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THE FEASIBILITY OF *UNHU/UBUNTU* IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION LEARNING AREA (RILA) IN THE PRE-SERVICE TEACHER (PST) TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

Supervisor-supervisee relationship in research projects in the research and innovation learning area (RILA) is sometimes punctuated by animosity and blame game. Considering the heritage aspect, teaching-learning is supposed to be based on *Unhu/Ubuntu* principles including the need to treat each other with respect and dignity irrespective of age. *Unhu/Ubuntu* has become popular as scholarly activities advocate for cultural resuscitation and decolonising the ways Africans study, analyse and interpret African reality. Most scholars opt for an appraisal narrative of the concept as an educational philosophy. Scholarly attention is yet to examine the feasibility of the philosophy in the Western tainted and globalised pre-service teacher training (PST) purposes. Based on the social reconstruction theory, this article examined the feasibility of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in the context of supervisor-supervisee relationship in RILA for PST programmes at one teacher training institution (TTI) in Harare in Zimbabwe. The research approach is based on inductive qualitative illuminative case study that conducted face-to-face and focus-group discussions with purposively sampled key informants: lecturers, PSTs and administrators using open-ended questions. Grounded theory was employed as the method of coding and analysing data. Findings revealed the invisibility of *Unhu/Ubuntu* principles and; hence, the argument for the adoption of ‘transformative and emancipatory *Unhu/Ubuntu* rather than traditional version that was based on supervisors instilling fear in PSTs.

Key Terms: African philosophy, *Unhu/Ubuntu*, pre-service teacher (PST), research and innovation learning area (RILA), transformative and emancipatory *Unhu/Ubuntu*, social reconstruction theory

Introduction

In the spirit of decolonisation, scholarship mostly looked upon *Unhu/Ubuntu* with nostalgia in the hope that it may possibly provide the missing link and help address challenges in education in Zimbabwe and worldwide. Scholarly studies in Zimbabwe usually concentrate on the possibility of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in revitalising education and nourishing the perceived curriculum deficiencies (Samkange & Samkange, 1980, Nziramasanga, 1999). A brief review of related literature has indeed confirmed that scholarship from the 1980s to date indicated the likelihood of *Unhu/Ubuntu* going a long way in addressing challenges bedevilling Zimbabwe and the world (Nziramasanga, 1999; Hapanyangwi-Chemhuru & Makuvaza, 2014; Bondai & Kaputa, 2016).

Another generation of scholarship confirms the centrality of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in revitalising the Zimbabwean education system from early childhood education development (ECD) to higher education. This second generation of scholarship bases its argument on the results of the implementation of the philosophy in other countries, such as South Africa, the United States of America, Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Mozambique (Bolden, 2014, Hapanyangwi-Chemhuru & Makuvaza, 2014). Bondai and Kaputa (2016, p.12) confirm that their research is “an affirmation of *Unhu/Ubuntu* mainstreaming in education curricular from ECD to university level”. Similarly, Taringa (2019a) argues that the philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu* instils in citizens a sense of self-policing, which is crucial in reducing and eliminating corruption, unethical conduct, and unprofessionalism. While appreciating the stance of these generations of scholarship, this article departs from its predecessors by taking a step back and consider unpacking and repackaging *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophical principles to suit the new education conditions and; in particular, supervisor-supervisee relationship in the research and innovation learning area (RILA) for pre-service teacher training in Zimbabwe. RILA is the compulsory college-wide ‘3 in 1’ module to do with research methods and statistics as taught components while the research project is the operationalisation of acquired theory about research. In a research project component, a pre-service teacher is supervised by a college allocated supervisor who is a lecturer hence supervisor-supervisee relationship emerges. Some students face most of the problems in the research project or dissertation component when they are out of college on teaching practice (TP). This is the period when students are on attachment and therefore may fail to meet their supervisors due to either financial challenges, distance, or poor time management. Such scenarios are experienced year in and year out. Thus, the article sought to uncover the feasibility of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in the context of social reconstruction theory where both supervisors and supervisees would consider doing things differently in RILA.

Zimbabwean educators, policymakers and the public have heard enough about the suitability of the *Unhu/Ubuntu* in informing education in general. Employing the social reconstruction theory, the present authors set to examine whether the principles of the African philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu* can possibly inform Zimbabwean teacher education programmes with specific reference to RILA. The article sought to bring an alternative approach to the usual one that appraises and evaluates the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy. This pays heed to and extends Asante’s (1980) view that, as scholars, we should avoid unconscious adoption of concepts and their attendant conceptual frameworks which may be alien to our situations. In sync with Taringa

and Bishau (2015), this article considers the deconstruction and reconstruction of *Unhu/Ubuntu* before recommending it for adoption in education. The move is meant to avoid the possibility of erroneously recommending an educational philosophy that may not be compatible with Zimbabwean education. Educationists should carry out proper needs analysis of the situation on the ground in Zimbabwe and find repackaging strategies that suit the unique context. This resonates with Gwaravanda and Ndofirepi (2020) who argue that scholars of African philosophy are sometimes blinded by Eurocentric tendencies in practising philosophy hence the need to identify and overcome such problems. Thus, they insist on self-examination, self-criticism, and self-evaluation in the practice of African philosophy, which they consider unexplored in universities. The Zimbabwean education system is currently blamed for producing uncultured educated graduates (Nziramasanga, 1999, Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Makuvaza, 2014, Bondai & Kaputa, 2016). Hence, it is prudent at this point to find possibilities of producing cultured educated graduates as anticipated by stakeholders. The aim of the article is to uncover the principles of *Unhu/Ubuntu* that are visible in supervisor-supervisee relationship in RILA. Furthermore, through reconstruction theory, the article seeks for possibilities of deconstructing negative and antagonistic relationships and reconstructing a health supervisor-supervisee relationship based on mutual trust as espoused in the positive principles of *Unhu/Ubuntu*. The article is informed by two research objectives that are to: 1) uncover factors affecting supervisor-supervisee relationships in research projects conducted in the RILA 2) the extent to which *Unhu/Ubuntu* principles may foster friendly supervisor-supervisee relationship in the context of *Unhu/Ubuntu* and social reconstruction theory.

Theoretical Framework

The article is underpinned by the social reconstruction theory of an educationist, Theodore Brameld. It is a theory of change that offers a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It is a tool to identify links between desired change and sequence that will make it happen. The theory was, therefore, appropriate to apply in this research in which participants needed to change behaviour as supervisors and supervisees in their interaction in RILA.

The proponents of the social reconstruction theory, as noted in Zuga (1992), are Karl Max, George S. Counts (1889-1974), Theodore Brameld (1904-1987) and Paulo Freire (1921-1997). These philosophers believed that what was happening in schools was not real or reflective of the problems in society (Bode, 1933; Counts, 1932; Cremin, 1977; Dewey, 1916; Dewey & Child, 1933). To these philosophers, the school environment is artificial and; hence, a misrepresentation of the issues learners would confront in reality (Dewey & Childs, 1933). In sync with the principle of social reconstruction, they argue for the deconstruction and reconstruction of a new learning environment in schools through the construction of a school of experimentalism (Hullfish, 1933). According to Dewey (1916), schools should shape the experiences of the young so that, instead of reproducing current habits, they should improve the future. The implication is that the current ethical conduct and way of interaction by supervisors and supervisees are artificial and misrepresent the modern ethical system of education. To the philosophers, education in social reconstruction theory must be empowering and liberating and PSTs must invent and reinvent as they engage in problem solving.

Social reconstruction theory seeks to understand change and the rate at which it comes in societies which makes it handy in vetting the feasibility of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in RILA. This

theory of change comprehensively describes and illustrates how and why a desired change in ethical conduct and supervisor-supervisee interaction in RILA is expected to happen in a particular context. In this context, it is a change from the norm. The theory assists with the identification of the link between a desired change and the sequence that makes it happen. The degree of possibility for human creativity at any point in history corresponds to the level of change that is taking place. Change in the supervisor-supervisee relationship is imminent and inevitable and truly epochal. The culture of respect between the two in the supervisor-supervisee relationship is a sure pointer that, even when they are in the field, they will protect the dignity, rights and welfare of research participants. This will ensure that the PST's research is conducted responsibly with integrity and with no harm to communities. Change in the way supervisors and supervisees interact should not be merely one of dates or even administration, but rather of systems and even of conceptions of the nature of ethical contact in RILA. One important conception that ought to respond to change is the relationship defining supervisor and supervisee and all the frameworks that inform operations and conduct.

The theories of social change and social reconstruction are in sync with the transformation of ethical conduct and the supervisor-supervisee relationship in RILA. Kandemir (2021) argues that people are aware of the gap between what is being done and what needs to be done. This may imply that both supervisors and supervisees know the gap between their relationship and what is expected of it and they are the best in coming out with possible strategies.

Contextualising the study

There are several discourses on *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy. The discourses have to do with definitions, origins and relevance in education and in communities. These are captured in the discussion below.

Definitional Issues

It is imperative at this juncture that the article proffers a contextual definition of 'African philosophy' that conceptually guides the readers of this article. African philosophy is African thought that involves the theoretical questions raised by critical engagement in African cultural ideas. In this case, an educated person will have reached a high level of moral maturity, reasonableness and refinement (Wiredu, 2004). Such a person will have acquired virtues of honesty, faithfulness, dutifulness, and empathy for the well-being of others in their community. There are basically four trends of 'African philosophy', which are: ethnophilosophy, philosophical sagacity, nationalistic ideological philosophy and professional philosophy. In achieving the four, there are main branches that inform philosophy, namely metaphysics, epistemology, axiology, aesthetics and methodology and problems and opportunities of philosophising. Key philosophers who pioneered and led 'African philosophy' debates are Odera Oruka, Kwasi Wiredu, Julius Nyerere, John Mbiti and Leopold Senghor.

Similar to previous research works, the authors understand that the concepts 'African' and 'African philosophy' are not without challenges. Higgs (2011) notes that the adjective 'African' that scholarship attaches when talking about 'African philosophy' is crucial in a debate that attempts to establish a uniquely African order of knowledge. Ramose (2003) opines that the term 'Africa' or 'African' is contestable on at least two grounds. First, the name is not conferred by the indigenous people of Africa themselves. Second, the name does not by definition refer to histories of indigenous people inhabiting various parts of 'Africa'

from time immemorial. Thus, according to Ramose (2003), the name 'Africa' is geographically significant, but historically its meaning is questionable from the point of view of the indigenous African people. However, some philosophers regard an intellectual product as 'African' simply because it is produced or promoted by Africans (Mbiti, 1970; Kwame, 1992). Hence, they adopt a geographical criterion in their definition of the term 'Africa' in 'African philosophy' in which context 'African' may not necessarily be restricted to ethnicity. They regard African philosophy as the product of the contributions of Africans practising philosophy in the defined framework of the disciplines and its historical traditions.

Another criterion is a cultural one, which is used to determine what is meant by 'Africa' in 'African philosophy'. According to this criterion, a philosophy works in Africa if it directs its attention to issues concerning theoretical or conceptual underpinnings of 'African' people and communities. Therefore, philosophy is a cultural phenomenon in that philosophical thought is grounded in cultural experience. Thus, the study of the traditional 'African' world in terms of views, ideas, and concepts represents the unique substance of 'African philosophy'.

Apropos the term 'African philosophy', two conceptions of philosophy are prominent in debates. First, philosophy is taken as a rational and critical activity hence Ramose (2003) equates 'African philosophy' with a traditional worldview. In sync with this view, scholars such as Mbiti (1970) and Kwame (1992) maintain that traditional African world views constitute 'African philosophy'. These scholars take a broad definition of 'African philosophy' that encompasses world-views which are linked to practising ethno-philosophy. This broader definition of philosophy emphasises the specificity of the concepts of whatever is produced by African philosophers in the practice of ethno-philosophy. The view stands sharply against scholarship that takes the purist definition and defends the professional integrity of the definition against the popularisation by cultural nationalists.

According to Higgs (2011), the problem surrounding 'African philosophy' is not about meeting the criteria for either being 'African' or being 'philosophy' but the problem of dealing with 'the extent to which African philosophers' are able to put their intellect in the services of the struggle for the destiny of Africans. Therefore, the debate is not about whether contributors to the debate are 'African' born, or whether the question under consideration is authentically 'African' in a cultural sense. It is not even about whether what they are doing is pure philosophy applied or ethno-philosophy, social criticism, or whatever. The problem is whether the works enhance the livelihoods of Africans. In other words, the West does not philosophise in a different style or method to Africa, but rather their scholarship is attributable to an enormous resource base and funding which they use to universalise their philosophy. The West is concerned with philosophy for its own sake while Africa wants philosophy to address social issues where relevance and usefulness are important. Thus, Wiredu (1996) argues that African intellectuals who continue to revive and reinstate traditional thinking are doing disfavoured to Africa by pretending that traditional ways of thinking are still sufficient or even applicable to today's needs in Africa. To Wiredu, Africa is facing new problems and challenges that traditional ways of thinking are no longer able to address. Hence, African community-based education research and practices do not only attempt to revive and reinstate indigenous African knowledge systems and ignore the impact of modernity and industrialisation. It is for this reason that educational institutions are seen as location points to integrate the community. According to Letseka (2000), traditional morality is known for its concern for human welfare. To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others. It entails treating others with fairness and the hope that,

in turn, they will also be treated with fairness, which is crucial if instilled in RILA. Philosophy is therefore a conceptual response to basic human problems at different epochs.

Taking a leaf from the views above, while *Unhu/Ubuntu* is an old solution for new problems, we are of the opinion that it requires tweaking to respond to modern challenges effectively. To this end, there is a need for unpacking and repackaging *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophical principles in line with social reconstruction theory.

Discourses around *Unhu/Ubuntu*

Scholars have been battling with the definition, origins and relevance of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in education (Lephallala, 2012; Bolden, 2014; Coetzee & Roux, 2002; Tutu, 1999, Samkange & Samkange, 2012; Nziramasanga, 1999). There is scholarship that argues about whether Africans have their own philosophy, whether they philosophise and whether they have the requisite skills to philosophise (Etieyobo, 2017; Mawere 2015; Okere, 2005; Oyewumi, 1997). They view African philosophy as the same as Eurocentric philosophy in terms of methodology and outcome. They place emphasis on the sameness of Afrocentric philosophy and Eurocentric philosophy. They feel that the Eurocentric mindset is universal since it discovered the way the world works and laid the foundation of thought. All that Africans need is therefore to add their own ideas on top of the already laid philosophical foundation. Eurocentric theories become tools of hegemony as they are applied universally. This view assumes that European experiences define what is to be human (Etieyobo, 2017; Mawere, 2015; Okere, 2005; Oyewumi, 1997). On the other side, there is scholarship that opposes this view and argues for the need to ground African philosophy on an authentic African foundation that stands independent of Eurocentric thinking. According to this scholarship, African philosophy should develop its own methodology, content and form so that it warrants the adjective 'African'. This should be the basis of a reflective and critical effort to think in an indigenised African situation beyond the confines of Eurocentric concepts and categories (Serequeberhan, 1997). The philosophy should interrogate African conditions and identity as a basis of philosophical argument that should not in any way mirror Eurocentric philosophy. It should develop its own paths, using its own concepts, theories, categories and principles that are grounded in African thought. It ought to reflect on African experiences, articulate African worldviews and accommodate African cultures without necessarily employing either fragmentation or ethnocentric thinking. To this scholarship, simply rejecting universalism in favour of relativism is not enough to demonstrate pluralism. Particularism in the same way can be pluralism. Pluralism embraces several African cultures by way of drawing comparisons, deducing common elements and using the elements for both philosophical reflection and reconstruction. The debates remained unresolved in their re-discoursing of African philosophy. In other words, African philosophy shares a lot with other philosophies across the world but should stand as an autonomous discipline that can address African realities and experiences without using Eurocentric standards (Campbell, 1985; Serequeberhan, 1997; Gwaravanda & Ndofirepi, 2020). It is not the aim of this article to attempt to resolve these controversies, but simply to consider them in contextualising the feasibility of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in fostering quality research activities in Zimbabwean PST education. The article settles for option two in which, though *Unhu/Ubuntu* has been universalised, it should stand as an autonomous philosophy that is packaged to allow the transformation and the reconstruction of the complementary and friendly supervisor and supervisee relationship in the RILA.

Lephalala (2012) views *Ubuntu* as complex, elusive and multifaceted. It mirrors the multiple and shifting nature of African society and human relationships. Bolden (2014) describes it as a social philosophy based on care, community harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness that express the fundamental interconnectedness of human existence. Post-colonial and post-apartheid leaders, amongst others Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Thabo Mbeki, considered it a philosophy of peace and renaissance that helped Africans to re-engage African values. The three positions are testimonials of relativity in the philosophy which may open loopholes for abuse.

Unhu/Ubuntu is strictly African, although parallels have been drawn from other societies including the Chinese philosophy of *jen*, the Filipino philosophy of *loob* and the Russian philosophy of *obschina* (Bolden, 2014). Levinas and Ricoeur show that *Unhu/Ubuntu* has no comparable word in the English language except for ‘humanness’; hence *Unhu/Ubuntu* is African in origin. Bolden (2014, p.1) describes it as “...an alternative to individualistic and utilitarian philosophies that dominate the West.” *Ubuntu*, translated as humanness in English, is a Zulu/Xhosa word that has parallels in many other African languages. The term ‘*Unhu/Ubuntu*’ is suggested to have been Bantu in origin though it is now shared across the African continent.

Coetzee and Roux (2002) argue that the use *Ubuntu* to guide education systems is part of African historical reconstruction, response and challenge to scholars who think that Africans have no philosophy and cannot philosophise. It demonstrates that they do and have the requisite skills to philosophise. According to Roux (2002), curriculum terrain is punctuated by ideological struggles and for the sake of liberation, those who bore the burden of learning under an imposed Western epistemological paradigm argue for the transformation of the curriculum. Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999) argues that *Ubuntu* is a gift Africa gives to the world and, along with other scholars, called for its wider application beyond African borders. In resonance, former United States president, Bill Clinton, advocated for and promoted *Ubuntu* philosophy through his foundation as well as in his high-profile speeches in the USA and United Kingdom (UK) (Bolden, 2014).

Samkange and Samkange (2012) argue that *Ubuntu* is used to define an educated Zimbabwean. The Nziramasanga Report (Nziramasanga, 1999) suggested *Ubuntu* as appropriate for Zimbabwean education and training. While Samkange and Samkange (2012) add that a new philosophy in education does not only mean introducing new programmes, but a changing mindset and moving away from Eurocentric approaches of defining an educated African person. Yet no efforts have been made to reconstruct supervisor and supervisee relationships and ethical conduct in the RILA based on *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophical principles and in the context of social reconstruction theory. Scholarship argues for recentring African values, and that Africans should reclaim self-belief, pride and confidence (Asante, 2007; Letseka, 2008; Metz, 2009; Wa Thiongo, 2009; Chitumba, 2013). These scholars aim to influence African education through recentring African values. Similarly, Lepalala (2012), Shumba (2011), Museka and Madondo (2012) and (Khomba, 2011) opine that *Ubuntu* is an ethical and moral framework of transition to sustainable living that is based on principles of collective and collectivist agency, which are essential for behaviour management and character formation that may contribute to sustainable lifestyles.

Methodology

This article used a qualitative study which enabled an in-depth understanding of the applicability of *Ubuntu* in the RILA at one teacher training institution in Zimbabwe. A single case study design of one institution and six departments was singled out. Purposive sampling was used to select data-rich key informants. These were identified as supervisors (lecturers), supervisees (pre-service teachers) and administrators (research coordinator, head of department and chairperson Centre for Teacher Education and Material Development (CTEMD)). Data were collected using a triangulation of both document analysis and qualitative one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions.

The data was collected in two phases:

- i) Phase one was concerned with documentary analysis where the marked research projects, mark guides, college policy documents, CTEMMD handbook and ethical consideration and professionalism checklist documents were critically analysed through content and discourse analysis. The documents were assessed focusing on their traits of *Ubuntu* and ethical compliance. The document analysis checklist checked on the visibility of values of *Ubuntu* like respect for self, others and systems, the privacy of research sites and participants, validation and member-checking, permission to undertake research, consent form completion avoidance of plagiarism.
- ii) Phase two was based on combined one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions based on interview guides with open-ended questions. The details of the procedures are outlined below. Individual face-to-face interviews were held with administrators and a focus group discussion with supervisors and supervisees based on an interview guide with open-ended questions. The researcher interviewed key informants, namely lecturers, pre-service teachers, research coordinators and an officer from CTEMMD. The interview focused on the following themes: values of *Ubuntu* like respect for self, others, and systems; privacy of research sites and participants; validation and member-checking; permission to undertake research; consent form completion, and avoidance of plagiarism.

The above two methods of collecting data were triangulated in generating data for the article. The choice of instruments depended on the purpose of the study, which was an exploratory one, and determined the kind of data to be generated, presented, and analysed. The study purposively sampled one lecturer, who was also a supervisor, from each of the six departments: Department of Foundations of Education, Professional Studies and Contemporary Subjects, Research and Innovation, Vocational Technical Education, Science and Mathematics, Department of Humanities. Six (6) PSTs were purposively sampled from the departments which made a total of six (6) PSTs. In addition, three administrators, the Head of Department and Coordinator, RILA and a member from the Centre of Teacher Education and Materials Development (CTEMMD) who were or had been involved in quality assurance in RILA brought the number of participants to fifteen (15).

Table 1: Summary of Biodata of Participants:

Code	Designation	Department	Age	Qualifications	Experience (years)
Centre for Teacher Education and Materials development (CTEMD)					
Masvika	Chairperson	CTEMD	+65	PhD	+30
College Administrators					
Madzima	Head of Department, Research	Research and Innovation Learning Area	54	Master of Education	+25
Murau	Coordinator	Research and Innovation Learning Area	43	Master of Education	+20
College Supervisors' Perspectives					
Maga	Supervisor	Foundations of Education	49	Master of Education	+20
Mafa	Supervisor	Professional Studies	65	Master of Education	+30
Mika	Supervisor	Humanities	45	Master's Degree	+20
Shuvai	Supervisor	Technical& Vocational Education	50	Master's Degree	+25
Shamba	Supervisor	Science Education	47	Master's degree	+20
Tafa	Supervisor	Mathematics Education	52	PhD	+25
Pre-Service Teachers					
Ticha	Supervisee	Humanities	22	Post A level	2 nd year
Roland	Supervisee	Technical vocational education	23	Post O level	3 rd year

Roy	Supervisee	Physical education and sport	22	Post O level	3 rd pear
Fadzai	Supervisee	Science	32	Post A level	2 nd year
Farai	Supervisee	Mathematics	20	Post O level	3 rd year
Maka	Supervisee	Tourism & Hospitality Management	23	Post O level	3 rd year

In phase one, documents were critically content and discourse analysed based on the designed document analysis guide. In phase two, combined interviews, both face-to-face and focus group discussions, were undertaken with participants *in situ*. The study used grounded theory as a method and a coding scheme. Web-like data analysis helped in mounting sub-themes, themes and global themes in building a coherent story for reporting on the feasibility of *Ubuntu* in revitalising RILA.

Presentation of Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study are packaged in five global themes based on the pre-set categories that formed the framework of operations in RILA in the selected institution. The themes are supervisor-supervisee allocation process and procedures, supervisor-supervisee conduct and relationship, assessment and moderation modalities, regulatory policy framework, and ethical consideration and professionalism. The first phase presents and analyses data from documentary analysis and the second phase presents and analyses data from one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions based on above noted themes. The themes combine both documentary analyses and interview results.

a) Supervisor-supervisee allocation processes and procedures

i) Documentary analysis

The supervisor-supervisor allocation processes and procedures were based on documentation. There were lists of supervisees allocated to each supervisor. It was evident in the allocation lists that candidates were deployed to supervisors from their departments mainly. Rarely were candidates deployed to lecturers from faculty-wide courses like Professional Studies and Contemporary Subjects and Educational Foundations and Research and Innovation. This was for easy supervision and follow-ups when they were deployed to lecturers in their main subject areas who knew them. The allocation lists were posted as bulk emails on mail lists and the website for every lecturer and student to access as a way of ensuring transparency. The hard copies of the allocation lists were posted at strategic points such as the reception, office window of the research coordinator and Head of Department where they could be accessible 24 hours a day and seven days a week. The number of supervisees for each supervisor depended on enrolment size and number of staff. The members of staff who had posts of responsibility such as Heads of Department (HODs), Lecturers in Charge (LICs),

programme coordinators, were allocated fewer supervisees to allow for time for meetings and office work. From the allocation lists, it appeared that the allocation of supervisees between those with posts of responsibility and ordinary lecturers was at a ratio of 1:3. Supervisees who required special attention like those who failed or had deferred from previous groups were allocated to lecturers with posts of responsibility for easy follow-up since they had fewer allocations.

ii) Interviews

Upon being asked about the level of transparency on supervisor-supervisee allocation, the lecturers gave the following narrations:

Maga cited a lack of transparency saying, *“The Lecturers-In-Charge (LICs) take the cream of students yet they are ones who take smaller numbers compared to the ordinary lecturer.”* The LICs had posts of responsibility.

Mafa, Tafa and Mika cited, *“... overwhelming, ...unreasonable numbers, ...ranging between 22 and 23. respectively”*.

Tafa added that supervisees, *“... came for supervision ‘raw’ from RILA that I will be starting from zero”*.

Shuvai and Shamba both echoed the complaint that *“I am overwhelmed, I am reaching burnout.”*

The lecturers were disgruntled and blamed administrators despite that it was explained that those with posts of responsibility would take lesser allocations and that they were allocated special cases. The content words, “overwhelmed, unreasonable and burnout”, imply that the supervisors were feeling overloaded. In line with reconstruction theory, there is a need for an adjustment in the way deployment is done in RILA. The finding resonates with Mupa (2023) who highlights that postgraduate Zimbabwe Open University supervisors are overloaded and overstretched with supervising so many students which eats into one on one interaction with the supervisees. The same sentiment was echoed by Hudson (2016) who noted that poor grounding on students as exacerbated by in some cases inexperienced, overburdened and poorly motivated supervisors.

On the other hand, students (supervisees) blamed lecturers (supervisors) for neglecting them as highlighted in the narrations.

Ticha indicated, *“I got to my allocated supervisor with enthusiasm... the supervisor is not in the same spirit and mood. I got dejected.”*

Roland, in agreement said, *“I later realised that nothing will ever come as a guideline and I left in despair.”*

Roy, showing desperation, expressed, *“Instead, I sought for services of a side-supervisor.”*

Fadzai, on the contrary argued, *“I am the group manager together with the supervisor. It is going on well.”*

Farai desperately complained, *“We are still waiting to hear from the supervisor, but we are already working on our own.”*

Maka complained, *“I got back to the research section to ask for a change of supervisor. I had been deployed to my mother who is coincidentally a lecturer.”*

The content words, “dejected, despair and desperate” and the phrase, “services of a side supervisor” are evidence that PSTs were in a hopeless situation. The sentiments raised by participants in RILA demonstrate supervisors’ lack of commitment to duty and; thus, negates *Ubuntu/Unhu* as a social philosophy based on care, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness that express the fundamental interconnectedness of human existence. A cooperative spirit, hospitality and devotion to the welfare of family and community noted by Nziramasanga (1999) is missing. In line with social reconstruction theory, the participants should consider complementary relationships. However, one supervisee declared that she had been mistakenly deployed to her mother thus displaying a high level of integrity, which is in line with *Unhu/ Ubuntu*. The scenarios are evidence of supervisors’ lack of motivation and commitment to duty. The finding adds more evidence to Manderson et al. (2017) who established that poor pay may compel supervisors to multi-task to supplement income which in turn is limiting their capacity to provide effective and timely student support system.

On the other hand, the administrators were helplessly watching the situation as implied in the narratives below:

Murau vehemently protested, *“We will keep on pressing for the filling of vacant posts. Otherwise, the relationship between lecturers and PSTs keeps on deteriorating as lecturers get strained.”*

Madzima added, *“We just leave it to time when posts are unfrozen so that we recruit more lecturers.”*

Similarly, Masvika helplessly said, *“Regarding recruitment matters, we have not much control. It is the responsibility of the Public Service Commission (PSC).”*

Supervisors and administrators are yet to be “caring, humble, thoughtful, considerate, understanding..., hospitable and socially sensitive” (Nziramasanga, 1999, Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Makuvaza, 2014). In line with *Unhu/Ubuntu*, in which people should do to others what they would want them to do unto them, and social reconstruction theory, change of allocation ratio of administrators and ordinary lecturers, like bringing it down to 1:2 from 1:3, may reduce the lecturers’ load.

b) Supervisor-supervisee relationships

i) Document analysis

The documentation of the code of conduct guiding the supervisor-supervisee relationship was accessible on the college website. The document was reinforced by a workshop conducted for supervisors, supervisees and administrators before each group started undertaking research projects. In the document, the supervisor-supervisee relationship was based on mutual respect, transparency, accountability and honesty. Supervision was blended both virtual and

face-to-face. The supervisor-supervisee only would meet physically on the dates indicated on the college calendar. The supervisors and supervisees were reminded to declare if they were related to each other. This was to make sure that supervision would be objective. The supervisor would be the mentor who should report at given checkpoints on the supervisees' progress or lack of it. The supervisors would serve in *loco parentis*. If there was no progress in two calendar months from the day of deployment to that supervisor, both supervisor and supervisee were to alert the office of the RILA coordinator in writing. The written correspondence would detail and account for the lack of progress and suggest ways forward.

iii) Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

The participants, when asked to assess the supervisor-supervisee relationship considering the principles of *Ubuntu*, said:

Maga grumbled, *"PSTs are cheats. They tell me that they have been looking for me all day and they could not find me."*

Mafa, in agreement, narrated, *"One of the PSTs told me that he misread my name and he went to another lecturer for supervision until he finished his research project. This is evidence of dishonesty."*

Tafa also recounted, *"I received the list of my allocation, but the students are not forthcoming. I kept on hunting for them but only 6 of the 9 candidates reported for supervision. It means the other 3 are not serious. They are going to pay the price."*

Mika similarly reported, *"One of PSTs told me in my face that she is prepared to pay me in cash or in kind."*

Shuvai further recounted, *"One of the candidates told me to, ...do her a favour and provide extra tuition and that she will pay me for the extra service?"*

Shamba also narrated, *"One of my students said, ...do you not have a ready-made research output? We can talk. Please help me."*

The narrations above are evidence that supervisors, who were also lecturers, blamed students for being unethical. The PSTs were regarded as dishonest, unfaithful, untrustworthy, lazy, and tempting lecturers. On the other hand, lecturers regarded themselves as victims of all these vices. In so doing, students were viewed as failing to uphold ethical values and virtues of honesty, faithfulness, dutifulness, and empathy for the well-being of others in their community as noted by Ramose (1999). The findings are evidence that some supervisees are not satisfied with supervision they are getting. The reason for fear by students may be because of the fact that the students are underprepared in terms of research skills and have inadequate academic writing capacity (Bacwayo et al, 2017 & Okoduwa et al. 2018, Motsi & Newlin, 2021, Hudson, 2016 & Dimitrova, 2016). Most students in such circumstances drop out or fail to complete their research projects in stipulated time (Naimi and Dhanapal, 2015) & Bitzer, 2011). Hence, the finding adds more evidence to Mupa (2023) who recommends intensive training workshops for supervisors to provide them with the fundamentals for mentoring and coaching candidates into producing quality research throughputs. In addition, Manyike (2017) calls for some level of proficiency as requirement for supervisors in general

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so that they see over and beyond the processes and to assist the candidates to complete research projects as per the expected standards.

On the other hand, students' narrations are mixed as some are comfortable while others are disgruntled.

Ticha grudgingly expressed, *"Some of these lecturers are just showing off for nothing. They are frustrated by universities now they want to frustrate us."*

Roland acknowledged, *"When I met my supervisors for the first time I felt anxious. But I am now comfortable with my supervisor."*

Roy similarly narrated, *"I was once told that it is not surprising to fail in a research project which frightened me, but to me, it turned out to be the opposite. We have a healthy communicative relationship."*

Fadzai concurred and said, *"I took time looking for my supervisor, but we now have a warm relationship."*

Farai, on the contrary, expressed that, *"When I electronically sent my document to my supervisor, she did not even acknowledge receiving it. When I called her, she told me that it was ok, she would get back to me soon. And the soon is forever."*

Maka angrily said that, *"Ummmm! Some of the comments that we get from these supervisors are so demoralising. I got a comment that reads, 'Is this your idea of a research proposal? Please follow the research proposal template at the end of the research booklet on the college website.'"*

PSTs raised mixed sentiments about supervisor-supervisee relationships expressing frustration, demoralisation, and some negativity. However, some supervisees acknowledged that they were getting along with their supervisor though they started off with a negative attitude. The narrations point to evidence that there was a mixed bag of lecturers' attitudes just like Gatawa (1990) talked of a mixed bag of teacher qualifications. Some supervisors dampened the PSTs' spirit and made them feel demoralised and frustrated as evidenced by the frequency of the words, 'fear, frighten and frustrate.' The scenarios refute an embodiment of values of the spirit of oneness, and brotherhood that were noted as part of *Ubuntu* by Museka and Madondo (2012). There is a need for transformative change and to diffuse the continued polarisation between lecturers and PSTs. According to Couros (2015), it is important for participants to know that there is a gap between what they are doing and what they need to do. The student anguishing voices in the above scenarios reveal supervisors' failure to use pedagogical approach that is student centred that in-turn trains students to be critical thinkers (Swai, 2019). The lack in supervisors result in the students failing to manage criticism from supervisors where they consider criticisms as attack. Instead, constructive criticism is a teaching and learning component which is foundational for attitude building to the research work professional development (Mupa, 2023). When students have so much fear, mistrust in their supervisors and have no skills development they may be tempted to plagiarise hence observation by Mupa (2023) that plagiarism has become a virus. Plagiarism

is especially worse when there are institutional challenges like inaccessibility of anti-plagiarism software.

In acknowledgement of the animosity between supervisors and supervisees, the administrators gave the following narrations:

Madzima reported that *“There is bad blood between some supervisors and their supervisees. We have lined up workshops and seminars in the coming year 2024 for ethical and professional conduct between the parties during research project undertaking.”*

Murau added *“Some lecturers who faced disciplinary action always said that the students tempted them. The students come and complain that the lecturers are sexually harassing them or seducing them. Students insist that they are misread. They have no hidden intentions whatsoever.”*

Masvika wrapped up saying, *“We have realised a gap in supervision skills and attitudes after the needs analysis that was undertaken in 2023.”*

Thus, *Ubuntu* sensibility is yet to permeate the epistemological, axiological and ontological underpinnings of the Zimbabwean education system (Makuvaza, 2014). The attitude shown by participants is a sign that RILA is still a foreign enterprise that needs decoloniality and change through embracing *Ubuntu*. This is in line with Taringa and Bishau (2015) who argue that the current conception of *Ubuntu* has been corrupted by Western individualism hence the lack of complementarity between supervisor and supervisee relationship. The scenarios above refutes Mafa and Mapolisa’s (2016) conceptualisation of supervision as the role of guiding the student guiding their research aspirations with supervisor as mid-wife and the supervisee as the pregnant woman in a relationship which lead to the birth of quality research output.

c) College Regulatory Policy Documents

i) Documentary analysis

There was a college policy document with important regulatory pieces that guided operations. Of interest to this article were the following guideline statements:

- ii)** Plagiarised work, late and non-submission as well as unsupervised works are scored zeros (0);
- iii)** Research proposals and research projects should be passed each separately and are part of coursework which is a passport for entry into the final examination. The components are in partial fulfillment of the Diploma and Bachelor of Education;
- iv)** The candidate who fails a research project changes the research title and starts all over again with a new research title and newly allocated supervisor who should be either an HOD or LIC from their Department. The condition is different from one who defers studies who shall continue with the same research title and supervisor unless there are challenges that warrant reallocation to another supervisor.

The above-noted guidelines are a frame of reference for supervisor-supervisee interaction. The college policy document was available on the website. The regulatory guidelines set the ethical framework that called for moral standard guidelines. To make the regulatory

guidelines operational, each candidate upon enrolling in the institution was made to read, understand, and sign a tear-off and return it to records as a commitment to abide by the regulations.

v) Interview and Observation

Supervisors, supervisees and administrators expressed their narratives in line with the college policy guidelines. The views are implied in the engagement captured below:

Maga explicitly stated, *“I am guided by the policy framework that an unsupervised research project is zero (0). So, if they do not come for supervision, I simply pull out the clause and use it against them. I do not hesitate.”*

Mafa followed up and said, *“Also, there is no lone visit whenever PSTs come for consultation. Some of them are so tempting. I do not want to be put into problems.”*

Tafa also expressed that, *“I stand by the rule that, plagiarised research project or proposal is awarded a zero (0). If a candidate plagiarises or does not secure their work enough then I have no choice but to award a zero (0).”*

Mika added, *“Also, guys remember that it is a zero for the one who plagiarised and the one whose work has been plagiarised. This is the same with late and non-submission which also yields a zero (0).”*

Shuvai was adamant that, *“Yaa! Candidates should remember that they can only proceed with teaching practice after having scored 50%+ in the research proposal assignment. The +50% score is proof that they have acquired baseline research skills to undertake the research project during TP attachment.”*

Shamba explained, *“Unsupervised research project and proposal does not mean it is unsupervised but rather that it has not been supervised by college allocated supervisor. I am left with no choice except to award a zero (0) to the candidate that had not been featured for supervision.”*

From the discussions on regulatory policy framework guidelines, instead of participants fostering a healthy relationship, they concentrate on the negative side of the clauses that set the participants in animosity. Instead of the framework policing both supervisor-supervisee into maintaining ethical conduct, it was used as a tool for disempowering the supervisees. The supervisors seemed to ignore the condition that the non-working supervisor-supervisee relationship should be put into writing and get to the relevant office within the maximum period of two (2) calendar months from the date that the supervisor was allocated that supervisee. All the supervisors who were interested in were awarded a zero (0), barring PSTs from proceeding for TP attachment and making their experience unpleasant. This violates the virtues of mutual social responsibility, mutual assistance, trust, unselfishness, caring and embodied in *Ubuntu* (Khomba, 2011) and; hence, there is a need for change. Similarly, a zero (0) for those who plagiarised and the ones who had their work plagiarised encouraged selfishness and individualism. Thus, the concept of unreasonable generosity in which

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candidates who gave research projects to assist their peers failed for negligence and not securing their work enough to avoid being plagiarised. The supervisors concentrate on using the guiding framework to punish students rather than use it as checklist frame to reflect on how they conduct supervision business. The sentiment negates the conceptualisation of supervision echoed by Wood and Louw (2018) which is intensive, interpersonally focused one-on-one relationship between supervisor and supervisee. The professional relationship should lead to supervisee's professional growth into a mature researcher.

Upon being asked how they perceived the RILA policy guidelines, the students gave the following narratives:

Ticha complained, *"The policy framework regulatory pieces are just technicalities to knock us students out of the research game."*

Roland concurred and said, *"My supervisor always says, it is not about how intelligent am I but rather how disciplined am I that I follow instructions and meet deadlines."*

Roy, in addition, explained that, *"The policy says, even if I am supervised by another lecturer in college as long as the lecturer is not allocated to me originally in the allocation document my project will still get a zero (0)."*

Fadzai grumbled, *"They insist that each of the two parts, research project and proposal should score at least a 50%+ passed separately."*

Farai narrated, *"I, later on, devised a plan as a group representative to get a cardboard box and collect all my colleagues' research proposals and dropped the box off at the reception. Luckily, the receptionist accepted."*

Maka remonstrated, *"What is special about the research proposal that bothers a person that they cannot go on TP attachment without passing it?"*

Murau, the administrator, acknowledged helplessly that, *"... there is always animosity kind of relationship between the supervisors and supervisees when the regulatory policy pieces are breached."*

Madzima added, *"There is a blame game, PSTs blame supervisors and LICs while lecturers blame students that they wait until the last minute when they are also under pressure with other duties."*

Masvika expressed, *"As a quality assurance body, we always avail funding for policy sensitisation workshops. This is to avoid a hide-and-seek scenario."*

The excerpts illustrate the negation of *Ubuntu* principles that are anchored on respect for others, human dignity, compassion, awareness of the needs of others, kindness, courtesy, consideration, and friendliness (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2014). This negation refutes ontological primacy to the community espoused in, "Your pain is my pain, my wealth is your wealth, and your salvation is my salvation" (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Makuvaza, 2014, p. 8). In this case, the supervisors were not their supervisees' keepers. In such scenarios, people question the "mercy and generosity" that Mandela (1994, p. 542) said exists in every heart.

The supervisors still needed to learn to love. The scenarios contradicts Mafa and Mapolisa (2016) that research supervision was enjoyable and satisfying seeing students developing professionally and grow into independent researchers.

d) Assessment and Moderation Policy

i) Documentary analysis

At the end of the research handbook, there is an appendix on the assessment and moderation which informs the processes. Its guidelines stipulate that supervisors should assess their supervision allocation list and declare vested interest if there is a need to do so. Research projects and proposals were assessed according to the set guidelines (criterion-referenced). The supervisor was not necessarily the assessor of the research proposal and research project. Plus 10% of the projects and proposals should be moderated. All scores in the 54% and below and distinctive regions would attract moderation. Also, when the assessor and moderator's difference was +5, it would require a third assessor to be approved by the college academic board (CAB). The third assessor would be given a clean document for assessment. Thereafter, two scores that were not more than 5 scores apart would be averaged and the result would constitute the score for the project or proposal.

There was also an external quality assurance moderation done by external examiners from a university to which all teachers' colleges were affiliated. Again, not less than 10% of the research proposals and projects would be moderated by an external examiner from teacher training institutions outside the one under examination. In this case, all projects and proposals that would be 54% and below or distinction ones were externally examined, which means they would be assessed by three examiners, two internal and one external. For all research proposals and projects assessed by the external examiner, the external examiner's score would be final.

i) Interviews and focus group discussions

Upon being asked about transparency, accuracy, and fairness of assessment and moderation modalities, the participants had this to say:

Maga complained, "Some of my students submit their projects for marking after the due date. They know very well that late submission is as good as non-submission. The two yields zeros (0)."

Mafa clarified, "In most cases, those candidates that are difficult to follow up during supervision are indeed those that either submit after the due date or fail to score 50%+. There is usually a correlation between difficulty in supervision and scoring low marks."

Tafa explained further, "I understand the mark guide descriptors. Sometimes it just happens that my score and the moderator's or the first marker's score have a difference of 10+ marks. But it is not always the case."

Mika also added, "We can read the same document differently because we concentrate on different things in a document. To some, if the methodology

is coherent then it is alright, I give a 70%+. But if the methodology is not logical it is pushed down into the 50s.”

Shuvai narrated, *“These guys sometimes appear like they are paid by the students. There are some issues that are glaring. That project that I showed you that day (referring to one of the participants). Even the structure could not follow the institutional template. How could an assessor award a distinction for such shoddy work? It may mean that we assess differently with the same mark guide.”*

Shamba opined, *“What I realised is that there are supervisors themselves that pretend to be naïve, yet they know exactly what they will be doing. They frighten their colleagues into simply confirming their initial score. Or simply connive with the moderators to confirm some scores. It is very unethical and unprofessional.”*

From the above discussion, it seems research projects were sometimes referred to as the third marker because the gap between marker and moderator was ten (10) and above. This was one way where lecturers’ integrity was tested and sometimes found wanting. The crucial element of the quality of being a human being, good disposition towards others, and being as Bondai and Kaputa (2016) cherished was missing in the personality of some of the lecturers who deliberately made commissions and omissions in awarding scores. In the same vein, supervisors should take heed from Motsi and Newlin (2021) that, supervisory relationships are difficult, dynamic and complex and may comprise conflicts because students are different when it come to work ethic behaviour, age, language, culture, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds which make them differently abled.

Upon being asked about transparency, accuracy, and fairness of assessment and moderation modalities, the PSTs expressed their narrations as below:

Ticha expressed, *“I just know that a lecturer marks the project. I am not sure whether the marking is standardised that if they are given the same dummy, they score it uniformly.”*

Roland narrated, *“I heard my friend saying, there are some students who pay lecturers for more marks in the research proposals and projects. It is true because there are some of us who get higher scores even on undeserving work-pieces.”*

Roy voiced, *“Some students even go to the extent of having affairs with lecturers whom I know in a phenomenon known as, a thigh’ for a mark.”*

Fadzai groused, *“There was an assignment that I felt that I researched and worked on very well, to my surprise I got my usual score of 60%.”*

Farai explained, *“If you can look for it at the end of the research handbook you will see it. The descriptors are so clear that you can self-assess.”*

Maka noted *“Every time we get assignments back, there is someone complaining about the mark. Also, the comments that we receive are not*

encouraging at all. Yet these are the people who teach us that the comments we give learners should not put them off.”

There is evidence of ‘politics’ in the allocation of marks and misconceptions that are pointers to irregularities. This resonates with the administrator’s claim that they received cases of unethical conduct. Hence, the assessment guide rarely serves a meaningful purpose. The irregularities and discrepancy in mark allocation resonates with Motsi and Newlin (2021) who noted unethical behaviour by supervisors that include favouritism and indirect communication.

The sentiments raised by lecturers and students above resonate with those from administrators as indicated in the following narrations:

Murau explained, *“Marking and moderation are the college’s core business. Lecturers continuously undergo capacity development in the area of marking and moderation.”*

Madzima added, *“It is unfortunate that we keep on receiving cases of unethical and unprofessional dealing in regard to marking and moderation.”*

Masvika similarly said, *“The centre continues to allocate funding towards capacity development of lecturers in regard to the crucial area of marking and moderation procedure. This just like any other areas, if not professionally executed, will compromise the quality of the research output.”*

Honest, trustworthiness, and objectivity expected in assessment and moderation seemed to be invisible in RILA. Lecturers sometimes succumbed to students’ bribery and their assessment became flawed in the process and divorced from the mark guide. The observation is in line with Motsi and Newlin (2021) who lament lack of ethical considerations by some supervisors that prejudice learners.

e) Ethical considerations and professionalism checklist

i) Documentary analysis

There was a checklist document showing ethical considerations and professionalism guidelines for students to follow with respect to research sites. In this case, every supervisee was required to produce and fasten in the appendices evidence of having asked for and having been granted permission to enter the research site. The letters for the granted permission were attached in the appendices section of all the samples that were analysed. These proved as evidence of how they ensured participants and site anonymity through the use of pseudonyms, participants’ informed consent through signing consent form, voluntary participation and validation and member checking. The narratives of how the supervisees made sure that they respected the research sites and participants were evident in all the samples. The sites and participants’ names were to be blinded, and supervisees were to use either colours, numbers or pseudonyms to conceal the identity of their sites and participants.

Interview responses

Upon being asked about their upholding ethical considerations and professionalism, this is what lecturers had to say:

Maga complained, *“I sometimes do not find evidence of the procedures in the appendices from students’ research write-ups. This means that they are cheating the participants.”*

Mafa added, *“Similarly, for the permission to do research, they are supposed to ask for permission in the schools, but I observed that letters in their research project files are not signed.”*

Tafa also expressed, *“In some cases, they avoid naming the names of schools which is good. However, the school stamp reveals the name of the school and the year that are supposed to be anonymous.”*

Mika noted, *“Some student teachers confess that they have not told their learners that they are student teachers for they fear that the learners will not respect them.”*

Shuva narrated, *“It was once suggested that the college has to produce a template of a letter that each candidate sends to the school head to ask for permission to conduct research in the school. This helps in instilling a culture of respecting participants.”*

Shamba also added, *“Similarly, member checking procedure is rarely followed up nor is it penalised for if the candidates fail to adhere to.”*

The PSTs had mixed views on upholding ethical considerations and professionalism.

Ticha explained, *“I just indicated that they should not indicate their names, but some were making mistakes and were indicating their names which I just cancelled.”*

Roland added, *“Same with me. I knew it was necessary though I could not do it. In terms of observation, I knew that if tell them that I am observing them they are likely to change their behaviour.”*

Roy noted, *“I did not give them the full document for validation and member checking.”*

Fadzai further added, *“Exactly my case. I indicated to them there but did not get back to them. The truth is, I did not know the importance of the sub-section. I was just following the template.”*

Farai expressed, *“The supervisor had told me that I would get a letter from the research and innovation department. I simply asked for permission from my mentor verbally that I wanted to do my research with the learners.”*

Maka indicated, *“No! I did not ask permission from anyone since I was the one taking up those classes that I have been researching.”*

The insights expressed in this section largely counter the principles of *Unhu/ Ubuntu* of respecting research sites and participants. PSTs confirmed that they “gave them (participants) consent letters to sign that they are voluntarily participating” because some lecturers insisted on wanting to see them in the appendices. They however skipped some stages like member checking. Thus, PSTs were stealing data from their participants. In every research, there is a need for a checklist to show that proper procedures are followed and that research sites and participants are respected and protected. The scenarios in the above narrations are lack of the necessary research foundational knowledge and skills and inadequate supervision skills (Zaheer & Munirs, 2020 & Mafa & Mapolisa, 2016).

The administrators echoed concerns like those raised by the lecturers’ which are captured in the narratives below:

Murau mused *“Ummmm! There is a serious gap here despite that the sub-section of ethical considerations is where the whole research project is anchored on, especially to do with Unhu/Ubuntu.”*

Madzima acknowledged, *“There is a need for sensitisation programmes to make researchers respect human rights.”*

Masvika explained further, *“This research ethics issue ought to be urgently addressed through establishing a board that oversees research ethics and (dis)approves the ethical clearance applications before research activities are done. The research group from this college once agreed on the need to set up an institutional ethical and professional board to guide researchers on upholding the values to do with research.”*

Certainly, nothing has been done despite emphasising the gravity of the matter. This inaction is against social reconstruction theory that calls for an inevitability of change in the education sphere. While Mupa (2023) proffered the need for policy framework in guiding research supervision process, the scholar underestimated the need for establishment of institutional ethical committee and reviewing ethical issues in the policy documents from time to time..

Conclusion

Considering its decoloniality and ethical sensibility in general, the philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu* is good for education. However, this paper has established that *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy was largely invisible in the RILA. Issues like individualism informed by globalisation and unethical conduct were pervasive and contradicted the realisation *Ubuntu* on the ground. Thus, to effectively deal with this contradiction, there is a need for a transformative and emancipatory version of *Ubuntu* that leads to a change of attitude among participants. The generalised principles of communalism, generosity and respect are no longer fit for the purposes of RILA hence the need to rethink and recast them in tandem with transparency, integrity, accountability, responsibility, duty-bound and obligation.

Recommendations for Policy Formulation

The write up recommends for intensive workshop trainings for the supervisors to equip them with necessary skill and attitudes that are based on *Unhu/Ubuntu*. The paper also encourages the adoption of collaboration and team supervision strategy to help supervisors to assist each other. Last, the institution are encouraged to review from time to time the research policy documents to plug the loopholes that may be taken advantage of by supervisors to unethically prejudice the students they supervise..Lastly, institutions should consider student evaluations to assess the quality of supervision that supervisors offer to students during their research journey.

Recommendations for Further Research

In relation to further studies, the following recommendations can be proffered:

There is a need for studies on needs analysis on fitness for the purpose of principles of *Ubuntu* in the various learning spaces in different contexts. Research studies are needed on the possibility of repackaging *Ubuntu* into transformative emancipatory rather than the traditional *Ubuntu* has fallen out of fashion in the modern learning spaces. Similar studies need to be done to assess the feasibility of *Ubuntu* in informing education in other learning areas apart from RILA.

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