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Revitalising the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy in a globalising Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Unhu/Ubuntu, a home-grown Afro-Zimbabwean philosophy under threat of extinction, is highly sloganeered about without substantial implementation. This presents a worrisome situation which perturbed the writers to reflect on the possible revitalisation of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in a globalising Zimbabwe. Informed by the postcolonial theory, the current textual analysis (secondary research) established that the integration of the fundamental aspects of *Unhu/Ubuntu* into the school curriculum could help revitalise this home-grown philosophy since the Western neo-colonial influences under the guise of globalisation are threatening it. Through the aforesaid integration process, education becomes an instrument for training the general Afro-Zimbabwean public to pragmatically live the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy and use it to combat vice and mimetic philopraxis. Though criticised as a postcolonial utopia invention, *Unhu/Ubuntu* remains the authentic African voice within the globalisation agenda. Hence, *Unhu/Ubuntu* should neither be left in solipsism nor treated as a sacred cow; instead, it should be subjected to immortal conversation to keep abreast with change. Therefore, revitalising *Unhu/Ubuntu* is an exigency, not an option. The article, thus, recommends, *inter-alia*, the expeditious integration of *Unhu/Ubuntu* into Zimbabwe's school curriculum and immortalised debates about the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy.

Key terms

Revitalisation, *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy, globalisation

Introduction and background

At the onset of colonialism, Westerners (Europeans) had to uproot Afro-Zimbabweans from their own culture rooted in *Chivanhu* (the bedrock of *Unhu/Ubuntu*) and *Unhu/Ubuntu* (the Afro-Zimbabwean philosophy of life). In the process, Westerners ushered Afro-Zimbabweans into their own foreign Western culture to impose their will on the will of the Afro-Zimbabweans (Makuvaza, 2008). Despite the preceding, *Unhu/Ubuntu* remains manifest in virtually all facets of the concrete Afro-Zimbabwean existentialism. This home-grown *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy comprises a diversity of values such as humility, respect, cooperation, empathy, and many others that make the local community live in social solidarity. The aforesaid values make people appreciate the existence of other members of the society, living and working together - the communocentric nature of the Afro-Zimbabweans. It is, however, imperative to note how the forces of globalisation impact the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy. The world is now interconnected more than ever due to rapid, advanced and complex developments in media and technology. As a result, the Afro-Zimbabwean society has become more multicultural, and the values inculcated in society now emanate from diverse cultures across the globe. It is also imperative to note that the popular cultures from the Western world tend to dominate the Afro-Zimbabwean worldview. Consequently, there is a need to revitalise the philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu*, ensuring it maintains humanness in the Afro-Zimbabwean society within a world order driven by globalisation.

The philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu* is premised primarily on healthy personal relationships among the members of Sub-Saharan societies. Thus, *Unhu/Ubuntu* is concerned with producing a socially acceptable individual who contributes to the meaningful development of society. The *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy has been described as a set of closely related African-oriented value systems that emphasise the interconnectedness of individuals with their surrounding social, physical, and metaphysical worlds. *Unhu/Ubuntu* lies at the heart of the African way of life and impacts every aspect of people's well-being (Lefa, 2015). The philosophy in question (*Unhu/Ubuntu*) cannot be separated from people's existential circumstances as it informs all human activities in the Sub-Saharan context. *Unhu/Ubuntu*, as a lifestyle, is informed by the Afrocentric worldview according to which members of the society live for each other. Thus, *Unhu/Ubuntu* is sometimes translated to 'I am because we are' or 'humanity towards others', expressing life's communalistic dimension. Moreover, *Unhu/Ubuntu* regards personhood as something developed or attained by adhering to society's ethical expectations (Lefa, 2015). *Unhu/Ubuntu* is, therefore, a moral theory that is associated with humanness or being human (Mabvurira, 2020). Discipline, morality, altruism, self-consciousness, social consciousness, responsibility, and duty are all definitive of *Unhu/Ubuntu* (Sibanda, 2014). Thus, *Unhu/Ubuntu* is an all-encompassing home-grown and humanistic philosophy which should not be treated as inferior to the Western worldview.

However, the Afro-Zimbabwean society has embraced several foreign cultures ushered into the Sub-Saharan region through globalisation - exotic cultures which bring in their norms and values. Globalisation is, thus, manifested not just within economic and technological interdependence but also within socio-cultural intercourse (Rosenmann et al., 2016). Regrettably, values propagated by globalisation are, in essence, at cross-purposes with the principles of *Unhu/Ubuntu*, which are based on collaboration, empathy, and respect for human dignity. These exotic cultures contradict the values and norms cherished within the Afro-Zimbabwean societies. Globalisation has led to the internationalisation of multiple cultures worldwide to the extent that some countries no longer boast of a single culture

as their sole heritage (Ram, 2004). Each country has contributed part of its art, gastronomy, idioms, and literature to other nations, thereby making the identity of its people known and also as a way to promote its industries like, for instance, tourism (Isabella, 2020). It is, however, lamentable that the dominant cultures are mainly from the West and attract many admirers and followers from developing countries. Lamentable as well is the fact that some of the behaviours borrowed from foreign cultures contradict the local African cultures whose torchlight is fundamentally *Unhu/Ubuntu*.

Problem declaration

The *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy is a product of African thought but is still threatened by extinction due to globalisation. Western values, thus, manifest in virtually all aspects of human existence within the Afro-Zimbabwean milieu – a state of affairs which relegates the principles of *Unhu/Ubuntu* to the periphery. However, one of the supreme contributions of the peoples of Africa to the world is the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy. The word ‘*Ubuntu*’ derives from the Bantu languages of Africa; hence, it is an African philosophy (Mabvurira, 2020). Regrettably, African values have since been interrupted by cultural globalisation, which refers to the intensification and expansion of cultural flows across the globe (Mofoluwawo & Ajibade, 2019). To make matters worse, globalisation embraces a form of uniformity that threatens to dissolve cultural attachments, dissociate people, and induce isolation (Hindi, 2014). Thus, globalisation is a tool for cultural homogeneity and ending cultural diversity worldwide. This global threat to *Unhu/Ubuntu* has led to numerous calls to revitalise this home-grown philosophy to salvage it from possible demise. In the Zimbabwean context, in particular, *Unhu/Ubuntu* is highly sloganeered about without visible and substantial implementation. This presents a worrisome situation which perturbed the writers to reflect on the possible revitalisation of the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy in a globalising Zimbabwe.

Theoretical framework

The postcolonial theory informs the current reflection. Postcolonial theory is a body of thought primarily concerned with accounting for European colonial rule's political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impact worldwide, especially from the 18th to the 20th century (Elam, 2019). This theory is capable of addressing the aspect of *Unhu/Ubuntu*, which is denigrated and dismissed by Western thinkers for the perceived lack of universal appeal and application. Postcolonial theory takes many different shapes and interventions. However, all share the fundamental claim: ‘the world people inhabit is impossible to understand except in relationship to the history of imperialism and colonial rule’. Thus, postcolonial theory critically examines the political, cultural, aesthetic, economic, linguistic, historical, and social impacts of colonial rule, especially colonialism of European making (Elam, 2019). More precisely, postcolonialism is a reaction to the practices of imperialism and European colonial rule (Drew, 2023).

Postcolonial theory is mainly targeted at that kind of literature portraying the formerly colonised as underdogs to their erstwhile colonisers and, simultaneously, the theories promoting the idea that the Africans were always inferior to the coloniser (Mapara, 2009). It is, therefore, important for *Unhu/Ubuntu* to be given its rightful place within the world's knowledge systems. Thus, postcolonial theory helps inform students in African institutions of learning about the prejudices of colonialism. Osman (2010) notes that the colonial powers utilised unorthodox means and devious laws to oppress the Africans. At the same time, they disenfranchised them (Africans) and took over their land and control of natural resources. Hence, it is imperative to note that the popular culture from the Western world tended to dominate the worldviews of most people in African societies as they view anything Western as superior and anything emanating from Africa as inferior.

Mapara (2009) posits that postcolonial theory is about the formerly colonised Africans claiming their identity and heritage and, at the same time, setting straight the historical facts that the colonisers had distorted. Hence, the onus is upon African scholars and inhabitants to set the record straight as regards the importance of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in promoting ethical and harmonious existence in society. *Unhu/Ubuntu* as a philosophy is attributable to the blacks of Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa. It is, thus, important to safeguard this purely African philosophy for posterity. It is essential, of course, that the conception of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in Zimbabwe should respond to the dynamic multicultural processes of post-modernity (Sibanda, 2014).

In light of the above, postcolonial theory helps inform students in African institutions about the prejudices of colonialism and how *Unhu/Ubuntu* can empower them to address past social and economic injustices (Murwira, 2020). The idea that Western values and views are the 'correct' is often taken for granted and accepted uncritically. Postcolonial theory, therefore, attempts to shift this and look at the world through a different lens (Drew, 2023). From the perspective of postcolonial theory, there is a need for a paradigm shift which accords *Unhu/Ubuntu* its rightful place among the different worldviews that inform different societies in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. Notably, *Unhu/Ubuntu* encourages communal cooperation and equitable distribution of wealth – a socio-centric and egalitarian position of Afro-Zimbabwean thought antithetical to neo-colonial individualism and inequality. This demonstrates the superiority of *Unhu/Ubuntu* over the Western worldview – the superiority that Western scholarship has refuted since time immemorial.

***Unhu/Ubuntu* and globalisation juxtaposed.**

The philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu* has been part and parcel of societies within Africa South of the Sahara since immemorial. To Van Breda (2014), *Unhu/Ubuntu* refers to the moral qualities of a person, mainly features like generosity, empathy, forgiveness, and consideration. Some refer to *Unhu/Ubuntu* as the presence of the divine, directing a person away from harmful behaviour towards the good (Mugumbate et al., 2023). *Unhu/Ubuntu* also refers to a pattern of interconnectedness between people through a worldview or philosophy (Van Breda, 2014). Thus, *Unhu/Ubuntu* is the worldview of the Black people of Africa from which they derive relational, communal, societal,

environmental, and spiritual knowledge, values and practices (Mugumbate *et al.*, 2023). *Unhu/Ubuntu* is regarded as the soul force (vital force) that drives almost every facet of societal life in African societies and a power that creates relationships among members of the African community (Lefa, 2015). Thus, a person with *Unhu/Ubuntu* upholds the African cultural standards, expectations, values, and norms and keeps the African identity (Sibanda, 2014).

It is, however, feared that globalisation will ultimately achieve cultural homogenisation, which is consistent with the demise of *Unhu/Ubuntu* and that the culture which will emerge at the end of the day will be predominantly American, thus, Americanisation (Mofoluwa & Ajibade, 2019). Thus, Globalisation is viewed as a crucial tool for cultural homogeneity and ending cultural diversity in the world. Cultural globalisation, in particular, is a process of assimilation of the different cultures of the world in order to generate a more homogeneous and common culture (Isabella, 2020). Hence, globalisation is construed as the interconnectedness of societies, economies, and cultures due to technological advances characterising the contemporary world order. Consequently, the globalised Western culture forms the basis for an exclusively globalised identity, which privileges only some cultures and ways of life (Rosenmann *et al.*, 2016). So, the content of globalised Western culture is consistent with moving away from the local, particularistic, traditional, and more transitional forms of culture (Rosenmann *et al.*, 2016). Globalisation, therefore, threatens the Afro-Zimbabwean culture in general and *Unhu/Ubuntu* in particular.

Unhu/Ubuntu is summarised in the adage *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu / munhu munhu navanhu*, which means a person is a person through others (Mabvurira, 2020). Hence, the African worldview is premised on the understanding that 'an individual exists only because others exist' (Mbiti, 1975). Moral values (as entrenched in *Unhu/Ubuntu*) are, therefore, the ethical-philosophical considerations according to which an individual can personally judge how reasonable, truthful, and appropriate his actions and relationships are with others (Mofoluwawo & Ajibade, 2019). However, the humanistic virtue of considering the welfare of others has since lost prominence in African societies as individuals are now more self-centered in line with the globalised Western mindset.

Samkange and Samkange (1980) view *Unhu/Ubuntu* as an Indigenous African philosophy whose three fundamental aspects are humanity, the sanctity of human life, and a people-centred status. Since the world has become a global village, it is reasonable to develop a flexible vision of what constitutes *Unhu/Ubuntu* as a function of the changing times (Sibanda, 2014). However, such an approach may end up diluting the pristine *Unhu/Ubuntu* worldview with Eurocentric values, which are a by-product of colonialism and globalisation. Today, globalisation has effected changes in the scheme of worldview, which altered the acceptable ways by which each society chooses to behave in line with the moral values embedded in their cultural process (Mofoluwawo & Ajibade, 2019). It is, therefore, mandatory for African societies to preserve and cherish the values enunciated under *Unhu/Ubuntu*, as these promote human dignity among African community members. *Unhu/Ubuntu* as a humanism suggests that whatever is good for humanity is *Unhu/Ubuntu*, and whatever harms humanity is against *Unhu/Ubuntu* (Mungai, 2015).

Globalisation has since permeated all aspects of life in African communities, and cultural imperialism is currently a feature in virtually all activities in African societies. Western or European cultures are decimating the values (as enshrined in the philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu*) within African societies. The critical aspect of cultural globalisation is

the cheap and fast information and communication technology, which plays a crucial role in globalisation and integration (Mofoluwawo & Ajibade, 2019). When foreign culture begins to matter more than local culture, there is a problem. To counteract such an adverse situation, countries must enact national policies that teach the youths to value local culture significantly in all its manifestations (Isabella, 2020). Hence, revitalising the philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu* is deemed justifiable as it counteracts the negative impact of globalisation on African culture.

Integrating *Unhu/Ubuntu* into Zimbabwe's school curriculum

One surest way to revitalise the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy is to integrate it into the country's school curriculum. The *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy comprises the education of 'the head, the heart and the hand' (Nziramasanga, 1999; Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2011; Siyakwazi & Machingura, 2018) - the 'three cardinal Hs' that define holistic education or education for *Unhu/Ubuntu*. Likewise, Nziramasanga (1999) proposes that Zimbabwe's secondary school curriculum should "have the following integrated learning areas which are dealt with in greater detail and depth than in Years 1-7 (Primary)" (pp. 255-256), viz Humanities, balanced up with Mathematics, Languages, Sciences, Arts, Design and Technology, Guidance and Counselling, etcetera. For instance, Mathematics and Science promote 'intellectual-cognitive' development (education of the head), Humanities and Guidance and Counselling uphold 'moral' development (education of the heart), whereas Design and Technology nurture 'psychomotor-vocational' development (education of the hand), giving rise to holistic education (education for *Unhu/Ubuntu*).

Nziramasanga (1999) argues that contemporary Zimbabwean society cherishes *Unhu/Ubuntu* and the practical application of what is learnt. This connotes that today's society values moral probity or virtuousness and education with praxis. Hence, "school libraries should be stocked with books that project positive values and assist character development" (Nziramasanga, 1999, p. 78). Thus, emphasis should be on availing text material that expounds the philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu*, which, beyond being learnt, should be lived.

Mavhunga (2006) recommends researching and writing African history from an African perspective so that the school curriculum can carry a genuinely African history for study by the African pupil. Mavhunga calls for re-writing texts on the Zimbabwean liberation struggle, the Lancaster House Conference and other African liberation struggles with African pride. According to Mukusha (2014), the knowledge of the History of the armed struggle and the liberation heroes (which constitutes the 'heritage' of Zimbabwe) manifests *Unhu/Ubuntu*. Hence, incorporating Zimbabwe's armed struggle and national liberation heroes into the country's school curriculum constitutes the integration of *Unhu/Ubuntu*.

Likewise, "religion should be studied from an African perspective, other religions coming in to understand other people's spirituality" (Mavhunga, 2006, p. 453). This way, African learners are prepared to appreciate their indigenous religion in which the African values (*Unhu/Ubuntu*), norms, and identity are anchored. Moreover, "the Commission envisages a curriculum that will initiate vocational opportunities for students with a flare in Sport" (Nziramasanga,

1999, p. 370). Since sport promotes teamwork and fosters the spirit of winning and losing graciously, it infuses *Unhu/Ubuntu*.

The Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe – herein called GoZ (2007) - urges:

...Zimbabweans need to rekindle customs, values and norms capable of laying a solid foundation for the resuscitation of the spirit of respect, integrity, tolerance, compassion, *Unhu/Ubuntu* and, at the same time, fostering national pride. These virtues must be transmitted to our children and youths through our cultural education to promote national identity, which will enable the nation to adopt those global values that they would have assessed to have meaning in their Zimbabwean lives (p. 12).

This proclamation implores designers of the national curriculum to accentuate cultural values at the epicentre of *Unhu/Ubuntu*. It compels the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education [MoPSE] to embark on a campaign to ensure that ‘cultural education’ (as incorporated in Cultural and Heritage Studies) gains acceptance among both learners and teachers in Zimbabwe. In tune with the above, Machingura, Magudu, Maravanyika, Moyo and Musengi (2012) suggest that “the school curriculum in Africa should be Africanised in line with Lawton’s (1975) position that curriculum should be based on a selection from a people’s culture” (pp. 71-72). This implies that the school curriculum should have cultural relevance (functionality), which is one of the defining principles of *Unhu/Ubuntu*. This home-grown philosophy underpins the Afro-Zimbabwean culture.

Education for living *Unhu/Ubuntu* in Zimbabwe

This theme magnifies and amplifies the idea of using education to train people to live *Unhu/Ubuntu* and use the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy to fight vice. To this effect, Nziramasanga (1999) recommends:

Course contents in all subjects should promote sound values. Cultural activities, such as art and music, are particularly useful in appealing to each person's profound aspirations and values. Sport also lends itself to learning many relational skills, such as teamwork, partnership, fairness, perseverance, and winning and losing graciously (p. 73).

The relational skills implicated above are at the epicentre of *Unhu/Ubuntu*; they are an antidote to strife and a *sine qua non* of societal harmony and cohesion. Therefore, offering ‘sport’ at school enables neophytes to live pragmatically in *Unhu/Ubuntu*. In the same vein, Nziramasanga (Personal Interview at UZ, 20 September 2017) notes that the content on *Unhu/Ubuntu* is available. However, it needs to be acted on and lived in the education system. Hence, he recommends that schools could teach *Unhu/Ubuntu* in all subjects. Above all, as Nziramasanga (1999) says, the school curriculum “should provide for the education of ‘the head, the heart and the hand,’ in developing *Unhu/Ubuntu*” (p. 75). This explicitly calls for an all-encompassing instructional package that nurtures all-round learner development.

Nziramasanga (1999) also reports:

Participants asked for more guidance and involvement by the Churches in holistic education to further cultural, religious, and moral formation, be that in school or in the communities...Some parents expressed the wish that the Rite of Entry be revived and timetabled by each school (p. 70).

Whilst the researcher endorses the notion of Church involvement, he cautions that there be no religious bigotry. According to Nziramasanga (1999), “Parents wanted to see moral education throughout the curriculum...they saw discipline and productivity as inseparable and were anxious that a work ethic would be fostered as well as respect for public property” (p. 63). This calls for the reduction of classes which appear too large for maintenance of the highly cherished ideal of learner ‘discipline’. Moreover, “in some instances teachers were not leading by example”, hence “a code of conduct for teachers seemed indispensable” (Nziramasanga, 1999, p. 65). Thus, teachers need ongoing re-orientation which could equip them to act in *loco-parentis* and to be role models for learners. Participants also “pleaded for workshops for parents and teachers on how to find positive ways of promoting discipline in the home and at school and how to deal with defaulters in a corrective but constructive manner” (p. 65). This corrective but constructive disciplinary strategy concurs with Mangena’s (2007) notion of ‘restorative rather than retributive justice’, which readily harmonises with the jurisprudential inclination of *Unhu/Ubuntu*.

Unhu/Ubuntu, as articulated in Nziramasanga (1999), calls upon the teacher to demonstrate compassion, kindness, patience, and warmth in handling learners. When the teacher uses group work, this has the vast potential to foster the spirit of cooperation, harmony, and solidarity typical of the communocentric predilection of *Unhu/Ubuntu*. The philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu* also calls upon the teacher to involve the learners - a pedagogical activity with “students and educators engaging in a transaction” (Waghid, 2013, p. 434). This places a premium on mutual relationship and understanding between learners and educators, consistent with what Martin Buber 1878-1965 A.D. (An Austrian-Israeli existentialist philosopher) calls the *I-thou* relationship.

Unhu/Ubuntu is against gender inequity and insensitivity (Shutte, 2001). Hence, this philosophy is consistent with social justice. The teacher is, thus, called upon to observe gender equity and sensitivity to manifest the egalitarian and humanistic dimensions of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in class. In addition, Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Shizha (2012) aver, “Teachers should respect the pupils, treat them with care, fairness, tolerance and make pupils realise that they are valued for who they are – human beings” (p. 23). This standpoint stresses the communalistic and humanistic principles of *Unhu/Ubuntu*. In the same vein, Muchenje, Goronga and Bondai (2013) assert that “classroom pedagogy should draw examples from all students’ cultures” (p. 510). Beyond epitomising multiculturalism in the classroom, this propagates epistemological access and epistemic justice within the educative process. What is communicated in the preceding quote is also consistent with the communitarian aspect of *Unhu/Ubuntu*. This multicultural inclination of *Unhu/Ubuntu* becomes an antidote to tribal discrimination.

Majoni and Chinyanganya (2014) recommend that education should inculcate a sense of respect for elders, brotherhood, and an appreciation of cultural values – all of which are constitutive of *Unhu/Ubuntu* as a philosophy which informs the education of the ‘heart’. They also suggest that education should inculcate skills in practical matters, thereby demonstrating that *Unhu/Ubuntu* significantly incorporates the education of the ‘hand’. The above

recommendations indicate that beyond intellectual development (education of the head), the learner should have moral and vocational development in the educative process. When this happens, there will be holistic education for Unhu/Ubuntu, whose graduates will be intellectually polished, vocationally oriented, and morally groomed.

Nziramasanga (1999) also observes, “In the secondary school context, citizenship education is marginalised and, to a larger extent, never taught” (p. 349). As defined in Nziramasanga (1999), citizenship “is part of his/her (individual) existence in a democratic state which includes rights, duties and responsibilities” (p. 349). Hence, Nziramasanga (1999) avers, “While all parts of the curriculum must contribute to the development of the citizen, it is considered that there should be a specific part of the curriculum entitled Citizenship Education” (p. 349), which expounds *Unhu/Ubuntu*. Thus, the link between citizenship and *Unhu/Ubuntu* is revealed by the participants in the Nziramasanga Commission where they “called for the schools to develop a whole and well-rounded person with *Unhu/Ubuntu*, youths who are loyal, responsible, productive and respectful of the law and institutions of their nation” (Nziramasanga, 1999, p. 350). However, from the democratic perspective of citizenship education, the ‘loyalty’ and ‘obedience’ implicated in the preceding should not be wholesome propagation of docility within the learners. It must not be uncritical loyalty and blind obedience because *Unhu/Ubuntu*, as a decolonising and emancipatory philosophy, is endowed with some nuances of critical consciousness.

Sibanda endorses the Unhu/Ubuntu-citizenship confluence (2014) when he proposes “the inclusion of the concept of *Unhu/Ubuntu* in the national curricula right from pre-school to university and deliberate citizenship education as some of the possible means of transmitting the values of *Unhu/Ubuntu*” (p. 29). Furthermore, participants in a study conducted by Muropa, Kusure, Makwerere, Kasowe, and Muropa (2013) “argue that merely teaching students about the theory of citizenship is ineffective unless homes, schools, colleges and universities themselves reflect democratic practices by allowing students to have a say in decision making” (p. 660). Such manifestation of democratic ideals is in tandem with the philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu* since *Unhu/Ubuntu* and democracy are in close propinquity (Msila, 2009).

Given Nziramasanga’s (1999) two recommendations: Item 6.2 - “Teachers should promote ethical education, character formation and model *Unhu/Ubuntu*” and Item 6.12 - “The school should promote holistic education and expound the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy” (pp. 78-79), Makuvaza (2010) argues, “the recommendations appear to be premised on rather flawed assumptions, the assumptions that teachers know what the idea of *Hunhu/Ubuntu* and *Hunhu/Ubuntu* philosophy entails apart from probably a layman’s view” (p. 360). Makuvaza, thus, suggests workshops and staff development sessions on *Unhu/Ubuntu* for the teaching fraternity to expedite the implementation of the above-referred recommendations.

In critiquing recommendation 6.2, Makuvaza (2010) argues that ‘teaching’ *Unhu/Ubuntu* and making learners pass is one thing and ‘living’ *Unhu/Ubuntu* is another. Makuvaza then rationalises, “whilst one can teach Mathematics without being a mathematician. ...one cannot effectively and meaningfully teach *Unhu/Ubuntu* without being *munhu ane unhu* [a good citizen]” (p. 361). Hence, he stresses, “...the teacher of *Unhu/Ubuntu* cannot and should not only teach it but also live it” (p. 361). Nziramasanga (Personal Interview at UZ, 20 September 2017) endorses Makuvaza’s

(2010) standpoint, as he recommends that the teacher teach and live *Unhu/Ubuntu* across the entire school spectrum. To achieve the desired horizon of commitment and devotion to *Unhu/Ubuntu* among the teaching fraternity, workshops and staff development sessions also need to be conducted.

Makuvaza (2010), however, cautions:

The problem and challenge regarding the implementation of *Unhu/Ubuntu* is who amongst the teachers and lecturers would like to be associated with the so-called ‘backwardness’, ‘heathenism’ and ‘uneducatedness’ by not only championing *Chivanhu* but also more so living it (p. 362).

Hence, Nziramasanga (Personal Interview at UZ, 20 September 2017) notes some implementation challenges, as teachers and learners are not living *Unhu/Ubuntu*. The explanation for the regrettable *status quo* presented in the preceding could be that teachers and learners are both concerned with passing the terminal examinations, relegating *Unhu/Ubuntu* to the margins of instruction. To Makuvaza (2010), therefore, “it calls for great commitment, devotion and a liberated consciousness from all those concerned about and involved in the implementation of *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy in the education system” (p. 362). Those concerned and involved in the implementation dynamics are, thus, implored to take the lead in changing their frame of mind about the home-grown *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy if the call for Afro-Zimbabweans to live *Unhu/Ubuntu* is to realise fruition.

Sustainability and immortality of *Unhu/Ubuntu* within the globalisation agenda

The research participants (inclusive of Teachers, Heads of Departments, Heads of schools, and Lecturers) in a study conducted by Wuta (2020) phenomenally emphasised the viewpoint that the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy is sustainable in a perpetually globalising Zimbabwe. Given this finding, the researcher concludes that the home-grown Afro-Zimbabwean philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu* is the authentic African voice within the globalisation agenda. The philosophy is also envisaged to coexist with the unrelenting forces of globalisation and, in some cases, resist the negative aspects of globalisation that seem to be intensifying by the day. Therefore, the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy is envisioned to survive the forces of globalisation, which are launching an onslaught on African culture(s).

Prominent contributions from some of the research mentioned above participants stressed that for it to be more viable and sustainable, the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy should not be treated as a sacred cow because if this happens, the home-grown *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy gets fizzled out. In other words, the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy should be subjected to rigorous scrutiny, also called an immortal conversation. This connotes that the said philosophy should be vehemently debated as it can add *forte* to it. Other prominent contributions from the participants involved urged the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy to be harnessed for humanness in whatever and whichever context, multicultural or otherwise. The above implies that educators and lecturers are potential vanguards in promoting, escalating, and immortalising this philosophy in Zimbabwe. This agrees with Makuvaza (2010), who understands that the presence of knowledgeable and visionary educators about the philosophy of *Unhu/Ubuntu* is a desideratum for speedy implementation.

Conclusion and recommendations

As it emerges from the preceding, integrating the cardinal aspects of the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy into the school curriculum could be one of the surest ways of re-vitalising this home-grown philosophy in Zimbabwe. Hence, through the success of this integration process, education becomes an instrument for training the general Afro-Zimbabwean public to pragmatically live the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy and use it as a tool for combatting vice. Against the criticism that *Unhu/Ubuntu* is a postcolonial utopian invention that lacks measurability, it came out vividly that the philosophy is the authentic African voice within the globalisation agenda. It has also been stressed in the outgoing that the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy should neither be left in solipsism nor be treated as a sacred cow. However, it should be put to rigorous scrutiny, *id est*, the immortal conversation so that it keeps abreast with change. Therefore, it could be concluded that the re-vitalisation of the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy is an exigency requiring expeditious implementation. The article, therefore, makes the following recommendations:

- Integration of the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy into the school curriculum be expedited as a matter of urgency.
- Educating people to live the *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy be escalated pragmatically.
- The *Unhu/Ubuntu* philosophy is debated persistently so that it remains the authentic African voice within the new world order driven by globalisation's unrelenting and ever-intensifying forces.

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