

EXAMINING THE NEXUS BETWEEN UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY AND GREEN BUSINESS MODELS: INSIGHTS FROM THE SADC REGION

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Abstract

The discussion in this article is an analysis of the Ubuntu philosophy and green business models discourse in Southern African Development Community (SADC). Although Western-founded theoretical approaches have dominated sustainability studies, there has been little focus on how the local African philosophies can be used to support sustainable business practices in the environment. The article integrates interdisciplinary data based on Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of peer-reviewed articles on the subject of Ubuntu relational, communal and intergenerational ethics and modern green business model innovation. It investigated forty-seven carefully selected studies found with the help of PRISMA 2020 guidelines but representing a variety of SADC countries and industries. These results indicate that Ubuntu values (interconnectedness, collective responsibility, participatory decision-making and cyclical temporality) and the most important aspects of green business models (stakeholder inclusiveness, systems thinking, regenerative value creation and long-term sustainability orientation) have a high degree of theoretical proximity. Agricultural, mining, financial, tourism and manufacturing evidence all reveal that Ubuntu-inspired interventions may lead to increased confidence between stakeholders, a sense of ownership of an initiative by the community, better environmental performance and increased financial stability. These models produced quantifiable gains in various settings such as a decrease in environmental incidents (EIs), higher loan repayment rates, retention of

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farmers and productivity of cooperatives. The review also establishes the implementation issues, including institutional mismatch, scaling, cultural appropriation risks and limited resources in rural areas. Further, a number of knowledge gaps remain, such as comparative research between the Ubuntu-informed systems and more traditional sustainability models, lack of longitudinal evidence and a lack of gender-specific study on leadership, participation and benefit-sharing relationships. In terms of theory, the proposed study has a contribution by incorporating a combination of stakeholder theory, systems thinking and an institutional approach to make a context-specific framework that explains the role of these indigenous philosophies in making a sustainable enterprise in emerging markets. It claims that Ubuntu is more than a normative ethical prism; it is a means of potential green business model creation as a strategic reaction to the complexity of institutions and the lack of resources. In terms of practicality, the results provide substantive advice to managers, policymakers and educators in favour of culturally authentic and locally entrenched means to sustainability development approaches in the SADC region. The article ends with a research agenda in the future presenting a plan to develop empirical validation and comparative evaluation of Ubuntu-informed sustainability models.

Keywords: stakeholder theory systems thinking, institutional theory, indigenous management, circular economy, sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

The environment is increasingly feeling the pain as the process of economic growth and social development continues to play out along the region and this is why there is increasing pressure on firms to abandon its naive concept of sustainability and redefine it in the realities of operations. The former is not to focus on the macro concept of sustainability but to begin with the concept that is micro based and align it with the already existing community visions without making sustainability look like an alien term. In the word Ubuntu which translates to the concise maxim of ‘I am because we are’ simply puts all of us together as human beings, which is that fulfilment cannot be achieved individually but through the interdependence of all. The principles that reflect the objectives of green business models are quite similar, that is, safeguarding the environment, honouring the stakeholders, developing sustainable value in addition to temporary gains. It is, thus, valid to postulate that firms within the Southern African Development (SADC)

region will come up with sustainable localised, practical and authentic strategies based on their core values. But, to as much as Ubuntu is eminent and environmental impacts are growing steadily in the region, there is very little empirical evidence on how Ubuntu can be operationalised into actual green business model practices of regulating the formal sector, economy and society of SADC countries.

CONCEPTUALISATION OF UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY AND GREEN BUSINESS MODELS

In this section, we extend the underlying principles of ubuntu philosophy and green business models.

UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY:

FOUNDATIONS AND PRINCIPLES

Green business practices are a radical shift not only in the traditional paradigm of profit maximisation that has historically dominated corporate decision making but also in the real practices in which corporate business practices are conducted. Modern companies are becoming more and more engaged in the convergence of profit oriented economic institutions as well as purposive social institutions and, at the same time, in the creation of economic values, environmental protection, and well-being of the society. This shift is associated with an increased recognition that the long-term business viability is not only related to financial performance but also to the preservation of ecological systems and the ability of the current generation to satisfy their own needs without compromising the possibility of future generations to meet their own needs (Elkington, 2020; Bansal *et al.*, 2021).

In contrast to superficial forms of corporate social responsibility (CSR) that are commonly linked to greenwashing, truly sustainable businesses incorporate environmental considerations in their core business strategies, organisational processes, value chain relationships and long-term value creation logics (Dyllick and Muff, 2020; Hahn *et al.*, 2022). This transformation goes beyond environmental signalling of a symbolic nature, and goes deep into organisational regeneration, such as the implementation of sustainability principles into governance structures, innovation processes, and performance measurement systems. Consequently, sustainability gets internalised in the manner in which firms determine success, resource allocation and performance measures over time.

This has been catalysed by a number of interrelated drivers. The regulatory frameworks have become stricter, especially regarding the environmental disclosure, carbon reporting, and supply chain transparency requirements (Ioannou and Serafeim, 2021; European Commission, 2022). Simultaneously, the preferences of consumers are changing significantly, with the increased demand to use environmentally responsible products and services putting the pressure on the companies on the market to adjust their offers to the principles of sustainability (White *et al.*, 2021). Investors have also increased their monitoring of the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance of firms, as well as relating the results of sustainability to access to capital, firm valuation, and long-term financial resilience (Friede *et al.*, 2021; Gillan *et al.*, 2021). Besides, increased awareness of climate related financial risks has strengthened the perception that ecological degradation is a systemic risk to financial stability, corporate profitability and long-term competitiveness (Bolton *et al.*, 2020; IPCC, 2023).

The concept of the circular economy is one of the most influential theoretical frameworks that lead to business model innovation. The logic behind a circular economy aims to decouple the level of economic growth and the extraction of resources by reducing waste, increasing the life cycle of products, and restoring natural systems (Geissdoerfer *et al.*, 2020; Kirchherr *et al.*, 2023). The circular business models, in contrast to the linear take-make-dispose model, emphasise repair, reuse, remanufacturing, recycling, and eco design to keep materials and resources in productive use as long as possible (Bocken *et al.*, 2019; Centobelli *et al.*, 2020). This is a strategy that does not only minimise the harm done to the environment, but also allows firms to create new forms of value by systemic innovation and regenerative practices.

Collectively, these trends show that green businesses practices are no longer the issues of ethical values but the ones of strategic values. To ensure sustainability transformations are lasting and routinised, firms need to restructure fundamental aspects of organisational cognition, organisational capabilities, and logic of value generation to balance profitability with environmental stewardship and social prosperity. High-profile examples are companies like Interface Inc. and Patagonia that have radically restructured their operations on the principle of circularity, and have proven the viability

of sustainability driven innovation in terms of commercial viability (Geissdoerfer *et al.*, 2022).

Tightly connected with this transformation is the rise of stakeholder capitalism, which undermines the primacy of shareholders by extending corporate responsibility beyond shareholders to include employees, customers, communities, and environmental systems. Companies that follow this model in their decision-making process tend to seek B Corporation certification or adopt triple bottom line accounting models to balance economic, social and environmental goals in the decision-making process (Freeman *et al.*, 2020).

Green business principles further operationalised through sustainable supply chain models, which integrate environmental and social standards into sourcing, production, and distribution processes, and thus, increase transparency, traceability and accountability across value networks. Correspondingly, platforms of the sharing economy use digital technologies to optimise resource utilisation by fostering consumption sharing and minimising material throughput. Biomimicry is a nature inspired approach based on ecological systems and biological processes as a template to innovative and sustainable business solutions.

Notably, the success of green business models is informed by their consistency with the local socio-cultural climates and expectations of the stakeholders. Sustainability oriented practices will have a higher chance of succeeding should they resonate with the dominant norms, values, and conceptualisations of responsibility and collective welfare. This has been applied to the principles of sustainable business practice by one culturally based framework, namely, the philosophy of Ubuntu, which focuses on shared humanity, mutual responsibility, and collective well-being. This alignment leads to legitimacy, social acceptance, and long-term viability as it helps in reinforcing reciprocal relationships between businesses, communities, and the natural environment.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is grounded in the theoretical perspective of stakeholder, systems and institutional theories.

THE STAKEHOLDER THEORY AND UBUNTU CONVERGENCE

The article deliberates the potentials of Ubuntu as a way of life and the green approach to business whereby the Stakeholder Theory can be an effective mediating mechanism between the Western managerial ideologies and the African philosophy of collective responsibility. The theory, first coined by Freeman in 1984, and followed up by many other authors, asserts that stakeholders of the firm do not only include the owners, but also includes constituencies in the broad sense of the word. The theory can also be applied to Ubuntu because this theory foreshadows the connectedness and shared responsibility where the wellbeing of the community prevails over the profit of an individual (Mungwini, 2020; Ncube, 2022). Ubuntu is, therefore, a culturally-based platform of reinterpreting business language in African settings that promotes a redirection of corporate purpose of gaining communally, instead of prioritising shareholder primacies. The African relational worldviews continue to gain more and more recognition in modern sustainability studies and have already entered the discourse on the subject of reciprocity and stewardship in economic activities (West, 2020; Bolden and Kirk, 2021). The similarity between the Stakeholder Theory and Ubuntu is that both are interested in the notion of relationality and interconnectedness. Most stakeholder theorists, in particular those with normative and socially sustainable perspectives, do not hold a mechanistic and isolated view of firms, but instead hold the view that organisations are embedded within a field consisting of stakeholders of an interrelated interest (Freeman *et al.*, 2021; Harrison *et al.*, 2021). Ubuntu is also critical of atomistic notions about people and institutions arguing that people, corporations and communities are built together in an enlarged social and moral order (Ncube, 2022). Both conceptions give up the notion of an autonomous firm that is not connected with society, looking towards the relational accountability.

Most significantly, Ubuntu represents a new path in the sustainability-related discourse that gives the African ethical resources to the corporate responsibility that transcends the compliance or the reputation management. With Ubuntu, sustainability can shift to a moral duty of the commons perpetually and to ecological care (Mungwini, 2020; Lutz, 2021). In a world of climate change and increasing social inequality where it is no longer What can the company extract? but What can the company do for me? This relational orientation can redefine the key business question in the age of climate change and growing social inequality where it is no longer

What can the company extract? but What can the company do for me? The provided re-orientation aligns with new policy-level discussions around the world regarding stakeholder capitalism and regenerative business practices beyond profit-maximising work in firms to the creation of shared value and systemic resilience (Freeman *et al.*, 2021; Hahn *et al.*, 2022). Ubuntu invests, however, more than the localisation of sustainability in the African mind, but it adds value to the global debate on how to address the climate and social crises. The moral reciprocity, collective welfare and interconnectivity, make Ubuntu a worthy addition supplementing and reinforcing the modern stakeholder theory through foregrounding. It is an interpersonal reasoning that on a climate of ecological un-stability and social displacement furnishes African-inspired profundity and universally applicable principles of how to rethink the objectives and methods of doing business.

THE SYSTEMS THEORY AND HOLISTIC THINKING

The Systems Theory is an effective analytical concept to explain why Ubuntu philosophy and green business models are an attractive creation of sustainability. Systems Thinking denies the idea that sustainability problems are discrete challenges that can be addressed via exogenous solutions to linear problems viewed as out of discrete, cause-or-risk reduction prisms. Instead, it focuses on feedback loops, nonlinearity and emergent properties that prevail (Meadows, 2020; Williams *et al.*, 2021). The issues mentioned above under the economic, environmental and social pillars are not stand-alone problems that can be addressed one at a time, but these are systemic problems that have to be intervened in the economic, environmental and social pillars (UN Environment Programme, 2022; IPCC, 2023). Sustainability has to be inoculated into the DNA of business models in this system-based approach rather than a collection of voluntary and isolated initiatives which can be related to any of the social responsibility or peripheral programmes. Ubuntu philosophy is a good fit with Systems Thinking which inevitably backgrounds relational interdependency and collective well-being. Ubuntu is indicative of the assumption that one cannot separate individual well-being and communal and ecological well-being and, therefore, it offers a systemic perspective on the world in which actors exist as part of larger relational networks (Mungwini and Ncube, 2021). In this regard, Ubuntu is normative contrary to Systems Theory: in the case that Systems Theory is the analytic paradigm, Ubuntu is the moral paradigm. The two frameworks disregard atomistic assumptions and argue that individuals,

organisations and communities are not separate entities, but aspects of a whole. The logic of green business models is based on such a relational ontology and extends the understanding that the creation of long-term values is based on the sustenance of the health of ecological and social systems (Bocken and Short, 2021; Hahn *et al.*, 2022).

The existing green business models, more specifically those of the more recent and systemic generation based on the principles of a circular economy, follow the systems logic by seeking to reduce waste, regenerate resources and material loops, instead of pushing environmental costs into other locations (Geissdoerfer *et al.*, 2020; Kirchherr *et al.*, 2023). These models show how sustainability cannot be restricted to a department or a programme and that it has to be embedded in the systems of governance, supply chains, product design and relationships with stakeholders. The Systems Theory also assumes that the effectiveness of these models depends on the congruence of the institutional, organisational and societal levels. The emphasis on consensus-building, inclusivity and distributive responsibility, in turn, provides the Ubuntu with a sound focus on the practical implementation of green business models through the increased involvement of stakeholders and their active engagement towards sustainability goals (Bolden and Kirk, 2021; Harrison *et al.*, 2022).

Additionally, Systems Thinking is also ideal in resolving the issue of sustainability since it directly recognises the feedback loops, unintended consequences and cause-effect relationships (Williams *et al.*, 2021). The erosion of nature and social disequilibrium tend to be the results of strengthening feedback loops that enhance even the slightest shocks into the crises of the system. The dedication of Ubuntu to dialogue, to shared responsibility and governance by relationships are complemented by such a strategy. At the praxis level, the participatory Ubuntu process can be utilised to incorporate different perspectives which is essential in the context of concern such as climate change that needs to be adopted by the firms, communities and institutions (Hahn *et al.*, 2022; IPCC, 2023). These two Systems Theory and Ubuntu have much potential to be the origin of sustainable business models. Systems Thinking explains the structural interrelationships within which these processes of sustainability are maintained and Ubuntu enhances the ethical and interpersonal values needed to achieve them in a collective way. By introducing the systems views to the relational African philosophy and integrating the point view

with the systems view, organisations are in a position to go beyond a silo-based and point-based view and transform the organisation towards a truly systemic change.

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT AND INSTITUTIONAL THEORY.

The Institutional Theory is one of the most significant theoretical frameworks which may be used to inform how Ubuntu will help in diffusion as well as institutionalisation of the green business models within the SADC region. The theory assumes that organisational behaviour is regulated by factors which go beyond the considerations of efficiency, such as social conventions, institutional logics and cognitive-cultural models that provide organisations with legitimacy, stability and long-term survival (Bitektine and Haack, 2020; Scott, 2021). The institutional pressures are extremely dominant as forces on corporate sustainability practices in the context of developing countries like in the SADC region where formal institutional structures are normally incomplete or developing and informal norms play a very powerful role on corporate sustainability practices. Some of the key themes of the Institutional Theory have a lot in common with the Ubuntu-green business model nexus, including but not limited to legitimacy-seeking behaviour, isomorphism and institutional logics. Since legitimacy improves the social acceptance, access to resources and survival in the long term (Deephouse *et al.*, 2021), organisations strive to legitimise. When it comes to the sphere of sustainability, legitimacy is more and more dependent on the signs of environmental accountability and adherence to the expectations of climate justice and social justice (Hahn *et al.*, 2022). Ubuntu expands the concept of this legitimacy orientation by considering corporate responsibility as an ethical obligation to the society in general. The normative support of green business models founded on Ubuntu may be more successful in the societies where the relational values and societal wellbeing are more prioritised.

The institutional isomorphism thinking also assists in the actualisation of how practices founded on sustainability are most likely to disseminate through the organisational realms. Organisations that are subjected to memetic pressures over time, evolve convergence within their structure and behaviour as long as they remain in a common institutional space (Bitektine and Haack, 2020). The regulation which includes environmental compliance requirements, carbon reporting requirements and ESG disclosure requirements - problems which African regulators struggle with -

are compounded by coercive forces. The mimetic pressures are realised when organisations are feeling insecure and follow the footprint of early adopters of successful acts concerning being green, especially when sustainability improves reputation or access to the market (Hahn et al., 2022). Normative forces can be seen when the ecologically responsible business practices are demanded by the professional norms, industry associations and sustainable global certificatory bodies. These pressures are coupled with the social norms of the Ubuntu led social norms in SADC region that could accelerate the process of normalising green business models as the norms of organisational behaviour that is acceptable and expected.

Another analytical relation is indicated by the notion of institutional logics. The wider concept of institutional logics is the concept of those beliefs and values that underpin what is considered to be right or legitimate action in a given situation (Thornton *et al.*, 2021). Market and state assumptions are out-weighted by communal and relational logics of the African continent, among others. In this sense, one can describe Ubuntu as an institutionally fundamental cultural logic which values the common good, mutual interaction and lifetime custodianship. When such logic of relationships collides with new sustainability norms, it can foster internalisation of pro-environmental management behaviour that goes beyond the anticipated responsibility. The organisations do not implement the sustainability programmes due to the reputation or due to the regulations but they implement the sustainability programmes as part of the responsibility that is socially based. Thus, the Ubuntu compatible green business models can be disseminated throughout the SADC hemisphere by the use of the Institutional Theory as a structural metaphor. The coercive, mimetic and normative pressures, which are instilled, fill the institutional logics of Ubuntu with its meaning and expression. The Ubuntu-green business nexus aims to bring both institutional knowledge and relational African thinking into the organisation sectors with the aim of normalising, legitimising and maintaining the knowledge in the organisation sectors.

METHODOLOGY

This section details the research methodology employed in the study.

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW APPROACH

The rationale to utilise Systematic Literature Review (SLR) in the study is based on theoretical and practical reasons. The conceptual fragmentation that has been witnessed in a wide array of academic fields such as African philosophy, business ethics, sustainability studies, strategic management and Institutional Theory characterises the relationship between Ubuntu philosophy and green business models. This kind of dismemberment has created a seepage between scholarly discourses and lack of cross-referencing and conceptual assimilation. In this case, the systematic review offers an officially rigorous way of condensing the knowledge scattered about to a format of analytical narrative. The SLR dismantles conceptual silos by systematically finding and incorporating the relevant scholarship and offers a point upon which further development of the theory can be built upon. These motives are also supported by the immature nature of research field. Although Ubuntu has been discussed extensively throughout the spectrum of philosophical and leadership research, and the green business models were widely covered within the context of sustainability literature and management research, the mutual intersection of the two has been under-theorised. This choice of a methodology is further justified by the fact that the field is in its infancy.

The uncertainties and ambiguities in the operationalisation of the important constructs are generally found in new areas of research. A systematic review could help map out the conceptual areas, illuminate on the most common themes and study the controversies of theories. Instead of trying to create unpublished primary research too soon, the SLR aims at assembling intellectual architecture by critically evaluating and synthesising existing knowledge. Boundary demarcation and integration of theory is also a must. Most of the existing theories that blur sustainability with business models research are based on the western institutional contexts which may not easily translate to the African contexts that are characterised by the community-based norms, informal institutions and alternative socio-cultural rationalities. Contextual contingencies and boundary conditions are exhibited in the comparison between contexts made by an SLR. This approach has a special role in the interactions of the indigenous philosophical perspectives such as Ubuntu with the institutional pressures and sustainability imperatives of the organisational behaviour in the SADC. The SLR is capable of being refined in theory, and applied in context due to its systematic synthesis.

Transparency, credibility and reproducibility are also increased by the systematic review approach. In contrast to traditional narrative reviews, which may be cherry-picked or may be implicitly biased in other ways, an SLR will demand a clear description of the search methods, screening, inclusion/exclusion criteria and approaches to quality evaluation which are presented in the Search Strategies section. Adherence to the current reporting standards, such as PRISMA 2020, increases the methodological responsibility of other researchers and makes them adopt the same. This transparency is needed in the interdisciplinary and situational research fields in order to become the recipient of scholarly trust and establish an accumulative body of knowledge. All these prove that the systematic review is not a mere selection of methodology, but a theoretically grounded and site-specific approach to study the interrelations between Ubuntu philosophy and green business models in the SADC region. The databases that were used were Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection, Business Source Premier and Academic Search Complete, good sources of research on business, management and sustainability. Other searches on African databases, such as AJOL, Sabinet African e-Publications and the African Index Medicus that periodically index publications that are not easily covered by major international databases were also done to ensure that work created in Africa or published in less frequented venues was not ignored. The search process was wide-ranging but narrow to ensure it retrieved all the important and relevant research and eliminated too much irrelevant information by using both the free-text and controlled vocabulary. The thematic core of visionary African thought, Ubuntu and philosophy which proposes values such as Ubuntu, African philosophy, communalism, collective responsibility, were used in free-text words and controlled vocabulary terms to connect these ideas with the sustainability and green business, green business models, sustainable businesses, the greening economy, circular economy and environmental sustainability. This was then further limited to the region by adding such terms as SADC, Southern Africa and names of individual SADC countries.

DATABASE SELECTION AND SEARCH STRATEGY.

The selection of database was informed by the fact that there is a need to identify broadly published research and research that is of value to Africa. Scopus and the Web of Science Core Collection, the most popular international databases in the world were emphasised as they not only have large multi-layered coverage but also high indexing quality. The purpose of

inclusion of Business Source Premier and Academic Search Complete is to focus more on green business model studies, as most of the discussions on the topic are published there. To find research that is relevant to Africa, the search was further widened to include Africa-focused databases such as AJOL, Sabinet African e-Publications and African Index Medicus, to make sure that Southern African research which might not be present in international sources would come to light. The search terms were to capture two central themes of the study: Ubuntu and green and or sustainable business, but keeping the SADC region as its geographic boundary. Related ideas and concepts were linked together using the binary logic in order to encompass the differences in terms. In practice, the searches were narrowed down by adding the terms Ubuntu, African philosophy, community-related and collective responsibility, to the list of keywords being searched, to ensure that the eventual list of results was still within the context of the research. Nevertheless, various indexing systems and controlled vocabularies necessitated the need to adjust the search terms to each database. The temporal boundaries would be to focus on literature which has been published within the time period 2020-2025 to ensure that this review is up to date and is also able to capture emergent research which continues to surface within this developing field. A language restriction has been placed to cover publications in the English, French and Portuguese languages as a representation of linguistic diversity in the SADC region as well as ensure a manageable scope of analysis.

STUDY SELECTION AND SCREENING PROCESS

Studies were selected based on two steps (1) initial screening of findings in the form of title and abstracts in order to eliminate articles that were not relevant to the topic at hand and (2) overall full-text screening of potentially relevant articles to narrow down on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selection procedure was founded on PRISMA. Within the context of the literature, the inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) to deal with Ubuntu philosophy or some other theme of African communalistic; (2) to deal with green business models, or sustainability business practices or another theme of environmental sustainability; and (3) to deal with either SADC countries or relevance to Southern African contexts in general. In addition, only acceptable sources which contained papers published in peer-reviewed academic journals since 2020 and earlier, written in English were accepted. The exclusion criteria included articles that: (1) studied Ubuntu philosophy without business aspect; (2) studied business sustainability without cultural

or philosophical background; (3) studied regions outside SADC without identifiable relevance; (4) used grey literature, abstracts, or non-peer reviewed articles; (5) published before 2020 or after 2025; or (6) was not on the target languages. Screening was done by the investigators and any disagreement discussed and resolved with the help of a third reviewer where there was a need. Inter-rater reliability was measured using Cohen kappa and results showed that reviewers were more agreeable to each other than would be expected with chance.

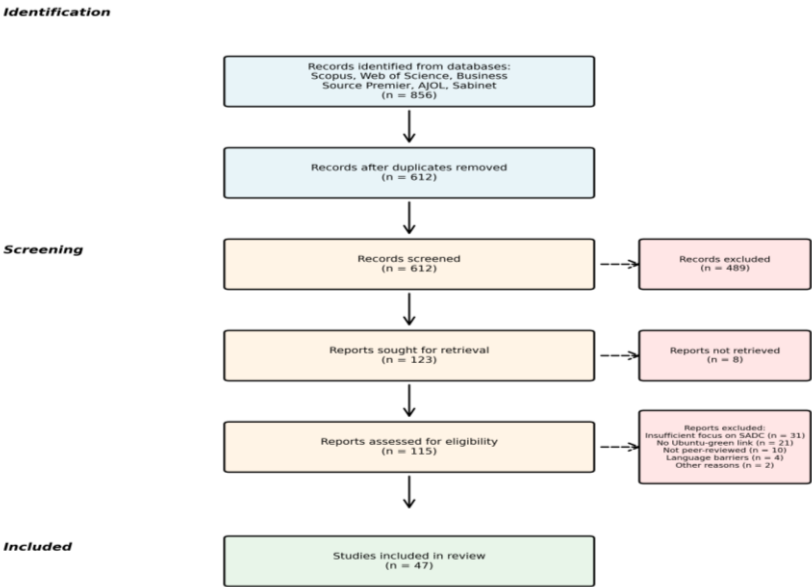


Figure 1: PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram for Systematic Literature Review

DATA EXTRACTION AND QUALITY ASSESSMENT

A standardised form, specifically designed to be used in this review to have similar data extraction in all the studies included in the review, was used to extract data. The tool revealed the publication details, research objectives, the theoretical or practical nature of the implications, the methods that are going to be used, the key findings and the contribution the article made to the conceptualisation of the Ubuntu-green business model relationships. It also recorded the geographical focus, sector or industry background,

stakeholders to be considered and suggestions made to the authors to get to a researched study next. The accepted tools of appraisal were modified and subjected to quality appraisal based on the type of evidence under consideration. Conceptual papers were rated based on the criteria of Torraco (2016) which comprised theoretical contribution, conceptual clarity and scholarly rigour. Empirical studies were appraised based on the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool that was modified according to the research in the field of business and management by Hong *et al.* (2021). Significant domains of quality assessment were theoretical foundation, methodological suitability, validity of results, analytical rigour and added value. In this regard, studies were categorised as high quality, medium and low quality and sensitivity analysis was conducted whereby the changes in quality were taken into account as to whether the general trends or conclusions of the review were altered with the changes in quality.

SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA.

The analysis and synthesis of the data were in line with the standards of systematic reviews of conceptual meta-synthesis and transfer. These methods were thematic analysis and involved the use of descriptive code, inductive coding and heuristic coding. A pre-coded set of themes based on research questions and theoretical frameworks, led to deductive coding, whereas inductive codes were produced to go to new dimensions and patterns that cannot be predicted in advance. Thematic analysis was grounded on six-step process of familiarisation with the data; first-hand code generation; theme searching; theme review; theme definition and naming; and the final analysis. It was done through analyses done in an iterative way and with frequent team meetings to help maintain consistency and thoroughness in the process. Narrative synthesis was also utilized to explain how the Ubuntu philosophy could be utilised when coming up with green business models and to define what is known, what is contradictory and what the research can be in future. The meta-synthesis techniques were used to combine evidence across studies and, thus, produce second-order theoretical concepts and synthesised evidence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

FINDINGS

The crucial results of the research are discussed in the following section.

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY.

After identifying and screening 312 publications, 47 peer-reviewed articles were included on the basis of agreed inclusion criteria. Of these last, 23 were conceptual, 18 were both empirical and 6 had mixed methods. Geographically, literature was strongly biased towards (a small number of) countries in the SADC region: 34% of studies concentrated on South Africa, followed by Botswana with 19%, Zimbabwe with 15%, and Namibia with 11% and the remaining articles study two or more SADC countries and/or a broader region. The industries also were broadly spread in the studies: manufacturing featured most often at 21%, followed by agriculture and agribusiness at 19%, mining and extractives at 17%, financial services at 15% and tourism at 13%. Scanning through the past, this subject seems to have gained momentum. Those 8 articles published in 2020, 12 in 2021, 14 in 2022, 9 in 2023 and 4 between 2024 and 2025, thus represent an increasing academic interest in the Ubuntu-green business model intersection. The methods used to mix the evidence base were as follows: 28% of the evidence base was represented by case studies, 23% by interviews and focus group, 19% by surveys, 17% by mixed-methods research studies, and 13% by purely theoretical papers. The majority of included studies were considered to be strong: 68% of them met the high-quality threshold, 26% rated medium-quality and 6% lower quality, however, they were included to present the review as complete as possible.

CONCEPTUAL CONVERGENCES OF UBUNTU AND GREEN BUSINESS MODELS.

The numerous concepts of Ubuntu philosophy and green business models are far closer than merely being similar in their common thought of good will. The most visible manner in which they come together is in how the people involved are open and decisions are arrived at with contributions made by all. An illustrative example is how the Ubuntu concept of shared responsibility and agreement would be very fitting to new forms of multi stakeholder capitalism that holds companies to account, not only to shareholders, but also to their workers, communities and the world we all live in (Mabelebele and Makhanya, 2022). Ubuntu concepts of connectedness are also related to ideas of the circular economy. When manufacturing firms in Botswana were examined, it was found that firms that had implemented waste reduction efforts based on Ubuntu had a much better chance of success than the common linear ways by up to 34% and had far more multi stakeholder support and community-based practices of resources recovery (Ngugi and Ochieng, 2023). The other large

interconnection is the way Ubuntu and green business conceptualise time. A number of reports indicate how the Ubuntu circular economy take-on time aligns with the longer-term perspective of sustainability, rather than the short-term perspective of making money. This unity of perception facilitates the use of business decisions on the basis of preservation and cross-generational fairness issues, at the core of both Ubuntu ideas and more general green growth ideas. The reports also included how when applied to restorative justice Ubuntu addresses the longer, greener cycle of green business ideas: caring for not damaging, biological and social systems. Sibanda *et al.* (2022) provide evidence that community-led reform concepts on the basis of Ubuntu are more highly regarded and yield more positive results than traditional fixing procedures in the minerals industry in Zimbabwe.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION MODELS.

Some of these studies demonstrate how Ubuntu has been practised and adopted to the green business model in SADC countries. In a case study, Mthembu *et al.* (2023) observed the practice of the Ubuntu principles within the organic agricultural business model in an isolated rural cooperative farming scheme in South Africa. This led to a 45% increase in crop yields and a 67% rise in farmer retention rates when compared to traditional co-operative setups. The researchers explain this by the Ubuntu philosophy according to which collective ownership and shared decision-making encourage members to build a culture of commitment and sharing of knowledge. Chikodzi and Matamanda (2022) discovered that the Zimbabwean financial institutions used the Ubuntu philosophy in their green finance initiatives. The loan repayment rates were 23 per cent higher than conventional individual lending models and were the result of community-centred approaches which were the derivatives of the Ubuntu philosophy. The paper demonstrates that Ubuntu philosophy founded on collective responsibility, generates informal social collateral that minimises the risks of default, but at the same time it maximises access to sustainable development projects.

The most interesting aspect of this was that there were many examples where Ubuntu was utilised as a component of a green business plan in the tourism industry, some of them even displaying community-based eco-tourism projects in Namibia, Botswana and Zambia. Ubuntu principles were employed to assist in the creation of a business plan that would be inclusive

and would assist in helping local communities and also protecting the natural resources. These demonstrate how Ubuntu emphasis on community ownership and sharing of benefits can assist in repairing the past of not including local communities and produce tourism income that is sustainable. Some manufacturing case studies demonstrated how supply chain management approaches based on Ubuntu contributed to the enhancement of environmental performance by mitigating incidents and improving community relations through community-based monitoring and problem-solving. The company that had made use of Ubuntu in their green supply chains saw a reduction of 28% in the number of environmental incidents and a 41% increase in their community relations as compared to those who had been using more traditional ways.

BARRIERS AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Although the text indicates that there are indeed some real successes, it also highlights that there are serious barriers to the implementation of Ubuntu-based green business models in SADC. One of the biggest problems is that community-oriented values of Ubuntu conflict with the market structures of which the collective interests of individuals are often undermined in favour of the individual ones. This conflict is most evident in the area when the laws are very strict, and the laws are more inclined toward the individual decision-making and the private ownership of property, rather than the community-based approach and the shared benefits. The other problem is scale. In various sections of the text, it is noted that Ubuntu principles are relatively simple to follow in small scale and community-based projects but become difficult to follow as a business expands to larger proportions and becomes less localised. Put another way, the interpersonal proximity and mutual support that Ubuntu relies on is difficult to sustain in larger operations and thus the model is less applicable when it comes to large-scale environmental initiatives that involve more than two communities and organisations. But there is another difficulty that is the cultural authenticity. Some articles explain how resistance may ensue when external forces impose to have Ubuntu-inspired initiatives without knowing the local culture and social norms (Mokgoro and Stevens 2023). In such instances, the risk to Ubuntu is that it is used as a superficial label or marketing service; one can accuse the project of cultural theft quite rapidly, when the core values of shared responsibility, collective decision making and respect to community authority do not reflect in how the project is being managed. Last but not least, there exist the practical resource limitations: a lot of rural

and low-income communities where Ubuntu is highly practised may lack funds, technology and technical skills to implement and maintain green business innovations on a large scale. The literature recommends that progress should be based on the balance between the strengths of Ubuntu such as trust, reciprocity and collective action and external partnerships carefully designed to provide financing and technical assistance as well as protecting community ownership and cultural integrity.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion of the main findings of the study is provided.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS THEORY.

The findings indicate that the connection between Ubuntu philosophy and green business models is more than mere coincidence that they have the same objective. Rather, they are quite compatible in how they perceive people, responsibility and value. Ubuntu as such can be used as a foundation on which to make green business models that do make sense and that can work in the SADC context. The perception of society presented by Ubuntu is quite similar to that of the Stakeholder theory, making it an excellent starting point of the business models expanding beyond the narrow and Western concepts, can yet still survive the rigours of academic criticism. The research also assists in the realisation of the role of time as a culture when it comes to sustainability perceptions. Ubuntu frequently perceives time roundly which is unlike the linear fixed planning nature of most business models used by the west. It might be closer to the natural order and hence may be more appropriate to work on sustainability which needs to be long term. It also paves way to a new theory that would connect the native time to the common business planning and assessment tools.

The results also demonstrate that Ubuntu can assist in filling two critical gaps in the research on green business model: first, the actual stakeholder engagement and local ownership; second, how meaningful the actual stakeholder engagement and local ownership can be achieved. Current research into stakeholder engagement is not in any real sense progressing beyond a consultation and neither is it going beyond limited participation. Just as the first argument, Ubuntu has its foundation on actual cultural practices of collective deliberation and collective responsibility. This provides means to create stakeholder engagement strategies that are more effective, trusted and local. Tensions also exist which can hardly be resolved

with the help of this work. Market forces that are anchored on competition, individual ownership and profit are likely to conflict with the values of community in Ubuntu. Working through these tensions calls for nuance and we suggest new hybrid models that bring the ideals of community and market into a joint space that remains true to both, instead of watering down either so they can work together.

CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY AND DE-COLONISATION PERSPECTIVES

Such findings are included in the greater scholarly discussion regarding the significance of taking indigenous knowledge systems as sources of theory and practice seriously in de-colonising business and management. Among the best examples of this may be Ubuntu. It offers a highly developed alternative to much of the Western assumptions about business and can support sustainable approaches that feel culturally relevant in African contexts but also provide ideas that can be relevant to debates on global sustainability. It is also evidence that Ubuntu does not work, unless you really take it in, and follow its natural ways, not just fancy signs and Ubuntu branding that have no connection to the culture that created it. This is highly significant to the ways multinationals and development groups may behave within African places. It demonstrates that they will only succeed when they learn deep into it, work well together and have strong ties with local groups, not just to bring in plans or think that superficial signs will create lasting change. Other studies also examine local concern that it is true and in charge. The idea is that green business ideas based on Ubuntu are best implemented when the locals are involved in planning and operating the business and when the locals get a share of the business and some decision-making authority, not when the outsiders are imposed on them even when the outsiders have good ideas. Meanwhile, this study reveals that there are slippery matters to be treated with caution, the most important ones being between preserving the way things are locally and the necessity of change. Noteworthy, it seems that Ubuntu is not stagnant or old anymore; it moves and thus can change with the new facts without losing its grip on its core ideas of shared care, human worth and common good.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The fact that it seems that Ubuntu-based green business models are working in the real world has a clear implication on the way SADC should formulate its policies and plans towards growth. They demonstrate that the growth policy must treat our own cultures as an actual resource to sustainability

and not to rely much on imported best practice models that are unlikely to be appropriate to local contexts. Other studies of strategies adopted by local people that proved viable also provide an insight into how Ubuntu-inspired work might be done on a large scale provided that the right policies are implemented: examples of crafting rules that would allow shared ownership, increased use of local natural resources and community-based growth strategies. All these lessons demonstrate how Ubuntu can be able to develop growth plans specific to the region as well as to make growth plans that are also eco-friendly.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

In accordance with research of this type, it is high end to submit managerial suggestions of the results.

UBUNTU PRINCIPLES TO BE INTEGRATED STRATEGICALLY.

These results may assist managers, who are willing to implement Ubuntu in green business models. The change Ubuntu requests is to cease dealing with stakeholders as you would in a transactional relationship and to begin building relationships with them. This involves leaving the process of talking to the stakeholders and entering the process of working with them and making the decisions together. To do this, companies will have to change their culture, how they run their organisation and how they measure success. They will be required to devise a way of appreciating and quantifying the wellbeing of the community and shared responsibility as much as the traditional method to quantify financial means. Managers will also be required to lay more emphasis on consensus building and participative leadership abilities. They will have to be capable of sharing the capability to make decisions in a common manner yet still be in sync and be tactical. In most cases, the process of effecting this kind of change is only realised when top leaders take the same seriously. They need to allocate resources, embed this in policies and systems and set an example through their behaviour, to show the organisation's commitment to these shared values. Another reason of this is that the more long-term orientation on planning and assessment that is reflected by the findings echoes the cyclical conception of time that Ubuntu has, as well as the focus on responsibility to future generations. This would, in turn, require new measures and evaluation methods that would not only quantify short-term financial performance, but also, the long-term community and environmental value. In some cases, this might involve use of intergenerational or 'seven-

generation' style impact assessments more consistent with Ubuntu's expanded time horizon.

OPERATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORKS

These conclusions lead to practical set-ups in real-life involving Ubuntu concept in the workplace yet maintain a focus on the growth and efficiency of the firm. Supply chain management is a clear first step since Ubuntu can be used with group-based sourcing, working with suppliers and other local players to solve problems and benefit sharing that is different from the regular "buyer-supplier" type of relationship. A significant shift will also be required by people management, so that the emphasis on the shared self and shared duty of Ubuntu could be taken into consideration. New systems would not disrupt the balance between team performance and what can be done to improve the community and how well the individual does. In recruiting, it would have to go beyond the skills and qualifications, to look at cultural suitability and true willingness to work in ways based on working together and helping the community. Quality management systems must also be modified to provide weight to the focus of Ubuntu in relationship building, and in resolving issues in a manner that restores relationships. To illustrate this, rather than corrective actions being based on punishment, joint improvement processes could be used by firms that address problems as they are doing this, and enhance trust and stakeholder relations. In the present instance, quality management fuelled by Ubuntu may yield far better results by promoting increased commitment, openness and a desire to deal with issues before they get out of control. Lastly, the budget and the decisions where to allocate money needs to be enlarged to consider both community and environmental benefits as well as financial ones. This may take methods such as social return on investment (SROI) modified to fit the Ubuntu-based scenarios, as a means of making the wider value easier to perceive and quantify. Cooperative farming data also demonstrate that Ubuntu-led financial management can reduce risk by sharing resources and social support structures that can help build resilience and achieve sustainability objectives.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

The article demonstrates that the participatory system of Ubuntu may be utilised to enhance the involvement of the stakeholders to attain sustainable green business. The crux is that groups must learn to develop proper management systems that enable the actual influence and actual say, as

opposed to just having a little say or two or merely giving lip service to true partnership in which the local people set the goals and are not merely allowed to comment on the goals but actually be allowed to participate in the goals. Another point that the article makes is that individuals should be careful when interacting with others. To ensure Ubuntu is indeed going to matter, then organisations must give a serious thought to how long and how much time is required to create trust and build consensus with communities, rather than perceive engagement as a quick precondition to get down to work. Other concepts of the articles are that rushing into a project can bypass those stages of developing trust and consensus that will drive the project forward to higher resistance and worse results than those approaches that work on trust and relationships and bring people together to agree on what to do. Change the communication strategies to be in line with Ubuntu's oral tradition and story-telling styles, maybe even to include narrative techniques, together with cultural protocols which would best suit the local people's communication styles, rather than the traditional written documentation and formal presentation formats. Apparently, culturally appropriate communication methods have much higher likelihood of influencing stakeholder buy-in and understanding positively than the traditional business style of communication. The conflict resolution mechanisms must therefore make use of the restorative justice principles in Ubuntu which focus on restoring relationships and reestablishing harmony within the community, instead of the guilty being proven guilty. The literature suggests that conflict resolution mechanisms informed by Ubuntu yield better outcomes, by enhancing stakeholder satisfaction, and decreasing the chances that the conflict will occur again.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION.

The results indicate that new mechanisms of performance measurement are required. These should look at the results of an Ubuntu-informed green business model across the economic, environmental, social and cultural contexts. The old monetary indicators do not go silent and alone but still form the story that what the models are trying to accomplish. They must be maintained through actions that consider wellbeing on a community scale, satisfaction among the stakeholders, cultural authenticity and sustainability that are long lasting. The research proposes a Balanced Scorecard that has been customised to the Ubuntu contexts. The community sets the idea of what “success” would be and this will be used in conjunction with the measures used by the more traditional business world. This can imply a

certain degree of sharing benefits and a certain degree of equity in the division of benefits. It might also imply estimating the respect to the local culture, the impact that will be experienced by the future generation. At a local level, credibility, and authenticity will be essential; in the process, the community stakeholders will be involved in a process of developing the scorecard, defining the indicators, and defining how the performance would be measured. Evaluation systems will have to change to match Ubuntu's long-term focus and cyclical time frame that can extend the period for evaluation or require several rounds of assessment to allow the benefits and lagged effects to present themselves over time that may not be feasible under quarterly or annual reporting systems. The literature indicates that the Ubuntu-infused evaluation approaches are patience-demanding and longitudinal approaches that are contrary to the demands of short-term investors. The reporting system will have to be moulded in such a way that they can convey Ubuntu enlightened outcomes to key stakeholders' groups, particularly the community members who are more inclined to use oral communications and narrative reporting styles over written reports, which can still be of use to the regulators and investors. Through the research, it is better to communicate and involve stakeholders using a multi-format reporting approach compared to using a standardised reporting system.

Some of these studies indicate how Ubuntu has been practised and adopted in the green business model in SADC countries. Mthembu *et al.* (2023) presented a case study of a rural cooperative farming scheme in South Africa where the researchers observed the application of Ubuntu principles to the business model of organic agriculture. This resulted in a 45 per cent growth in crop yields and a 67 per cent improvement in the rates of farmers remaining with the organisation compared with the traditional co-operative arrangements. The researchers explain this by the Ubuntu philosophy that promotes collective ownership and shared decision-making to encourage members to develop a culture of commitment and sharing of knowledge. According to Chikodzi and Matamanda (2022), the Ubuntu philosophy was applied to green finance projects implemented by the Zimbabwean financial institutions. The community-based strategies, which were based on the Ubuntu philosophy led to 23 percent higher loan repayment rates than those achieved with traditional individual lending models. The study demonstrates that Ubuntu philosophy founded on collective responsibility forms an informal social collateral which minimises the risks of default and, at the same time, increases access to sustainable development projects.

The best part of this was the plethora of examples where Ubuntu was applied as a component in a green business plan within the tourism sector, some even demonstrating community-based eco-tourism projects in Namibia, Botswana and Zambia. Ubuntu principles were assisted in making a business plan that would be inclusive and as a way to help local communities and protect the natural resources. These demonstrate how the Ubuntu emphasis on community ownership and benefit sharing can be used to repair the past of ignoring the local community, and developing tourism income that is sustainable. A number of manufacturing case studies established how the supply chain management approaches based on Ubuntu helped in improving the environmental performance by reducing incidences and improving community relations through community-based monitoring and problem-solving. Those companies that deployed Ubuntu in their green supply chains experienced a 28% reduction in environmental incidents and a 41% increase in their community relations compared to those who deployed more traditional ways.

RESEARCH POTENTIAL AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS.

Consequently, the review found some critical gaps in knowledge that indicate how future work could be value adding. One of these gaps is that there are no high quality and long-term evidence on Ubuntu-informed green business models. Some of the papers rely on small-scale, short-term case studies or conceptual discussion papers that leaves us with little evidence on how these models perform over time and the long-term environmental, social and financial impacts. The review also determined that there was an uneven distribution of studies across sectors; very few studies looked at how Ubuntu could affect green business models in the tech, health and education sectors that are typically considered as infrastructure sectors and are especially important to sustainable development in the SADC countries. The relevance of Ubuntu in more economic and services sectors remains, therefore, yet to be thoroughly understood since the literature is still concentrated in the realms of agriculture and tourism.

The other notable limitation that is noted in the review is the little application of comparative analytical designs. Even though there are a few studies that examine Ubuntu-informed organisational practices and green business models within African contexts, very few of them explicitly compare the approaches with conventional business models or sustainability

models based on other cultural traditions. Such lack of systematic comparison limits the depth of analysis. In the absence of analysing relative performance in terms of assessing measurable results such as sustainability performance indicators, financial resilience, stakeholder satisfaction, or long-term strategic adaptability, it becomes challenging to determine whether Ubuntu-informed models provide unique benefits, are contextually dependent, or perform in a similar way to mainstream sustainability models. Comparative inquiry is necessary to go beyond normative endorsement to evidence-based evaluation, as Nkomo *et al.* (2021) argue. The absence of such work restricts both the external validity and theoretical generalisability since it does not allow finding the specific institutional, cultural, or market conditions within which Ubuntu-informed green business models are most effective.

This restriction is not entirely due to lack of methodological savvy on comparative research across cultural systems, but also in part because comparative research across cultural systems necessitates methodological sophistication. But in the absence of such comparative analysis, scholarship risks assuming that Ubuntu-informed approaches are inherently good without empirically questioning how they perform relative to each other or in relation to multiple boundary conditions. Future studies are thus advised to consider multi-country, cross-sectoral, or mixed-method comparative designs that will systematically compare models based on Ubuntu with models based on Western-derived sustainability theories. This work would enhance theoretical vigour and define whether Ubuntu is a situational alternative, a complementary framework, or a potentially transferable model of sustainable enterprise.

Another important void is the insufficient focus on gender aspects by Ubuntu-informed green business scholarship. This is an analytically important omission in light of the fact that women often play central roles in Ubuntu-oriented communities, informal economic networks and grassroots sustainability initiatives across the SADC region. Gender relations influence the participation in decision-making activities, access to resources, leadership and allocation of benefits that emanate as a result of sustainability efforts. However, the reviewed literature rarely breaks down findings by gender or studies the effects of gendered structures of power on the implementation and outcomes of Ubuntu-informed business models.

Lack of gender sensitive analysis undermines the explanatory richness of the current literature. It is hard to completely comprehend the social processes that support sustainability performance and inclusion of stakeholders without looking at how gender roles, cultural expectations and institutional constraints interact with relational philosophies such as Ubuntu. This is a significant research potential. Future research must examine the influence of the dynamics of gender on participation, leadership structure, benefit-sharing arrangement and overall performance of Ubuntu-informed green business models. The inclusion of gender analysis would not only add to the empirical richness, but also to the normative coherence of Ubuntu that focuses on inclusion, dignity and shared responsibility. Together, the absence of comparative models and gender-sensitive inquiry restrain the ability of current literature to measure relative effectiveness, circumstances of boundary conditions and internal equity dynamics. The closing of these gaps would greatly contribute to the theoretical refinement and practical applicability of Ubuntu informed sustainability models in SADC region.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This review presents solid evidence to adopt that there is great synergy between the Ubuntu philosophy and green business models. It also confirms that the indigenous Africans philosophical approaches could be utilised as a conceptual foundation and guide towards the development of sustainable business practices which are culturally authentic and eco-efficient to the SADC region. It was noted that the key values of the Ubuntu business model that foster interconnectedness, collective responsibility, participatory decision-making and long-term perspective have a significant agreement with the modern qualities of the green business model such as stakeholder inclusiveness, systems thinking and regenerative value creation. Meanwhile, the research also indicates that there are also considerable challenges that could not be ignored- institutional barriers, scaling beyond the local contexts, cultural authenticity and limited financial and technical resources in most communities. This renders green business models based on Ubuntu more than a replica of old ways that have been turned into new ones. It challenges us to combine sticking to what we know best about Ubuntu but change how we do it to suit what we need today. The ideas presented in this study extend beyond the continent since new perspectives are offered in the world regarding the need to go green. It demonstrates how to think differently about how to work with everyone we need, think long term and make a real community way to add value. Ubuntu brings a new way to the

Western ways that see only the individual. This may aid in correcting some of the long, old issues that accompany old green growth concepts such as lack of real buy in, short term planning and lack of true ownership of the process by the local people. The study indicates what research has to be done and why: the research agenda is wide and ambitious. The areas in which future research can be enhanced to the current research evidence are many. More studies that track the same group of people over a period of time, more controlled comparisons and research in all fields; there is need to know more about the role of policies, scale-up strategies, gender and other aspects. With the perspective of promoting the use of Ubuntu philosophy in the development of green business models, some recommendations are presented here. These findings can be used by groups who wish to put into practice Ubuntu concepts to ensure that green business models become operational in SADC. First, businesses ought to invest money in how to comprehend Ubuntu more than simply a glance and a few words. This can be achieved through practical learning such as community stays and demonstrations on how to implement the idea in our daily decision and action.

The groups will also need rules of decision making that will combine Ubuntu style collective deliberation with the usual practices of corporate governance. This may be achieved through establishment of community boards whose real powers are to change plans and not to show off. Firms might also consider Ubuntu inspired ways of sharing the work of leading replace or add to more normal ways of sharing the work of leading. In order to make these steps appear real, they would need to be implemented, that is, in business rules, given resources and well supported by top managers. Second, they ought to establish mechanisms to gauge how they conduct themselves that also consider Ubuntu values and not solely financial statements. These systems would be created by collaborating with communities to select which indicators to use, using evaluation styles which consider a wide range of interests and tracking outcomes which show well-being rather than profit. It should be a metric that gives a measure of the impacts over a long time, even generation because Ubuntu cares about the future more than it cares about today. Third, business ought to negotiate with communities beyond asking them what they want and sharing the fruits equally. Companies can contribute to producing more local social wealth rather than depriving people by sharing benefits clearly and having community investments. Such deals must be based on a promise to work a

long time with trust and sharing of knowledge, not just as a means to get quick benefits out of small jobs.

The lawmakers and rule-makers of SADC can assist Ubuntu-based green business models to emerge and help by doing some things. They can do so by making better rules about community-based type of business, special zones of business where they are needed or other rules that allow people to own their own business and also so that Ubuntu-based business can work in the larger economy. All member states should be required through education policy to ensure that the curriculum that is used in studying business and management study programmes at the tertiary level incorporate the Ubuntu philosophy in preparing to apply the principles in the field. To conduct this case study, material, theoretical approaches and exercises need to be developed, to train future business leaders to implement Ubuntu in practice. It should be aimed that each business school should teach this as well as environmental studies, development studies and public policy programmes.

Capacity-raising projects should be deep and serious; many levels should be targeted to serve various groups of people. The package to business heads and those who manage should entail very strong cultural skills, very strong skills in real community work and the opportunity to witness real decision making led by Ubuntu. Assistance with the mentoring process and actual work will help the people in charge not only shift to just knowing about Ubuntu to actually using it all the time in their work, in their leadership and in what they do on a daily basis. Capacity-making on the level of the people of the community must strive at business talk and starting up in such a manner that it counts. Researchers and educators should also be provided with capacity-building, so that they will be also capable of studying and teaching the linkages between Ubuntu and green business models with profundity and authority. Research exchanges and joint projects would also assist in the development of a stronger body of work and wider networks without displacing the local cultural setting as the basis of research, in favour of the demands of other people who are outside the research.

This systematic review has pointed out a few areas as priorities to further the development of business models relationships on Ubuntu-green business models. There is an urgent need to conduct longitudinal empirical studies to find out what the long-term outcome and sustainability of Ubuntu-informed green business models is, including control group comparisons with

quantitative performance measurement on economic, environmental, social and cultural levels. There is a need for sectoral expansion research on applications of Ubuntu in technology, healthcare, education and infrastructure, among other key sectors, for sustainable development which is currently underrepresented in the literature. This should go further to include how Ubuntu may make known to emerging technologies in the digital transformation, applications of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies within the contexts of sustainability. Research on the impact of Ubuntu-green business model interactions on the role of women, a benefit-sharing and leadership position in gender equality would fill a very important gap in what we know about Ubuntu business models and help us better measure their inclusiveness. There is also the need to investigate, for example how gender roles in old-style Ubuntu community can change when this community is threatened by the modern business to survive and evolve. It will particularly need to see who makes the rules, who speaks, who does the jobs, who gets the money and how the head of the Ubuntu model develops so that Ubuntu-informed models will not unwittingly cause unfairness in their efforts to promote a feeling of well-being in everyone. It should be aimed at allowing ideas to grow and spread without losing cultural roots and local ownership that might become less apparent in case the ideas grow big.

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