The Ubuntu Philosophy in Community Development in Iyowa Community, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose: The concept of Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity and the importance of communal relationships, has gained attention in various fields, including community development. The *Sustainable Development Report 2019* points out that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) might not be achieved, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. However, there is a gap in the literature on how Ubuntu philosophy has been applied in practice in community development initiatives (Nwachukwu, 2018). The extent to which Ubuntu philosophy has been applied in community development initiatives in different regions and contexts remains unclear. The main objectives of this study is to focus the Ubuntu philosophy on community development in Iyowa Community.

Methodology: The research design for this study was qualitative in nature, using a phenomenological approach. The sample size for this study was 30 participants, including community leaders, development practitioners, and community members. Participants will be selected based on their knowledge and experience with Ubuntu philosophy and community development. The study used purposive sampling to select participants who had experience in community development and are familiar with the Ubuntu philosophy.

Findings: The study found that there was good knowledge of the Ubuntu philosophy among community members. Based on the Ubuntu Philosophy, there was increased collaboration in the community has led to access to resources like water, roads, community security, and other amenities that have aided in community development. There was a mixed feeling on whether the Ubuntu Philosophy had ushered in development in Iyowa Community. While some acknowledge that it has greatly aided in bringing about community development, others believe it has only helped a little, and some feel it has made a small contribution but is not enough.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: In conclusion, the Ubuntu Philosophy has been successful in fostering a sense of unity and collective responsibility among community

members, which has enabled them to achieve common goals and support each other during difficult times, and has had a positive impact on community development in Iyowa community and that the government creates an enabling environment for community development initiatives.

Keywords: *Ubuntu, Philosophy, Community, Development.*

Introduction

Ubuntu is one of the themes of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development 2020 to 2030. The Agenda's theme for 2020–2022 is 'Ubuntu: Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness´. The Agenda was set by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) (IFSW, 2020). That Ubuntu became the theme of such an important program is in itself an acknowledgment of African knowledges that often receive low recognition in social work education, research and practice (Mugumbate et al., 2023).

The concept of Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity and the importance of communal relationships, has gained attention in various fields, including community development (Nkomo & Ngirande, 2020; Okechukwu & Ezeokoli, 2020). However, there is a need to explore the opinions of community members regarding the relevance of Ubuntu philosophy in community development. While there is literature on the application of Ubuntu philosophy in community development, there is a limited understanding of community members' perceptions of this philosophy (Mathole, 2018; Mbigi & Maree, 2019). Further research is necessary to explore the ways in which community members understand and apply the principles of Ubuntu philosophy in their daily lives and in community development initiatives. The concept of Ubuntu philosophy has gained attention in recent years, particularly in the context of community development initiatives (Wenzel & Brown, 2018; Mbigi & Maree, 2019). The Sustainable Development Report 2019 points out that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) might not be achieved, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (Sartorius, 2022). Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals and the importance of social harmony, has been lauded as a potential framework for community development that prioritizes community participation, social cohesion, and sustainable development (Tandon, 2019). However, there is a gap in the literature on how Ubuntu philosophy has been applied in practice in community development initiatives (Nwachukwu, 2018). The extent to which Ubuntu philosophy has been applied in community development initiatives in different regions and contexts remains unclear. The purpose of this study was to identify the challenges associated with applying Ubuntu philosophy in community development.

Reports from the research show that the application the Ubuntu philosophy is helping to address the challenges of unemployment, health, poverty, inequality and psycho-social support for

orphan and vulnerable children. This study therefore seeks to investigate impact of the Ubuntu philosophy on community development in Iyowa Community in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The study focusing on the Ubuntu philosophy in community development has significant implications for policymakers, practitioners, and communities seeking to develop programs that are rooted in this philosophy. The study objectives will provide insights into the relevance of Ubuntu philosophy in community development, the ways in which it has been applied, its impact on community involvement and development outcomes, the impact of socio-demographic characteristics on its application, and the challenges associated with applying it. The study findings will be useful for developing community development programs that are rooted in the Ubuntu philosophy, leading to better outcomes for communities.

Problem Statement

The concept of Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity and the importance of communal relationships, has gained attention in various fields, including community development (Mkhwanazi, 2017; Nkomo & Ngirande, 2020; Okechukwu & Ezeokoli, 2020). However, there is a need to explore the opinions of community members regarding the relevance of Ubuntu philosophy in community development. While there is literature on the application of Ubuntu philosophy in community development, there is a limited understanding of community members' perceptions of this philosophy (Mathole, 2018; Mbigi & Maree, 2019). Further research is necessary to explore the ways in which community members understand and apply the principles of Ubuntu philosophy in their daily lives and in community development initiatives.

The concept of Ubuntu philosophy has gained attention in recent years, particularly in the context of community development initiatives (Mbigi & Maree, 2019). The Sustainable Development Report 2019 points out that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) might not be achieved, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (Nwachukwu, 2018). However, there is a gap in the literature on how Ubuntu philosophy has been applied in practice in community development initiatives. The extent to which Ubuntu philosophy has been applied in community development initiatives in different regions and contexts remains unclear.

This study aims to fill this gap by assessing the relationship between Ubuntu philosophy, community involvement, and development outcomes. While there is a growing body of literature on Ubuntu philosophy and its potential for community development, few studies have empirically tested the impact of Ubuntu philosophy on community involvement and development outcomes (Nxumalo, & Ngulube, 2016). Furthermore, there is limited research on the role of Ubuntu philosophy in shaping community involvement in development initiatives.

The main objectives of this study is to focus the Ubuntu philosophy on community development in Iyowa Community. The specific objectives are to:

1.   Explore the opinion of the concept of Ubuntu philosophy and its relevance to community development in Iyowa Community.

2.   Examine the ways in which Ubuntu philosophy has been applied in community development initiatives in Iyowa Community.

3.   Assess the impact of Ubuntu philosophy on community involvement and development outcomes in Iyowa Community.

Literature Review

Ubuntu and Development

Literature relating Ubuntu to "development" exists. John Eliastam gives an account of many ways Ubuntu has been used. Several texts can be used as a signifier to "development": Ubuntu as a philosophical basis for democracy, moral theory, public policy, business ethics and management, conflict resolution and as a theological motif (Eliastam, 2015). Dandala's (2009) text is an example of Ubuntu in an economy and a work environment. Bujo (2009) refers to Ubuntu elements used in political models which are rooted in African traditions. Metz and Gaie (2010) construct the foundation of a moral theory based on Ubuntu and Botho. Due to the limitations of this paper, I will rely on the outcome of my analysis and exemplify only where necessary.

Mvume H. Dandala, former Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, stresses Ubuntu values in business ethics (Dandala 2009, 259–278). He attempts to establish good relationships between workers and employers. He cares about people with different kinds of (physical) disadvantages to make them self-sufficient in the working world (Dandala 2009, 274). Dandala links the signifier "development" to the signified "economic growth" (Dandala 2009, 266; 259). He promotes an African tradition of storytelling as a way of passing on knowledge, from old to young – a way to preserve unique heritage and a bulwark against colonialism to "sustain dignity and Ubuntu under humiliating circumstances" (Dandala 2009, 264–268).

Whereas Dandala seems to favour a very low hierarchical style of empowering people, he does not discuss the hierarchy between "employer" and "subordinates" and the hierarchy inherent in such terms. Dandala seems to advocate absolute obedience from the young towards the old. All examples only involve "men" and "boys", while women seem to be absent (Dandala 2009, 264–268). This is a case in point of the criticism that certain understandings of Ubuntu are patriarchal (Magadla/Chitando 2014).

Bujo's understanding of "development" firstly means that all forms of decisions must be democratically approved and contextually implemented and adopted. Secondly, all systems, whether economic or political, must be rooted in local tradition. This study would argue that "development", according to Bujo's line of thinking, must follow the principle of solidarity, starting at the local level. He is very critical of any form of non-democratically approved economic and political (foreign) interventions. Bujo furthermore criticises economy, although he does not

tackle a particular economic system. He criticises (economic) inequality (Bujo 2009, 400), he considers "development" in an African context as depending on the influence of the "First World" (sic) (Bujo 2009, 402–403) and its actions and behaviour towards Africa on a political, economic and cultural level. This relates to political demands strongly criticising the debt policy of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Bujo 2009, 409). He is inspired by Christian ethics (Bujo 2009, 400–401). "Human dignity" (Bujo 2009, 410) could be understood as the essence of his notion of "development". Bujo seems to be in favour of an entangled system of (Western) democracy and indigenous culture. His arguments are in line with Mboti, who rejects the interpretation of a strong dichotomy between Western ethics as individualistic and African ethics as communitarian (Mboti 2015, 144). It is important to remember Mboti's critique of Ubuntu as something diffuse and ungraspable, which also stresses that the dichotomy of the West as individualistic and African as communitarian is a construction (Mboti, 2015).

There are more papers which mention the link between Ubuntu and "development". Since these articles have already investigated and articulate their respective relation to an understanding of "development" there is no further in-depth investigation needed. Molefe proceeds methodologically in similar ways to this research by constructing the frames of a theoretical conception of "development" based on Ubuntu (Molefe, 2019). Key to his thought is relationality: people need each other, to become fully human, to achieve personhood, to achieve moral virtue, and to ultimately become Ubuntu. People need a community with moral standards (Molefe 2019, 100–103). Hoffmann and Metz (2017) operate similarly to this research by outlining how the capability approach can learn from an Ubuntu ethic. Although they seem to think and speak about "development" in a quite materialistic manner – probably conditioned by the capability approach and focused on material aspects, which are not an Ubuntu priority – their paper has interesting outcomes. In the perspective of Ubuntu, capability deprivation can limit a person's ability to care for others. It could be the outcome of neglect through bodies such as the state (Hoffmann/Metz 2017, 12). This deprivation of capabilities, in Ubuntu terms, will detract from a person's (cap)ability to develop towards full personhood, to be Ubuntu. For Hoffmann/Metz, relationality is a central aspect of Ubuntu, too. These two papers align with the above analysis, which thinks of "development" in terms of Ubuntu prioritising human relations.

An important observation at the end of this analysis is the fact that in all descriptions of Ubuntu, nature and objects are seen as essentially inherent to Ubuntu. This has not played a major role in the texts analysed. The reasons can only be speculative. A possibility could be that the term "development" as influenced and entangled to epistemologies of the Global North has not been extended beyond human beings.

Ubuntu Philosophy and Community Development/ Community Social Work

Ubuntu philosophy is consistent community development in line with the global definition of community development. The International Association of Community Development (IACD)

2016 defines community development as follows:

> *Community development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline thatpromotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality and social justice, through the organisation, education and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings"* (IACD, 2016).

Ubuntu Philosophy is also consistent with the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method and the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). The ABCD approach draws on the philosophy of oneness. It draws on the assumption that everyone in the community has a gift and that change must start from within the community. This model of community development follows six steps. The steps facilitate the participation of community members in identifying, planning and addressing the life challenges in the community. The steps include:

1. Involving the community.

2. Identifying the community needs and aspirations

3. Determining appropriate programmes and services to meet the needs of the community

4. Collaborating with the other organizations, groups, associations and societies in the community

5. Delivering quality programmes and services in the community.

6. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the interventions in the community including programmes, practices and governance.

In this process, steps 1-4 and 6 constitute the community-strengthening component of the model. Step 5 represents the snowballing result of this developmental intervention (Oyefara, et al., 2020). This process brings together everyone in the community of all ages, ethnic groups, nationalities and abilities to connect, participate, belong, contribute, lead and learn through programmes, services and community building. This process is consistent with the attributes of Ubuntu: valuing individual identity and the community; promoting community building; collective work and consensus.

Drawing on the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Approach to community development, Ubuntu is an asset in all African communities. This approach draws on four foundations: community assets and strengths; identifying and mobilizing individual and community assets and skills and passion; building communities from the inside out, and dependence on the relationship (Kretzmann, 2010; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). Ubuntu

respects the dignity and worth of others and promotes community relationships and social cohesions (Battle, 2000; Hailey, 2008). These values are consistent with the principles of the ABCD approach to community development. They are also consistent with the core values and principles of social work. Furthermore, Ubuntu Philosophy is consistent with Sachs's (2005) idea that starting to act cooperatively is the way to address sustainability and the challenges of development.

Theoretical Framework

Ubuntu Theories

Over the years several Ubuntu theories have emerged in the social work literature. Mugumbate and Chereni (2020) discuss several Ubuntu models, theories, frameworks and perspectives from previous and emerging articles. The articles demonstrate the use of Ubuntu social work in some African countries and how it could be further applied to address issues left behind by the western social work ideology. Ubuntu Theory provides the platform to challenge the overuse of western values, ethics, theories, textbooks and articles.

The theories, frameworks and perspectives on Ubuntu social work include Samkange's theory of Ubuntu (Samkange & Samkange, 1980); Ubuntu social justice framework (Rankopo, et al., 2007); Unhu ethical model (Council of Social Workers, Zimbabwe (CSW), 2012); Ubuntu as a philosophical framework for African social work (Mugumbate & Nyanguru, 2013; Anti-poverty and social protection model of ubuntu, Metz, 2016; Ubuntu ecological and eco-spiritual perspective, (van Breda, 2019). An integrated framework of Ubuntu (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019); Ubuntu as a pan-African philosophical framework for social work in Africa, (Mupedziswa, Rankopo & Mwansa, 2019) and the decolonial framework of Ubuntu, (Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Mugumbate & Nyanguru, 2013; Dziro & Rufurwokuda, 2013).

Samkange's Theory of Ubuntu

Samkange and Samkange's Theory of Ubuntu consists of aphorisms focused on human relations, the sanctity of life, and a people-centred status. On human relations, Samkange and Samkange (1980) posit that:

> "To be human be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with them". p.6

> "The attention one human being gives to another: the kindness, courtesy, consideration and friendliness in the relationship between people; a code of behaviour, an attitude to other people and life, is embodied in *hunhu*or Ubuntu". p. 6

On sanctity of life, Samkange and Samkange (1980) posit that

> "If and when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, then one should opt for the preservation of life". p.7

On people-centred status, Samkange and Samkange (1980) posit that:

> "The king owes his status, including all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people under him". p. 7. Anybody holding a leadership position or position of power is considered a king in this context.

Implications of Ubuntu for Social Work Theory and Practice

There are substantial implications for applying Ubuntu within social work theory and practice. Ubuntu philosophy is consistent with the elements of the different perspectives in social work.

The different elements include intervention, self-determination, involuntary clients, the role of the client, the nature of the process, the role of self-help groups, problem ownership, resilience, contract, client social worker relationship and cross-cultural social work. Ubuntu is a component of the comprehensive process that promotes the culture of the community by emphasizing commonality and independence (Hailey, 2008). The social workers should understand how the Ubuntu culture of the clients motivates them and dictate their behaviours and responses to developmental interventions in their communities Ubuntu builds a system of subtle relationships to promote community-building (Hailey, 2008). Where there is an Ubuntu philosophy in a community, a relationship is built among members of the community; this provides opportunities that empower them engage in problem-solving exercises that promote community development and transformation.

Methods

The research design for this study was qualitative in nature, using a phenomenological approach. This approach enabled the researcher to explore the lived experiences of the participants and gain a deep understanding of their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards the Ubuntu philosophy in community development. The persons who made up the population of this study were members of the Iyowa Community who were 18 years old and above, and who must have lived in the community for least five years. The sample size for this study was 30 participants, including community leaders, development practitioners, and community members. Participants will be selected based on their knowledge and experience with Ubuntu philosophy and community development.

The study used purposive sampling to select participants who had experience in community development and are familiar with the Ubuntu philosophy. The snowball sampling was also used to identify additional participants who may have valuable insights into the research questions. The qualitative data needed for this study was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews guide. The persons who were purposively selected were informed of the study. Their informed voluntary consent was obtained, and a convenient date, time and venue was agreed upon to conduct the research. The language used was English Language. The proceedings of the in-depth interview sessions were recorded with an audio recording device.

The data collected was analyzed thematically using NVivo software. The qualitative data obtained for this study was analyzed in two phases. The first phase involved transcribing the responses of the in-depth interviewees, and the subsequent conducting of a thematic analysis of the data. The second phase involved analyzing the data in relation to the research objectives and developing a narrative that reflects the participants' experiences and perceptions of the Ubuntu philosophy in community development.

Results

Table 4.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of interviewees

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Religion	Educational Qualification
1	34	Male	Christian	Secondary Certificate
2	26	Male	Christian	Secondary Certificate
3	46	Male	Christian	Secondary Certificate
4	43	Male	Africa Traditional Religion	Secondary Certificate
5	53	Male	Africa Traditional Religion	Secondary Certificate
6	39	Female	Christian	B.Sc
7	42	Female	Christian	B.Sc
8	42	Female	Christian	B.Sc
9	40	Female	Christian	B.Sc

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Religion	Educational Qualification
10	26	Female	Christian	B.Sc

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2023

Background Characteristics of Interviewees

Table above shows the demographic information of ten individuals who were interviewed about the Ubuntu philosophy. The table lists their age, gender, religion, and educational qualification. From the table, we can observe that the interviewees come from different age groups, ranging from 16 to 53 years. Also, the table shows that there were more female interviewees than male, with six females and four males. In terms of religion, eight of the interviewees were Christians, while two are followers of Africa Traditional Religion. The educational qualification of the interviewees varies, with six of them having a Bachelor's degree and the other four holding a Secondary School Certificate. Overall, the demographic information in the table suggests that the Ubuntu philosophy resonates with individuals across different age groups, genders, religions, and educational backgrounds. This aligns with the central idea of Ubuntu, which emphasizes the importance of community and collective wellbeing.

Opinions of the Concept of Ubuntu Philosophy and its Relevance to Community Development

The concept of Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity and the importance of communal relationships, has gained attention in various fields, including community development (Mkhwanazi, 2017; Nkomo & Ngirande, 2020; Okechukwu & Ezeokoli, 2020). However, there is a need to explore the opinions of community members regarding the relevance of Ubuntu philosophy in community development. While there is literature on the application of Ubuntu philosophy in community development, there is a limited understanding of community members' perceptions of this philosophy (Mathole, 2018; Mbigi & Maree, 2019). Further research is necessary to explore the ways in which community members understand and apply the principles of Ubuntu philosophy in their daily lives and in community development initiatives. The interviewees were asked to comment fully on their knowledge and opinion of the principles of Ubuntu philosophy. Their responses were as follow:

> *It's got to do with the affection that permeates the neighborhood, where everyone looks out for one another in an effort to improve everyone's quality of life. It also means kindness, sharing, trust, protecting yourself and your neighbors, and sustaining the wellbeing of the individual and the*

community **(Male, 34 years, Christian, Secondary Certificate, 20/03/2023).**

It denotes collaboration and the coming together of individuals to help one another. Also, it means love, understanding, selflessness, caring, and protecting your fellow neighbor or relative. It means I am what I am because of who we all are. Ubuntu philosophy gives birth to the spirit of unity **(Male, 26 years, Christian, Secondary Certificate, 20/03/2023).**

The interviewees' responses demonstrate a common understanding of Ubuntu philosophy as a communal way of life, where individuals work together to improve the quality of life of all members of the community. They highlight the importance of kindness, respect, love, sharing, trust, unselfishness, and cooperation in promoting the wellbeing of the individual and the community as a whole. The Ubuntu philosophy is seen as a unifying factor that brings people together, creating a sense of solidarity, brotherhood, and togetherness. The implications of these findings suggest that the Ubuntu philosophy has the potential to foster social cohesion and community development. It emphasizes the importance of collective responsibility and mutual support, promoting a culture of caring and sharing, which can help to address social issues such as poverty, inequality, and marginalization. By adopting Ubuntu principles, individuals are encouraged to work together to create a better future for themselves and their communities, thus promoting sustainable development.

Implications of these findings are that the Ubuntu philosophy has played a significant role in promoting communal togetherness, peace, and love within the Iyowa community. It has also led to the development of social amenities such as roads, water, and light. The philosophy has encouraged those who have had opportunities to travel abroad and acquire wealth to come back and invest in their community, creating a culture of giving back and promoting collective growth.

Examination of the ways in which Ubuntu Philosophy has been applied in Community Development Initiatives

The concept of Ubuntu philosophy has gained attention in recent years, particularly in the context of community development initiatives (Wenzel & Brown, 2018; Mbigi & Maree, 2019). Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals and the importance of social harmony, has been lauded as a potential framework for community development that prioritizes community participation, social cohesion, and sustainable development (Tandon, 2019). However, there is a gap in the literature on how Ubuntu philosophy has been applied in practice in community development initiatives (Nwachukwu, 2018). The extent to which Ubuntu philosophy has been applied in community development initiatives in

different regions and contexts remains unclear. Accordingly, the interviewees were asked to give their views on the various ways the Ubuntu philosophy has been used to bring about development in this community. Their responses are captured below:

> *Today in the community, like in the past, we have access to resources like water, roads, community security, and other things that have aided in the development of our community, all because of the increased level of collaboration in the community* **(Male, 34 years, Christian, Secondary Certificate, 20/03/2023).**

> *Some people in the diaspora go out of their way to assist individuals in this community, whether it be by giving clean water, rehabilitating schools, or providing motorable roads in the community. All of these things are done through community cooperation, including the rehabilitation of the community clinic, among other things* **(Male, 26 years, Christian, Secondary Certificate, 20/03/2023).**

The interviewees in the in-depth interviews generally had a good understanding of the principles of Ubuntu philosophy and how it has been applied in their community. They acknowledged that the philosophy emphasizes the importance of community cooperation, compassion, and generosity towards others. They cited several ways in which the philosophy has contributed to the development of their community, such as building roads, schools, and health centers, providing clean water, and assisting individuals in finding employment or starting their own businesses. The interviewees noted that community members work together to achieve common goals and support each other during difficult times. For example, when someone is sick or has lost a loved one, community members visit, contribute money, and provide food to help alleviate their suffering. This, in turn, creates a sense of unity and love within the community. The interviewees also mentioned the role of individuals in the diaspora in supporting the development of the community. They noted that some people go out of their way to provide assistance, whether it be by giving clean water, rehabilitating schools, or providing motorable roads in the community. Such assistance has contributed significantly to the community's development and progress.

The Impact of Ubuntu Philosophy on Community Involvement and Development Outcomes

The Ubuntu philosophy, with its emphasis on interconnectedness and community, has been increasingly adopted as a framework for community development initiatives in various contexts (Gade, 2011). However, there is a gap in understanding the specific impact of Ubuntu philosophy

on community involvement and development outcomes, particularly in the African context. This study aims to fill this gap by assessing the relationship between Ubuntu philosophy, community involvement, and development outcomes. While there is a growing body of literature on Ubuntu philosophy and its potential for community development, few studies have empirically tested the impact of Ubuntu philosophy on community involvement and development outcomes (Nxumalo, & Ngulube, 2016). Additionally, existing research on Ubuntu philosophy tends to focus on its philosophical and cultural roots, rather than its practical application in development contexts (Asante & Mazama, 2004; Land, 2015; Nussbaum, 2018). Furthermore, there is limited research on the role of Ubuntu philosophy in shaping community involvement in development initiatives. Therefore, the in-depth interviewees were posed the question on how well and to what extent has the Ubuntu philosophy bring about community development in the community. Their responses are as follow:

> *As I previously stated, it has greatly aided in bringing about community development. For example, before today, residents of this community had to purchase water, but now those who were willing to help came together to give the pie-born water, help fix the road, install street lights, and provide security in the neighborhood (***Female, 40 years, Christian, B.Sc, 20/03/2023).***

> *The Ubuntu principle has helped a little, but it hasn't been enough. The community still has many needs because the government isn't doing anything, so the little assistance from members of this community who are based in Nigeria's cities and overseas helps, but it's not enough. However, some of these folks have helped their loved ones, brothers, and friends within our community get employment in both private and government establishments* **(Female, 42 years, Christian, B.Sc, 20/03/2023).**

The responses of the interviewees suggest that the Ubuntu philosophy has had a positive impact on community development in Iyowa community. According to some respondents, the community members have come together to provide basic amenities such as water, road, street lighting, security, and education. The community has achieved these developments through cooperation, contributions, and communal efforts. However, some respondents noted that the impact of Ubuntu

on community development is limited. For instance, some wealthy individuals in the community who own skill acquisition centers outside the state recruit young people from the community to train in urban cities. Some of these young people do not have the patience to complete their training, and they often leave to find quick money, which leaves the person who took them responsible for their welfare and needs. This has made it difficult for the person to return to the village and choose another person to train. The findings also suggest that the government's lack of support has hindered community development. Respondents noted that the government is not doing enough to support community development in Iyowa community, and this has made it difficult for the community to achieve its development goals.

Discussion

Objective one of the study was to explore the opinion of the concept of Ubuntu philosophy and its relevance to community development. The responses from the in-depth interviewees on their knowledge and opinion of the principles of Ubuntu philosophy indicate that the Ubuntu philosophy promotes communal living, caring, sharing, trust, unselfishness, cooperation, respect, kindness, love, and togetherness. It also emphasizes the importance of looking out for one another in an effort to improve everyone's quality of life, contributing positively to the wellbeing of people and community, and promoting group solidarity.

Additionally, the Ubuntu philosophy encourages individuals to act in ways that benefit the community, behave well towards others, and help each other so that nobody will be left behind. It also promotes the belief in a universal bond among people in a community, where everyone looks out for one another, and the promotion of collectiveness. The findings of this study have implications for community development in Iyowa community, Edo State, Nigeria. It indicates that the Ubuntu philosophy has helped the town's social amenities, including roads, water, and light, and has promoted communal togetherness, peace, and love. The philosophy has also contributed to the funding of the education of certain local children whose parents cannot afford to pay for their children's education, and individuals who have traveled abroad and returned to serve the community have played a significant role in community development. The Ubuntu philosophy has played a vital role in shaping the culture and values of the community, and the study's findings suggest that the philosophy has positively impacted community development in Iyowa community. The promotion of communal living, caring, sharing, trust, unselfishness, cooperation, respect, kindness, love, and togetherness is crucial in building a strong and sustainable community.

Objective two of this study was to examine the ways in which Ubuntu Philosophy has been applied in community development initiatives. The Ubuntu philosophy is a key factor in community development in Iyowa community, Edo State, Nigeria, according to the responses of the interviewees. They indicated that increased collaboration in the community has led to access to resources like water, roads, community security, and other amenities that have aided in community

development. This has been achieved through community cooperation, including the rehabilitation of the community clinic, among other things. Also, people in the diaspora have gone out of their way to assist individuals in the community by giving clean water, rehabilitating schools, and providing motorable roads, among others.

Moreover, the Ubuntu philosophy has helped in developing the community by providing job opportunities for residents. For instance, a friend of one of the interviewees who got a job with the Edo State Government brought him in, and through him, some people in the community have gotten jobs. Similarly, some people have been assisted with admission to the University of Benin (Uniben) because of the friends they have there who are lecturers. Additionally, some residents of the community who have tailoring shops, catering shops, etc. have agreed to assist any persons in the community to empower them, and today some of the girls are learning the trade, which will help in the development of the child and the community.

The Ubuntu philosophy has also led to the development of the community's wellbeing by lifting people out of poverty. The more affluent residents a community has, the better it develops. For instance, the community now has many new buildings, roads that are suitable for cars, water, light, local security, and a large population of educated people thanks to those based in Lagos, Abuja, and other places who provided primary and secondary school scholarships for children whose parents cannot afford to pay their children's school fees. Also, the community members come together to contribute money to support families when they lose a loved one or when someone gives birth. The Ubuntu philosophy has been used in various ways to bring about development in Iyowa community, Edo State, Nigeria. The implications of these findings indicate that the community members have recognized the importance of working together to achieve common goals. Thus, they have been able to build a community that is self-sufficient, supportive, and empowering. This suggests that the Ubuntu philosophy can be used to foster community development in other parts of Nigeria and beyond.

Objective three of this study was on an assessment of the impact of Ubuntu philosophy on community involvement and development outcomes. The responses from the interviewees on how well the Ubuntu philosophy has brought about community development in Iyowa community, Edo State, Nigeria, vary. While some acknowledge that it has greatly aided in bringing about community development, others believe it has only helped a little, and some feel it has made a small contribution but is not enough. The interviewees cited different areas where the Ubuntu philosophy has brought development to the community, such as water supply, road repair, street lighting, security, education, and skills acquisition. They all agree that community members came together to contribute money and resources to solve these problems because they believe in the Ubuntu philosophy of togetherness and collaboration. Some interviewees highlight that the government has failed in its responsibility to provide basic amenities to the community, and the Ubuntu philosophy has helped to fill in the gap. Others acknowledge that the government has

provided some infrastructure, but the community has had to contribute to maintain and sustain them. One interviewee expresses concerns about the negative impact of the Ubuntu philosophy, citing how wealthy individuals take young people from the community to the cities to train them in skills acquisition centers, only for some of them to run away and leave the trainers accountable for their welfare. This situation makes it difficult for the trainers to trust and train other community members in the future. The findings suggest that the Ubuntu philosophy has contributed to community development in Iyowa community, but there are still many areas where development is needed. The government needs to do more to provide basic amenities, and community members need to continue to collaborate and work together to address the community's needs. The negative impact of the Ubuntu philosophy on skills acquisition training should also be addressed to ensure it does not hinder the community's development.

Conclusion

Community dwellers have a good knowledge of what the Ubuntu Philosophy entails. The Ubuntu philosophy has played a significant role in the development of this community by promoting cooperation, compassion, and generosity. The philosophy has been successful in fostering a sense of unity and collective responsibility among community members, which has enabled them to achieve common goals and support each other during difficult times. The Ubuntu philosophy has had a positive impact on community development in Iyowa community, but its impact is limited by several factors, including the government's lack of support and some wealthy individuals' actions. The Ubuntu Philosophy has implications for community development in Nigeria and other developing countries, where government support is often lacking, and communities have to rely on their own efforts to achieve development.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Relevant stakeholders should ensure that more skilled social workers involved in community transformation are produced in various levels of tertiary education.

2. The Ubuntu philosophy can be a valuable tool for community development, but it needs to be complemented by other strategies to address the challenges of development in developing countries.

3. The government should also create an enabling environment for community development initiatives.
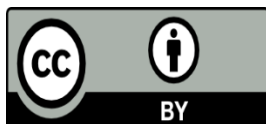
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