard itself. When it becomes solipsistic, that is, when it becomes self-inclusive, it suffers isolation and in isolation it may suffer defeat (The danger of solipsism) but if it is a part of the immortal (global) conversation then it becomes sustainable. This Ubuntu philosophy is, thus, not a sacred cow. It should be debated and criticised.

The above participants are also in unanimous agreement that the Ubuntu philosophy is sustainable in an eternally globalising world. *L₁* and *L₂* in particular see the sustainability of Ubuntu through the role it plays in safeguarding African identity and humanness. Hence, the decolonial inclination of the Ubuntu philosophy is herein conspicuous. *L₃* is of the understanding that Ubuntu is sustainable because of its multicultural predisposition. Thus, if Ubuntu is to stand the tide of global forces, then it should be harnessed to uphold humanness in a multicultural kind of education. *L₄* stresses that the philosophy of Ubuntu is the true African voice within the globalisation agenda. He, therefore, underscores that Ubuntu is bound to survive in a globalising world as long as the African survives and especially if it is situated within the immortal conversation. Hence, the Ubuntu philosophy could be persistently debated upon so that it keeps abreast with change. The author of this article is already engaged in the immortal conversation that interrogates Ubuntu and in the process he is contributing to the re-vitalisation of the said philosophy. Advocacy for the re-vitalisation of Ubuntu, therefore, is supported by the observation that this decolonial philosophy is capable of safeguarding African identity, humanness, and multiculturalism.

Discussion of Findings

The findings strongly reveal that Ubuntu is sustainable as a philosophy of education in postcolonial and globalising Zimbabwe, a position which confirms Wuta's (2020) conclusion that Ubuntu is strategically positioned to continue giving worthwhile direction to education in Zimbabwe. However, a measure of skepticism with education for Ubuntu found expression in the minority of participants, insinuating that the said philosophy may not work out for some learners who might have been irretrievably adulterated and corrupted by the wayward forces of globalisation. Nevertheless, this skeptic standpoint is disconfirmed by Makuvaza and Gatsi (2014), who anticipate and predict that Ubuntu will assist in checking the advances of 'mimetic philopraxis'. With particular reference to Ramose (1999), mimetic philopraxis "is the uncritical imitation of the life of non-Africans" (p. 10), which has invaded especially the Zimbabwean youths of today. Therefore, the fact that Ubuntu is predisposed towards checking the advances of mimetic philopraxis connotes that this philosophy is sustainable as it readily harmonises with decoloniality.

The position that the Ubuntu philosophy is sustainable in an eternally globalising Zimbabwe concurs with Makuvaza (2008), who argues that with the philosophy of Ubuntu guiding education, Zimbabweans are in a position to safeguard their African identity and humanness and are able to resist being swallowed up in the global village. The view that Ubuntu is more sustainable when Africans stand their ground against the advancing forces of globalisation is also consistent with Makuvaza's (2008) fundamental argument that Ubuntu is a decolonial, decolonising, and liberatory philosophy full of potential to fortify Africans against being swallowed up in the global village. As the true African voice within the globalisation agenda, Ubuntu is sustainable because it fosters and emblematises the African identity and

humanity, respectively. This is consistent with Makuvaza and Gatsi's (2014) argument that Ubuntu as a philosophy of education is capable of checking the advances of 'mimetic philopraxis', which has invaded the youths of today.

As emerged from the current study, the Biblical Ten Commandments are favourably related to the Ubuntu philosophy. This is supported by Sibanda (2014), according to whom, the Biblical Commandment 'thou shall not kill' is consistent with the humanistic principle of Ubuntu, which recognises 'the sanctity of human life'. This humanistic aspect of Ubuntu is endorsed by Ndofirepi and Ndofirepi (2012) who state, "life in the African community is based on the philosophy of live-and-let-live" (p. 18), and is further affirmed by Nziramasanga (C. T. Nziramasanga, personal communication, September 20, 2017) who expounds the concept of 'bioethics', which, as entrenched in Ubuntu, also says 'do not kill'. Since education for Ubuntu imparts the humanistic principles that align with the Biblical Ten Commandments, therefore, Ubuntu is sustainable as a philosophy of education in contemporary and postcolonial Zimbabwe which continues to be afflicted by the negative influences of globalisation in the form of greed, vice, strife, and bloodshed.

This field inquiry also established that the sustainability of Ubuntu as a philosophy of education reclines in its resonance with the notion of 'oneness of humanity'. This communalistic oneness of humanity ideal concurs with Okeke's (2008) concept of 'cosmopolitan citizenship', which is exemplified by Socrates (circa 470-399 B.C.), a Greek idealist philosopher, who once said 'I am not an Athenian, or a Greek, but a citizen of the world'. The notion of cosmopolitan citizenship, therefore, harmonises with the communitarian view of the world, which extols the building of one tolerant global society. It can, therefore, be inferred that the Ubuntu philosophy is global in outlook since some of its principles are compatible with some Euro-Oriental ideals.

The view that Ubuntu is more sustainable when subjected to an ‘immortal’ or ‘global’ conversation is an endorsement of Wuta’s (2020) conclusion that this philosophy needs neither to be treated as a sacred cow nor kept in solipsism but to be persistently debated upon so that it keeps abreast with change. This call to subject the Ubuntu philosophy to a ‘global’ or ‘immortal’ conversation is with a view to enhancing its sustainability, a position which harmonises with a recommendation by Wuta (2020) that this philosophy be researched on and critiqued further so that it keeps abreast with change.

The multicultural predisposition of Ubuntu, which also makes it sustainable as a philosophy of education, concurs with Muchenje, Goronga, and Bondai’s (2013) recommendation that, “classroom pedagogy should draw examples from all students’ cultures” (p. 510). This penchant of Ubuntu towards multicultural ideals, therefore, is exigent for inculcating the ideals of harmonious living and oneness of humanity in learners at a tender age so that they grow up appreciating the fact that all human beings regardless of race or ethnicity do share equal membership of the world.

Conclusion

This inquiry reaffirmed the Ubuntu philosophy, which, from a literature point of view, works favourably well for a postcolonial Zimbabwe within the current world order driven by the forces of globalisation. Its findings warrant the conclusion that the Ubuntu philosophy is feasible and sustainable amidst the incessant Western-global influences. This conclusion confirms what has been raised in previous studies (as mentioned in the review of related literature) – the position that the home-grown Ubuntu philosophy is overall sustainable and worth revitalising in Sub-Saharan Africa in general, and Zimbabwe in particular. Though under criticism from some scholars, Ubuntu remains a viable, vibrant, and sustainable African philosophy with the virtues

and values that are harmonious with African identity, holistic education, bioethics, morality, humanism, communalism, multiculturalism, and oneness of humanity. This renders the Ubuntu philosophy way superior to the Western capitalist worldviews in the context of African education. Above all, Ubuntu is the true African voice within the globalisation agenda, it is a decolonial and decolonising philosophy of education for Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular.

Recommendations

The outgoing study, therefore, recommends the following:

1. Operationalisation of the Ubuntu philosophy be expedited as this home-grown ideology is well-positioned to salvage Zimbabwe's education system from the negative influences ushered through colonialism and globalisation, thereby giving worthwhile direction to education in Zimbabwe.
2. This reaffirmed philosophy of Ubuntu be customised to continue giving worthwhile direction to primary and secondary education so that it continues to raise complete individuals who are able to live and work productively whilst maintaining their African identity within a postcolonial but globalising Zimbabwe.
3. The Ubuntu philosophy be re-vitalised and continue being taught in teacher education institutions so that they continue to churn out ideal teachers for the 21st century and beyond, teachers who are intellectually-polished, morally-upright, and work-oriented – qualities which they then hand down to learners at school.

4. There could be ongoing research for further discourse on enhancing the sustainability of Ubuntu in accordance with the notion of immortal-global conversation, enabling the philosophy to keep abreast with change.

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