

Ubuntu *Politics of Process*: An Alternative Conflict Management Culture in Universities

Bunmi Isaiah Omodan¹
Walter Sisulu University, South Africa

Abstract: Conflict is inevitable in an organization that depends on people's collaboration and togetherness in actualizing its aims and objectives. A university system, which comprises staff, students, and other extraneous subjects and objects, remains under perpetual uneasiness due to interpersonal conflicts between members of staff, management and staff, students, and students and management or against other staff. The conflicts between these critical stakeholders are inevitable, not only because of the differences in their responsibilities towards organizational goals but because the place of individual differences can not be underestimated. This study presents the Ubuntu politics of process as an alternative to managing organizational conflict in the university system. The study answers questions such as: what are the Ubuntu politics of process, and how can it be deployed to manage or prevent conflicts? This article is theoretical and located within the transformative paradigm. A conceptual analysis was employed to interpret Ubuntu as a framework for alternative conflict management in universities. The concept of Ubuntu was presented, and its politics of process as the assumptions were also presented. The nexus between Ubuntu and conflict management was also argued. The findings showed that the spirit of solidarity and sharing, positive and optimistic mindedness, compassion and inner goodness factors can minimize organizational conflict in the university system. The study concludes that the Ubuntu politics of process is a dimension of conflict management in the university system. Universities should promote solidarity and the spirit of sharing, positiveness, an optimistic way of life, caring and compassion, and inner goodness among stakeholders.

Keywords: Ubuntu, politics of process, conflict management, universities.

There is a growing need for alternative conflict management practices in universities, as the current methods are often insufficient in addressing the complex nature of interpersonal conflicts within these institutions. At the heart of any university system are the staff, students, and other stakeholders who interact daily to carry out the organization's goals and objectives (Mainardes et al., 2010; Ramírez & Tejada, 2022). However, conflicts between these groups are inevitable due to differences in responsibilities, priorities, and perspectives. One challenge in managing these conflicts effectively is that existing approaches focus on reducing or resolving them without considering their root causes or possible long-term impacts that may have been controlled by injecting a humanistic organizational culture such as Ubuntu practices. There is a pressing need for new Conflict Management Practices (CMPs) that can holistically address the various complexities of university conflicts.

¹ Corresponding Author: CAPTD, Faculty of Education. Butterworth Campus, Walter Sisulu University.
E-Mail: bomodan@wsu.ac.za

Some potential CMPs that have shown promise include utilizing mediation and dialogue and implementing conflict resolution strategies within the university setting (Andrade & Neves, 2022; Brummans et al., 2022; Malihah & Nurbayani, 2015). These approaches facilitate collaboration between stakeholders, allowing them to work together towards meaningful solutions that address underlying issues while mitigating the negative effects of conflict on individuals and the organization as a whole (Gallo et al., 2018; Popadynets et al., 2020). Another common CMP is inclusive decision-making, where all stakeholders are involved in the management process (Dell'Anna & Dell'Ovo, 2022). In these collaborative and inclusive decision-making approaches, the idea is to create a more unified university system where all stakeholders can thrive individually and collectively. Another prevalent conflict management approach is conflict coaching (Freedman, 2018; Jones, 2016). This is a process in which an impartial third party assists individuals involved in the conflict in developing new skills and strategies for addressing their differences. According to Amadei (2011), this process can help stakeholders better understand their own needs and interests and those of others to find more effective ways of interacting. Mediation is also a general method of dispute resolution in which a mediator facilitates communication between parties in conflict to help them reach a mutually agreeable solution (Pinkevich & Artemov, 2020). The mediation process requires all parties to be willing to participate openly and honestly to find common ground. Such participation is important for managing organizational conflicts, consistent with the argument that conflict management is a tool organizations use to proactively address the causes of conflict and reduce its negative impacts (McKibben, 2017).

Despite these approaches introduced to managing conflict among the university stakeholders and the fact that conflict is inevitable due to human nature and their compulsory amalgamation in actualizing organizational and/or university goals and objectives, conflicts exist in universities. The world of higher education is rife with internal and external conflicts. Examples of these conflicts include clashes between university authorities and students, staff unions and university authorities, as well as disputes between students and other students or between staff members themselves, and even institutional bullying (Akpotu et al., 2008; Arikewuyo, 2009; Hodgins & Mannix-McNamara, 2021; Ihuarulam, 2015; Kumari & Fernando, 2022; Yidana, 2022). These conflicts arise due to unethical *politics of process*, including anti-people management mechanisms, issues related to power dynamics, disciplinary policies, access to resources, or differences in ideological perspectives. Regardless, one could argue that the system lacks the Ubuntu *politics of process*. To address these conflicts effectively, universities need to cultivate a culture of love, university, communality, unity, oneness, empathy, and cooperation that promotes the principles of Ubuntu. By prioritizing these values, institutions can help to mitigate tensions and encourage constructive stakeholder relationships. Hence, there is a need to redefine conflict management practices from the Ubuntu lens to accommodate humanistic politics of process toward a humanistic university system devoid of social conflicts and unrest. Therefore, this study answers questions such as; what are the Ubuntu politics of process essential for conflict management, and how are those politics of process integrated towards managing conflicts in universities? In this study, the Ubuntu politics of process is described as the mechanism, the practices, and the assumptions embedded in the Ubuntu philosophy that could be adopted as a leadership or management practice.

Research Objectives

Based on the above problems and the potential questions to be answered, the following objectives were formulated to guide the study. That is:

- The study examines the *politics of process* embedded in the Ubuntu philosophy.
- The study also argues how those politics of process can be integrated towards managing conflicts in universities.

Methodological Lens

The study is located within a transformative paradigm, a world view to examine conflict management in universities. This perspective is relevant because the study aims to transform conflictual social space in the university system. The transformative paradigm posits that individuals and groups can change their perspectives and behaviors to effect meaningful change (Biddle & Schafft, 2015; Jackson et al., 2018; Romm, 2015; Romm & Otten, 2018). This paradigm means that parties involved in a conflict can work together to resolve rather than continue to clash. Additionally, the transformative paradigm emphasizes the importance of communication and dialogue, collaboration of people facing the problem to jointly come together and find solutions (Duckles et al., 2019; Frey, 2018; Mertens, 2016) to the processes of conflict management. This perspective is also relevant as a worldview for this study because the study aims to create positive change within the university by creating an alternative *politics of process* that will ensure peace and a conflict-less university system. This, in turn, can help improve the university's overall climate and create a more positive social space for all.

This agrees with the argument that the transformative paradigm is a new way of thinking about change based on the premise that change happens not just from the outside but also from within (Mertens, 2022). However, people must be willing to change themselves to create lasting change. Because traditional approaches to change are no longer effective, a need exists to offer a new way of thinking about change that can help individuals and organizations to achieve their goals. I adopted conceptual analysis to make sense of Ubuntu as a concept to present an argument for a new way of managing university conflict,

Conceptual analysis is a methodology that allows one to conceptually interpret complex concepts for meaning-making (Horvath, 2016; Liu et al., 2020). This approach can be used in various disciplines, including philosophizing (Kleinig, 2016). When conducting a conceptual analysis, one must first identify the key concepts involved in the issue or topic under investigation. Once the key concepts have been identified, their meanings must be explored and clarified. This process often involves critically evaluating the conceptual definitions of the subject matter. After the meanings of the key concepts have been elucidated, they can then be integrated into a conceptual framework that can be used to understand the issue or topic under investigation better. This framework forms the yardstick for making sense of Ubuntu towards meaning-making.

Ubuntu as a Concept

The word Ubuntu is derived from the Ndebele, Swati/Swazi, Xhosa, and Zulu words from Southern African languages, which means "humanity" and "humanness" (Gade, 2012; Nafukho, 2006). It is also an African philosophy that emphasizes the interconnectedness of all humanity (van Huyssteen & Bheekie, 2013). This philosophy is often translated as "I am because we are" (Dillard & Neal, 2020. p. 372), which stresses the importance of community and the interdependence of people. This translation also contradicts the argument that Ubuntu is about caring for others and working together to achieve common goals (Ubalijoro & Lee, 2022). One can argue that to possess Ubuntu is to live a genuinely human way of life, whereas lacking it is to be devoid of human excellence. As enmeshed by Ubuntu, these communal connections with other people justify the need for cooperation and conflict management to create and sustain a community based on justice and mutual care.

This African philosophy can be applied to many different situations in life, including business, education, and even politics because it provides a unique perspective on how to interact with others and manage conflicts emanating from social, personal, and organizational differences, which can be beneficial in both personal and professional contexts (Genger, 2022; Ngubane & Makua, 2021; Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019). Today, Ubuntu is still a relevant African philosophy that promotes peace and understanding between people of different cultures (Akinola & Uzodike, 2018). According to Ntlapo (2022), this philosophy can be used to help create a more equitable and just world. This recommendation is connected to the fact that Ubuntu stresses the importance of compassion, empathy, and understanding, which promotes cooperation over competition (Tolsma & Downing, 2016).

Desmond Tutu described another perspective to it. He held that when Africans compliment someone, “we say Yu u nobuntu; Hey, so-and-so has Ubuntu,” which means every good thing, including good character, compassion, loving, and respect (Otieno, 2020; Tutu, 2013). For many Black African cultures, the higher one's level of Ubuntu is displayed, the more the propensity for that person to excel as a human being and the more he creates happiness for the people around him and justifies the happier one will be. This idea of what constitutes a good life distinguishes two possible lifestyles: the good and the bad humans (Metz, 2019), arguing that people should live like humans rather than animals or sub-humans. In relation to organizations, “like humans,” some people are less likely to engage in activities or conflict-like behaviors, while “animals or sub-humans” will likely be the cause or the instigator of unpleasant situations leading to conflict. Hence, this concept/philosophy is presented to argue that organizations, including university systems, can be repositioned within the politics of process laced with the principles or assumptions of Ubuntu highlighted in the following section.

Assumptions of Ubuntu as a Politics of Process

Based on the above conceptualization of the Ubuntu philosophy, one can deduce that the philosophy reflects the intricacies of solidarity and sharing, positivism and optimism, care and compassion, and people's inner goodness towards each other.

Solidarity and Sharing

Deducing from the above conceptualization of Ubuntu, one can argue that one of the ways in which Ubuntu can be recirculated is to view it from how people are made to solidarity and exercise love, oneness, and share things among themselves. Many African scholars have viewed Ubuntu as an African way of life (Ngomane, 2019), a philosophy that gives credence to solidarity, communality, and love of one another towards sharing (van Breda, 2019). This perspective is often translated as humanity towards others, but it can also be seen as the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity (Jimu, 2016). This assumption emphasizes the interconnectedness of all people, encourages cooperation and caring for others, and promotes the idea that “we are all responsible for each other” and that people in organizations and people who share the same communal relationships should help those in need among themselves. This is one of the beauties of Ubuntu that could tag a politics of ensuring the ethical organizational process to solidarity and sharing among people.

Positivism and Optimism

As an African way of life, Ubuntu preaches positivism and optimism. This politics of process deduced from Ubuntu is based on unity and togetherness, which encourages people to be good-minded and helpful to one another and that people are all interconnected and should

strive to live in harmony with one another (Rampke, 2016). This aligns with the argument that Ubuntu is a powerful philosophy that can change lives for the better, and it is something that should be learned more about. Positivism and optimism are key traits that help make Ubuntu what it is. Positivism is the belief that good exists and can be achieved, while optimism is the belief that things will improve (Hanssen et al., 2016). These beliefs help create an overall feeling of hope among people. This hope then manifests itself in people taking action to improve their lives and the world around them due to the contagiousness of Ubuntu. Ubuntu creates a snowball effect where more and more people start to trust and believe in themselves and their ability to make positive change.

Caringness and Compassion

The concept of Ubuntu is often used to argue for care and compassion for others (Chisale, 2018; Ngubane-Mokiwa, 2018). The idea is that people in any setting are interconnected and that caring for others is essential to our well-being. This politics of process can be seen as a way to create a more compassionate society where everyone is cared for and respected. Ubuntu can also be seen as a political philosophy, as it calls for people to care for those most vulnerable in our society (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019). This caring includes ensuring everyone has access to basic needs like food and shelter and support for those struggling. Based on this, Ubuntu is about creating a world where we all work together to ensure everyone can thrive with little or no conflict. This philosophy can be applied to many different areas of life, create more compassionate workplaces in the business and social world, and build stronger relationships with others in our personal lives. And in the world of politics, Ubuntu can help create a more just and equitable society, which will create less urge for conflictual tendencies.

Inner Goodness

From the above concept of Ubuntu, one can also agree that it is a philosophy that values inherent inner goodness in people. Both goodness and badness are part of human life, but Ubuntu teaches the activation of the good side (Metz, 2019). When one conceives Ubuntu, the thought of the phrase “I am what I am because of who we all are.” Is activated. This is because Ubuntu is about connection and community building (Rego et al., 2019). It is the idea that all are connected and that our actions impact those of others. That is why the urge to do good is not negotiable to Ubuntu. It is a reminder that people should treat others with kindness and respect. By doing this, we are creating a more nurturing world for everyone. Therefore, I can argue that the inner goodness or natural goodness of people is something that Ubuntu could enhance. Connecting with others and showing them kindness helps to develop not only others but also inner goodness and peace. These, in turn, can create a more positive, peaceful, and harmony in lives and the world for all.

Nexus of the Ubuntu Politics of Process and Conflict Management in Universities

This section discusses the relationships between the Ubuntu politics of process and how it resonates with managing conflict in the university system. These are discussed under the following themes; solidarity and sharing and conflict management in universities, positivism and optimism and conflict management in universities, care and compassion and conflict management in universities, and inner goodness and conflict management in universities.

Solidarity and Sharing and Conflict Management in Universities

The spirit of solidarity, unity, and love among university staff promotes good feelings for one another, which is not far from the argument of Ubuntu regarding togetherness and oneness (Swanson, 2007). This spirit promotes compassion and willingness to share ideas and problems and could be used to prevent or subdues conflicts. This is because prevention is the best way to manage conflict, where necessary measures are put in place to avoid conflict (Gonzalez, 2022). The argument is that university stakeholders who care for each other and are willing to share their fortunes and problems are likelier to avoid or resolve conflicts quickly and efficiently. Those who do not share or care for each other are more likely to let conflicts fester and grow into larger problems. Therefore, solidarity and sharing are essential for effective conflict management in universities. By working together, all university stakeholders can help prevent, resolve, or manage conflicts and create a more positive environment for achieving university goals and objectives, among which is peaceful co-existence. However, effective university system administration will find it quintessential to have a plan to address potential conflicts before they occur; such a plan should include promoting Ubuntu politics of process via solidarity and a spirit of sharing. This promotion will enhance peaceful co-existence and create a more positive learning environment for all students to thrive.

Positivism and Optimism and Conflict Management in Universities

As postulated by Ubuntu, positivism and optimism are two important personality traits that can help create positive-minded stakeholders in a university environment. Positivism believes that all events and circumstances are ultimately good (Sherwood, 2022), while optimism is the hopefulness and expectation that good things will happen (Wiesner, 2022). These traits can play an important role in conflict management in universities. When individuals with these personality traits are present in a university setting, they tend to see the potential for good in every situation. Seeing this potential can help create a more peaceful university environment by diffusing potential conflicts before they even have a chance to start. Additionally, positivity and optimism can help build bridges between different stakeholders within a university community, further promoting peace and understanding.

While it is not always possible to create a university environment completely free of conflict, having positive-minded stakeholders will eliminate or reduce the overall level of conflict and promote a more peaceful and productive university community. This further justifies my argument that positivism and optimism are productive and progressive politics of process that could be adopted in conflict management in the university system.

Caringness and Compassion and Conflict Management in Universities

Caring and compassion are essential qualities for anyone working in a university setting. Universities are places where people from all walks of life come together to learn, and those who work there must be caring and compassionate individuals. These qualities are essential because a compassionate individual is typically more effective at preventing stakeholder conflicts. Someone with an Ubuntu-like way of life is a potential peacemaker. Promoting the Ubuntu politics of process will drive everyone to the same compassionate page to work together towards a common goal and make it much easier to avoid misunderstandings and disagreements. Based on this, I can argue that a university setting, where a caring and compassionate attitude is prevalent, can prevent conflict because an average person that is compassionate and caring is likely to be respectful of others and willing to listen to different points of view.

Therefore, one hidden politics of process that can prevent conflicts among university stakeholders is to be compassionate, which is consonant with the argument that compassion can help us build relationships of trust and respect that are essential for effective communication and collaboration (Maphosa & Chiwanza, 2021; Ngondo & Klyueva, 2022). When we act with compassion, we acknowledge the humanity of others and their need for understanding and support and signal willingness to work together for the common good, which is the hallmark of Ubuntu (Mabingo, 2022).

Inner Goodness and Conflict Management in Universities

As one element of the Ubuntu politics of process, goodness is often thought of as something that cannot be seen but can be measured. Goodness is inherent in good people, and good people are those who care about others and try to make a positive difference in the world. Universities, laced with the principles of Ubuntu, are assumed to attract more good people – staff, students, and administrators – who are bound to work hard to make a difference. One way that goodness manifests itself in universities as one of the Ubuntu politics of process is through conflict management. When there are conflicts between stakeholders, good people are more likely to work towards resolution rather than exacerbating the situation. This is because they understand that conflict is a natural part of life and relationships and that it does not have to be negative (Nankya, 2022). Good people also know that conflict can be an opportunity for growth, learning, and the generation of new knowledge.

Universities are often seen as hotbeds of conflict, but this does not have to be the case, hence the need for an Ubuntu management style that preaches people's inner goodness to others and themselves. Good people committed to doing good can make a real difference in managing conflicts. When stakeholders work together for the common good, it can lead to more productive and positive outcomes for everyone involved and reduce the urge for conflictual activities.

Discussion of Findings

Having responded to the objectives of the study, the following findings also answered the main research question; what are the Ubuntu politics of process essential for conflict management, and how are those politics of process integrated towards managing conflicts in universities?

Finding 1

The study found that the spirit of solidarity, unity, and love among university staff promotes good feelings for one another and reduces potential conflict that could jeopardize organizational goals. The research conducted by a team of researchers MacDonald, Kelly and Christen (2019) showed that when staff feels a sense of solidarity with their colleagues, they are more likely to experience positive emotions such as happiness and satisfaction. In contrast, when staff feels a sense of division and conflict within their organization, they are more likely to experience negative emotions such as anger and frustration (Zaidi, Ghayas, & Durrani, 2019), leading to conflicts. Therefore, it is not out of place to suggest that promoting a culture of solidarity within the university system can help reduce potential conflict sources and promote positive feelings among staff.

Finding 2

The study found that positive-mindedness and optimism create positive-minded stakeholders in a university environment and eliminate potential conflict among stakeholders. This is supported by a recent study that found that positive thinking can go a long way in creating a positive university environment (Li & Huang, 2022). Another study, which was conducted at a university, surveyed various stakeholders, including lecturers and students, about their attitudes and perceptions of the university. The results showed that those who had a positive outlook on the university were more likely to be satisfied with their experience and less likely to engage in conflict with other stakeholders (Bochmann et al., 2018). This suggests that by fostering a culture of positivity, the university can create an environment that is more conducive to learning and collaboration.

Finding 3

The study found that caring and compassion are essential qualities among university stakeholders and could eliminate potential conflict among stakeholders. This is in consonance with a study conducted by Biswas and Chakraborty (2019), who found that caring and compassion are essential qualities among organizational stakeholders. Another study also showed that caring and compassion were the most important qualities for creating interpersonal relationships and resolving conflict (Moll et al., 2015). From their findings, one can argue that when stakeholders felt cared for and valued, they were more likely to resolve conflict peacefully. This research, therefore, highlights the importance of caring and compassionate relationships among university stakeholders. By fostering these relationships, universities can create a more positive and productive environment for all members of the community.

Finding 4

The study found that goodness and good people are the engine room of quality management and could eliminate potential conflict among stakeholders. The study conducted by Zelnik et al. (2012) found that when it comes to quality management, it is not just the systems and processes in place that matter, but also the people who are responsible for carrying them out. This is in consonance with the major principle of Ubuntu that “goodness” is a fundamental human quality that can be harnessed to create a positive force for change (Tolsma & Downing, 2016). In other words, to ensure that universities provide quality products and services, it is essential to ensure that employees are good people committed to doing their best.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The article advocated the transformation of conflict management space in the university system. It examined the politics of process embedded in Ubuntu philosophy and argued how those politics of process could be integrated towards managing conflicts in the university system. The analysis and argument presented used the mentalities of the conceptual analysis presented that Ubuntu politics of process capable of managing, preventing, and or controlling conflict in university environments are implementation of solidarity and sharing, positivism and optimism, care and care compassion, and inner goodness among university stakeholders. The study concludes that Ubuntu politics of processes such as solidarity and sharing, positivism and optimism, care and compassion, and inner goodness should be dimensions of conflict management in the university system. Based on this, the study recommends that universities begin conversations on how to incorporate an organizational, leadership, and management

process that preaches and promotes solidarity and the spirit of sharing, positiveness, and an optimistic way of life, caring and compassion, and inner goodness among stakeholders. This conversation will increase people's communal relationships toward organizational peace and create a less conflicted university system.

References

- Akinola, A. O., & Uzodike, U. O. (2018). Ubuntu and the quest for conflict resolution in Africa. *Journal of Black Studies*, 49(2), 91-113. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0021934717736186>
- Akpotu, N. E., Onoyase, D., & Onoyase, A. (2008). Effective intervention conflict management techniques as perceived by academic staff, non-academic staff and students in Nigerian universities. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 17(2), 113-120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2008.11892640>
- Amadei, R. (2011). *Conflict coaching*. Mediate. <https://www.mediate.com/articles/AmadeiR1.cfm>
- Andrade, C., & Neves, P. C. (2022). Perceived organizational support, coworkers' conflict and organizational citizenship behavior: The mediation role of work-family conflict. *Administrative Sciences*, 12(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci12010020>
- Arikewuyo, M. O. (2009). University management and staff unions in Nigeria: Issues and challenges. *South African Journal of Education*, 3(1), 15-22.
- Biddle, C., & Schafft, K. A. (2015). Axiology and anomaly in the practice of mixed methods work: Pragmatism, valuation, and the transformative paradigm. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9(4), 320-334. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1558689814533157>
- Biswas, W., & Chakraborty, D. (2019). Impact of organizational values, compassion, and well-being on industrial disputes: An empirical study. *Prabandhan: Indian Journal of Management*, 12(1), 36-51. <https://doi.org/10.17010/pijom%2F2019%2Fv12i1%2F141427>
- Bochmann, R., Roepke, A., Koczielski, C., & Rindermann, H. (2018). The influence of inner drivers, positive thinking, motivation and social support on the attendance of lectures at german universities. In *INTED2018 Proceedings* (pp. 1882-1886). IATED.
- Brummans, B. H., Higham, L., & Cooren, F. (2022). The work of conflict mediation: actors, vectors, and communicative relationality. *Human Relations*, 75(4), 764-791. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0018726721994180>
- Chisale, S. S. (2018). Ubuntu as care: Deconstructing the gendered Ubuntu. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 39(1), 1-8. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-e830cc4ae>
- Dell'Anna, F., & Dell'Ovo, M. (2022). A stakeholder-based approach to managing conflictual values in urban design processes. The case of an open prison in Barcelona. *Land Use Policy*, 114, Article 105934. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2021.105934>
- Dillard, C. B., & Neal, A. (2020). I am because we are: (Re) membering Ubuntu in the pedagogy of Black women teachers from Africa to America and back again. *Theory Into Practice*, 59(4), 370-378. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2020.1773183>
- Duckles, J. M., Moses, G., & Moses, R. (2019). Community-based participatory research and constructivist grounded theory: Aligning transformative research with local ways of being and knowing. In *The SAGE handbook of current developments in grounded theory* (pp. 630-648). <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526485656.n33>
- Freedman, B. (2018). Conflict coaching in complex adaptive healthcare systems: Conflict resolution or transformation? *Australian Journal of Clinical Education*, 4(1), Article 6344. <https://doi.org/10.53300/001c.6344>

- Frey, B. (2018). *The SAGE encyclopedia of educational research, measurement, and evaluation* (Vols. 1-4). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506326139>
- Gade, C. B. (2012). What is Ubuntu? Different interpretations among South Africans of African descent. *South African Journal of Philosophy = Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Wysbegeerte*, 31(3), 484-503. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC125037>
- Gallo, M., Malovrh, Š. P., Laktić, T., De Meo, I., & Paletto, A. (2018). Collaboration and conflicts between stakeholders in drafting the Natura 2000 Management Programme (2015–2020) in Slovenia. *Journal for Nature Conservation*, 42, 36-44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jnc.2018.02.003>
- Genger, P. (2022). Ubuntu: The political paradigm Africa should endorse to impact the global community. In S. O. Oloruntoba & T. Falola (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of Africa and the changing global order* (pp. 257-278). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77481-3_13
- Gonzalez, N. J. (2022). Preventing communal violence in Myanmar: Power and legitimacy in local conflict prevention. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2022.2050278>
- Hanssen, M. M., Vancleef, L. M. G., Vlaeyen, J. W. S., Hayes, A. F., Schouten, E. G. W., & Peters, M. L. (2015). Optimism, motivational coping and well-being: Evidence supporting the importance of flexible goal adjustment. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 16(6), 1525-1537. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9572-x>
- Hodgins, M., & Mannix-McNamara, P. (2021). The neoliberal university in Ireland: Institutional bullying by another name? *Societies*, 11(2), 52. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc11020052>
- Horvath, J. (2016). Conceptual analysis and natural kinds: The case of knowledge. *Synthese*, 193(1), 167-184. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-015-0751-z>
- Ihuarulam, M. O. (2015). *Management strategies of conflict between academic and non-academic staff of Federal Universities in South East, Nigeria* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Nigeria]. http://www.unn.edu.ng/publications/files/17807_management_strategies_of_conflict_between_academic_and_non-academic_staff_of_federal_universities_in_south_east,_nigeria.pdf
- Jackson, K. M., Pukys, S., Castro, A., Hermosura, L., Mendez, J., Vohra-Gupta, S., & Morales, G. (2018). Using the transformative paradigm to conduct a mixed-methods needs assessment of a marginalised community: Methodological lessons and implications. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 66, 111-119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2017.09.010>
- Jimu, I. M. (2016). Shared sociability and humanity. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 9(4), 404-412.
- Jones, T. S. (2016). Mediation and conflict coaching in organisational dispute systems. In K Bollen, M. Euwema, & L. Munduate (Eds.), *Advancing workplace mediation through the integration of theory and practice* (pp. 89-110). Springer.
- Kleinig, J. (2016). *Philosophical issues in education*. Routledge.
- Kumari, D., & Fernando, R. L. S. (2022). Determinants of student activism in state universities in Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 5(2), 583-725. <https://doi.org/10.47191/jsshr/v5-i2-25>
- Li, S. P., & Huang, C. C. (2022). The effects of positive psychological characteristics on individual creativity in technological universities in Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2022.2083073>
- Liu, Z., Heffernan, C., & Tan, J. (2020). Caregiver burden: A concept analysis. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 7(4), 438-445. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2020.07.012>

- Mabingo, A. (2022). Decolonising assessment in dance education: Ubuntu as an evaluative framework in indigenous African dance education practices. *Journal of Dance Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15290824.2021.2004313>
- MacDonald, P., Kelly, S., & Christen, S. (2019). A path model of workplace solidarity, satisfaction, burnout, and motivation. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 56(1), 31-49. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2329488414525467>
- Mainardes, E. W., Alves, H., & Raposo, M. (2010). Exploratory research on the stakeholders of a university. *Journal of Management and Strategy*, 1(1), 76-88. <https://doi.org/10.5430/jms.v1n1p76>
- Malihah, E., & Nurbayani, S. (2015). Teaching conflict resolution through general education at university: Preparing students to prevent or resolve conflicts in a pluralistic society. *Asian Social Science*, 11(12), 353-361. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n12p353>
- Maphosa, N., & Chiwanza, V. (2021). Caregiver experiences and the perceived role of social workers in caring for people with disabilities in South Africa. *African Journal of Social Work*, 11(3), 155-163.
- McKibben, L. (2017). Conflict management: Importance and implications. *British Journal of Nursing*, 26(2), 100-103. <https://doi.org/10.12968/bjon.2017.26.2.100>
- Mertens, D. M. (2016). Advancing social change in South Africa through transformative research. *South African Review of Sociology*, 47(1), 5-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21528586.2015.1131622>
- Mertens, D. M. (2022). *Transformative qualitatively-driven mixed methods: For a change*. <https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.nova.edu/dist/a/4/files/2022/01/Transformative-Qualitatively-Driven-Mixed-MethodsMertens.pdf>
- Metz, T. (2019). *The African ethic of Ubuntu*. <https://1000wordphilosophy.com/2019/09/08/the-african-ethic-of-Ubuntu/>
- Moll, S., Frolic, A., & Key, B. (2015). Investing in compassion: Exploring mindfulness as a strategy to enhance interpersonal relationships in healthcare practice. *Journal of Hospital Administration*, 4(6), 36-45. <https://doi.org/10.5430/jha.v4n6p36>
- Mugumbate, J., & Chereni, A. (2019). Using African Ubuntu theory in social work with children in Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Social Work*, 9(1), 27-34.
- Nafukho, F. M. (2006). Ubuntu worldview: A traditional African view of adult learning in the workplace. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 8(3), 408-415. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1523422306288434>
- Nankya, C. (2022). *Workplace conflict management in small businesses in Uganda: A case study of Pinkstone Trading SMC Ltd* [Doctoral dissertation, Makerere University]. <http://makir.mak.ac.ug/handle/10570/10172>
- Ngomane, N. M. (2019). *Everyday Ubuntu: Living better together, the African way*. Random House.
- Ngondo, P. S., & Klyueva, A. (2022). Toward an Ubuntu-centered approach to health communication theory and practice. *Review of Communication*, 22(1), 25-41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2021.2024871>
- Ngubane-Mokiwa, S. A. (2018). Ubuntu considered in light of the exclusion of people with disabilities. *African Journal of Disability*, 7(1), 1-7. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-136682b517>
- Ngubane, N. I., & Makua, M. (2021). Ubuntu pedagogy-transforming educational practices in South Africa through an African philosophy: From theory to practice. *Inkanyiso*, 13(1), 1-12. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-uz_inka-v13-n1-a2

- Ntlapo, H. S. (2022). "Ubuntu" justice and the South African truth and reconciliation commission: A theological-missiological study [Master's thesis, Stellenbosch University]. <https://scholar.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.1/124537?show=full>
- Otieno, S. A. (2020). Ethical thought of Archbishop Desmond Tutu: Ubuntu and Tutu's moral modeling as transformation and renewal. In N. Wariboko & T. Falola (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of African social ethics* (pp. 589-604). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36490-8_32
- Pinkevich, A. G., & Artemov, G. P. (2020). Place of mediation in the monitoring of the educational process conflict factors in the conditions of modern risks. *Journal of Siberian Federal University, Humanities & Social Sciences*, 13(2), 201–207. <https://doi.org/10.17516/1997-1370-0551>
- Popadynets, I., Andrusiv, U., Shtohryn, M., & Galtsova, O. (2020). The effect of cooperation between universities and stakeholders: Evidence from Ukraine. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, 4(2), 199-212. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2020.1.001>
- Ramírez, Y., & Tejada, Á. (2022). University stakeholders' perceptions of the impact and benefits of, and barriers to, human resource information systems in Spanish universities. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 88(1), 171-188. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852319890646>
- Rampke, B. (2016). *Interconnectedness, healing and harmony: The application of Ubuntu in peace research and in Namibian-German postcolonial disputes emerging from the return of human remains* [Master's thesis, Tampere University]. <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:uta-201606141900>
- Rego, L., Mohono, K., & Peter, G. M. (2019). Beyond Ubuntu: What the world can learn about building community from Africa. In *Peace, reconciliation and social justice leadership in the 21st century*. Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S2058-880120190000008015>
- Romm, N. R. (2015). Reviewing the transformative paradigm: A critical systemic and relational (Indigenous) lens. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 28(5), 411-427. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11213-015-9344-5>
- Romm, N. R., & Otten. (2018). *Responsible research practice*. Springer International Publishing.
- Sherwood, A. (2022). *What is positive thinking?* <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/positive-thinking-overview#:~:text=Positive%20thinking%2C%20or%20an%20optimistic,or%20make%20light%20of%20problems.>
- Swanson, D. M. (2007). Ubuntu: An African contribution to (re) search for/with 'a humble togetherness'. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*, 2(2), 53-67. <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/JCIE>
- Tolsma, M. H., & Downing, C. (2016). An integrative review of Albertina Sisulu and Ubuntu: Relevance to caring and nursing. *Health SA Gesondheid*, 21(1), 214-227. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC192559>
- Tutu, D. (2013). *No future without forgiveness*. Random House.
- Ubalijoro, E. & Lee, S. (2022). Homo Ubuntu leadership for the twenty-first century. In G. Perruci (Ed.), *The study and practice of global leadership (building leadership bridges)* (pp. 51-66). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S2058-88012022004>
- van Breda, A. D. (2019). Developing the notion of Ubuntu as African theory for social work practice. *Social Work*, 55(4), 439-450. <https://doi.org/10.15270/52-2-762>
- van Huyssteen, M., & Bheekie, A. (2013, November 20-22). Ubuntu: Interconnecting the African spirit with service-learning in Pharmacy [Paper presentation]. *5th International Symposium on Service-Learning*. Stellenbosch, South Africa.

- Wiesner, C. (2022). Between optimism and pessimism: Rethinking EU politicisation in theory, conceptualisation, and research. In *Tracing the politicisation of the EU* (pp. 21-44). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-82700-7_2
- Woermann, M., & Engelbrecht, S. (2019). The Ubuntu challenge to business: From stakeholders to relation holders. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 157(1), 27-44. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3680-6>
- Yidana, P. (2022). Workplace conflicts and perception of quality higher education in Ghana. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Education Research*, 4, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.51986/ijer-2022.vol4.01>
- Zaidi, H., Ghayas, M. M., & Durrani, T. I. K. (2019). Impact of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction. *RADS Journal of Business Management*, 1(1), 49-57.
- Zelnik, M., Maletič, M., Maletič, D., & Gomišček, B. (2012). Quality management systems as a link between management and employees. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 23(1), 45-62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2011.637781>

Notes on Contributor

Bunmi Isaiah Omodan is a Senior Lecturer at Walter Sisulu University, South Africa. He holds a PhD in Education Management and Leadership. He is the Editor-in-Chief and guest-editor of various academic journals. He currently holds a research grant to decolonize the management of student unrest in South Africa universities. He has published many articles in various local and international journals, chapters-in-books, and conference proceedings. His research focus includes but is not limited to qualitative and quantitative research approaches, social and Africanized pedagogy, conflict management and Africanization.

ORCID

Bunmi Isaiah Omodan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9093-3108>