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The Ubuntu Parenting: Kairos Consideration for the 21st Century Dynamics and Globalization

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Abstract

Ubuntu is a well-defined principle and way of life in many African communities. Over the past decades, a significant amount of empirical and theoretical work has accumulated about the principle of Ubuntu. The principle has been tested and applied in many professions and faculties such as leadership, theology, sociology, education, and health. Ubuntu is also applicable in psychology around child development and parenting. Parenting is both an art and science of child nurturing. Admittedly, parenting facilitates and nurtures child development. Thus, parenting models continue to be reviewed and interrogated. This chapter has discussed how the decorations of Ubuntu can be applied in the parenting dynamics of the twenty-first century. In this chapter I have applied the experience of being African as the ground to explore the Ubuntu parenting founded on the African and ecological systems perspective. This experiential approach has been supported by the qualitative research method of reviewing and analyzing available literature about parenting and ubuntu.

Keywords: Ubuntu, Parenting, Globalization, Family, Technology, African, Community

1. Introduction

In pedagogical spheres it has become common knowledge to regard adulthood as the aim of parenting and education, that is to view the person's life as unrelenting progress towards adulthood. Parenting facilitates this process by nurturing children from birth to adulthood. Every person is nurtured within a particular society and culture. Time, as in season is one of the variables that governs culture and society. The twenty-first century season is ripe to review the parenting approach from an African principle of Ubuntu. There are questions that immediately surface; what is Ubuntu? Can Ubuntu be a model of parenting? Is Ubuntu a viable approach to parenting in the twenty-first century? In responding to these questions, I am aware of the effects of globalization on parenting. However, the question remains, can Ubuntu stand the test of globalization and the modernity "post modernity era and help parents in nurturing children? Observable realities seem to be pushing traditional parenting techniques and styles to the periphery. The topic asserts that Ubuntu is a parenting model – "The Ubuntu Parenting". The model seeks to push back parenting importance to the center and encourage the involvement of other institutions.

Therefore, Ubuntu parenting is addressing the community, the child, the parents, and the interconnected institutions that are essential in child development. The social environment plays a central role in the quality of life and development of children [1]. In Africa, Ubuntu is the way of life. It is expressed as, “I am because we are” a person is fully human because of others. This is close to the English statement that “no man is an island”. Therefore, Ubuntu can not be regionalized and applied only in Africa since it originated from the African way of life and philosophy. Nevertheless, if it is to be compartmentalized as African, there is room for its transferability and applicability across cultures and contexts since every child expects to be parented. Society requires this Ubuntu principle regardless of the continent one is located only “if indeed the people of the world would allow themselves to internalize this way of thinking” [2].

Globalization has brought some changes in the way people, families and communities perceive their local traditions against the backdrop of a fluid global village. In considering parenting in conjunction with globalization, I am underscoring that globalization is not totally a political, economic, and social movement, rather, it is a socially conscious issue that shapes and channels the way of life. Parenting has been transfigured and confronted with challenges because children are growing up with limited parental attention due to heavy work demands. Moreover, easy access to technology and social media has negative and positive influences on both parents and children.

The global society has been affected by globalization and parenting has not been spared. In the context of the 21st century, Ubuntu parenting is offering an alternative approach to the outlook of parenting. Ubuntu is providing communal based approach to produce the resourceful and disciplined child desired by the environment and community.

2. Theoretical approach

Ubuntu Parenting is rooted in an African perspective and approach. Acknowledging that there is no homogeneous African perspective. African approach is cognisant of the various traditions, cultures and lifestyles that exist in different parts of Africa and African diaspora communities. Notwithstanding the diversity of cultures research points out that there is a common ground of consciousness that all Africans or Bantu tribes share [3, 4]. This chapter will use the African approach in analyzing the parenting discourse in 21st century dynamics.

Admittedly African knowledge systems are often neglected because of the limited written literature, underutilization, or neglect in favor of Western approaches. Nevertheless, African values have a great deal to contribute to the world consciousness, therefore Ubuntu is one such value that can enrich the range of new paradigms in parenting and children development. F. Mangena points that Ubuntu philosophy is a gift to the world and applicable to diverse contexts [5]. In utilizing the African approach, I concur with B. Nussbaum when she notes the misunderstandings that exist if one mentions the African approach. What good can one learn from Africa? This is because of:

Much of the richness of Africa's traditional heritage is inaccessible. It is oral and lived rather than descriptively communicable in books and journals. Secondly some African political leaders have chosen to betray many of the very philosophical and humanitarian principles on which African culture is based and the political failures in these African countries tend to be in the spotlight. Thirdly, the media in the global West and America depicts negative Africa defined by; poverty, ethnic

dysfunctionality- wars and dictatorship, famine, and unrelenting spiritualization at the expense of science ([2], p. 21).

This can not undermine the wealthy of the African approach that is applicably useful for this chapter. In my analysis, of Ubuntu parenting, I acknowledge that I am an African whose roots are traceable to the soil of Zimbabwe (Southern Africa) and I am an immigrant (minority-parent) living in Canada (North America). This intersectionality of identity and experience is critical in my thought forms about parenting in the 21st century.

The ecological systems theory validates the analysis of parenting from an Ubuntu way of life. The ecological approach is born out of biological theories that explain the interdependencies between organisms and their environments. Ecology focuses on the relationship between living organisms and the environment; all life forms seek adaptive balance, require resources and a reciprocal environment [6]. The ecological systems theory views children as developing with a system of relationships and contextual influences affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment. The goal of the ecosystems narrative is to enhance and advance the psychosocial functioning of persons and to challenge noxious social conditions that impede the mutually beneficial interaction between person and their environments [7]. The ecological systems theory underscores the need to celebrate the variables that brings the best outcome for the benefit of the system's survival. Mutual interdependence and cooperation among members of the system are paramount for the best outcome.

3. Ubuntu: an understanding

Ubuntu is an African tradition [8]. Ubuntu has been grounded as an African philosophy that belongs to the Nguni group of indigenous languages and has cognates in other Bantu languages [4]. It is derived from the African word “*mntu*” “*munhu*” singular or “*bantu*” “*vanhu*” plural, meaning a person or persons [9]. Significantly Ubuntu is about the humanness of being human, it emphasizes the acceptable humanness attributes of being a person. In the Zimbabwean sense *hunhu/ubuntu* is humanness in the noblest sense. Ubuntu is the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony, and humanity in the interests of the building and maintaining a community with justice and mutual caring [2]. This compassion- reciprocity is displayed when Zimbabwean (Shona) greet each other; *makadiniko* (“how are you” is always in respective tone and in the plural, even if addressing an individual), the response is *tinosisimba kana imi muchisimbawo* (we are well as long as you (plural) are well). In Africa individual represents three communities on face value: the community of origin, the community of locality and the community of the living dead (ancestors). This implies that one has to honor these communities and shame these communities through failure or being a deviant. The principle of communal shame and honor is significant and alive in Africa.

The Ubuntu is a philosophy, grounded in the attributes that a good person ought to have, and should have love, kindness, empathy, respect of self, and others, and care for the existing environment. As an African philosophy, Ubuntu gives an understanding of the value of relationships for the good of wellbeing of the society. In this case, an action is deemed right or wrong based on how it is related to corporate existence [10]. The philosophy is founded on the importance of collectivism, interconnectedness, cooperation, harmony, maintaining good relationships and sensitivity to the wellbeing of other people individually or collectively. Nussbaum argues that, “Ubuntu speaks to the interconnectedness, common humanity and

the responsibility enshrined in each other that flows out from the depth of natural connection” ([2], p. 21). Desmond Tutu’s, emphasis on Ubuntu is critical for this discourse as it encapsulates all that Ubuntu stands for, from philosophy to a mystery of life. Tutu states,

Ubuntu is exceedingly difficult to render into a Western language [philosophy or others]. It speaks to the very essence of being human. When you want to give high praise to someone we say, “Yu, u Nobunto”; he or she has Ubuntu. This means that they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring, and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means that my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs. We belong in a bundle of life. We say, “a person is a person through others” – Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye. I am human because I belong, I participate, and I share. I person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes with knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed or treated as if they were that who they are ([11], pp. 34–35).

The African perspective of being is rooted in value contribution to the community and from the community. The lived experience from this understanding is collectively passed down generationally to another. This makes Ubuntu a relevant tool in the parenting discourse.

Ubuntu is not just an African philosophy, but spirituality and an ethic engraved in the African way of life. Hunhu/Ubuntu is both horizontal and vertical, that is, the relations go beyond human relations to include the human beings’ relations with the spiritual world [12]. It is a way of life because it existed from time immemorial. In Africa no one is pointed or taught to acknowledge one’s mother, one is born and nurtured by a mother’s love. This is the way of life, even when the mother’s love is not from the biological parent it is compassionate motherly love regardless. In the African worldview no one is born outside Ubuntu because one is born in a community, exists within a community and when one dies, they are committed to a community of ancestral lineage.

As a way of life, Ubuntu is rooted in the oneness of purpose, value, and significance. A person is of value to the sustainability of the whole society and community. An Ubuntu way of life invites an individual to see the good in self and the intended production shared communally, which means certain things need no explanation but require one to abide and uphold. This makes the whole village accountable for the affairs and wellbeing of an individual. For example, the whole village shares in the celebration of life, that is from birth to any transition in life from one stage to the other. The same happens in sorrowful moments, such as death, the whole village shares the painful loss and becomes active participants in the grieving process. Ubuntu creates the commonwealth that enriches the wellbeing of society. The communal principle of Ubuntu does not mean the good or happiness of the individual is subordinated to that of the community. Rather, by pursuing the communal good, the individual pursues own good and through that sustainability of the whole community is achieved. This promotes the idea of group or communal belonging which in turn, promotes social cohesion between members, groups and/or communities [12].

Ubuntu means a person fully attains a state of being human by recognizing their humanity in others and through being in a relationship with others. J.S. Mbiti argues that ubuntu solidifies the individual when one understands their completeness through others “I am because we are, and since we are therefore, I am” [13].

Ubuntu insists that everyone is accountable to the community of existence for the wellbeing of self and the peace of the community. The individual is then celebrated in communal terms, relations, and responsibilities. This way of living encourages responsible living [14]. Both parents and children are to be responsible and accountable to each other. Thus, the nurturing becomes mutual, joyful, and exciting on every stage of human development. A relationship is important at every level of development from birth to death.

Ubuntu has three pillars: interpersonal values (regard for others), intrapersonal values (regard of self) and environmental values (regard for community) [15]. These pillars are integrated into the framework outlook of Ubuntu which is, the individual, the family, the community, the environment and the spiritual. In clarifying the point of frameworks, the individual incorporates the biological mechanisms, that are inherited from birth. These biological mechanisms influence development from birth to adulthood, but they are shaped in a family and community. This nurturing of the individual only makes sense when the environment is conducive and the spiritual relevance of being is valued. In simple terms, an individual is part of a larger group- family; the family is part of a larger system- community; the community exists in an environment of all that is; the environment is part of the spiritual and cultural worldview [16]. In other parts of traditional heritages, this framework is referred to as the wheel of life. The components of the wheel of life are essential to one's wellness and wholeness.

4. Parenting: African perspective

Parenting as the art and science of upbringing a child, stimulate the emotional, intellectual, physical, and social development from infancy to adulthood. Ecologists note that children develop within a complex system of relationships and contextual influences affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment [17]. It is through parenting that children learn to adapt to different environments they interact with. Parenting nurtures the characters, and the skills in children. It can be argued that parenting is the learning and education pad for children from birth to adulthood.

The parenting topic has generated debate because there is no one size fit all style or model. There is no single prescriptive book to draw principles and showing parents how to raise or educate their children. Admittedly, parenting is rooted in context and cultural values. Parenting culture or traditions are passed from one generation to the next. In that process there are opportunities to retain the good and discarding the bad traditions. This enables parenting culture or traditions to evolve and transform to accommodate the pristine environment. The children's social rights to be heard and respected without too much labor, but as a way of appreciating the life of the children. Children's voices to be listened to without prejudices. Ubuntu parenting address the person and the value of being. This eliminates harsh and violent parenting. Ubuntu parenting advocates for loving reinforcements and compassionate punishments. I grow up under the care of my grandparents, and we were twelve grandchildren from different parents. Whenever one of us did good the reinforcement of good behavior benefited and encouraged all of us for it was shared and when one shows unruly behavior the consequences were shared among the twelve. This tradition encouraged children to be each other's keeper, responsible, accountable, and inspiring in attitude.

Parenting assumes deep moral, cultural, and religious significance in the African worldview. Children are considered valuable and welcome human beings, and parents are expected to love, provide, guide, and protect their children. Children

on the other hand are to love, respect, obey and abide with their parents. Marriage in this sense is for procreation. In Shona (Zimbabwe) when one gives birth and people congratulate the family, they respond by affirming that the child is theirs too. *Makorokoto* (congratulations) when a child is born and *ndeedu tose*, (it is for us all) response resonates with communal responsibility and accountability. The African sense of parenting is not only limited to the biological component. It goes beyond giving birth to parenthood. It is about caring for children, socialization and being sensitive to the needs of the children including grooming them to be responsible and productive adults. Parenting has spiritual and religious connections that are to be respected. This signifies the perspective that being a parent, or a child is a blessing. Everyone honors the gift and blessing of being. Parents uphold their position with honor and dignity, while children appreciate the good intentions of their parents. Parenting is the foundation that sets the children to be responsible and accountable adults.

5. Encountering globalization impact on parenting

Globalization has been defined from mainstream approaches that focus on politics and economic nature; the processes that shape nations, businesses, and individuals to become integrated into the global market [18]. Globalization makes the world look and feel smaller. Giddens [19] argues that globalization is about macro-systemic changes in the global marketplace and the nature of sovereignty, but it is also about the here and now, about the transformation that affects our daily and emotional lives. The information revolution, that invades the texture of everyday life, and provides restructuring of other institutions [20]. Parenting is typically culture-specific, following certain norms and values [21]. It is passed from one generation to another. However, questions are raised when it comes to the globalized community, modernized society, and digitalized era. Thus, globalization challenges the bounded and singular notion of culture and identity. There is a need to talk of parenting in the sense of a globalized culture. Globalization squeezes sideways, pulls away and pushes down boundaries, creating new cultural, economic, social, and political outlooks. Society has undergone a transformed kind of rationalization process which Welsh [22] refers to as McDonaldization which created a “Mcworld” [22] the principles of fast foods are dominant and “MacWorld” the digital society dominated by Google and Smart technology. In this world, people are not passive recipients of Western cultural and social products therefore, hybridization of culture and identity is fluid. African models and approaches should not be secondary rather part and primary in conversations of parenting.

The age of digital parenting makes information once only accessible through health experts available to parents at the touch of a screen. This is empowering to parents; however, the digital environment is stressful to both the parents and the children. Online (one touch) parenting information brings confusion as some theories are unrealistic and some overstated [23]. No doubt, technology has introduced further changes to family life, modified the way family members interact. There is the element of online judgment, shaming, association, views and likes. This has put pressure on children and challenges on parents to cope. Children's sense of belonging and relevance is shaped by the responses they get on social media; Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. These social media platforms have some ripple effects on self-esteem, sense of belonging, meaning of rejection and love. However, they have also positively impacted the children's interpersonal skills to interact and play. In this regard parents need to monitor children's screen time, ensure children's safety, and regulate online behaviors. Furthermore, parents need

to be knowledgeable and skilled to navigate the digital world as to be able to instruct and mentor their children.

As the planet shrinks in size, culture and social life, the challenges this poses on children's development and safety from unwarranted images has increased. Children are exposed to scary images -violence, guns, pornography, and the list can go on. Social media bullying, stalking, and shaming has some psychological effect on children development. Parenting has to be dynamic and critical to match up with the demands of the environment. Ubuntu asserts that every child has the right to grow up in a nurturing and protective environment.

Over the last half-century, the world has changed significantly, causing a shift in expectations and experiences of how parents raise their children. The dimension of marriage and family has shifted, fertility has decreased, unmarried, divorce and single parent households are on the increase. The 21st century is increasingly characterized by family diversity, increasingly codified in laws and governing policies in terms of child rearing and safety. In a modernized global village people have choices and rights, most people are becoming parents late in life. People are no longer pressured to have children. In this era family stability has been affected, many children move from one house to another on a regular basis due to shared custody or foster home arrangements. Children's services in other countries (Canada) have a significant role in children's development. Globalization transmits new concepts about gender, work, citizenship, identity, familial relationships, women's, and children's rights.

Globalization has transfigured the traditional roles of parenthood, roles of parents (women and men) and the impact of other institutions in society. There are some children's summer camps that have lasting impacts on children. More parents are able to balance work with parenthood as they are receiving more support from daycare to grandparents. These support systems enhance the effectiveness of child protection and development. Ubuntu parent underscores that parents, children, and the family as a unit deserves support from communal stakeholders so as to safeguard the best enabling developing environment. Significant people in the children's environment can provide support and feedback to the family. When social resources are adequate, crises can be averted [1], on the contrary, when resources such as social support are inadequate, families are more apt to display emotional distress and children's psychological and physical dysfunctions. Ubuntu parenting can buffer the mental frustrations on both the parents and children as significant players will avail their expertise in helping out. These significant institutions (schools, family services, churches, social clubs, police services, town councils, neighbors etc.) should not wait for consequences or problems, but they should be involved. Ubuntu parenting opens the doors to greater cooperation and understanding of the children and parenting routines, patterns, and functioning. Ubuntu parenting reinforces family capacity and strengths, it creates sustainable and effective ground for necessary support and helps in a timely fashion.

6. Parenting dimensions and styles: Ubuntu

Diana Baumrind [24], propounded two components of parenting. Warm-cold dimension of parenting and restrictive-permissive dimension [17]. Warm parents are affectionate towards their children. They are caring and supportive, they communicate positively to their children. They apply reasoning and negotiating strategies and less physical discipline. They had the time to explain things and give the child an opportunity to explain their thinking. Creative and critical thinking is encouraged. On the other hand, the cold is dry parents. They are distanced in

the affairs of their children. This parenting dimension is incredibly challenging in globalized environment where children have access to many media information. If a parent is not involved in their children affairs the social media will teach them. The Kenyan proverb *'asiyefunzwa naMamaye hufunzwa naUlimwengu'* translated "if parents are not involved in the training of their children, once they are in the world, they learn what the world offers" reminds us of the importance of being involved in children's daily activities and teach them the way of life.

Restrictive dimension reads correctly as the term "restrictive" entails. It means punishment, interference, and strictness, these elements if not moderated will not achieve the intended goals and objectives. Therefore, a moderated side of the restrictive dimension is applicable in the 21st century outlook of parenting. In this view restrictive parents should put standards, controls, and rules. "Consistent control, exceptional reinforcements, and firm enforcement of rules can have positive consequences for the child, particularly when combined with dedicated support and affection ([17], p. 141)". On the other hand, the permissive parents do not present authority or reinforcements. Children regulate themselves. The *laissez faire* type of parenting, which encourage whatever is, let it be. This is the most depicted dimension in mainstream Canadian society [17].

These dimensions are closely related to three distinct parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive [17]. The Ubuntu parenting would fit in the restrictive category, for parents would be firm on the children, set rules to be followed and be supportive in their role. Conversely, Ubuntu upholds the authoritative parenting style with high demandingness and high responsiveness. Authoritative parenting allows children to view their parent's behavior as responsive while controlling, seems to facilitate the development of child competent behavior [25]. Authoritative parents have structures and rules in place when raising children, and they also encourage children to be children in their decision making and critical thinking process. Parents are to provide reasons for the rules and the structures. While this is not always guaranteed in African homes, that parents provide an explanation to rules, however, there are significant shifts as children are critical and experimental. The question "why" has to be addressed by parents to the best of the wellbeing of the family and children. Ubuntu authoritative parenting nurtures individuality in relation to others. It is through this that Ubuntu responds constructively to mischief and misbehaviors with intentions to correct and rehabilitate the child.

In contrast, authoritarian parenting is controlling and non-responsive. The mantra for this parenting is "because I say so" and the question "why" has no place in the family rather "how" is most tolerated. "Authoritarians stresses conformity, obedience and respect of authority for its own sake" ([17], p. 142). Parents tend to use prohibitive and punitive strategies while they emphasize on child obedience. Authoritarian parenting style has been condoned since children end up being punished, bruised, and battered in situations education and encouragement would be necessary. A number of studies have found that authoritarian parenting is positively associated with childhood aggression and bullying behaviors [25]. Children requires love and interest from their parents as to model them for good behavior and mental stability. These components of love and interests are critical in the era of access to so many violent games, and television shows.

In Ubuntu authoritative parenting emphasizes, interdependence, affiliation, and cooperation versus confrontation. Ubuntu parenting emphasize discipline, skills development, and accountability at every level of children's development. Family becomes foundational and relationship critical, children from authoritative families or communities understand the importance of setting goals and objectives that conform to the expectation of the family. "Children from authoritative homes, whose parents are willing to exert control and explain their reasons for doing so-show the most competent behaviors. They are more self-reliant and competent" ([26], p. 218). Being competent means feeling able, knowledgeable, and skilled in

a task. Significantly one becomes productive and resourceful. This analysis fulfills the conclusion made by Baumrind that the authoritative style of parenting fosters self-esteem, maturity, cognitive development, responsibility, and critical thinking [17]. Ubuntu parents teach their children to be hands on, creators of solutions when situations demand so. This is not done in an abusive manner rather in an affectionate manner. For example, a 9-year child is entrusted with tendering or shepherding the family wealth such as cows and goats. This creates a sense of ownership and pride in the children as they know the net worth of their family through cows and goats. These life skills are not in the mainstream curriculum of education.

7. Ubuntu parenting and its relationship to developmental psychology

Developmental psychology is “the biological, psychological, and socio-cultural study of development across the lifespan” ([17], p. 3). It examines the progressive challenges and changes that individuals encounter from cradle to grave, which are prompted by maturation and the learning process [17]. When one mentions developmental psychology, the popular perspectives come to mind such as psychoanalytic, learning, cognitive, biological, social-cultural, and ecological. Ubuntu principle of parenting appreciates these perspectives, and it becomes more inclined to the ecological perspective, and socio-cultural perspective. The ecological perspective asserts that development is explained in terms of the interaction between people and the settings in which they live while socio-cultural argues that development is influenced in the socio-cultural environments [17]. Culture in this essence becomes a social system that exists as a network linking people. Anthropologists argue that culture is a shared way of doing things [27], this makes Ubuntu parenting relevant in the world. Culture is to be understood as an information-based system, involving both shared understandings and praxis, that enables groups of people to live together in an organized fashion and to get the greater benefit of coexistence.

Ecological systems theory argues that the context of human development consists of multiple systems [1] and each system is embedded with the next larger context, from narrowest to widest. These systems are microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem [17]. All these systems impact the child's development, attachment, belonging and productivity. Ubuntu encourages a mutual cooperation and collaboration from all the systems for the better development of the child, for the child is at the center of the widening circle.

8. Concept of family in Ubuntu terms

The African perspective upholds the centrality of family. This primary organization is the center for children's growth and nurturing. In parenting family is central. Arguably, family as the crucible of human life and wellbeing is not independent of the social environment [1]. Sociologically, a family is a social group, a social system, and a social institution. As a social group, it is a collection of persons who recognize one another as family members and interact with each other mutually [28]. As a social system it has many interdependent components which help the sustenance of each person. As a social institution, the family meets broad societal goals. Indispensably family is not limited to biological parents or siblings, and blood or immediate. This fulfills the African perspective of viewing family in pluralistic and diverse terms. Emotional ties are intense, whether they are negative or positive. Ubuntu believes that the family group is the prototype of all other groups and is the first group that a child familiarizes with for social purposes. Therefore, “family

exerts tremendous influence over its members in terms of behaviors, beliefs, communication styles, cultural transmission, social skills, and efforts to meet basic human needs” ([1], p. 22). The African perspective of the family is engraved in the value of being human. The practice of Ubuntu demonstrates how inclusive the African family worldview is oriented. One is born in a family, a village, a community and into the world. Tembo [29] points out that in the African family system there is nothing known as extended family, for all brothers of the father are referred and known as “fathers”, all sisters of your mother are “mothers”, and all their children are brothers and sisters, respectively.

In an African Ubuntu society, adoption is by means of kinship and no legislated procedures. It is mutually binding that uncles, aunts, cousins, and nieces will take ownership and care of orphaned children. If these are unable to provide the expected care and support, someone in the extended kinship would take up the responsibility. This adoption system has helped many African families that have migrated into other parts of the world. Some families left their children in their country of origin until such as the time when their regularized stay is approved, and they reunite with their children. During this whole time, their children are well looked after by cousins, uncles, and aunties. In this respect, the community is entrusted with parenting. In this setup every member of the family has the responsibility and power to stand as a mentor, and teacher. It is every member’s responsibility to care for each other and to ensure that children are groomed and socialized according to the ways of the community. Through this mutual adoption, unmarried or childless adults experience parenting as they take care of their relative’s children.

Furthermore, all members of the family are empowered with authority, to teach, correct and rebuke any misdemeanor of any child of the community. Parents and communities reward and punish children without the need for professionals, courts, probation, and juvenile jails. The community standard of good and bad is the last court of appeal for every child. Ubuntu is a deeply moving yet intangible African soul force that demonstrates the standard of living. Hence the common maxim “*it takes the whole village to raise a child*” still holds value in many African societies. The maxim implies that meaningful interactions among the child, family members and those institutions of value are necessary for children to realize human excellence [16]. If you want to travel faster go alone, but if you desire to travel far and further, go with a company (community). Ubuntu parenting is a way to get somewhere else than where we are in terms of child development and nurturing.

The role of the family in the social development of children is irresistible. Family is a determinant factor in promoting physical, psychological, and social activity in developing children. Family enables a child to develop with confidence and is where children are and should be celebrated regardless of the short comings that be. It is within families that children develop skills that prepare them for life outside the family – first in school and friendships and later in the workforce and romantic partners [1]. It is through the family that children mature and learn how to survive outside of the family. They learn how to get along with others. It is within the family that children learn about gender roles, peer relationships, and responsibility to self and others. Families produce workers and consumers, two requirements that a strong economy depends on [1]. Work ethics are not born, they are nurtured in families.

9. African perspective: the round hut

In traditional rural African setup, there are mud and grass thatched homesteads. In the Southern African parts, most of these houses are built in a round shaped conical style, popularly known as a round hut. They are in most cases detached one

roomed. In some cases, they are used for different purposes from granary, sleeping room, to cooking house/hut (kitchen). They are constructed differently and in the 21st century they have been modernized into assorted designs and built using modern materials. Some now use roofing sheets instead of grass, while some use mortar and bricks instead of ordinary poles and mud. In some communities the hut is beautifully decorated with artistic designs inside and out.

A traditional round hut (kitchen) is symbolic and significant in the discourse of parenting. There are some things that are permanently placed in the hut such as the sitting bench (*chigaramakwati*), the kitchen plate holder, the sanctuary (*chikuwa*) and sometimes the fire pit/place (*choto*) which is normally at the center of the hut. The sitting bench is long enough stretching from the entrance and exit (door) which is normally single. During the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe some huts had two doors, the entrance on the other hand and the exit or escape exit. This was strategic for security reasons; the exit was positioned facing the hiding spot; nearby bushes or mountains. The sanctuary is mostly the opposite of the sitting bench. The fireplace which is at the center will then have a cooking stove. Traditionally there were three stones, but the modern day is a steel build stove replicated after the electrical stoves. Firewood is the common source of energy used for cooking.

The sitting bench is mostly for male figures, and females sit on the sitting mat which is movable. When there are more people gathered in the hut, the bench is reserved for elders according to their importance because relationships are defined not only by seniority or age but kinship. The kinship importance is of value. In an African setting, when there is a gathering of family, people have the informal greeting of saying how are you or shaking hands and causally talking about anything from weather, to the experiences of the traveled journey and even humorous memories. This is not the greeting. The proper greeting happens when people gather in the round hut where kinship seniority is honored and respected.

In the round hut all are honored and valued including children, women and socially different in terms of social status. It is a place of welcome, a place of honor, a place of listening to each other. It is in the hut that no one is excluded but all are included, and all have space. No matter how big the family – extended, significant and expanded, everyone fits into the round hut. It is in this space that visions are shared, important decisions are made, and critical issues are discussed. A round hut is a place of convergence and convention. It is essentially a place of equals, in terms of kinship. When people sit in a circle, they set aside external categories that separate them [30].

The round hut is dyadic not individual. This is a critical component in parenting. Parenting is not individual, it is communal. This communal aspect of parenting is founded on the communal or kinship relationship. “Communal relationships are based on mutual love and concern, people do things for each other without expecting to be repaid” ([27], p. 412). This communal relationship is contrasted from the exchange relationship and the excluding relationship. The exchange relationship is based on reciprocity and fairness, where each person does something for the other mainly in the expectation of getting some direct benefit in return [27]. While the excluding relationship is all about individual success and self-gains. The communal perspective of being is healthier because instead of equality, rights and repayment, the underlying rules involve caring for the other person and being available and ready to provide support for the sustenance of coherent living. This entails that children’s development is enhanced in a mutual environment not because of legalism but out of love. Communal parenting of Ubuntu involves the efforts and the collaboration of the whole community. Who would want to raise children in an unsafe environment? Communal existence makes people feel safe and secure and provide a haven where others care for you regardless of who you are, status, sexuality, age, or race. Ubuntu thus encourages, the safety of all human beings and the preservation of life, flora, and fauna.

Parents desire a better lifestyle for their children, thereby they are the first teachers. The hut is undoubtedly the center of education. It is from here, that lessons of life are imparted to the children. This center of education is for planning purposes, discussions of the future, family wealth and provisions. It is a place where guidance is sought, and broken relationships are repaired through reconciliatory conversations. The hut is where children are groomed to be productive, helpful, and resourceful. Understandably, Ubuntu advocates that homes, regardless of status should be places of education not brutality. Parents should believe in their children so as the children to believe in themselves. This is possible regardless of the busy schedules of the 21st century parents to create space for learning in their homes. The parent as the teacher is possible when the skills of teaching are inculcated in the parents. One such skill is empowering the child.

A hut is a place of storytelling. There is only fire in the center of the hut and people sit in a circle. The circle allows everyone to be involved. It is one of the safest places to be. In a circle all have a significant contribution. A circle is an energetic social container capable of helping a group draw on wellsprings of insight, information and story that inspire collective wisdom, and action [30]. This is paramount to parenting, to create space for conversation away from the technology. Storytelling techniques are nurtured as to develop critical thinking and coherent conversation. Storytelling expresses feelings, attitudes, and responses to lived experiences. They mediate and transmit knowledge and expectations. In the 21st century there is a need to emphasize family storytelling time.

A hut is a place of transition, growth, and development. In the African context and setup, the hut is the center of religious and traditional rituals. This uphold that life is rooted in the hut as traditionally the umbilical cord of every newborn family member is buried underneath the fireplace. The fireplace is positioned at the center of the hut, therefore, when the umbilical cord is buried there it signifies the centrality of wellbeing of the newborn to the family and community. The burial further signifies belonging, everyone is central to the welfare of the family and community sustainability. Furthermore, it has been held that umbilical cords define one's identity. Thereof when one is asked about originality they always refer back to the place where their umbilical cord is interred. Regardless of globalization and the movement therefore, many other African families, preserve the umbilical cord for the ritual of its interment. Hence when there is a newborn in the diaspora or an urban environment the paternal grandmother or maternal grandmother of the child is expected to be present during the delivery and care for the grandchild and nurse the mother for some time. The grandparents preserve the umbilical cord, till it is interred properly.

From this illustration of the round hut, the interdependence between children, families, and the larger society should be clear. Some social problems and failures are easily corrected or buffered through the application of Ubuntu principles. A good example: "divorce and remarriage have allowed many adults and children to escape from toxic family environments, yet lack of social support networks and failure to forge new values for sustaining intergenerational obligation have let many children fall through the cracks in the process" ([31], p. 47). Families and communities should exert the same energy towards nurturing values that enable children's development.

10. Ubuntu parenting as a turning point

Ubuntu principle of life as demonstrated in this chapter, encapsulates courage, caring, compassion, mutual, respect, responsible living, sharing, the integrity of life, connectivity, peaceful existence, and communal accountability. All these attributes are not leveled on children only or parents only, but they are expected of the entire

community, street, and neighborhood. Everyone looks after each other. This means the community are the eyes of the affairs of the community. It, therefore, begets peaceful and harmonious living. However, it encourages the intersectionality of being human regardless of color, race, and or ethnicity. Children become citizens with expectations and responsibility when the community displays the attributes of Ubuntu.

Parental and community goals for children are centered on social and human values. These include respect, self-reliance, and being helpful, cooperative, and obedient. Children are to respect their family and value their parents and their efforts through parenthood. This concept of respect is mutually shared even among the children themselves. The roles are shared and respected. Self-respect of self is also emphasized to children in terms of sexual education. Fathers are responsible to teach the boys ways of self-respect and respecting the opposite sex. While mothers train the girl children in the importance of her sexuality and sexual respect. Pre-marital sex is forbidden until one is an adult. Getting into an intimate relationship too young is considered destructive and time consuming since one has to focus on education.

Ubuntu concept of parenting emphasize coherent existence which is grounded in the dignity and integrity of belonging for the benefit of community sustainability, resilience, and relevance. Ubuntu distinguishes parenting from parenthood in which parenting is more than being a father or mother who gives birth. Parenting encompasses belonging, responsibility, accountability, imparting of values, availability, love, mutuality, encouraging, caring, and valuing human life. This parenting is not limited to a circle of immediate family, but it incorporates the whole community. Ubuntu parenting is conducive for the working environment of society, where both parents are to provide for the welfare of the family. In this era, there is no stay-at-home spouse or stay at home parent. Ubuntu articulates the role of childminders, daycares, schools, afterschool care and drop-in centers. Above all Ubuntu parenting celebrates the role of grandparents. In particular, parenting means the role performed by a person or institution that possesses parental status in order to suitably and positively enhances development in every aspect of the child's life [32]. The ubuntu parenting seeks to reestablish social partnerships and creating a world in which the best of collaboration, cooperation and involvement informs and inspires child development.

Children, regardless of the stage of development are influenced by parents and the environment around them to cope with establishing a sense of identity and self-determination. Therefore, the parenting environment should be conducive and enabling for children to reach their optimal potential. Self-identity and self-determination are founded on three principles: relatedness, autonomy, and competence [33]. The persistent, initiative-taking, critical thinking, and positive tendencies of human nature flourish through relatedness and autonomy. Furthermore, children require affectionate and attentive adults for them to develop and flourish in self-identity and self-determination.

11. Ubuntu and parental involvement

Parents have a duty and obligation to undertake in order to ensure the protection of the children's interests. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure a safe environment and guarantee the rights of children. Parental involvement is important for the child's outlook of life. Parental involvement should be inclusive and involving the stakeholders that influence the development of children. Accordingly, the definition provided by Eldridge as cited in Mawere et al. [34] is significant, parental involvement is the process whereby schools, parents, children services, government, police (RCMP), community, chamber of commerce, politicians, business owners, religious organizations and all other related services support each other

in stimulating children's curiosity, motivation, and development in order to achieve educational, organizational, democratic, and enabling objectives. Parental involvement creates the enabling environment of partnership, cooperation, and collaboration among stakeholders for the greater benefit of producing a resourceful individual. The stakeholders are critical, and in Ubuntu terms, it is the village. The safety of children is guaranteed when the whole village is involved. Justice and empowerment of children is issued when the whole village coordinates and collaborates. Noteworthy is the fact that justice is not only limited to analyzing and promoting proper relations among members of society, but it also refers to procedures of arriving at conclusions and the way in which stakeholders and institutions in a community execute their roles and duties [35]. Justice, involves advocating for the execution of proper functions, promoting laws that are not discriminatory, responsible living, and defending the rights of the vulnerable in society as expected for the common good of all. The issues of corporate diligence and consciousness are critical to sustainability. The corporate has to work together for the best of society's wellbeing. This commonwealth commitment and involvement build synergies where the whole is more effective than the sum of individual parts. The Ubuntu commonwealth intends to guarantee stability, peace, harmony, and resourcefulness in society. This way of living and participation in the welfare of children is expected in this environment of the 21st century.

Parental involvement describes the extent to which a parent is dedicated to, takes an interest in, is knowledgeable about and is actively participating in the child's life [36]. The basic obligation of parents is to be involved in the life of the child, participate in activities, and observe the progress thereof. African parents encouraged academic achievement, moral uprightness, and successful life determination. Academic achievement has been often promoted as a means of bringing honor to the family. Regardless of the social status of most African parents, they desire the best outcome for their children from childhood to adulthood. Parental support in education, and extra curriculum such as sports build the confidence and motivation to achieve. In this regard parents should be the number one cheerleaders of their children. Through observation, extra-curriculum activities are not much of the African family's ambition, although there is significant encouragement coming from parents, to have their children excel in sports and other talent-based professions. However traditional principle of parent involvement meant that children had no secret space or password on gadgets. Whilst most technological applications and downloads have some parental control or family accounts the Ubuntu parenting invites open communication and no secrecy. In the African setup there is no timeout in terms of children expected to live independent of their parents. The only time a child leaves the family home is when she or he gets married. While living with parents, they are treated as children regardless of their economic status. Whatever help children give in paying for bills is out of mutual relatedness and show of responsibility. Under Ubuntu governance provisions, respect, dignity, caring, and sharing are considered critical values that build family and community.

12. Ubuntu parenting and immigrants of African dissent (visible minority)

Acknowledging the language flux that arises when using certain phrases. "Minority" in this context means a visible minority, immigrants of African Dissent or people of color. Diverse value orientations, life experiences and worldviews are all implicit in the term multiculturalism [1]. The ethnic sense of "them versus us" becomes realistic when one relocates to different countries and continents. Immigration has configured

challenges on parenting norms and the subsequent changes in family structures, dynamics, and roles. Parents may feel that the socio-cultural context prior to and post-migration may conflict, and that the legal system undermines family dynamics and values or that the schooling system alienates them from their children [23]. The lack of immediate and close families around has been a challenge in parenting in the diaspora. This is catapulted by the economical demands on parents.

Acculturation is the process of change when two cultures come into contact has a significant effect on migrants. The degree to which adaptation to new cultural environments is problematic to some immigrants and it depends on factors such as migration motives, socioeconomic status, socio-psychological circumstances, similarities, and differences between the culture of origin and the place of settlement and also personal attitude [37]. Furthermore, the intercultural relationships in the world have had a rather checkered history of racism, colonialism, genocides, systemic discrimination, and oppression. Their parenting principles are rated, classified, and misunderstood in children's development. Mistakenly visible minority parenting is classified as authoritarian, where parents are taken to be too rigid and inflexible. No matter the historical past, people can rise above the prejudices and stereotyping characterization imposed on them.

Visible minorities have a powerful sense of kinship bonds, educational and work achievement orientation, a strong commitment to religious values and church participation which should be celebrated. The centrality of community, respect of tradition, harmony with nature and the sociality of self-hood ensures survival and successful parenthood among visible minorities [37]. There is a sense of resilience among the parents and children of a visible minority population. This attitude enables them to cope with the balance of life and demands in social life. The mutual cooperation between the parents and children enables them to support each other creatively. Furthermore, a sense of belonging enables the minority diverse communities to successfully get support when they most expect it. Schools and religious communities are the most available support institutions that offer guided parental support.

In Ubuntu rights are presented not as an external concept imposed upon communities, but rather the enhancement of existing good practice already embedded in families and communities [37]. This is important as children are rewarded out of a privilege not based on rights. Children receive gifts and value them based on privilege, going to school and be with your family is based not a right among the visible minority community but a privilege to be appreciated and reciprocated. Ubuntu encourages good and appreciative attitude reciprocity in a family. This means that parents appreciate their children and children appreciate their parents.

Immigrant families have a history and cultures to be honored. The family's past and present life cannot be devoid of history and present challenges of modernity. In this scenario families depend on social support from the context they are existing. They formulate relationships that last with those support systems in helping the child's development. Adjustments will be visible in parental involvement, parental expectations, and children's assimilation in the context of diaspora.

13. Criticism of Ubuntu

According to Metz, there are three reasons why Ubuntu is considered faulted: it is misunderstood as philosophical thought, its collective orientation is taken as a challenge to individual freedoms and finally that it is only applicable and useful in traditional contexts, but not in modern society [38]. These criticisms make Ubuntu relevant to a greater extent as it proposes significant insights that enhance human lives and functionality.

Manyonganise posits that Ubuntu is oppressive and liberating [10]. She analyzed that Ubuntu has been celebrated and glorified from a patriarchal noxious bias. Ubuntu needs to be seen as a creation of men who were determined to regard women as restricted, dominated, and marginalized [10]. The systems that used to oppress can be the systems that liberate. Therefore, Ubuntu is liberating. Women and children are not second citizens of any family. In an economical society, everyone has to play a significant role to achieve functionality in any given family and parenting. Furthermore, Ubuntu is not only liberating but empowering. It is empowering as it assigns roles mutually. Roles in a family are defined and classified among parents and children. When it comes to children, the eldest is expected to look out and defend the interests of the younger children. This is mutually, and not prescriptive. Through Ubuntu, chores are part of life not burdensome activities to be endured.

14. Conclusion

Parenting as an art should be viewed from the visual beauty of nurturing children from birth to adulthood. The terrain of raising children continues to evolve. In the 21st century, as in the past, parents are faced with a myriad of challenges that affect the desired outcome of child development. This chapter has highlighted the challenges of globalization and the availability of different information technologies. In this one touch world, which shaped the globalized culture, the African approach has detailed the Ubuntu philosophy and way of life as a critical model of parenting. Ubuntu parenting put together with the different dimensions or styles of parenting influence the nurturing of children. No parenting or child development occur in a vacuum. This invites, family, individuals, community, and different institutions to be significant players in child development and parenting. Ubuntu parenting advocates for the communal parenting which is centered on mutuality, interdependence, and cooperation.

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