



**Cohesive Living: Exploring the Value of Ubuntu among Students Staying
in Residences at a University in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

By

Sthembisio Phoswa

Supervisor: Dr Sibonisile Zibane

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree:

Master of Social Science

Discipline of Social Work

School of Applied Human Sciences

2024

DECLARATION

I, Sthembiso Phoswa, declare that:

- i. This dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- ii. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- iii. This dissertation does not contain other persons' writing unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
 - a. Their words have been rewritten, but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.
 - b. Where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.
- iv. This dissertation does not contain texts, graphs or tables copied and pasted from the Internet unless specifically acknowledged, and the source is detailed in-text and in the reference section.

Signed:

 _____

Student: Sthembiso Phoswa (Student number: 215062156)

As the candidate's Supervisor, I agree to the submission of this dissertation.



Supervisor: Dr Sibonsile Zibane

Date: 14 / 10 / 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was only through commitment, enthusiasm, and a strong desire to learn that I was able to complete this entire dissertation.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and acknowledgement to everyone who made this research possible and successful.

I extend my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Sibonisile Zibane, for your consistent guidance and the knowledge you shared throughout this journey, which enabled me to complete my dissertation. Your role extended beyond that of a lecturer; you became a mentor and a source of solid support and encouragement. I am grateful for believing in me.

A special thanks to Professor Vishanthie Sewpaul, my former lecturer, who stood by me during challenging times and showed me that my potential exceeds my struggles.

I want to acknowledge Mr Luvuyo Makhaba, my former African Psychology lecturer, for teaching me advanced critical thinking skills and engaging with knowledge professionally. Your scholarly influence has enriched my understanding and wisdom.

To the entire UKZN Social Work department, thank you for your support and continuous encouragement.

To the Phoswa family – oGemase, oGengeshe, oChwensi – I am grateful for your love and support.

My beloved mother, Zithobile, you are a remarkable, precious and strong woman, and I deeply appreciate all the sacrifices you have made for us.

To my precious sisters, Nokubongwa, Nonsikelelo, and Ayanda, thank you for your support and for always checking up on me while I was away from home.

To my friend and sister, Nokukhanya Zondi, I am thankful for your sacrifices, guidance, and constant support. You have always been there for me, and I am fortunate to have you as a friend.

To my research participants, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your invaluable contributions and commitment, which made this research possible.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late father, Mduduzi Dumisani Phoswa. May your soul rest in peace. I fondly remember how you always stressed the importance of education and encouraged me to take pride in my work. Your support and consistent encouragement enabled me to pursue my passion and study for the profession I love. I know you only wanted the best for me, and I wish you were here to see how far I have come with my academic work.

I love you, Gemase.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to all the parents who support their sons and daughters in their education, regardless of any financial challenges or career paths they have chosen. Your support is truly invaluable and greatly appreciated.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CHASU	Campus HIV/AIDS Support Unit
DSRA	Department of Student Residence Affairs
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DUT	Durban University of Technology
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSSREC	Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MUT	Mangosuthu University of Technology
PMB	Pietermaritzburg
RA	Residence Assistant
RLO	Residence Life Officer
RMS	Risk Management Services
SAHMS	South African Health Monitoring Study
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TIKZN	Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal
UCSF	University of California San Francisco
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNIZULU	University of Zululand
WRHI	Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

Table 3.1	Profile of demographic data of study participants.....	60
Table 4.1	Participants' socio-demographic characteristics.....	73

Figures

Figure 3.1	Satellite map of UKZN's Howard College.....	39
Figure 4.1	Alignment of the study's objectives and emerged themes.....	74

ABSTRACT

Transitioning from secondary to tertiary education is often challenging for students. Despite embracing newfound autonomy, many students face difficulties due to a lack of parental support and unfamiliar social networks in institutions of higher learning. University residences are increasingly seen as problematic and unsafe due to reported murder cases stemming from a lack of cohesive living among students. This study explored the value of Ubuntu in fostering cohesive living among students residing at a university residence in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Using qualitative approaches and grounded in the Afrocentrism Paradigm, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 undergraduate and postgraduate students, selected through purposive non-probability sampling. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and participants voluntarily provided informed consent. During the interviews, participants reflected on their experiences in university residences and how they uphold Ubuntu values. The data underwent multiple stages of coding, quality assurance and validity measures, and was analysed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that participants have a solid understanding of Ubuntu principles, as they cited terms such as respect, humanity, sharing, and harmony to describe its values. However, understanding Ubuntu alone is insufficient, as putting it into practice presents challenges. Participants mentioned that while some students find it easy to apply Ubuntu values to cope with university life challenges, others resort to alcohol and substance abuse due to feelings of isolation or familial and socio-economic issues they prefer not to share. The influence of Eurocentric values at university residences was also noted, which was anticipated as universities often impart Eurocentric and Western ideas through the curriculum, and some students lack exposure to Ubuntu from older generations at home. The study emphasises the importance of promoting Ubuntu values systems across all spheres of an African society and recommends further research that would investigate how the current generation can impart Ubuntu values to future generations, considering the evolving world and new technologies that sometimes challenge and undermine African value systems.

Keywords: Ubuntu, Afrocentrism, Africa, university residences, students, social cohesion

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	10
1.1. Background and the rationale of the study	10
1.2. Problem statement.....	12
1.3. Aim, objectives, research questions and underlying assumption	13
1.4. Significance of the study.....	14
1.5. Theoretical framework.....	15
1.6. Definition of terms.....	18
1.7. Outline of the dissertation.....	20
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	21
2.1. Introduction.....	21
2.2. Conceptualising Ubuntu.....	21
2.3. Social cohesion in university residences.....	24
2.4. Challenges at university residences	26
2.4.1. <i>Initiatives made to address challenges in university residences</i>	28
2.5. Colonial attempts to dismantle African value systems	30
2.6. Theoretical debates on Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism.....	32
2.7. Gaps in this area of interest.....	35
2.8. Conclusion	36
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	37
3.1. Introduction.....	37
3.2. Location of the study	37
3.3. Research paradigm.....	41
3.4. Research approach	56
3.5. Research design	57

3.6.	Population and sampling.....	59
3.7.	Data collection instruments.....	61
3.8.	Methods of data analysis.....	62
3.9.	Ethical considerations	65
3.10.	Authenticity, trustworthiness and quality assurance.....	68
3.11.	Limitations of the study	70
3.12.	Conclusion	70
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION		72
4.1.	Introduction.....	72
4.2.	Participant socio-demographic characteristics.....	72
4.3.	Emerged themes.....	74
4.4.	Theme 1: Philosophical nature of Ubuntu	75
4.4.1.	<i>Students' understanding of Ubuntu</i>	75
4.4.2.	<i>Common values of Ubuntu</i>	77
4.5.	Theme 2: Relevance and non-relevance of Ubuntu practices in student residences.....	79
4.5.1.	<i>Ubuntu as part of student residences</i>	79
4.5.2.	<i>Perceptions of Ubuntu in an African worldview</i>	81
4.5.3.	<i>Elderly people's teachings</i>	83
4.5.4.	<i>Alcohol and substance abuse as a barrier to maintaining Ubuntu</i>	86
4.5.5.	<i>Dominance of Western ideologies</i>	89
4.6.	Theme 3: Guiding principles of Ubuntu in building social cohesion	91
4.6.1.	<i>Residence parties</i>	92
4.6.2.	<i>Distribution of food parcels</i>	93
4.6.3.	<i>Sharing of residence facilities</i>	95
4.7.	Conclusion	96
CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION		97
5.1.	Introduction.....	97
5.2.	Major conclusions based on objectives.....	97
5.3.	Recommendations.....	101
5.4.	Conclusion	104
ANNEXURE A: UKZN STUDENT RESIDENCE POLICY		120
ANNEXURE B: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT (ENGLISH).....		122
ANNEXURE C: ISHIDI LOLWAZI KANYE NEMVUME (ISIZULU)		125

ANNEXURE D: INTERVIEW GUIDE (ENGLISH).....	128
ANNEXURE E: UHLAKA LWEZINGXOXO ZOCWANINGO (ISIZULU).....	130
ANNEXURE F: ETHICAL APPROVAL	131
ANNEXURE G: TURNITIN REPORT.....	132
ANNEXURE H: GATEKEEPER’S LETTER (ENGLISH).....	133
ANNEXURE I: INCWADI YOKUCELA IMVUME (ISIZULU).....	135
ANNEXURE J: EDITING CONFIRMATION LETTER	137

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Background and the rationale of the study

The transition from secondary to tertiary education is often a challenging process for many students. It marks a period of excitement mixed with uncertainties for numerous young people. Besides the academic hurdles and challenges posed by entry requirements to higher education institutions, there exists a crucial need for students to develop independence in managing various aspects of university life, including accommodation, finances, catering, and coping with heightened academic demands and expectations (Lei et al., 2018). While students may embrace their newly acquired autonomy, they often encounter difficulties due to a lack of parental support and unfamiliar social networks. Fisher and Hood (1987) long argue that building social networks remains a major challenge during the transition period for students. Moving from high school to university may involve leaving behind one's home, family, and friends, which presents a substantial social shift for many young people, especially in their first year of study.

When young people leave home to pursue tertiary education, some seek out a university residence – an accommodation in close proximity to the university where they will reside throughout their academic tenure. Despite the challenges inherent in securing such accommodations, upon obtaining a residence, they foster social connections with fellow residence students in order to blend seamlessly into their new living environment (Shaik & Deschamps, 2006). Moreover, this transition requires university living spaces, in particular, to be characterised by social cohesion among students. As Lei et al (2018) stated, this transition requires students to become socially integrated. However, life at university residences is never smooth sailing and is somewhat characterised by isolation, fatigue and stress, and difficulties in coping with day-to-day living problems (Shaik & Deschamps, 2006).

Increasingly, university residences are reported as problematic, unsafe and violent spaces, when they are expected to be spaces characterised by social cohesion and peace among students (Agherdien & Petersen, 2016). Several violent incidences have been reported to have occurred at university residences. For example, in 2018, there was a murder incident at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU), where Nhlaka Sazi Ngubo, a 20-year old first-year student from Port Shepstone was stabbed to death by his roommate at eSiphetho Residence on the

KwaDlangezwa campus (Zululand Observer, 2018). The two roommates apparently (and allegedly) had an argument over ‘cold water’ because the hot water for showering had run out in their room (Zululand Observer, 2018). Following this incident, several murder incidents occurred at other university residences in KwaZulu-Natal. Nqobani Dlomo, a student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), was stabbed in the early hours of Saturday morning by another student at Oval Residence in Westville Campus (African News Agency, 2018). Additionally, Sikhumbuzo Lushaba, a student from Durban University of Technology (DUT), was shot dead near a student residence in Albert Park on Friday (African News Agency, 2018).

Other reports highlight students turning to sex work and transactional relationships due to poverty or lifestyle competition in university residences (Doyisa et al., 2023). These incidents represent just a few of the many unfortunate occurrences reported in university residences and are often attributed to a lack of cohesiveness, respect for diversity, and a sense of togetherness among the university residence students. These qualities are proclaimed to be promoted by those who observe and practice the African values of Ubuntu (Mabovula, 2011). The present study is therefore motivated by a scholarly curiosity and aims to ascertain the extent to which the concept of Ubuntu is integrated and manifested within university residential environments.

Several initiatives have been implemented by universities to address some of the challenges faced by students in university residences. The researcher of this study was a member of the House committee at one of the student residences at UKZN in 2017. During this time, members of the House committee requested donations from students who were residing at Derby House, an off-campus UKZN Howard College residence. These donations were sought to assist and support students who did not have financial aid. Fellow students were encouraged by the members of the House committee to contribute either a monetary amount of their choice or donate any food items they bought themselves during their grocery shopping. This initiative appeared to be influenced and reinforced by the generally shared understandings and fundamental principles of Ubuntu, a crucial value of sharing within the African worldview (Mabovula, 2011). Ubuntu, which emphasises community, mutual care, and collective well-being, theoretically underpins such charitable actions. However, the extent to which Ubuntu influences university students remains unclear. It is uncertain whether all participants in the food parcels initiative were motivated by Ubuntu, or if other factors such as social pressure, personal beliefs, or a general sense of altruism played a role. This ambiguity highlights the need for a more in-depth examination of the motivations behind student participation in

charitable activities within university residences. Understanding these motivations could provide valuable insights into the presence and impact of Ubuntu in these residential settings.

Afrocentric scholars such as Asante (1983), Mabovula (2011), Mbiti (1990), Mucina, (2013), Mugumbate and Nyanguru (2013), Mutwa (1969), Ncube, (2010), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) and Ramose (2002), have extensively published on Ubuntu philosophy, elucidating its significance among people of African descent. Despite this rich body of work, there has been limited research on how Ubuntu can contribute to building social cohesion among students residing in university residences. Consequently, the importance of the present study lies in its aim to explore the existence, non-existence or the extent to which the value of Ubuntu influences how students coexist in university residences. By addressing this gap, the study seeks to enhance our understanding of Ubuntu's role in fostering communal living and mutual respect within diverse student populations. Therefore, the present study intends to fill this notable gap in the literature, providing insights that could inform policies and practices aimed at promoting social cohesion in university residential settings.

1.2. Problem statement

South African universities are increasingly plagued by different forms of violence, which manifest in many forms. Whether the violence occurs between students and university management, or among students themselves, its impact is deeply concerning. In 2018, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) reported 47 cases of rape on South African campuses, with most of these cases found in university residences (Independent Online, 2018). Additionally, a study conducted by the South African Health Monitoring Study (SAHMS) from 2013 to 2014 revealed that 76.5% of surveyed sex workers were students from different universities, who engaged in such work to pay for their education, clothing and basic needs (University of California San Francisco [UCSF] et al., 2015). Despite these alarming statistics, there are many other cases that remain unreported. Instances of students committing murder against one another also surface. As previously mentioned, several murder cases have been reported at university residences, leaving other fellow residence students traumatised in the aftermath (African News Agency, 2018). Moreover, students grapple with challenges related to academic pressures and personal issues, leading to substance abuse such as alcohol and drugs (Kyei & Ramagoma, 2013). In addition, students are also faced with financial

difficulties, which exacerbate these challenges, often resulting in hunger and academic exclusion.

Despite these challenges, it is crucial to remember that students are still human beings. Mutwa (1969) describes a human being from an Ubuntu perspective as kind, generous, friendly, living in harmony and connected to the creator. Mutwa (1969) further argues that people have forgotten how to be human beings and to embody these qualities, and suggests that people must remember the qualities of being a human being to quickly contribute positively to the world. Being human in the context of this study involves students working together to address the social ills within university residences. Failure to tackle these issues may further perpetuate the cycle of violence and hardship in university residences. This study illuminates the challenges faced by students living in these environments, explore the relevance of Ubuntu, promote social cohesion, and provide actionable recommendations to enhance safety and well-being through the principles of Ubuntu. In view of the aforementioned, it is imperative to explore the role of Ubuntu in building and fostering social cohesion among students staying in university residences at a university in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

1.3. Aim, objectives, research questions and underlying assumption

This section covers the aim, objectives, research questions and underlying assumption of the study.

Aim

To explore the value of Ubuntu in fostering cohesive living among students residing in university residences at a university in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Objectives

- To explore the knowledge and understanding of Ubuntu among university residence students.
- To examine the practice (or lack thereof) of Ubuntu in university student residences.
- To determine the potential of Ubuntu in promoting and fostering social cohesion among university residence students.

Research questions

- What knowledge and understanding do university residence students have of the notion of Ubuntu?
- Is Ubuntu being practised or not practised in university residences?
- How can Ubuntu contribute to promoting and fostering social cohesion among university residence students?

Underlying assumption

- There is a dominance of Eurocentric values in South African universities, causing students to suffer in isolation.

1.4. Significance of the study

Despite social transformations and ongoing changes in society, the discourse around social cohesion and unity remains complex and unclear (Kamri et al., 2021). During apartheid in South Africa, the central policy of “divide and rule” aimed to maintain white hegemony (based on Eurocentric views) by dividing the non-white population along racial and ethnic lines (Henrard et al., 2002, p. 19). The end of apartheid brought forth the vision of a “rainbow nation”, aiming to foster peaceful coexistence among different communities with shared loyalty and equity (Moodley & Adam, 2000, p. 51). However, achieving unity in South Africa’s highly diverse and deeply divided society has proven to be a formidable challenge (Bornman, 2014). Although the black African population shared common experiences and sentiments during and after apartheid, contemporary African society continues to be influenced by Eurocentric and Western values. As a result, the African philosophy of Ubuntu, which emphasises togetherness, social cohesion and unity, contrasts sharply with Eurocentric values of individualism.

Despite the modern society and apartheid legacies of division, this study is particularly timely given the limited literature on the appreciation and application of Ubuntu values in university residences. The study uses an African-coined theory and an African-based paradigm for data collection and analysis. Recent studies in South Africa (Mahlangu & Mphahlele, 2019; Monyae & Du Plessis, 2019; Naidoo & Mokoena, 2017; Nganase et al., 2017; Singh & Nkambule, 2018) have primarily focused on the living conditions of students, examining their socio-

economic, health, and safety experiences within university residences. However, none of the aforementioned studies address how students employ Ubuntu values to navigate and survive the challenges they face in these living environments. In contrast, this study uses Ubuntu as a determining factor and a framework to explore how its values can be used to address any challenges faced by students and foster cohesive living among students in university residences. Moreover, this study is significant in the context of a multicultural South African society where debates about unity and social cohesion are ongoing. Therefore, this study has the potential to inform policies and programmes aimed at improving and fostering social cohesion in university residences.

1.5. Theoretical framework

This study adopted Afrocentrism as its theoretical framework. This theoretical framework, also termed ‘Afrocentricity’ by Molefe Kete Asante in 1983 emphasises the critical need for African people to be repositioned and relocated historically, economically, socially, politically, and philosophically (Engelbrecht, 2019). Afrocentrism challenges Eurocentrism, especially when practised in an African context, by arguing that Eurocentric values are not universal. Therefore, the underlying principle of Afrocentrism is that African people should reject the portrayal of themselves as victims or objects and instead strive for the recognition of African agency and centrality in various phenomena (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2018). In this study, Afrocentrism provided a perspective wherein university students from a South African university were interviewed and analysed through the lens and perspective of their African experience. Throughout the study, the researcher aimed to establish the appropriate centrality of African people in the analysis and interpretation of findings.

According to Molefi Kete Asante, a prominent African scholar, Afrocentric Theory is defined as “a paradigm that emphasises the centrality of Africa and African people in the study of African history, culture, and society” (Asante, 1983, p. 4). Asante (1983) argues that Eurocentric approaches to studying Africa have marginalised African perspectives and perpetuated negative stereotypes about the continent and its people. He posits that Afrocentric Theory serves as a corrective measure and solution by prioritising African voices and experiences. Similarly, Marimba Ani, another African scholar, views Afrocentric Theory as a means to reclaim African cultural heritage and identity. Ani (1994, p. 97) asserts that “Afrocentricity involves the active promotion of African culture and values, and the rejection

of European cultural hegemony.” She argues that the Eurocentric education system has indoctrinated Africans to perceive themselves through a European lens, resulting in a loss of cultural identity and self-esteem. Consequently, the Afrocentric Theory aims to counteract this trend by encouraging Africans to embrace their own culture and history.

According to Reviere (2006), Afrocentrism is a social, political, and intellectual movement aimed at centring Africa and the African culture in global historical, cultural, and social narratives. It emphasises the contributions of African people and their civilisations to human history and culture, which challenges the Eurocentric perspective that portrays Africa as inferior and primitive. While the Afrocentric movement has existed for centuries, it gained popularity and prominence in the twentieth century and continues to shape the African and African-American intellectual, cultural, and political discourse. One of the most notable statements on Afrocentrism comes from Robert L. Reviere’s book “*African History: A Guide to Reference and Information Sources*” published in 2006. Reviere (2006) argues that “Afrocentrism is a legitimate corrective movement that seeks to balance the biased and inaccurate views of the world that have been propagated by Eurocentric scholarship.” This quotation captures the essence of Afrocentrism and highlights the necessity for a paradigm shift in how the world views and perceives Africa and Africans.

According to Reviere (2006), the Eurocentric scholarship has historically portrayed Africa as a continent devoid of history, culture, or civilisation. This view has been used to rationalise the enslavement, colonisation, and exploitation of Africa and its people by Europeans. It has also perpetuated the stereotype of Africans as primitive, backward, and uncivilised, which has significantly impacted how Africa is perceived and treated globally (Mbembe, 2001; Mbembe & Nuttall, 2004). Consequently, Afrocentrism seeks to challenge this narrative by presenting a more accurate and comprehensive depiction of Africa’s rich and diverse history and culture. Further, Afrocentrism recognises that Africa has a long and complex history that predates European interactions. It acknowledges the contributions of African civilisations such as Ancient Egypt, Kush, and Ghana to human history and culture (Diop, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1993). Additionally, Afrocentrism celebrates the achievements of Africans across various fields, including science, mathematics, literature, and arts (Reviere, 2006). Through these efforts, Afrocentrism seeks to centre Africa in global historical and cultural narratives to counter the Eurocentric view that portrays Africa as lifeless.

Contrary to some critics' arguments, Afrocentrism is *not* about promoting a reverse form of racism. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018a) highlights that Afrocentrism aims to correct biased and inaccurate views of the world perpetuated by the Eurocentric scholarship, rather than favouring one race over another. It also strives to correct and foster cross-cultural understanding and dialogue by presenting a more accurate and comprehensive portrayal of Africa and its people. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020a) further argues that Afrocentrism plays a crucial role in challenging Eurocentric views of Africa and Africans, acknowledging the necessity of shifting global perceptions to recognise the contributions of African civilisations and people to human history and culture. In this way, Afrocentrism promotes a narrative that challenges the stereotypes and biases that have historically perpetuated the view of Africa as lacking in history or culture.

According to Graham (1999, p. 112), the African-centred worldview is rooted in the following five principles and values:

- 1. The interconnectedness of all things:** This principle views all elements of the universe, including people, animals, and non-living (spiritual and natural) objects, as interconnected.
- 2. The spiritual nature of human beings:** Afrocentrism emphasises valuing human beings beyond their assigned social and economic status. Thus, one's personhood comes through their relationship with the community.
- 3. Collective/individual identity and the collective/inclusive nature of family structure:** The motto "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am" embodies this principle. It values human similarities and commonalities over individual differences, thus collective identity.
- 4. Oneness of mind, body, and spirit:** Optimal health and spiritual divinity are attained through self-development and knowledge of oneself across optimal emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions.
- 5. The value of interpersonal relationships:** Success is measured not only by personal achievements but also by contributions to other people's success and active engagement in collective problem-solving efforts.

Therefore, this study adopted Afrocentrism as a theoretical framework due to its emphasis on placing African people at the centre of analysis of an African phenomenon (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2018). Given that this study explores the social relationships and interactions among students in university residences in South Africa, it was crucial to employ a theoretical

framework that aligns with African values, culture, worldview, and spirituality, particularly concerning Ubuntu. Afrocentrism is inherently directed toward the people being studied, ensuring that they are central to the analysis. This approach not only provided the researcher with a culturally relevant lens for examining the influence of Ubuntu in university residences but also ensured that the study authentically represented and respected the lived experiences and perspectives of African students. Thus, adopting Afrocentrism as the theoretical framework enhanced the study's ability to yield meaningful insights into the role of Ubuntu in fostering social cohesion among students.

1.6. Definition of terms

To enhance the readability and comprehensibility of this dissertation for the reader, the definitions of key terms and concepts used throughout this study are presented below.

Ubuntu as a concept can be traced to the Bantu people of southern Africa, although this philosophy is now shared across much of the continent. Therefore, it is best understood as a social philosophy based on principles of care and community, harmony and hospitality, as well as respect and responsiveness (Nabudera, 2005). These principles express the fundamental interconnectedness of human existence (Nabudera, 2005). Embracing Ubuntu fosters a sense of belonging and community, which is essential in today's fragmented society.

The terms **Afrocentrism/ Afrocentricity/ African-centred worldview** are used interchangeably, each conveying a concept of "placing African culture at the centre of any analysis that involves studying African people" (Asante, 1983, p.6). This scholarly movement seeks to conduct research and education on African subjects from the perspective of historical African peoples and polities. It is important to recognise that this perspective not only elevates African voices but also challenges dominant narratives, from the global North, that have historically marginalised them.

Collectivism, within the Afrocentric paradigm, can be understood as a significant African value. It embodies the notion that an individual's life is not solely their own but belongs to the group or society that they are part of (wa Thiong'o, 1992). This emphasis on collectivism in Afrocentric thinking emphasises the criticality of communal relationships. Furthermore, the group or society is regarded as the fundamental unit of moral concern, with the individual's

value contingent upon their contributions to the community. The principle of collectivism is crucial for addressing social issues, as it encourages mutual support and shared responsibility.

Eurocentrism is a worldview centred on or biased towards Western civilisation. It can also be understood as the worldview that contrasts with the Afrocentric worldview because Eurocentric views promote individualism (Woolman, 2011). This individualism often neglects the communal aspects of human existence that are central to many African cultures.

Communitarianism refers to a cultural ethos that embodies a form of life, exemplifying a certain conception of the role and significance of the community in the lives of individuals within society (Mabovula, 2011). Additionally, it is a pathway to creating more inclusive and supportive environments in various contexts, including university residences.

Individualism can be better understood as a doctrine wherein the interests of the individual are considered ethically important (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019). The emphasis on individualism can be detrimental, as it undermines the collaborative spirit and cohesive living that are essential for fostering a supportive community among university residence students.

Institutions of higher learning, as defined by Harwood et al. (2012), include college-level institutions such as vocational schools, trade schools, and other career colleges that award academic degrees or professional certifications. These institutions play a critical role in shaping the future of individuals and communities alike.

A **university residence** is a place where students live and interact with one another (UKZN-Department of Student Residence Affairs [DSRA], 2022). Residences are also not just living spaces but also crucial sites for personal growth and community building. There are two types of university residences; on-campus and off-campus residences.

Social cohesion refers to the extent to which individuals within a society or community are interconnected, share common values and beliefs, and work towards a common goal (Stanley, 2003). Promoting social cohesion is vital for fostering a sense of belonging and collective responsibility among university residence students.

Residence Life Officer (RLO) is typically a part-time or full-time staff member at UKZN who engages and interacts with the Residence Assistants and House Committee members after business working hours (UKZN-DSRA, 2022). RLOs play an important role in creating a supportive environment for university residence students.

Residence Assistant (RA) is appointed from suitable and eligible postgraduate students annually, typically in November or December, for the following year. These individuals have students' best interests at heart and are responsible for safeguarding students' health and safety. Additionally, they enforce residence house rules and regulations to maintain a safe and conducive living environment for students, whilst reporting to RLOs for effective coordination (UKZN-DSRA, 2022). RAs are essential for fostering community and ensuring that students feel safe and supported.

House Committee members comprise a group of six students elected by students from university residences each year around September (of the current year). These committee members serve as representatives for students to convey their views, suggestions and complaints to the management (UKZN-DSRA, 2022). This democratic process empowers students and gives them a voice in shaping their living environment.

1.7. Outline of the dissertation

Chapter one, the current chapter, focused on the introductory segment of the study. It delved into the background and the rationale behind students' experiences as they transition to tertiary institutions and navigate their realities while residing in university residences. Additionally, this chapter outlined the aim, objectives, research questions, underlying assumption and significance of the study, which provided clarity on the research direction. It also discussed Afrocentrism as the adopted theoretical framework and its relevance in the context of this study. Finally, this chapter defined several terms and concepts relevant to the study, which are consistently used throughout the dissertation. **Chapter two** is the literature review, which presents and discusses relevant literature related to the study. **Chapter three** is the methodology, which discusses the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population and sampling, data collection instruments, ethical considerations, quality measures and methods of data analysis. **Chapter four** presents the findings, analysis and discussion of findings in relation to available literature and the theoretical framework. **Chapter five** summarises the study, outlines the major conclusions as they relate to the objectives, recommends solutions based on the findings of the study and for future research, and concludes the entire study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of relevant literature to illuminate the study's aim of exploring the value of Ubuntu in fostering cohesive living among students residing in university residences at a university in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The chapter begins by examining the conceptualisation of Ubuntu, providing a foundational understanding of this African philosophy. It then explores the meaning of social cohesion within the context of university residences, highlighting its importance and implications for student life.

Subsequently, the chapter addresses the challenges facing students in university residences, offering insights into the social, cultural, and academic hurdles that can impede cohesive living. It also discusses various initiatives undertaken to mitigate these challenges and promote a supportive residential environment. It also discusses various initiatives undertaken to mitigate these challenges and promote a supportive residential environment. Furthermore, this chapter delves into the historical context of colonial attempts to dismantle African value systems, shedding light on the enduring impact of such efforts on contemporary African societies. The theoretical debates surrounding Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism are also explored, providing a critical lens through which the study's framework is understood.

Finally, the chapter identifies existing gaps in the literature, emphasising the need for further research on the role of Ubuntu in enhancing social cohesion among university residence students. By addressing these gaps, the current study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between cultural values and communal living in higher education settings.

2.2. Conceptualising Ubuntu

Ubuntu represents a Bantu characteristic of relationships, with "Bantu" referring to the people, as noted by Muwanga-Zake (2009) cited in Gumbo (2014). The Bantu people cover nearly a third of sub-Saharan Africa and speak over 400 indigenous languages in South Cameroon, the south-eastern part of Nigeria, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, southern Somalia,

Tanzania, Angola, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa (Gumbo, 2014). This diversity explains the various forms in which Ubuntu is found in many societies throughout Africa (Asante, 2019). In addition, this diversity encompasses various expressions of Ubuntu, as reflected in different indigenous languages. For instance, “*motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe*” in Tswana language (Mokgoro, 1998), “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*” in IsiZulu language (Mokgoro, 1998; Nyaumwe and Mkabela, 2007), and “*munhu munhu ngevamwe*” in Shona language (Nyaumwe and Mkabela, 2007), all directly translate to “a person can only be a person through others” (Asante, 1983; Mokgoro, 1998; Mutwa, 1998; Nyaumwe & Mkabela, 2007; Ramose, 1999; Shutte, 1990).

Biko (2017) argue that Ubuntu is a widely embraced African philosophy that has played a significant role in shaping concepts of citizenship and morality throughout Africa. Ubuntu serves as the spiritual foundation of many African communities and cultures (Hailey, 2008). It encompasses a multidimensional concept that represents the core values of African ontology, such as respect for human beings, human dignity, collective sharedness, obedience, humility, solidarity, caring, hospitality, interdependence and communalism (Mabovula, 2011). While these values are recognised in the Western world, they are not emphasised to the same extent, as the Western context places more emphasis on the notion of individualism. In the West, one might speak of “I think, therefore I am” whereas the African philosophy of Ubuntu is more akin to “I am a human because I belong” (Gumbo, 2014). Similarly, some studies have revealed that within the African context, the notion of Ubuntu can be translated as “I am because we are” or “we are, therefore I am” (Mbiti, 2015). Thus, Ubuntu can be seen as a radical reflection of the humanity of people of African descent, yet also holds universal appeal due to its traditional community values. In contrast, other studies have criticised Ubuntu, arguing that it does not promote self-determination and independence (Mugumbate & Nyanguru, 2013).

Ubuntu, a Bantu word that also roughly translates to “humanity towards others”, is a philosophy deeply ingrained in the African culture. It is a concept that emphasises the importance of community and interconnectedness, while recognising the fundamental principles of humanity in all people (Gumbo, 2014; Mabovula, 2011; Mbiti, 1990; Mugumbate & Nyanguru, 2013; Ramose, 1999). Ubuntu is a way of life that has been passed down through generations, continuing as a guiding principle for many people in Africa and beyond. Magobe Ramose, a South African philosopher, has extensively written about Ubuntu and its significance in African societies. In his book, “*African Philosophy through Ubuntu*”, Ramose (1999) argue that Ubuntu is not merely a cultural phenomenon but also a philosophical one as

well. In addition, they see Ubuntu as a way to counteract the individualism and materialism principles dominating Western philosophy and culture (Ramose, 1999). Moreover, Ramose (2002), in a different academic piece, also viewed Ubuntu as a holistic worldview that encompasses all aspects of life – a way of being that values community, harmony, and interconnectedness. According to his view, Ubuntu is not merely a set of rules or principles but a constantly evolving and adapting way of living that serves the needs of the community.

One of the key aspects of Ubuntu is the idea of interconnectedness. According to Ramose (1999), all people are connected in a web of relationships, and each person has a role to play in the community. This means that individual success is not the ultimate goal; rather, the well-being of the community as a whole is what matters most. Another vital aspect of Ubuntu is empathy and compassion. In Ubuntu philosophy, people are encouraged to see themselves in others and to treat others with kindness and understanding. This is reflected in the often-quoted phrase, “I am because we are”. This idea of interdependence and shared humanity lies at the core of Ubuntu. Ubuntu also emphasises the importance of respect and dignity. In African cultures, elders are respected for their wisdom and experience, which is a sentiment mirrored in the Ubuntu philosophy (Gumbo, 2014). Everyone is entitled to respect and dignity, irrespective of their position in the community. This includes not only humans but also the natural world and all living beings. Ramose (1999) perceive Ubuntu as a solution to address many of the problems facing modern society, as they believe that the individualism and materialism dominating the Western culture have led to a breakdown in social cohesion and a lack of concern for the well-being of others. Ubuntu, conversely, offers a path to build stronger communities and promote social justice.

Another South African scholar who has contributed to the conceptualisation of Ubuntu is Nonceba Mabovula. According to Mabovula (2011), Ubuntu is a way of being that prioritises the collective over the individual. This means that individuals are not viewed as separate entities but rather as part of a larger community. Mabovula (2011) further explains that Ubuntu is not only about human relationships but also about the relationship between humans and the environment. The concept of Ubuntu is deeply rooted in African culture and has been practised for centuries. Additionally, Ubuntu emphasises the importance of social harmony and encourages individuals to work together to achieve common goals. In African societies, Ubuntu is reflected in the way people interact with each other. For instance, it is common for individuals to greet each other warmly and ask about their well-being when passing each other

in the street. This reflects the value that is placed on human relationships and the importance of community (Mabovula, 2011).

In recent years, the concept of Ubuntu has gained significant attention due to its potential to address contemporary societal challenges. For instance, Ubuntu has been applied to tackle issues such as social inequality, gender inequality and poverty (Handongwe, 2017; Mkhize & Mthembu, 2023). By highlighting the interconnectedness among individuals, Ubuntu forces individuals to work together to find solutions to these issues. This approach shifts from individual success to working towards the common good of collective well-being. Mabovula (2011) argue that Ubuntu holds the potential to transform society by promoting and advocating social justice and equality. Furthermore, Mabovula (2011) posits that Ubuntu can address inequality by prompting individuals to acknowledge the interdependence among all members of society. This encourages individuals to work for the common good rather than solely pursuing personal interests. Through its emphasis on the importance of community, Ubuntu can contribute to building a fairer and more equitable society.

One of the challenges with Ubuntu and its application in everyday practices is its difficulty in being put into practice in a modern and globalised world (Lushaba, 2009). As African societies become more interconnected within the global economy and traditional African lifestyles face disruption, maintaining the core values of community and interconnectedness inherent in Ubuntu becomes challenging. Nevertheless, Ramose (2002) argues that Ubuntu remains relevant and crucial today. In an increasingly individualistic and fragmented world, Ubuntu presents an opportunity to build stronger and more resilient communities. This philosophy emphasises human connection, empathy, and compassion, reminding people of shared humanity. Ubuntu's deep roots in African culture and its transmission through generations highlight its enduring significance (Gumbo, 2014).

2.3. Social cohesion in university residences

Social cohesion refers to the degree to which individuals within a society or community are bound together, share common values and beliefs, and work towards a common goal (Stanley, 2003). A socially cohesive university residence is one that works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, encourages trust and thus offers its members a chance for improvement. Kushner and Sterk (2005) viewed

social cohesion as an ordering feature of society and defined it as the interdependence between the members of the society shared loyalties, and solidarity. There is a close relationship between social cohesion and Ubuntu. From Ubuntu's perspective, members of society possess qualities like love, compassion, and kindness. Therefore, if students possess these qualities within a university residence, the manifestation of social cohesion is inevitable. Under such circumstances, students within a university residence would be willing to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper.

Social cohesion plays a crucial role in university residences, representing the extent to which members of a community or group (i.e. students) share common values, beliefs, and goals, working together towards a shared purpose. It fosters a sense of belonging among residents and facilitates the development of meaningful relationships with peers. Undoubtedly, the significance of social cohesion in university residences cannot be overstated. It not only offers residents security and comfort by being part of a supportive community but also promotes positive behaviour while reducing negative actions like bullying, discrimination, and exclusion. This contributes to a healthier and happier living environment for everyone in the university residence. One effective way to promote social cohesion in university residences is through organised social activities. These may include events like movie nights, game nights, or cultural celebrations, providing opportunities for residents to socialise and form connections with one another (UKZN-DSRA, 2022). Engaging in such activities allows residents to learn about each other's backgrounds, interests, and values, which fosters deeper understanding and appreciation among them.

Fostering an inclusive environment is crucial for promoting social cohesion in university residences. This entails creating a space where all residents feel welcomed and valued, regardless of their background or identity. Achieving this goal involves providing diversity training for staff and residents, establishing policies that prohibit discrimination and harassment, and encouraging open communication and dialogue among residents (UKZN-DSRA, 2022). Further, social cohesion plays a vital role in cultivating a healthy and positive atmosphere in university residences. By promoting organised social activities and fostering inclusivity, university residences can cultivate a sense of community among students that encourages positive behaviour and diminishes negative conduct.

2.4. Challenges at university residences

Students living in university residences face numerous challenges. These challenges include being away from their homes and families. Due to the stress of academic studies and the lack of readily available guidance for academic and non-academic problems, some students suffer in isolation. Moreover, students in university residences represent the most vulnerable group. The overwhelming burden of academic studies leaves minimal opportunity to relax and recreate, sometimes leading to serious sleep deprivation (Firth-Cozens, 2001, cited in Shaikh & Deschamps, 2006; Lee & Graham, 2001). Various stressors may cause impaired judgment, reduced concentration, loss of self-esteem, increased anxiety and depression (Gisele, 2002; Pillay et al., 2001).

In line with the above discussion, students face social, emotional, physical, and familial problems that may affect their learning ability and academic performance. Other challenges include relationship break-ups, which often lead to suicide, especially among female students (Shaikh and Deschamps, 2006). South African university residences have long been a topic of discussion, with both positive and negative experiences being shared. While these residences can offer students a sense of community and a chance to meet new people, they also come with their unique set of challenges. The present study examined some of the challenges faced by students in South African university residences, drawing on the work of African academics including Mahlangu and Mphahlele (2019), Monyae and Du Plessis (2019), Naidoo and Mokoena (2017), and Singh and Nkambule (2018).

Literature suggests that one of the most significant challenges faced by students in South African university residences is the issue of safety and security. Monyae and Du Plessis (2019) note that many students feel unsafe in their university residences, with reports of theft, assault, and harassment being common. This can have a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of students, making it difficult for them to focus on their studies. Another challenge faced by students in South African university residences is the lack of basic amenities. Singh and Nkambule (2018) report that many university residences do not have access to reliable internet, hot water, or even functioning toilets. This can make it difficult for students to study and maintain good hygiene, leading to increased stress and illness.

Gbadegehin et al. (2022) and Naidoo and Mokoena (2017) highlight the issue of overcrowding in many South African university residences. Limited space and resources force many students to share small rooms with multiple students, making it difficult to study, sleep, and maintain

privacy. This situation can lead to increased stress and conflict among roommates, further impacting their mental health and well-being. Additionally, Mahlangu and Mphahlele (2019) note that many South African university residences lack adequate support structures for students, such as academic support, mental health services, and guidance from resident advisors. Without these resources, students may struggle to succeed academically and emotionally, leading to higher dropout rates and reduced overall success.

Interestingly, Monyae and Du Plessis (2019), along with Singh and Nkambule (2018), Naidoo and Mokoena (2017), and Mahlangu and Mphahlele (2019), categorised challenges in university residences into four; infrastructure, safety and security, funding, and the socio-economic backgrounds of students. Many university residences are poorly maintained, resulting in issues like leaking roofs, broken windows, and faulty electrical wiring. Additionally, some residences are overcrowded, compelling students to share rooms and facilities such as bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens. This inadequate infrastructure significantly affects students' academic performance, health, and overall well-being. Monyae and Du Plessis (2019) conducted a study highlighting the lack of proper infrastructure in South African university residences. Their study revealed that students residing in poorly maintained infrastructural facilities were more prone to health problems such as respiratory problems, skin infections, and allergies. Moreover, students living in overcrowded residences were more likely to suffer from stress, anxiety, and depression (Monyae & Du Plessis, 2019).

Another common challenge highlighted in the four aforementioned studies is the issue of safety and security facing South African university residences. Many students living in university residences are at risk of theft, assault, and other forms of violence. Additionally, some students are exposed to drug and alcohol abuse, which further exacerbates safety concerns. A study conducted by Mahlangu and Mphahlele (2019) found that many South African university residences lack adequate security measures. In addition, the study revealed a lack of security cameras, guards, and proper access control measures in many residences. Moreover, it noted that many students feel unsafe in their university residences and are reluctant to report incidents of theft, assault, and other types of violence.

Funding is also another challenge mentioned in four studies facing South African university residences. Many university residences suffer from underfunding, resulting in insufficient resources and facilities. This financial shortfall also directly impacts the quality of education that residence students receive. A study conducted by Naidoo and Mokoena (2017) highlighted

the inadequacy of the funding model for South African university residences. The study found that university residences were not receiving sufficient funding from either the government or the universities. Moreover, it pointed out that university residences frequently had to rely on unreliable external funding sources like donations and sponsorships.

Finally, the socio-economic backgrounds of students living in South African university residences also pose a significant challenge. Many students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, which in some ways impact their academic success. Moreover, these students lack access to essential resources like food, clothing, and transportation. A study conducted by Singh and Nkambule (2018) highlights these challenges, emphasising that the socio-economic backgrounds of students in South African university residences are a major concern. The study found that many students in residences come from low-income households, and face difficulties in affording basic necessities such as food and clothing. Additionally, the study also found that many students did not have access to transportation, which hindered their ability to attend classes and engage in extracurricular activities.

2.4.1. Initiatives made to address challenges in university residences

In South Africa, university residences have long been integral to student life. These residences, also known as dormitories or hostels, provide students with housing as they pursue their studies. However, students living in these university residences often encounter challenges such as limited access to basic necessities, lack of support systems, and social isolation. To address these challenges, various initiatives that prioritise the values of Ubuntu have been introduced and implemented. This subsection delves into the initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges faced by students in South African university residences through Ubuntu, drawing on insights from Thabo Msibi and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. Additionally, it outlines the role of the researcher of the present study as a House Committee member in a university residence.

One key initiative introduced to address challenges faced by students in university residences in South Africa is the creation of community-based living arrangements. This initiative, inspired by the concept of Ubuntu, emphasises the importance of communal living and the sharing of resources among residence students. According to Professor Thabo Msibi, a senior lecturer in the School of Education at UKZN, “Ubuntu emphasises the interconnectedness of

all beings and stresses the importance of community living, mutual respect, and sharing of resources” (Msibi, 2019). Community-based living arrangements encourage residence students to work together and support one another, whilst creating a sense of belonging and reducing feelings of isolation.

Another initiative that has been introduced to address challenges faced by students in university residences is the provision of mentorship programmes. Typically led by senior students, these programmes aim to offer guidance and support to younger students who are new to the university environment. Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, from the University of Stellenbosch, emphasises that “mentorship programs create a sense of community and provide students with a support system that can help them navigate the challenges of university life” (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2016). Through interaction with more experienced students, new students glean from their experiences to develop a feeling of belonging within the university community.

Another initiative that has been introduced to address challenges faced by students in university residences is the provision of basic necessities such as food and toiletries. Many students living in university residences come from low-income backgrounds and find it challenging to afford basic necessities. In response, universities have implemented programmes like food banks and toiletry drives to supply these students with the necessary resources for their well-being. Rooted in the Ubuntu concept, these programmes highlight the importance of sharing and mutual support during times of need.

At UKZN, several initiatives have been implemented to address the challenges faced by students in university residences. All university campuses provide student counsellors who offer psychosocial support to students, a service that is free for registered students throughout their academic year. Additionally, in response to student poverty, an organisation within the university offers free meals to students once a week. UKZN also has a mentorship programme, notably in the Faculty of Humanities, which supports students not only academically but also in personal challenges. Furthermore, House Committee members organise discussion programmes in residences, with the main aim of promoting wellness and social cohesion within residences. In these circumstances, it is evident that there are elements reflecting the presence of Ubuntu within the university.

Finally, the challenges faced by students living in university residences in South Africa are significant, yet initiatives prioritising the values of Ubuntu have been introduced to address

these challenges. Community-based living arrangements, mentorship programmes, and the provision of basic necessities are among the initiatives that have been implemented. Through these efforts, students can develop a sense of belonging and community, reduce feelings of isolation, and access the resources they need to succeed. As Professor Thabo Msibi notes, “Ubuntu is not just a philosophy, but a way of life that emphasises the importance of interdependence and communal living” (Msibi, 2019). By embracing these values, universities in South Africa are working to create an environment where all students can thrive.

2.5. Colonial attempts to dismantle African value systems

The colonial attempts to dismantle African value systems significantly impacted South African university students. Therefore, it is crucial to critically analyse colonisation and its contemporary implications in African society. One can argue that colonial invasion on the African continent led to the implementation of the coloniser’s own education within their colonies. Consequently, colonising countries realised that they gained power over colonised nations not only through physical control but also through mental control, achieved by introducing Eurocentric education (Clarke, 1974). This Eurocentric education promotes individualism, a notion foreign to people of African descent who prioritise the value of collectivism, aligning with the African philosophy of Ubuntu and the five principles of Afrocentrism that were mentioned in Chapter one. According to Woolman (2011), the educational goal of the colonisers was to impose a ‘superior culture’ on Africans, thereby dismantling African values of Ubuntu and communitarianism.

In accordance with the earlier discussion, Professor Chinua Achebe, a Nigerian novelist, argues in his book “*Things Fall Apart*” that the colonisation of Africa was not merely a political takeover but also a cultural conquest (Achebe, 1958). Achebe (1958) asserts that colonialism attempted to dismantle African value systems by undermining the traditional beliefs, customs, and traditions of African societies. This attempt at cultural domination had profound effects on African societies and their people, including South African university students. The impact of colonial attempts to dismantle African value systems on South African university students is evident in the current educational system in South Africa, which remains rooted in Western values and ideologies imposed on African societies. Consequently, South African university students are often taught to value and prioritise Western culture and traditions over their own, resulting in a loss of identity and cultural heritage.

Similarly, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a Kenyan writer and academic, argue in his book "*Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*" that colonialism attempted to strip African people of their language and culture, both integral components of their identity and value systems (wa Thiong'o, 1986). Furthermore, wa Thiong'o (1986) noted that this attempt to dismantle African value systems resulted in a loss of self-esteem and pride among Africans, leading to feelings of inferiority and an adoption of Western values and ideologies. These attempts to dismantle African value systems have resulted in a lack of appreciation and understanding of African cultural values and beliefs. This disconnect has led to a loss of cultural identity and heritage among African societies.

Over and above, decolonial scholars such as Professor Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Professor Lwazi Lushaba have extensively discussed colonial attempts and their long-lasting impacts focusing on the epistemic violence inflicted by colonialism and the ongoing struggles for decolonisation. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017b) highlights that colonialism in Africa was not only an economic and political project but also a cultural and ideological one, aimed at dismantling African value systems and replacing them with European ones. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni introduced the following concept to explain these colonial attempts. The first one is Epistemicide, Ndlovu-Gatsheni uses the term 'epistemicide' to describe the systematic destruction of African knowledge systems (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017a, 2018b). The aforementioned suggests that colonial powers imposed Western education systems that delegitimised African ways of knowing and knowledge production, promoting European scientific rationality as the only valid form of knowledge. The second one is Cultural Imperialism, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020d) argue that colonialists propagated the notion of European cultural superiority, denigrating African cultures, languages, and traditions. This was achieved through the imposition of European languages, religious conversion (primarily to Christianity), and the introduction of the Western legal and governance system (Nkrumah, 1965; 1978).

Similarly, Professor Lwazi Lushaba, another critical voice in the discourse on decolonisation, elaborates on the socio-political and ideological dimensions of colonial attempts to dismantle African value systems. His insights include Ideological Indoctrination, which emphasises how colonial education was used as a tool for ideological indoctrination, creating a class of Africans who internalised colonial values and norms Lushaba (2009). Professor Lwazi Lushaba also speaks about the distortion of African history. He asserts that colonial narratives often portrayed African societies as primitive and lacking history, justifying the civilising mission of

colonialism (Lushaba, 2009). This reveals how this historical distortion served to undermine African self-esteem and identity, making Africans more amenable to colonial domination.

These colonial attempts to disrupt African value systems were designed to alienate Africans from their cultural heritage (Prah, 2018). This has led to generations of South Africans who are more familiar with Western history, literature, and values than their own cultural traditions. As a result, important African values such as Ubuntu philosophy which emphasises community, mutual respect, and interconnectedness are often undervalued or forgotten, wa Thiong'o (2009) termed this social and ethical disorientation as 'cultural alienation'. The works of Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Lwazi Lushaba provide crucial insights into the colonial attempts to dismantle African value systems and the ongoing struggles for decolonisation. Their scholarship underscores the importance of reclaiming and revitalising African knowledge, culture, and values in the post-colonial era.

2.6. Theoretical debates on Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism

Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism are two competing theoretical frameworks that aim to explain Africa's and Europe's places and contributions to global history and culture. Afrocentrism argues that Africa should be the centre of analysis and interpretation of world history and culture, while Eurocentrism holds that Europe, and the West should be the focus. Both perspectives have been the subject of theoretical debates, with scholars from both sides presenting arguments and counterarguments to support their positions. This present study explored some of these debates, drawing arguments from different prominent African scholars.

One central debate in the Afrocentric versus Eurocentric discourse is the question of agency and power. Afrocentric scholars argue that Africa has been the source of many significant contributions to civilisation, including mathematics, science, medicine, philosophy, and spirituality (Asante, 1990). They further contend that Eurocentric scholars have ignored or downplayed Africa's contributions, instead portraying the continent as backward and primitive (Diop, 1988, 1991, 1993). On the other hand, Eurocentric scholars argue that Europe and the West have been the driving force behind world history and civilisation. They assert that European achievements, such as the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution, have transformed the world and laid the foundations for modernity (Hobsbawm, 1992). Eurocentric scholars also claim that Africa has made limited contributions to global

civilisation, and its history and culture have been largely shaped by external forces, such as colonialism and slavery (Mudimbe, 1988; Mignolo, 2000; Mbembe, 2015).

Another area of debate between Afrocentric and Eurocentric scholars is the interpretation of historical events and figures. Afrocentric scholars argue that many of the great figures of world history, such as Imhotep, Akhenaten, and Cleopatra, were African or of African descent (Asante, 2000). They contend that Eurocentric scholars have whitewashed these figures, portraying them as European or denying their African heritage altogether. Afrocentric scholars also assert that European interpretations of historical events, such as the Crusades and the Renaissance, have been biased and distorted, favouring European perspectives and ignoring African contributions (Diop, 1988, 1993). Eurocentric scholars, on the other hand, argue that historical events and figures should be understood in their specific contexts, without imposing contemporary values and perspectives. They contend that the study of history should be based on objective evidence rather than on racial or cultural bias (Hobsbawm, 1982). Eurocentric scholars further argue that Afrocentric interpretations of history and culture have been overly romanticised and uncritical, ignoring the complexities and contradictions of African societies and cultures (Mudimbe, 1994).

Theoretical debates surrounding Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism have sparked intense discussions among scholars from both sides. Afrocentric scholars argue that Africa has made significant contributions to global civilisation, which Eurocentric perspectives have downplayed or ignored. On the other hand, Eurocentric scholars contend that Europe and the West have been the primary drivers of world history and civilisation, with limited contributions from Africa. Both perspectives have strengths and weaknesses, contributing significantly to the study of world history and culture. Ultimately, the study of history and culture should rely on objective evidence and critical analysis rather than racial or cultural bias.

As established, Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism are two theoretical frameworks influencing the academic debate on the African philosophy of Ubuntu. In particular, Ubuntu, a philosophical idea originating from sub-Saharan Africa, has been a focal point in the debate between Afrocentric and Eurocentric perspectives. As previously noted, Afrocentrism places and centres African culture and history in its analysis, challenging the Western focus of the Eurocentrism perspective. Molefi Kete Asante, one of the leading scholars of Afrocentrism, defines it as "... a way of viewing the world that centres on African people, their culture, and their history" (Asante, 1990, p. 2). This perspective asserts that African culture is not only

equal to but also superior to other cultures in the world. In the context of Ubuntu philosophy, Afrocentric scholars argue that the concept reflects the communal values and social ethics of African people. According to Ramose (1999, p. 50), Ubuntu is “the moral principle that binds people together in community, with each individual sharing in the good of the whole.” This perspective emphasises the importance of social relationships and highlights the interdependence between individuals in a community. Therefore, Afrocentric scholars argue that Ubuntu reflects the unique cultural values and worldviews of African people.

Eurocentric scholars have challenged the Afrocentric perspective, arguing that it is essentialist and reductive. Eurocentrism centres on the culture, history, and achievements of Western civilisation. Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, a Congolese philosopher, characterises Eurocentrism as involving “the presumption of Western cultural superiority and the tendency to view other cultures as inferior and exotic” (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 3). This perspective asserts that Western civilisation serves as the benchmark against which all other cultures are measured. In the context of Ubuntu philosophy, Eurocentric scholars argue that the concept is not exclusive to African culture but is also present in other cultures. Kwame Gyekye, a Ghanaian philosopher, Ubuntu reflects “a universal principle of social ethics that is found in many African cultures, as well as in other cultures around the world” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 29). This perspective emphasizes the similarities among various cultures and underscores the importance of avoiding the reduction of African culture to a single, fixed essence.

Since this current study is prompted to explore the value of Ubuntu in university residences, it is vital to note that the study seeks to unpack and understand African perspectives, leading it to adopt Afrocentricity as a theoretical framework. Afrocentricity advocates for placing African people at the core of analyses of African phenomena (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2018). Consequently, Afrocentric methodology is relevant to Social Work researchers, as it argues that not everything that matters is measurable (Engelbrecht, 2019). Moreover, Eurocentric research methodologies have failed to consider African cultures. Europeans assumed that the African mind lacked systematic philosophy. Bodibe (1993) argue that Africans possess their own cosmology, ontology, eschatology, epistemology and axiology. The primary challenge with Eurocentric ideology is its pretence of universality across various fields such as philosophy, linguistics, psychology, education and anthropology (Engelbrecht, 2019; Mawondo, 2006; Mudimbe, 1994).

Conclusively, the theoretical debates on Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism regarding Ubuntu philosophy reflect broader discussions concerning the connection between African culture and Western civilisation. Afrocentric scholars assert that Ubuntu embodies the distinct cultural values and worldviews of African people, whereas Eurocentric scholars stress the importance of avoiding essentialism in African culture and highlighting the shared traits among various cultures. These ongoing debates emphasise the complexities of the relationship between African culture and the global community.

2.7. Gaps in this area of interest

The concept of Ubuntu, a philosophy that emphasises interconnectedness, care and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness and a sense of collective responsibility, has gained increasing attention in various fields of study. Afrocentric scholars such as Asante Molefi, John Mbiti, Yosef Ben-Jochannan and Ngugi wa Thiong'o have made immense contributions to elucidating Afrocentric paradigm and African cosmology. Additionally, other African writers like Magobe Ramose, Desmond Tutu, Credo Mutwa Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, and Lwazi Lushaba have contributed significantly to clarifying the African philosophy of Ubuntu and its importance to humankind. However, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding research exploring the value of Ubuntu in fostering cohesive living among students residing in university residences. While there have been studies on the impact of Ubuntu in different contexts, such as organisational settings or community development, there is a lack of focused research on its application within university residences. Given the unique dynamics and challenges faced by students living together, understanding how Ubuntu can promote a sense of belonging, social cohesion, and support among residents is crucial.

Exploring the value of Ubuntu in university residences can have significant implications for student well-being, academic success, and overall community building within these spaces. By fostering a culture of Ubuntu, universities can create environments that promote inclusivity, respect, and mutual support among diverse groups of students. Future research in this area should aim to investigate the specific ways in which Ubuntu principles can be implemented and their impact on fostering cohesive living among students in university residences. By addressing this gap in the literature, scholars can contribute to a deeper understanding of how Ubuntu can be leveraged to create more supportive and inclusive living environments for students at the university level.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter delved into global and sub-Saharan African perspectives on the Ubuntu philosophy in university residence spaces. It discussed the conceptualisation of Ubuntu and its origins in the African context. Based on the literature reviewed, this chapter explored the challenges students face in university residences and the initiatives implemented to address them. The challenges include being away from their homes and families, issues of safety and security, lack of basic necessities and suffering in isolation. Furthermore, it discussed the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of Ubuntu in relation to Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism. The literature suggested that Eurocentric scholars often overlook and downplay Africa's contributions to the world's civilisation, frequently portraying the continent as backward and primitive. Finally, the chapter discussed the gaps of interest.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The aim of the current study was to explore the value of Ubuntu in fostering cohesive living among students residing in university residences at a university in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. To achieve this aim, this chapter delineates the comprehensive methodology employed by the researcher to explore this phenomenon. Adopting a qualitative research approach, the study was guided by the three objectives of the study and supported by an Afrocentric paradigm, which provided a culturally relevant framework for understanding and disseminating knowledge throughout the dissertation knowledge throughout this dissertation.

This chapter is systematically organised into several key sections. It begins with an overview of the study's location, offering contextual insights into the environment where the research was conducted. Following this, the chapter elaborates on the philosophical underpinnings of the research, including the research paradigm and design. The sampling strategy is then detailed, outlining the criteria and processes used to select participants.

Subsequent sections describe the data collection methods and techniques employed, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of how information was gathered. The chapter also explains the data analysis strategy, providing a clear rationale for the chosen analytical methods. Ethical considerations are meticulously addressed, ensuring that the study adheres to the highest standards of research ethics. Additionally, the chapter discusses the trustworthiness, and the quality assurance measures implemented to maintain the integrity and credibility of the research. Finally, the limitations of the study are acknowledged, providing a balanced view of the research scope and highlighting areas for potential improvement in future studies. This structured approach ensures a thorough and transparent presentation of the methodology, reinforcing the study's credibility and reliability.

3.2. Location of the study

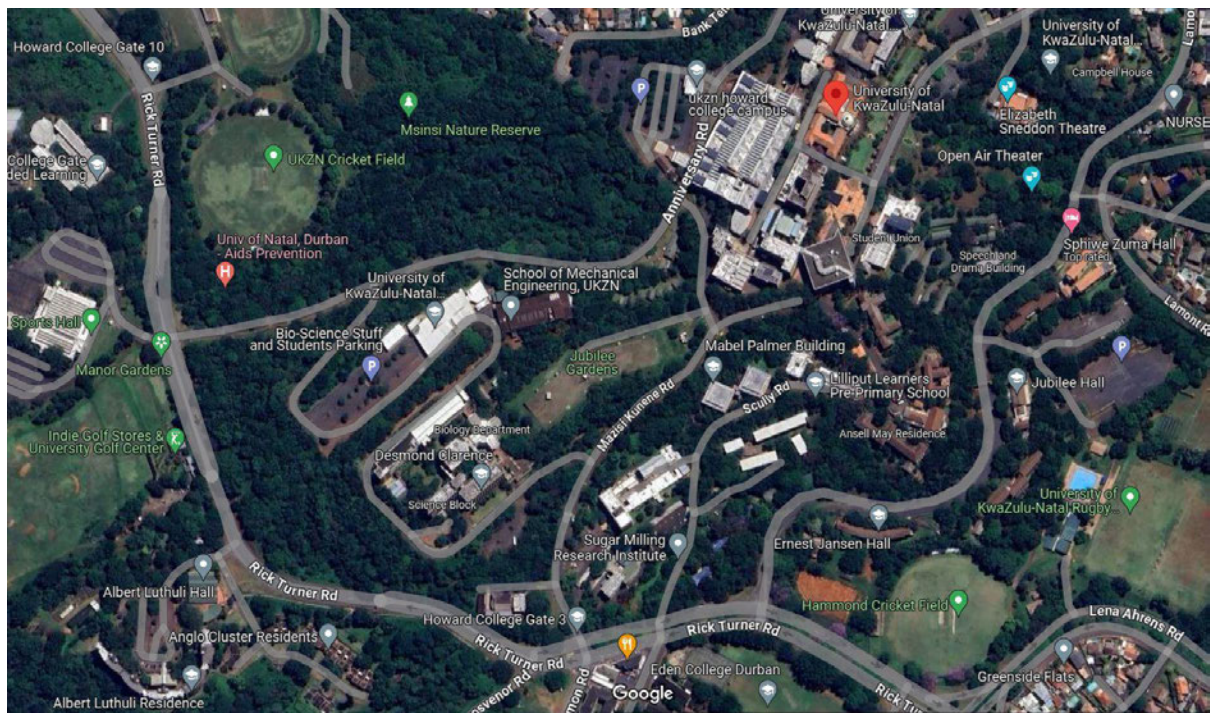
This study was conducted in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), which is situated on the southeastern side of South Africa. KZN is the second most populous province in the country, with over 12 million people recorded in 2022 (Stats SA, 2023). It is popularly known for its

rich culture and heritage, with the Zulu people comprising four-fifths of the population (Stats SA, 2023). KZN has the second largest economy in the country and has emerged as a hub of industrial development in the sub-Saharan African region, contributing approximately 16% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal [TIKZN], 2020). Most of the province's economic activities are concentrated in the metropolitan areas of Durban, Pietermaritzburg (PMB) and Richards Bay. Notably, Durban and PMB are home to four universities, namely UKZN, DUT, UNIZULU and Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT).

This study was specifically conducted at UKZN because its vision is to be “the Premier University of African Scholarship” (UKZN, 2022, p. 63). UKZN comprises of five campuses: Howard College, Westville, Edgewood, PMB and Medical School. In 2022, a total of 46 925 students were enrolled at UKZN, and among these students, 83% identified as Black African, and 60% were female (UKZN, 2022). The rationale for selecting UKZN was its adoption of an Afrocentric paradigm in its educational practices, which emphasises a distinct epistemology contrary to Western knowledge. Concurrently, UKZN is actively engaged in the process of decolonising the curriculum and promoting knowledge frameworks, making this context relevant to the study. Thus, this research was therefore conducted within a university setting.

The specific campus chosen was Howard College, situated in Glenwood, Durban. This campus predominantly has a majority of black African students, who reside in on-campus and off-campus residences. For this study, the researcher chose Albert Luthuli residence, one of the oldest on-campus residences from UKZN. This choice was informed by its diverse student composition, including undergraduates and postgraduates with extensive residency experience. Additionally, the selection of Albert Luthuli residence was influenced by the linguistic diversity among its students, primarily speaking South African languages such as IsiZulu, IsiXhosa and SiSwati. These languages are three languages of the nine official indigenous languages in South Africa, belonging to Nguni languages and there is mutual understanding among speakers.

Figure 3.1: Satellite map of UKZN's Howard College



Source: Google Maps (2024)

University residences are spaces where students live and interact with one another. According to the UKZN- Department of Student Residence Affairs (2022), the objective of university student residences is to create a living and learning space that enables students to spend several years developing not only their academic interests but also their personal lives and characters. There are two main types of university residences: on-campus and off-campus. On-campus residences are typically located within the university boundaries, whereas off-campus residences are located outside the university premises. Some residences accommodate both males and females, while others are gender-specific, catering exclusively to females or males. The operation and regulations governing the stay of students in a residence are overseen by the housing department of the university. For instance, at UKZN, this oversight is managed by DSRA (see Annexure A for residence policies).

On-campus residences at UKZN are equipped with university safety measures designed to safeguard students. The security measures not only ensure the safety of students residing at the university residences, but they also ensure compliance with rules and regulations promulgated by Department of Student Residence Affairs. UKZN's safety measures are led by the Risk

Management Services (RMS), which are directly employed by the university. In contrast, off-campus residences typically rely on private security services that may be outsourced from various security companies. However, regardless of the type of residence, the security personnel share the same mandate, which is to protect students and ensure adherence to the rules and regulations promulgated by Department of Student Residence Affairs.

In every student residence, there is a person who plays the role of a Residence Assistant. At UKZN, Residence Assistants are employed under the Department of Student Residence Affairs. According to the UKZN-Department of Student Residence Affairs (2022), the primary responsibility of the Residence Assistant is to liaise with students in their residences and provide mentoring and supportive assistance. Residence Assistants provide supportive assistance through several means including assisting students with their admissions at specific residences, implementing residence rules, and coordinating residence life programmes. Furthermore, Residence Assistants are responsible for executing fire drills, conducting emergency evacuation procedures, and providing assistance during medical emergencies. Lastly, Residence Assistants also assist Residence Life Officers in conducting House Committee elections and other functions delegated by Residence Life Officers. In summary, the role of a Residence Assistant is to assist students with residence-related matters as instructed by the Department of Student Residence Affairs.

Lastly, within university residences, there exists a House Committee team. Members of the House Committee are elected annually through a process conducted around September (UKZN-Department of Student Residence Affairs, 2022). These individuals lead and represent students within their respective residences. Furthermore, in university residences, students frequently share resources such as living spaces, kitchens, bathrooms, laundry facilities, and study areas. This collaborative sharing of resources plays an important aspect of community living and can facilitate the development of social skills, the ability to compromise and communicate effectively, and the formation of friendships. However, it is equally important for students to uphold mutual respect for each other's space and possessions, and to follow any rules and guidelines set by the Department of Student Residence Affairs. This adherence is essential for fostering a positive and comfortable living experience for all residence students. Moreover, the shared responsibility of maintaining the cleanliness and upkeep of communal spaces falls on the students. This includes cleaning up after oneself and contributing to the overall cleanliness of the residence. Through these actions, students contribute to creating a conducive and pleasant living environment for themselves and their fellow residence students.

3.3. Research paradigm

The study employed an Afrocentric paradigm. The Afrocentric paradigm was chosen for its relevance to the current study because it explores the experiences of African people (i.e. African students), enabling a qualitative exploration from their perspectives. Unlike Western epistemologies, this Afrocentric paradigm rejects viewing research participants as mere objects of enquiry and the notion of an objective reality in understanding human nature. It further emphasises the importance of cultural aspects when studying people of African descent (Mazama, 2003).

Mazama (2003), a proponent of Afrocentric methodology, identified seven principles for establishing an Afrocentric methodology. According to Mazama (2003), these seven principles of Afrocentric methodology include the following:

1. *African experience must guide and inform all inquiries:* This principle asserts that any research aiming to understand African phenomena must centre on African people, their experiences, perspectives, and worldviews. Historically, social science research has been dominated by Eurocentric lenses, which prioritise and privilege Western philosophical traditions and methods, often marginalising or misrepresenting African ways of understanding the world (Mazama, 2003). Eurocentrism in research emphasises Western scientific philosophy, which typically privileges objective, empirical approaches to knowledge. This approach often dismisses or undermines other epistemological frameworks, including those rooted in African traditions (Chilisa, 2012). For instance, Western science emphasises a positivist view of the world, which values objectivity and measurable data above all else. However, this perspective fails to account for rich metaphysical and spiritual dimensions integral to African ontologies. African epistemology is not confined to the Western objective view but is deeply intertwined with spiritual, communal, and relational understandings of being. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017a), this epistemological diversity shapes the ontology of African people, meaning their understanding of existence and reality is distinct and cannot be fully captured through Eurocentric methods alone.

Incorporating African experiences into research requires acknowledging and valuing the unique epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies of African people. Epistemology,

which concerns the nature and scope of knowledge, explains how African people know what they know and how they experience knowledge. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007), this involves the recognition of oral traditions, communal knowledge systems, and spiritual insights as valid and important forms of understanding. Ontology pertains to the nature of being and existence, and for African people, existence is often viewed as a holistic interplay of physical, spiritual, and communal dimensions. Axiology, the study of values in the African context, emphasises community, relationships, and harmony with the environment and the spiritual world (Mbiti, 1990). When conducting research on African phenomena, it is essential for researchers to integrate these dimensions into their methodologies (Lushaba, 2015). This requires moving beyond minimal effort and ensuring that African voices and perspectives genuinely shape the research process from conception to conclusion.

This principle challenges the dominance of Eurocentric paradigms in social science research by insisting that African experiences guide all inquiries. The Afrocentric paradigm calls for a decolonisation of knowledge production, which involves critically examining and often rejecting Western assumptions and methodologies that may not be relevant or appropriate for the African context (Mignolo, 2007). Instead, it advocates for the development and application of research methods that are grounded in African realities and responsive to the needs and aspirations of African people. The importance of this principle in social science research cannot be overstated as it ensures that research on African phenomena is not only more accurate but also more ethical. By respecting and valuing African ways of knowing, researchers can avoid the pitfalls of cultural imperialism and contribute to the empowerment and self-determination of African communities (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Moreover, this approach can lead to more innovative and holistic understandings of social phenomena, enriching the field of social science as a whole.

For instance, consider research on African educational systems. A Eurocentric approach might focus solely on standardised chi-square test scores and Western pedagogical models, potentially overlooking the importance of communal learning, storytelling, and the role of elders in knowledge transmission. By centring on African experiences, researchers can develop more culturally relevant educational strategies that resonate with African values and practices. This approach can lead to improved

educational outcomes and foster a greater sense of cultural pride and identity among African students (Nabudere, 2011; 2012). Similarly, in the field of conflict resolution, African experiences and traditional practices offer valuable insights. Western models often emphasise formal negotiation and legalistic approaches, which may not be effective in all contexts. African traditions of conflict resolution, such as communal dialogues, restorative justice practices, and the involvement of spiritual leaders, can provide more contextually appropriate and sustainable solutions in an African context.

2. ***The spiritual is important and must be given its due place:*** This principle asserts that researchers must acknowledge and integrate the significance of spirituality when conducting studies involving African individuals or communities. Spirituality is not merely an incidental or optional element but rather a core component of African knowledge systems, worldviews, and daily life. It is intricately woven into their language, cultural expressions, belief systems, rituals, and social relationships (wa Thiong'o, 2016). As such, it plays a pivotal role in shaping their identity, understanding of the world, and interactions with it. African spirituality, as defined by scholars like John S. Mbiti, is a universal substance that connects African people with Umvelinqangi, the Supreme Being (Mbiti, 1990; 2015). This connection transcends mere religious affiliation, delving into deep metaphysical realms and forming an essential aspect of African ontology. Spirituality serves as a lens through which African people perceive and interpret their reality, thus constituting a crucial element of their epistemology that influences how they understand and interact with the world. For African individuals, spirituality is not just a philosophical or ideological construct but a metaphysical necessity that is integral to their being and existence. It exerts profound influences over their moral values, social norms, and even their political and economic structures.

Within this principle, the Afrocentric research paradigm challenges the dominance of Eurocentric methodologies in social science research. Traditional Western approaches often overlook and marginalise the spiritual dimension of human life, by prioritising material, empirical, and secular aspects. This marginalisation can lead to a biased understanding of African phenomena, as it disregards a vital component of the lived experience of African people. By advocating for the inclusion of spirituality, the Afrocentric paradigm seeks to provide a more holistic, comprehensive and accurate

portrayal of African societies and individuals (Mazama, 2003). In practical terms, incorporating spirituality in research involving African populations necessitates researchers to use methodologies and frameworks that respect and incorporate African spiritual beliefs and practices. This approach, as outlined by Lushaba (2015), may involve qualitative methods that allow for the exploration of personal and communal spiritual experiences, such as ethnography, narrative inquiry, or participatory action research. Additionally, researchers should also be mindful of the language they use, to ensure it respects and accurately conveys the spiritual concepts and practices of the communities they study.

For instance, when studying African students who perceive spirituality as an integral part of their lives, it is essential to understand how their spiritual beliefs influence their educational experiences, aspirations, and challenges. Spirituality might affect their motivation, resilience, and coping strategies, as well as their relationships with peers, teachers, and the broader educational system. Ignoring this aspect may lead to incomplete or misleading conclusions about their behaviours and outcomes (Chilisa, 2012). Furthermore, acknowledging spirituality in research can help address power dynamics and representation issues. According to Fanon (2007, 2008), many African communities have historically been marginalised, with their knowledge systems devalued by colonial and post-colonial structures. By centring on African spirituality, researchers not only validate these knowledge systems but also contribute to a decolonising project that seeks to redress historical injustices and empower African communities. It recognises the legitimacy and richness of African epistemologies and challenges the hegemony of Western paradigms (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Furthermore, spirituality in African contexts is often communal rather than individualistic. It is expressed through collective rituals, ceremonies, and traditions that strengthen social bonds and communal identity. Researchers must be sensitive to these collective dimensions and consider how spiritual practices and beliefs foster community cohesion and resilience. This understanding can inform policies and interventions that promote and support community well-being and development.

- 3. *Involvement in the subject is important:*** This principle holds significant importance in social science research as it advocates for a participatory approach. In this approach, the researcher does not merely act as an external observer but as an active participant

who comprehensively understands and respects the lived experiences, cultural contexts, and perspectives of the African communities under study. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020c), this approach challenges traditional, often Eurocentric, research methodologies that tend to objectify subjects and view them through a detached impersonal lens. In contrast, active involvement in the subject requires researchers to immerse themselves within the community, building relationships and trust, and ensuring that the voices of the people being studied are not only heard but are integral to the research process. This is particularly important in the context of African-descent communities, which have historically been marginalised and misrepresented in social science research.

Mazama (2003) argues that adopting this principle encourages researchers to develop and cultivate a deeper empathy and a more nuanced understanding of the cultural and social realities of African communities. This involvement can manifest in various forms, such as participating in community events, engaging in dialogues with community members, and co-creating research agendas with the community. This becomes particularly relevant as the researcher of this study who resided in the university residence, served on the House committee, and collaborated with DSRA to understand and deliver the needs of students. This participatory approach helps to break down the barriers between the researcher and the researched, fostering a more equitable and respectful research environment (Chilisa, 2012; 2017).

The importance of this principle is multifaceted. Firstly, it addresses the power dynamics inherent in the research process. Traditional research often places the researcher in a position of power, interpreting and representing the experiences of the community without their input or consent. Involvement in the subject transforms this dynamic, empowering the community to have a say in how they narrate their stories and experiences. This approach can lead to more accurate and representative findings, as the community's insights and knowledge are incorporated into the research process. Secondly, this principle enhances the validity and reliability of the research. When researchers are involved in the subject, they gain a deeper contextual understanding, which can lead to more nuanced interpretations of data. This is particularly important in social science research, where cultural contexts and social dynamics play a significant role in shaping the behaviours and experiences of participants (Mamdani,

2018). Therefore, by actively engaging with the subject matter, researchers can avoid misinterpretations and ensure that the findings of their study are rooted in the actual lived experiences of the community.

Furthermore, involvement in the subject fosters mutual respect and collaboration. When researchers engage with communities as partners rather than subjects, it creates a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for the research outcomes. This collaborative approach can lead to more sustainable and impactful research, as the community is more likely to support and engage with research that they have been actively involved in. This principle also aligns with the broader goals of Afrocentric research, which seeks to re-centre African perspectives and experiences in scholarly work. Historically, as outlined by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018b), research on African communities has often been conducted from an outsider's perspective, leading to distortions and misrepresentations of their actual lived experiences. By involving themselves in the subject, researchers can contribute to a more authentic and respectful representation of African cultures and experiences, challenging the dominant narratives that have often marginalised African voices. Involvement in the subject also promotes ethical research practices, as it encourages researchers to be mindful of their positionality and the potential impacts of their work on the communities they study. This principle emphasises the importance of conducting research in a way that is respectful, responsible, and responsive to the needs and concerns of the community. It calls for a reflexive approach, where researchers continuously reflect on their role and the implications of their work, which ensures that they do not perpetuate harm or reinforce stereotypes.

Moreover, this principle can lead to more transformative and liberatory research outcomes. By engaging with the community and centring their perspectives, researchers can produce work that not only advances academic knowledge but also contributes to social change. This is particularly important in the context of African-descent communities, which have historically faced systemic inequalities and injustices (Mbembe, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017a). Research rooted in the experiences and aspirations of African communities can effectively shed light on critical issues, advocate for policy changes, and bolster community-driven solutions. Practically, adopting this principle necessitates a steadfast commitment to long-term engagement and the cultivation of relationships.

Researchers need to invest time and effort in getting to know the community, understanding their history, values, and priorities, and working collaboratively throughout the research process. This involves adapting research methods that are more inclusive and participatory, to ensure that seek input and feedback from the community at every stage and that the research benefits the community in tangible ways. Ultimately, the principle of involvement in the subject within the Afrocentric research paradigm is about honouring the dignity, agency, and knowledge of African-descent communities (Mazama, 2003; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020b). It is about recognising that the people being studied are not mere subjects but active participants with valuable insights and contributions. Overall, this principle challenges researchers to move beyond detached observation and engage in meaningful, respectful, and collaborative research practices that reflect the true essence of the communities under study.

4. ***Wholism is a must:*** This principle asserts that Africans uphold a unified vision of reality, which stands in stark contrast to the often fragmented and reductionist approaches common in Western paradigms. This holistic perspective emphasises the belief in a common source of all life and the inherent interdependence of all entities within the planetary system, encompassing both living and non-living organisms. In the context of social science research, this principle advocates for a comprehensive and integrated approach to understanding human behaviour, social structures, and cultural expressions among people of African descent. It challenges researchers to move beyond isolated variables and instead consider the complex web of relationships that constitute the lived experiences of African communities (Ramose, 2002). This means acknowledging the spiritual, cultural, historical, and environmental factors that shape and influence individuals and societies.

Holism in Afrocentric research is essential because it aligns with the traditional African worldview, which sees life as an interconnected whole where every element is inextricably linked to others. For instance, the African concept of Ubuntu, often summarised as “I am because we are”, highlights the significance of community and the interconnectedness of individuals (Mbiti, 2015). This perspective insists that individual well-being is tied to the well-being of the community and the natural environment, which reflects a deep-seated respect for the balance and harmony of the

cosmos. The principle also implies a methodological shift towards participatory and community-based research practices. Within this principle, researchers are encouraged to engage with communities as co-creators of knowledge rather than mere subjects of study (Asante, 2019). This participatory approach respects the agency and voices of African people, ensuring that research is grounded in the lived realities and perspectives of those it aims to understand. Such an approach not only enriches the research process but also enhances its relevance and impact.

In practice, holism requires the use of interdisciplinary methods that draw on various fields such as anthropology, sociology, history, ecology, and spirituality (wa Thiong'o, 2012). For instance, studying the impact of climate change on African communities would necessitate an exploration of environmental science, cultural practices related to land use, historical land tenure systems, and spiritual beliefs about nature. This interdisciplinary approach ensures that research findings are robust, contextually grounded, and reflective of the complex realities of African life. Furthermore, the holistic principle calls for an ethical commitment to the communities being studied. It demands that research practices be aligned with the values and needs of the community, promoting social justice and equity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). This further includes ensuring that research benefits the community, respects local customs and traditions, and addresses issues of power and representation. By adhering to these ethical standards, researchers can build trust and foster collaborative relationships with African communities. This principle also has implications for the interpretation and dissemination of research findings (Mazama, 2003). Researchers must strive to present their findings in ways that reflect the interconnected nature of the phenomena studied. This might involve using narrative forms, visual representations, or other culturally resonant modes of communication that honour the holistic perspectives of African communities. Such practices can enhance the accessibility and impact of research, making it more meaningful and useful for the communities involved.

5. ***Intuition is a valid source of information:*** This principle challenges the conventional reliance on empirical and quantitative methods that dominate Western social science research. By valuing intuition, the Afrocentric paradigm acknowledges the deep, often unspoken wisdom embedded within the cultural and spiritual traditions of African communities. Intuition, in this context, refers to the knowledge and insights that arise

from an intrinsic understanding and connection to one's environment, heritage, and community, rather than from structured data collection and analysis. According to Karenga (2003) in many African cultures, intuition is linked to the concept of "Ma'at" in ancient Egyptian philosophy, which represents truth, balance, order, harmony, law, morality, and justice. This holistic worldview suggests that knowledge and truth are not solely derived from rational or scientific methods but also from a harmonious relationship with the universe (Asante, 2003; Karenga, 2003). The Afrocentric paradigm, therefore, values intuitive knowledge as an integral part of a balanced and comprehensive understanding of the world.

Intuition as a valid source of information is crucial because it respects and legitimises the lived experiences and inherent knowledge systems of people of African descent. Traditional Western methodologies often dismiss these non-empirical forms of knowledge as subjective or unscientific. However, within the Afrocentric paradigm, intuition is seen as a vital component of a holistic understanding of social phenomena. This approach aligns with the broader goal of decolonising Western social science research, which involves challenging and expanding the epistemological boundaries to include diverse ways of knowing and understanding the world (Lushaba, 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017). Incorporating intuition into social science research allows for a more nuanced and authentic representation of African experiences. It enables researchers to capture the richness and complexity of African cultural practices, values, and worldviews that may not be fully understood or appreciated through conventional methods alone. For instance, oral traditions, storytelling, and spiritual practices are integral to many African societies. These practices are often guided by an intuitive grasp of cultural narratives and moral principles, which convey essential knowledge and values across generations. By acknowledging intuition as a valid source of information, researchers can better appreciate and interpret these practices in their studies (Mazama, 2003; Mbembe, 2004).

Moreover, this principle fosters a sense of empowerment and agency among African communities. It validates their ways of knowing and being, which have often been marginalised or undermined by colonial and Eurocentric perspectives (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020a). By elevating intuition, the Afrocentric paradigm honours the intellectual and cultural contributions of African people, recognising that their insights

and understandings are not only valid but also invaluable in constructing a comprehensive and accurate picture of human society (Asante, 2003). The importance of intuition in Afrocentric research also lies in its potential to reveal deeper, often overlooked layers of social reality. Intuition can guide researchers to ask different kinds of questions, seek alternative forms of evidence, and interpret data in ways that resonate more closely with the lived experiences of African individuals and communities (Mazama, 2003). For instance, the researcher of the present study was studying the social relations of black African students in a university residence, and in this study, intuition may highlight the significance of communal bonds, spiritual beliefs, and emotional connections through qualitative storytelling that quantitative data might miss (Lushaba, 2015). This approach leads to richer and more textured analyses that better capture the essence of African life.

Furthermore, recognising intuition as a valid source of information aligns with the Afrocentric emphasis on interconnectedness and holistic thinking. African worldviews often stress the interconnectedness of all aspects of life, including the spiritual, physical, emotional, and social (Karenga, 2003; Zondi, 2021). Intuition, which operates at the intersection of these dimensions, allows researchers to develop a more integrated understanding of social phenomena. This holistic approach contrasts with the compartmentalised perspectives often seen in Western social sciences, where different aspects of human experience are studied in isolation from one another (Lushaba, 2009). In practical terms, incorporating intuition into research methodologies can involve various strategies.

The recognition of intuition as a valid source of information has implications for the training and development of researchers. It calls for a rethinking of what constitutes rigorous and valid research practice. Researchers must be open to and skilled in interpreting intuitive knowledge, which requires cultural sensitivity, empathy, and an understanding of African epistemologies (Mbembe, 2003). This can be fostered through interdisciplinary training that includes elements of anthropology, psychology, and cultural studies, alongside traditional social science methods (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020b). Moreover, this principle encourages reflexivity among researchers, prompting them to critically examine their own biases and assumptions. It challenges the dominance of Western rationality and objectivity, inviting researchers to embrace a

more pluralistic and inclusive approach to knowledge production. This reflexivity can lead to more ethical and respectful research practices, as researchers become more attuned to the values and perspectives of the communities under study (Mazama, 2003).

6. ***Not everything that matters is measurable:*** This principle is crucial in the context of social science research, particularly when studying people of African descent because it calls for a more holistic and culturally sensitive approach to understanding human behaviour, social dynamics, and historical contexts. In conventional social science research, there is often a heavy reliance on quantitative data – statistics, numbers, and measurable variables – to draw conclusions and make generalisations on the study sample. While this approach has its merits, it can also be limiting, especially when it comes to capturing the full depth and richness of human experiences. The Afrocentric research paradigm challenges this norm by asserting that many significant aspects of life, such as cultural values, spiritual beliefs, community bonds, and historical narratives, do not lend themselves easily to measurement but are nonetheless essential for a comprehensive understanding of a group’s identity and experiences (Lushaba, 2015; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018b). This can only be achieved through qualitative interviews with the study sample to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and perspectives.

For people of African descent, whose histories and cultural practices have often been marginalised or misrepresented in mainstream academic discourse, the principle “Not everything that matters is measurable” is particularly relevant. This principle encourages researchers to go beyond numerical data and seek out the stories, traditions, and lived experiences that define Africans and the African diasporic communities. It promotes the use of qualitative research methods such as interviews, participant observation, and ethnography, which are better suited to capturing the nuanced and subjective aspects of human life (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018a). One key area where this principle is vital is in the study of cultural heritage and identity. For African communities, cultural practices, oral traditions, and historical memories are integral to their sense of self and community. These elements are often passed down through generations not through written records or statistical data, but through storytelling, rituals, and communal activities. By recognising that these intangible aspects of culture

are crucial and worthy of academic study, researchers can develop a more accurate and respectful understanding of African identities (Lushaba, 2015).

Moreover, the principle emphasises the importance of context in social science research. Quantitative methods often strip data of its context in an effort to find generalisable trends. However, when studying people of African descent, context is critical. Historical factors such as colonisation, the transatlantic slave trade, and systemic racism have profoundly shaped the experiences and realities of Africans and the African diasporic communities. Understanding these historical contexts requires a deep engagement with qualitative data that can illuminate how these large-scale processes have affected individuals and communities in specific and often deeply personal ways (Lushaba, 2015; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020c). In addition, this principle promotes the inclusion of multiple voices and perspectives in research. Traditional social science methods can sometimes impose a narrow, Western-centric framework on non-Western subjects, leading to biased or incomplete understandings. By contrast, the Afrocentric paradigm values the perspectives of those being studied and seeks to incorporate their voices into the research process. This approach not only enriches the data but also empowers the participants of the research, acknowledging their agency and expertise regarding their own lives and cultures (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018a).

This principle also has implications for how researchers interpret and present their findings. It encourages a move away from overly reductionist explanations and toward more complex, multifaceted narratives. For instance, in studying the impacts of systemic racism, a purely quantitative approach might focus on disparities in income, education, or health outcomes. While these metrics are important, they do not fully capture the lived experiences of discrimination and resilience that Africans navigate daily (Prah, 2004). Qualitative data can provide deeper insights into how racism affects personal identities, mental health, and community dynamics, offering a more comprehensive and humane understanding of these issues (Lushaba, 2015). Furthermore, this principle is aligned with the broader goals of social justice and decolonisation in research.

By challenging the predominance of quantitative data, the Afrocentric paradigm advocates for research that recognises and addresses power imbalances and historical

injustices. It calls for methodologies that are not only rigorous and valid but also ethical. This means designing research projects that are responsive to the needs and priorities of African communities and that contribute to their empowerment and well-being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018b). In the realm of policy and practice, the implications of this principle are significant. Policies informed by research that acknowledges the importance of unmeasurable aspects of life are likely to be more holistic and effective. For instance, in education, recognising the value of cultural heritage and identity can lead to the development of curricula that are more inclusive and affirming for African students (Lushaba, 2015).

7. ***The knowledge generated must be liberating:*** This principle posits that the ultimate goal of research within this paradigm is not merely the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake, but rather the creation of knowledge that actively contributes to the empowerment and liberation of African people. Liberation in this context encompasses various dimensions, including psychological, cultural, social, and political freedoms. It involves dismantling oppressive structures and ideologies, affirming African identities and cultures, and fostering a sense of agency and self-determination among African communities. From a social science research perspective, this principle is pivotal as it challenges the conventional approaches that often portray African people through a lens of deficit, pathology, or exoticism (Mazama, 2003). Traditional research paradigms have historically been Eurocentric, often marginalising or misrepresenting African perspectives and experiences. In contrast, the Afrocentric paradigm seeks to reframe research by placing African worldviews, experiences, and epistemologies at the centre of the study. It emphasises that the knowledge produced should not perpetuate colonial mindsets or reinforce stereotypes but instead should contribute to the decolonisation of knowledge and the validation of African ways of knowing (Lushaba, 2015; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020c).

An illustrative example of this principle in this present study can be seen in a study exploring how the value of Ubuntu can be used to build social cohesion and good relations among students living in a university residence. By integrating Ubuntu into the social dynamics of a university residence, the study aims to foster a communal living environment where students are encouraged to look out for one another, respect each other's diverse backgrounds, and work together towards common goals. This

approach is liberating in several ways. Firstly, it conscientises students about the values of communitarianism and unity, which are often overshadowed in Westernised and highly individualistic academic environments. By embracing Ubuntu, students learn to appreciate the importance of community and collective well-being, which can lead to more harmonious and supportive living conditions. Second, it reinforces the significance of heritage and cultural values, reminding students of the rich traditions they come from and encouraging them to carry these forward into their academic and social lives. This is particularly important for African students who might feel pressured to conform to Western cultural norms at the expense of their own cultural identities.

Furthermore, the application of Ubuntu in a university residence can also serve as a model for addressing broader societal issues. For instance, the principles of Ubuntu can be used to tackle issues of social fragmentation, violence, discrimination, and inequality. By promoting a sense of shared humanity and collective responsibility, Ubuntu can help to break down barriers and build more inclusive and equitable communities. In this way, the knowledge generated from the study is not only theoretical but also practical because it offers tangible solutions for real-world problems. The liberating potential of Afrocentric research also extends to the methodological approaches used. Afrocentric research methods prioritise participatory and collaborative techniques, ensuring that the voices of African people are heard and respected (Lushaba, 2013). This contrasts with traditional research methods that may be extractive or exploitative. By involving African communities in the research process, from the design to the dissemination of findings, Afrocentric research fosters a sense of ownership and agency. This participatory approach helps to ensure that the research outcomes are relevant and beneficial to the communities being studied, which furthers the goal of liberation.

The focus on liberation challenges researchers to critically examine their own positionality and the power dynamics inherent in the research process. Afrocentric researchers are encouraged to engage in reflexivity, acknowledging their own biases and working to minimise any potential harm their research might cause. This ethical commitment to doing no harm and promoting the well-being of African communities is a key aspect of the liberating potential of Afrocentric research (Mazama, 2003). The principle of generating liberating knowledge also has significant implications for

education and pedagogy. By integrating Afrocentric perspectives into curricula and teaching practices, educators can help to decolonise education and provide students with a more inclusive and empowering learning experience. This can involve incorporating African history, literature, and philosophies into the curriculum, as well as adopting teaching methods that reflect African cultural values, such as oral traditions, storytelling, and communal learning (Mazama, 2003; Mbembe, 2003).

Over and above, in doing so, education becomes a tool for liberation, equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to challenge oppressive systems and contribute to the development of their communities. Moreover, the liberating aspect of Afrocentric research can contribute to the broader project of social justice. By highlighting and addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by African communities, Afrocentric research can inform policies and interventions that promote equity and justice. For instance, research on the impact of systemic racism on African people's health outcomes can lead to the development of more effective and culturally sensitive healthcare policies. Similarly, research on the educational experiences of African students can inform efforts to create more inclusive and supportive educational environments (Lushaba, 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

These seven principles are indispensable for social work researchers and relevant to the present study. This study delved into three objectives that explore students' knowledge and understanding of Ubuntu values, their application of these values in their university residences and how these values contribute to social cohesion in communal living spaces. When examining the tenets of Ubuntu, as discussed in Chapter two, it becomes evident that they directly align with the seven aforementioned principles. Ubuntu emphasises the significance of passion, an internal locus of control, love, and harmony in interpersonal relationships. These elements, upon closer inspection, are not measurable and directly to Mazama's (2003) principle six of 'not everything that matters is measurable'.

In this study, the focus was on exploring African experiences, and how collective identity manifests in university student residences. Furthermore, given the non-measurable nature of this study, it was important for the researcher to document activities and experiences shared by participants as demonstrations of Ubuntu and to intuitively acknowledge them as their 'truth'. Additionally, Engelbrecht (2019, p.16) argues that "Social workers are ethically obliged to respect diversity and be culturally competent in their practice." Moreover, they further argue

that achieving cultural competence should involve employing culturally sensitive research methods (Mbembe, 2016; 2017).

3.4. Research approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach, which entails naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural context. According to Dowding (2013), a qualitative research approach focuses on the “why” rather than the “what” of social phenomena and relies on direct human experiences as meaningful agents in everyday lives. Unlike the quantitative research approach which relies on logical and statistical procedures, qualitative researchers use diverse systems of inquiry to study social phenomena (Neuman, 2011). This approach is relevant as it aims to achieve a deep understanding of a specific subject matter, rather than providing a superficial description based on a large population sample. Furthermore, it seeks to offer an explicit depiction of the structure, order, and overarching patterns found among participants (Dowding, 2013).

Key characteristics of qualitative research include its emphasis on context, flexibility in research design, the use of open-ended data collection methods, and the focus on participants’ meanings and interpretations. Qualitative research often involves small, purposively selected samples to capture rich, detailed data that reflect the complexity of human experiences (Dowding (2013). The suitability of a qualitative research approach for the current study is its focus on Ubuntu. In this regard, Ubuntu serves as the fundamental principle of collective orientation and, therefore, should guide the research approach. According to Mkabela (2005, p.186), in the context of Ubuntu, “... mutuality between the participants, a feeling of tolerance, hospitality and respect for others, their language, opinions, and conversational style is highly regarded”. These aspects are better explored by understanding the ‘why’ behind them rather than simply the ‘what’. For instance, in this study, understanding ‘why’ the use of indigenous languages either united or divided students in the university residences was important. Merely asking about languages used in the residences would have limited responses and disconnected language use from the Ubuntu principle. This approach suggests a transition from an alienated mode of consciousness, which perceives the knower as separate from the known to a collective mode of consciousness (Mkabela, 2005).

3.5. Research design

This study employed an exploratory research design, a specific type of phenomenological approach that focuses on understanding the essence of human experiences in contexts marked by uncertainty and limited understanding (Neuman, 2014). This design is characterised by its emphasis on collecting either primary or secondary data through unstructured formats or informal procedures for interpretation. It was deemed most suitable for addressing subject matters with high levels of uncertainty and ignorance, particularly the exploration of the value of Ubuntu among students living in university residences. The challenges faced in this exploration are compounded by the dominance of Western culture within institutions of higher learning, which often marginalises students' cultural experiences, spirituality, and communal values. This cultural hegemony can lead to a lack of understanding regarding the unique perspectives of students. Therefore, this study is contextually driven, aiming to illuminate the uncertainties surrounding students' behaviours in university residences. Students' behaviours are significantly influenced by their worldviews, which are often overshadowed by the prevailing Eurocentric values. This influence relegates cultural nuances to the background, hindering a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences within the university setting.

The exploration of the students' understanding, and appropriation of Ubuntu principles was rooted in the five Afrocentric canons outlined by Reviere (2006). These canons are as follows:

1. *Ukweli*, a canon that translates to 'truth', is defined as grounded in the experiences of the community being explored. The lived experiences of the community members become the ultimate authority in determining what is true, making them the final arbitrators of the validity of knowledge about their lives. This study focused on the value of Ubuntu among students staying in university residences, examining spiritual nature, collective identity, cultural values and beliefs among participants. Consequently, *Ukweli* was employed to allow the student community in university residences to serve as the authority in determining what is true regarding the relevance of Ubuntu in university student residences. Additionally, Reviere (2006) argues that *Ukweli* brings attention to the subjectivity of truth and mandates that the creation of knowledge must occur within the context of one's own experiences.

2. *Utulivu* embodies justice. *Utulivu* necessitates that researchers uphold fairness and justice in their research procedures, which can be achieved by seeking and obtaining consent from the participants for their involvement in Afrocentric research inquiries. In this study, participants were contacted and given the freedom to schedule a suitable time for their participation. They were also provided with a consent form to sign provided in English and IsiZulu, indicating that they agreed to participate in this study (see Annexures B and C). Moreover, the research ensured justice and fairness during the interviews. Participants were allowed to use the language that they were comfortable with. This accommodation is crucial because language not only serves as a means of communication but also enables individuals to access and embrace their culture (wa Thiong'o, 1986).
3. *Uhaki* translates to 'harmony'. *Uhaki* embodies the promotion of human rights, dignity, and social justice among African people. It emphasises the importance of considering historical and social contexts when interpreting and responding to any aspect of the learning process. The principle of *Uhaki* calls for the encouragement and maintenance of harmonious relationships between researchers and participants. In the case of this study, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the interview if they felt uncomfortable. Additionally, they were informed about available counselling services in case they experienced trauma or re-traumatisation during the interview or post-interview. This demonstrates a high level of acknowledgement and respect for the rights of participants. Furthermore, the spiritual dimension of participants was acknowledged and taken into account during the interviews. *Uhaki* encompasses not only the human rights of participants as outlined in the constitution but also considers their worldview and cultural beliefs. This aligns with two of the values of Afrocentrism that speak to the spiritual nature of human beings (Reviere, 2006). Given these circumstances, it was indispensable to consider the spiritual dimension of participants to ensure that the study remained culturally sensitive and context based.
4. *Ujama* is a principle centred on fairness, harmony, and fostering a spirit of communalism. University residences accommodate numerous students, with the specific residence under study housing approximately 450 students across five Blocks, each Block accommodating around 90 students. In these residential settings, students engage in interaction with one another and share certain residence facilities. The notion

of communalism, as supported by the Afrocentric canon *Ujama*, is relevant within such university residences as students function as a community. Furthermore, communalism and collective consciousness are fundamental principles of the Afrocentric paradigm (Reviere, 2006). As a result, this study acknowledges the principles of fairness and harmonious relationships, as it delves into the spirit of Ubuntu among university residence students.

5. *Kujitoo* can be understood as the enhancement of the value of Ubuntu. This study is culturally centred because it adopted the value of Ubuntu. The Ubuntu philosophy is common among people of African descent, especially in the southern part of Africa (Mugumbate and Nyanguru, 2013). Ubuntu shapes the culture and worldview of the participants; therefore, to better understand them, it was pivotal to centralise the Ubuntu philosophy in this study. The value of Ubuntu is grounded in the Afrocentric paradigm, which guided the approach and method of this study.

3.6. Population and sampling

Population in research refers to the aggregate or totality of all objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications (Creswell, 2009). The population from which the sample was drawn and recruited for this study consisted of students from Albert Luthuli residence at UKZN. This residence is exclusively occupied by black African students. While the majority of them hail from KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), there are also students from other provinces in South Africa. Additionally, the university residence accommodates both undergraduate and postgraduate students, with the majority being postgraduates. These students were enrolled and registered during the 2021 academic year at the UKZN Howard College campus.

Participants were recruited and interviewed in their respective residence rooms. Initially, 20 participants were recruited, but the researcher ended up conducting 15 interviews because the point of saturation was reached. The residence comprised both male and female occupants, which ensures gender balance. The sampling technique employed to recruit these participants was purposive sampling, a non-probability method where the researcher selects the sample based on subjective judgment rather than random selection. According to Creswell (2017), purposive sampling (also known as judgment sampling) involves deliberately choosing participants based on specific qualities that they possess. This technique allows the researcher

to target only the individuals who can offer relevant information based on their knowledge and lived experiences (Neuman, 2011).

Table 3.1: Profile of demographic data of study participants

Participant identifier	Age	Sex/Gender	Level of study	Duration of stay at university residences
Participant 1	25	Female	Undergraduate	2 years
Participant 2	26	Female	Postgraduate	2 years
Participant 3	26	Female	Postgraduate	2 years
Participant 4	29	Male	Postgraduate	4 years
Participant 5	27	Male	Postgraduate	2 years
Participant 6	27	Female	Postgraduate	2 years
Participant 7	25	Female	Undergraduate	2 years
Participant 8	30	Female	Postgraduate	4 years
Participant 9	27	Male	Postgraduate	3 years
Participant 10	28	Male	Postgraduate	3 years
Participant 11	24	Female	Postgraduate	2 years
Participant 12	29	Male	Postgraduate	2 years
Participant 13	27	Male	Postgraduate	4 years
Participant 14	30	Female	Postgraduate	3 years
Participant 15	29	Male	Postgraduate	4 years

The researcher, who was familiar with the residence under study, worked with the RAs to recruit participants, who also served as the research participants. The involvement of the RAs in the recruitment strategy was highly beneficiary. Each residence Block's RA helped the researcher identify the participants who met the selection/inclusion criteria. The criteria were as follows:

1. Having stayed in university residences for at least two years.
2. Having stayed at the residence under study for a year.
3. Being familiar with the Ubuntu value or philosophy to provide detailed information on its relevance in a university residence setting.

4. Participants speaking South African languages, including IsiZulu, IsiXhosa and SiSwati. These three Nguni languages are commonly spoken at the university residence.

Based on the above inclusion criteria, the following was the exclusion criteria:

1. Participants who had lived in university residences for less than two years were excluded, as they lacked the necessary experience to provide relevant insights.
2. Participants who had not lived at Albert Luthuli residence for at least one year were excluded, as they did not have sufficient familiarity with its culture and dynamics.
3. Participants who could not demonstrate an understanding of the Ubuntu philosophy or its relevance to university residence life were excluded, as their insights were irrelevant to contribute meaningfully to this research.
4. Participants who could not speak IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, or SiSwati were excluded, as these languages were essential for effective communication and understanding within the context of the study.
5. Participants who had moved to a different university residence or were no longer living at Albert Luthuli residence were excluded.
6. Underage participants were excluded, as the study required participants to be 18 years and older.

3.7. Data collection instruments

This study used in-depth interviews. As described by Neuman (2014), in-depth interviews are a qualitative research instrument that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of participants. The purpose of conducting in-depth interviews is to delve into their perspectives in relation to a specific idea, programme, or situation. These interviews were semi-structured, indicating that while there was no predetermined set of questions, the researcher had certain topics in mind and questions that would lead the conversation. Semi-structured interviews flow like everyday conversations and tend to use a more informal and open-ended approach (Neuman, 2011). Additionally, interviews in this study were conducted using an interview schedule, with each lasting no more than 60 minutes. Refer to Annexures D and E for more details on the guiding questions.

The in-depth interviews for this study were conducted in five weeks, a duration influenced by occasional challenges in participant availability. Participants are university students; hence, some of them raised concerns regarding academic commitments. However, at least two interviews were conducted per week, occasionally on consecutive days in a week and sometimes not, depending on the availability of participants. This scheduling approach was necessary as this study used in-depth interviews, requiring the researcher sufficient time to take notes and reflect on each interview immediately after it was conducted.

The interviews were conducted in South African languages, including IsiZulu, IsiXhosa and SiSwati, and a mix of English because the participants are literate university students. Additionally, participants were encouraged to speak in their preferred language. The linguistic commonality of the languages used facilitated mutual understanding between the researcher and participant, which enhanced the quality of the collected data. This flexibility was provided to ensure that students could express themselves freely without any constraints. Consequently, the participants in this study provided their perspectives and detailed information regarding the researched social phenomena. Data collection for this study involved note-taking and the use of an audio recording device. Consent to an audio recording of collected data is detailed in the informed consent. Recorded data and transcripts of this study were securely kept and stored in the locked cabin of the researcher, with access restricted to the researcher and the supervisor.

3.8. Methods of data analysis

This study used thematic analysis to analyse the collected data. The thematic analysis allowed the researcher to interpret the collected data by identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within the data (Neuman, 2014). The use of thematic analysis in this study aimed to identify themes, which are patterns in the data that are deemed important or interesting. These themes were then used to address the research questions or shed light on particular issues related to the objectives of this study. It should be noted that thematic analysis goes beyond mere data summarisation because robust thematic analysis involves interpreting and making sense of the collected data.

According to Braun and Clarke (2019), there are six important steps to follow when using thematic analysis. These steps include:

1. Familiarisation and immersion of data

This step required the researcher to fully immerse themselves and actively engage with the data. Firstly, the researcher noted the interactions from the interviews between themselves and the participants of the study by translating the interviews from the language it was conducted into English before transcribing. Subsequently, the researcher carefully read and re-read these English transcriptions whilst also listening to the recordings and noting down the initial thematic ideas. This process was important, as it facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the interaction content between the researcher and participants. Similarly, as highlighted by Ntshangase (2016) cited in Mzinyane (2017, p.50), assert that “during this stage, the researcher is expected to read text repeatedly and may further highlight some of the text with different and customised colours for the purpose of categorising the findings in successive phases of the analysis”. Following this, the researcher familiarised themselves with all aspects of the collected data. This foundational step laid the groundwork for subsequent analysis. Furthermore, the researcher of this study diligently documented and recorded the data with the permission of the participants, which enabled a comprehensive understanding of the content and familiarity with all aspects of the collected data.

2. Generating initial codes

After becoming familiar with the data, the researcher identified preliminary codes. These codes represented the features of the data that appeared interesting and meaningful for the analysis. During this step, the researcher started the coding process and formulated topics and subtopics aligned with the three objectives of this current study. As per Maree (2007) cited in Mzinyane (2017), “coding is the process of reading carefully through transcribed texts, line by line and dividing it into meaningful analytical units.” Subsequently, the researcher reviewed the data and correlated it with the established topics and subtopics.

The themes that emerged in this study were in line with the research objectives and the Afrocentrism theoretical framework. This alignment was intentional because the study aimed to explore the role of Ubuntu values in building social cohesion in student university residences. Additionally, the generated themes are culturally and contextually grounded, aligning with the purposively selected sample of the study. The in-depth interviewing process also assisted in generating the themes, with sub-themes emerging from the responses of the

participants. Moreover, the codes were more numerous and specific compared to the themes, but the themes provided insight into the context of the conversation between the researcher and participants.

3. Searching for themes

The third step in the process involved initiating the interpretive analysis of the collated codes. The researcher organised relevant data extracts, grouping them together and subdividing them based on overarching themes. The researcher's thought process delved into understanding the connections among codes, subthemes, and overarching themes.

4. Reviewing themes

In this study, the researcher reviewed the identified themes and deliberated on whether to combine, refine, separate, or discard the initial themes. The data within these themes cohesively aligned in a meaningful manner. Subsequently, clear and distinct boundaries between themes were observed, as detailed in Chapter four of this study. The researcher conducted this process in two phases; initially checking the themes in relation to the coded extracts (phase 1) and then examining the entire dataset (phase 2). A thematic 'map', derived from this step, was used by the researcher, as outlined by Neuman (2011).

5. Defining and naming themes

According to Neuman (2011), this step entailed 'refining and defining' the themes and potential subthemes within the data. Ongoing analysis was necessary to further enhance the identified themes. The researcher assigned names to the themes and provided clear definitions that captured the essence of each theme in a concise manner. This approach facilitates reader understanding and comprehension regarding topics that were discussed. Consequently, a unified and cohesive story of the collected data emerged from the themes.

6. Producing the report

The researcher concluded by transforming the analysis into an interpretable piece of writing, incorporating vivid and compelling extract examples that were related to the themes of this study. Additionally, the research questions and literature are explicitly interpreted in Chapter four. The report effectively conveyed the analysis in a manner that convinces the reader of the merit and trustworthiness of the analysis. Moreover, the study extended beyond merely describing the themes, it presented an analysis substantiated by empirical evidence drawn from various Afrocentric scholars. Consequently, the study successfully addressed both the research objectives and the research questions.

3.9. Ethical considerations

Ethics plays an important part in research as they reflect a researcher's moral judgements regarding what is right and wrong when conducting a research study (Beauchamp, 1982). Swartz and O'Neill (2011) argue that ethical conduct is imperative for human life as it serves as a guide for a course of action and decision-making. Without ethical standards, a researcher's action would lack direction and purpose (Zibane, 2021). By adhering to rational ethical standards, researchers are able to effectively organise their goals and actions with the core ethical values. Ethical approval to conduct interviews for this study was obtained from UKZN's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC), under protocol reference number 00003684 (refer to Annexure F) and with a gatekeeper's letter (Annexures H and I). The following ethical measures were adhered to as part of the application process.

1. Informed consent

According to Babbie (2010), informed consent is a norm in which subjects base their voluntary participation in research projects on a full understanding of any possible risks involved. In this study, participants were provided with information about the study, and the researcher distributed informed consent forms to them prior to their participation. Participants read the forms and they were informed that they had the right to refuse and decline participation in the study, and could withdraw their consent at any point during the interview if they felt uncomfortable. The researcher also clarified that the study did not involve any risks.

Furthermore, the research included questions that might have evoked discomfort, particularly if participants had negative experiences during their stay at the university residence. Participants were informed that the study offered no direct benefits to them and that its purpose was to contribute to the production of knowledge. Additionally, the study aimed to raise awareness among students and university management about the impact of Ubuntu philosophy on building and fostering social cohesion in university residences. Lastly, the researcher ensured that participants fully understood the purpose of the study before issuing and obtaining signed informed consent forms.

2. Voluntary participation

According to Mbokane (2009), participants have a choice to participate in any type of study and can retain autonomy over their participation. In this study, participants were assured that they could terminate or withdraw their participation at any time without facing consequences. Notably, no participants withdrew from this study, and this was influenced by several reasons. Among the reasons was the opportunity the study gave to participants to discuss aspects of their identities that they had previously overlooked but deemed significant to their way of living. The study also offered them a platform to express matters of personal interest, as highlighted by Zibane (2017).

3. Anonymity and confidentiality

According to Babbie (2010), a research project guarantees anonymity when neither the researcher nor the people who read the research findings can identify a specific response with a particular participant. On the other hand, confidentiality is guaranteed when the researcher keeps the information of participants private (Mzinyane, 2017). In this study, the participants were asked not to disclose their identity or any identifying information such as names, student numbers, or identity numbers. The researcher shared research findings with participants, but this information could be disclosed to the researcher to verify the correct sample and information provided by each participant during the interviews. However, such identifiable information was not included in this dissertation to protect confidentiality. The researcher also protected the personal information of participants by using participant identifiers (i.e. Participant 1, Participant 2, etc – see Table 3.1). Furthermore, information was kept

confidential between participants and researchers. Data was password protected, with only the researcher and supervisor having access to the unlocking code.

4. Non-maleficence

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2015), non-maleficence means avoiding harm to participants. While this study did not pose any physical harm to participation, there were potential emotional and psychological risks involved. An emotional risk could arise from participants recalling painful experiences or traumas they faced while residing at the university residence. A psychological risk might involve engaging with participants who were experiencing depression, which potentially triggers negative psychological feelings associated with the experiences of trauma and stress. Some participants did share sensitive information about their experiences in university residences. However, the interview served as a safe platform for them to express themselves. The research, or rather the interviews, thus became an intervention, as also noted by Zibane (2017). Furthermore, the researcher has training in Social Work and Psychology; therefore, brief counselling was offered if distress was observed during the interview. Following all interviews, no participants required referral for psychological intervention.

5. Privacy and deception

According to Mbokane (2009), privacy involves protecting participants, showing respect, and valuing their participation. On the other hand, deception can be defined as misleading and deceiving participants (Thyer, 2010). For this study, no interviews were conducted in public to ensure privacy. In addition, the research interviews were conducted exclusively between the university residence students and the researcher. There were no third parties present during the interviews, as they were conducted in their respective residence rooms. Participants were assured that there were no tangible benefits associated with participating in the study.

3.10. Authenticity, trustworthiness and quality assurance

Given that qualitative researchers do not rely on instruments with established metrics for quality assurance, validity and reliability, it becomes crucial to explore the credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of their research findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1986). To ensure the authenticity and trustworthiness of this study, the researcher followed the steps recommended by (Lincoln and Guba, 1986).

1. Credibility

Credibility refers to how confident the qualitative researcher is in the truthfulness of their study's findings. This essentially addresses the question, "How do you know that your findings are true and accurate?" It requires the researcher's commitment to having confidence in the accuracy of the findings (Polit & Beck, 2017). To achieve credibility, the researcher engaged extensively with the participants and employed member checking, which involves showing participants the transcriptions of their interviews to verify if the findings reflect their true experiences. Strydom and Venter (2005) emphasised that credibility and believability is enhanced when the researcher offers a detailed, comprehensive description of the setting, participants, procedures, and interactions of the study. As mentioned previously, the researcher audio-recorded, transcribed and translated the interviews into English before coding them for analysis.

Furthermore, the researcher undertook these measures to ensure a comprehensive and effective data capturing process. To gather sufficient data and respond to the research questions adequately, participants were given enough time to respond to questions and seek clarification as needed. They were encouraged to elaborate on their experiences. Additionally, to enhance credibility, participants were recruited through purposive sampling based on appropriateness related to lived experiences. The use of electronic devices for recording data provided detailed information crucial for transcription and verification purposes. Similarly, Neuman (2011) argues that credibility is ensured by reflecting the participants' authentic and original voices.

2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the qualitative researcher demonstrating that the findings of the research study can be applied to other contexts (Neuman, 2011). In this context, ‘other contexts’ refers to situations, populations, and phenomena that are similar (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). The researcher in the study employed rich and detailed descriptions to illustrate that the findings of the study are transferable to other contexts, circumstances, and situations. The results of this study were described with supporting direct quotations from participants, allowing the reader to make judgements about transferability with other studies and contexts. Moreover, this study provided the rationale and detailed sequential steps that were undertaken during planning, execution, and reporting to enhance transferability.

3. Conformability

Conformability refers to the level of neutrality and impartiality in the findings of the study (Strydom and Venter, 2005). Put differently, it indicates that the findings are derived from participants’ responses without being influenced by any potential biases or personal motivations of the researcher (Neuman, 2011). In this study, the researcher ensured that the data was not biased and did not distort the interpretation of participants’ statements to fit a certain narrative. To establish conformability, the researcher extensively included detailed descriptions to support their conclusions. Additionally, the researcher safely and securely kept the recordings of the interviews, verbatim transcriptions, interview guide and field notes. This measure was done to ensure neutrality in the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. Consequently, if necessary, this stored data can be reviewed and re-evaluated to ensure conformability. Furthermore, the researcher provided an audit trail documenting each step of the data analysis process, thus offering a rationale for the decisions made. This approach helped to establish that the findings of the study accurately reflected participants’ responses.

4. Dependability

Dependability refers to the extent to which a study can be replicated by other researchers, which yields consistency with other findings (Neuman, 2014). For another researcher to replicate the current study, they must have enough information from the research report. In order to establish

dependability, the researcher employed an inquiry audit, which involved an external party to review and scrutinise the research process and data analysis. This was done to ensure the consistency and repeatability of the findings within a similar context. Consequently, the study was deemed trustworthy and dependable, as it adhered to the four stages of trustworthiness proposed by suggested by Lincon and Guba (1986). Each process of the research process was reported in detail and carefully documented to enable an external researcher to replicate the inquiry and achieve comparable results.

3.11. Limitations of the study

The current study encountered a number of limitations. Firstly, it focused solely on students from a single university. The exclusion of other universities, who also offer university residence to students, implies that the findings of this study are limited to students from UKZN. Secondly, the findings of the study were derived from only 15 students, rather than encompassing all the students who reside in the chosen residence. However, the qualitative research method necessitates a smaller number of participants due to the time-consuming nature of data collection and qualitative data analysis (Neuman, 2011). Finally, another limitation arose as the recruitment process took longer than expected due to participants' availability to conduct interviews after they had given confirmation to participate. Despite this challenge, the data collection phase was successful as it reached the targeted number of participants. Those who agreed to participate were able to share their insights on Ubuntu and their experiences regarding social cohesion within university residences. This enabled the researcher to effectively address the research questions.

3.12. Conclusion

The chapter discussed the research paradigm, research approach and other methodological processes of undertaken to conduct the study. As established, this study was guided by the Afrocentric paradigm, which centres the study around people being studied (which in this case are African students), rather than adopting Eurocentric epistemologies and paradigms when studying people of African descent. Additionally, as well noted, the researcher chose the Afrocentric paradigm because it is context-based and relevant to the people being studied.

Ubuntu is a value system shared among people of African descent, and therefore, adopting the Afrocentric paradigm in this study was aimed to ensure cultural sensitivity and further recognise the people being studied.

This chapter demonstrates that this study was qualitative in nature. Participants were interviewed using the in-depth interviewing instrument, and the sample was drawn from a population of students at UKZN's Howard College campus, specifically residing at Albert Luthuli residence. The study employed purposive sampling to recruit participants because it required students who had stayed at university student residences for at least two years. These participants were seen as people who could offer perspectives on the existence and non-existence of Ubuntu at Albert Luthuli residence, UKZN Howard College campus. Furthermore, this chapter also discussed that the collected data was analysed using a thematic analysis strategy, steps to achieving authenticity, trustworthiness and quality assurance, ethical consideration and the limitations of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

In university, the concept of community and shared living spaces play a pivotal role in shaping the experiences of students. The university residence, often regarded as a microcosm of societal interactions, becomes a fertile ground for the exploration of diverse cultural dynamics, social norms, and interpersonal relationships. It is against this background that this study embarked on an exploration of the multifaceted dimensions of Ubuntu and looked deep into its presence in various aspects of student life, such as shared responsibilities, conflict resolution, and the creation of inclusive and cohesive spaces.

This chapter presents the findings obtained from qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with 15 diverse students who were registered at UKZN. The findings are presented as themes which emerged through thematic analysis. The emerging codes and themes were in line with the objectives of this study and the principles of Afrocentrism. Moreover, the discussion of these themes navigates beyond the mere identification of Ubuntu's existence and delves into its implications for the cultivation of a cohesive residence community. This discussion includes both the affirmative of Ubuntu as a way of life as well as the challenges and limitations that arise in its application and interpretations in university residences.

4.2. Participant socio-demographic characteristics

The final sample for this study consisted of 15 university students aged 24 years and older. All participants (15/15) were from the Black African population group. Participants who are postgraduate students (13/15), Zulu-speaking (12/15) and those who consider KwaZulu-Natal as home (11/15) were highly overrepresented in this study's sample. However, the diverse demographic characteristics of participants in this study play a crucial role in shaping this study's findings, insights, and implications. In addition, the participants' unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives contributed to a comprehensive understanding of how Ubuntu manifests within the context of communal living within university residences. In this study, the participants were originally from the largest provinces in South Africa, and these provinces are strongly rooted in their cultural and value systems. For instance, when a person is from the KwaZulu-Natal, the Zulu cultural value systems of Ubuntu are expected through sharing, unity

and humanness. Even the phrase “*Umntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*” (“I am, because we are”) originates from the Zulu language to highlight the idea of community being one of the building blocks of society.

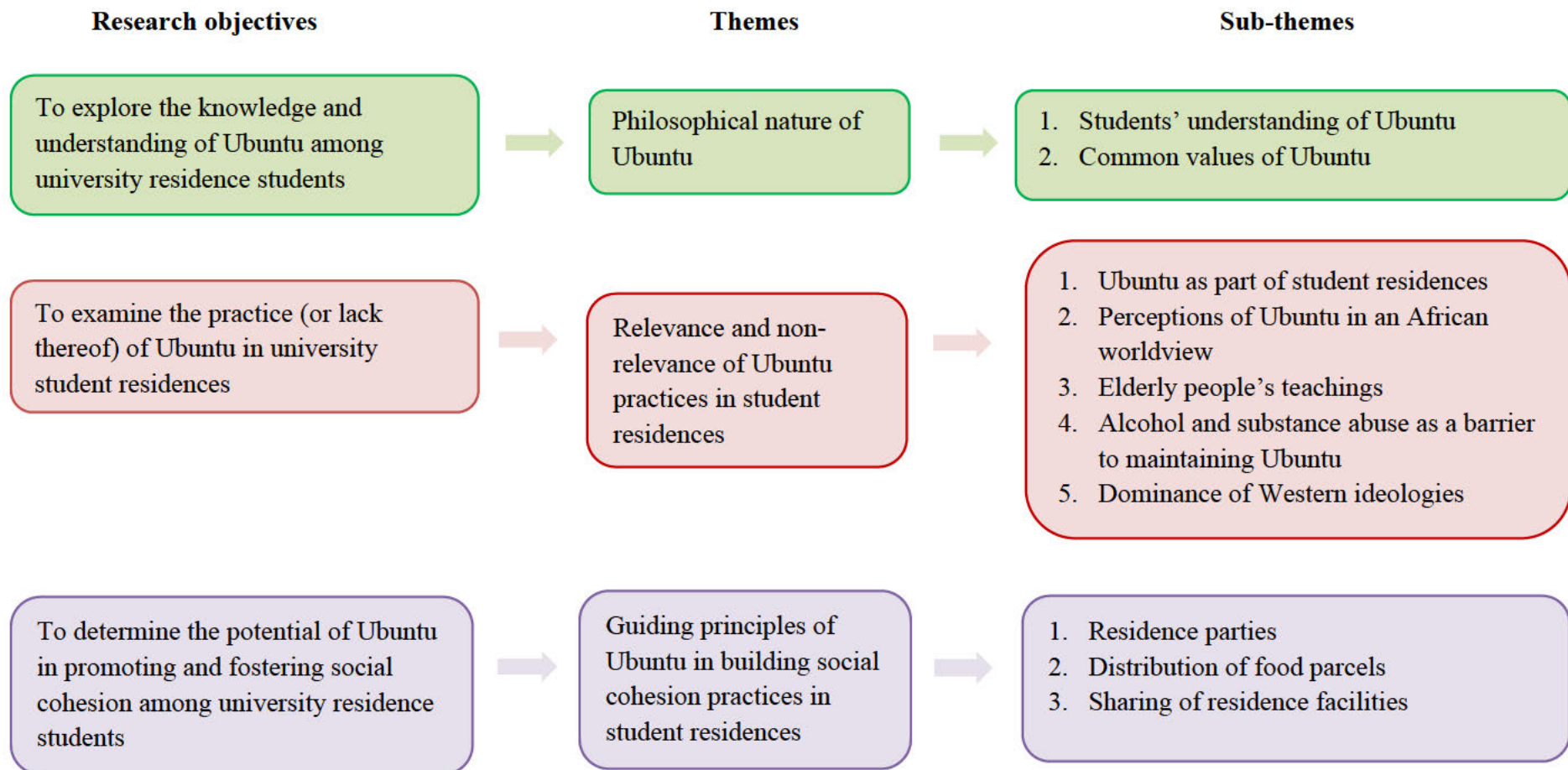
Table 4.1: Participants’ socio-demographic characteristics

Socio-demographic characteristics	N
Sample size	15
Mean age	27 years (24 – 30 years)
Length of stay at university residents (years)	
Two	8
Three	3
Four	4
Gender	
Male	7
Female	8
Languages	
IsiXhosa	2
IsiZulu	12
SiSwati	1
Level of study	
Undergraduate	2
Postgraduate	13
Home province	
Eastern Cape	2
Gauteng	1
KwaZulu-Natal	11
Mpumalanga	1

4.3. Emerged themes

The table below projects the alignment of study objectives with the emerged themes.

Figure 4.1: Alignment of the study's objectives and emerged themes.



4.4. Theme 1: Philosophical nature of Ubuntu

Ubuntu as a concept has been defined in so many ways related to social cohesion, solidarity and common humanity. In this study, the researcher was interested in how students define and understand Ubuntu from their perspective. This theme focuses on the knowledge and understanding of Ubuntu among students staying in university residences. The sub-themes that emerged during the interviews include students' understanding of Ubuntu and perceived common values of Ubuntu.

4.4.1. Students' understanding of Ubuntu

Exploring participants' understanding and conceptualisation of Ubuntu was very important in achieving the first objective of this study. During the interviews, one of the initial guiding questions to the participants was asking them to define or describe the concept of 'Ubuntu' in their own words. Interestingly, participants used very common and mutually thematic words such as respect, humanity, sharing and living harmony to describe Ubuntu. Participants also emphasised that one of the principles of Ubuntu is to help another person without expecting anything in return. This is something in line with what the first black president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, said: "There can be no greater gift than that of giving one's time and energy to helping others without expecting anything in return". During the interviews, students noted:

"Ubuntu means living together in harmony and respect with your neighbours. This includes helping one another without expecting something in return." (Participant 1)

"Ubuntu is all about oneness and living in harmony, where we recognise that you cannot function alone, especially here at the university residence. You know, we need each other in order to function at our best potential. There is a phrase in IsiZulu which says 'Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu', which explains Ubuntu very clearly. It basically means that even if I am not affected directly by any challenge, we face here at the university residence, I sympathise with my sisters and brothers affected directly. Therefore, all of us are affected by the same issue. This further means that even when seeking for solutions to resolve a particular issue, we seek solutions together because we are one." (Participant 2)

“Ubuntu is the ability to live with people in love and harmony and being able to think for another person on their behalf. I think Ubuntu can be shown by the way you speak or through your actions.” (Participant 3)

“Ubuntu is love, where a person is appreciating everyone, and value other people’s opinion and way of life...and I think respect is very important when explaining Ubuntu because it plays an important role. This is because all the values of Ubuntu are rooted in respect. For example, let us take supporting one another with academics here at the university residence, we do this because we respect each other, and we know the importance of contributing to the success of other fellow residence mates. All these practices of helping, sharing and giving through unity are fundamental to Ubuntu.” (Participant 4)

“It is people treating each other equally, regardless of how high their [social] status may be. Ubuntu is un-victimisation, it is humanity. Ubuntu is to give without being asked or expecting something in return. It is to open your heart for other people to feel the warmth. I mean we know love is free. So, Ubuntu would be giving off the love where it is needed.” (Participant 5)

The above extracts show the commonalities in the ways that the research participants defined Ubuntu. Almost all the participants’ definitions of Ubuntu were rooted in the famous Ubuntu idiom which states that “Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu” (*I am, because we are*), which many people and scholars have used to reflect on the principles of Ubuntu. During the interviews, the participants used this idiom in relation to how they [as students] support and help each other when someone is facing challenges and the togetherness they have at the university residence. The early work by a prominent South African philosopher asserts that “personhood comes as a gift from other persons” (Shutte, 2001, p. 12).

The definition of Ubuntu as provided by the research participants is in line with how many Ubuntu scholars have defined it. Many early scholars who interrogated the concept of humanity in the African context expanded our understanding of Ubuntu to include the idea of common humanity, reconciliation and solidarity and highlighted how its meaning is clearer when its social value is shown through respect and cohesive living (Ngcobo et al., 2023). Evidently, these are the understandings and concepts shared by the research participants in the extracts presented above. For example, Participant 3 above mentioned “*the ability to live with people in love and harmony*” in her definition of Ubuntu.

Scholars such as Nabudera (2005) and Ramose (2002) also defined Ubuntu as a social philosophy based on principles of care and community, harmony and hospitality, and respect and responsiveness that express the fundamental interconnectedness of human existence. Similarly, this understanding was depicted in how Participants 1, 3 and 5 defined Ubuntu. Furthermore, the responses by the participants are also in line with the three of five principles of Afrocentrism provided by Reviere (2006). These principles included the spiritual nature of human beings, collective identity and the value of interpersonal relationships (Chilisa, 2017). Overall, participants' understanding of Ubuntu emphasised the importance of helping one another and helping other people without expecting anything in return. Furthermore, they also noted the importance of unity and people living together in love and harmony. This further proves that participants' responses are in line with the general underpinnings of Afrocentrism.

4.4.2. Common values of Ubuntu

Although the values of Ubuntu may vary from one person to another, this study was also interested in understanding the 'common' values of Ubuntu that university residence students uphold. The researcher saw the need for research participants to reflect on the values they know and relate to and those they think are part of Ubuntu's philosophy. Therefore, this sub-theme reports findings on the values of Ubuntu that were said to be common among students who reside at the university residence. Commonality including sharing, collaboration, respect and togetherness were found in the responses that participants provided during the interviews. They mentioned the following:

"I would say for me respecting my residence mates and helping them when they need my assistance. For example, we help each other with schoolwork; sometimes we cook and eat together. I think those are two values that are part of Ubuntu that I know and uphold." (Participant 1)

"The values that come to my mind when I think of Ubuntu include love, sharing, compassion, collaboration, social cohesion, tolerance and respect and interdependence. But all I can say is that it is all about valuing togetherness. Even the way we look like the community at the university residence is very communal because it is all about valuing togetherness and oneness." (Participant 2)

“As you know that you cannot have everything - so it is heart-warming when one asks for something and knows they would surely get help. The girls here at the residence even go as far as lending each other’s bags and other stuff when one is going on a date. If someone does not have food, we would donate some to them. See, Ubuntu does not have to be so big, it is these small things we do effortlessly that counts to show humanity.” (Participant 11)

The above extract highlights the common Ubuntu-related values dominant in the residences including but not limited to sharing, humility, solidarity, care for others, collaboration, respect and togetherness. The values stated by the research participants are similar to how Asante (2003) described the values embedded in Ubuntu. According to Asante et al. (2018), Ubuntu is a multidimensional philosophy representing the core values of the African worldview, which include respect for any human being, human dignity, collective shared responsibility, obedience, humility, solidarity, caring, hospitality, interdependence and communalism.

The study participants also highlighted the importance of respect, sharing, collaborating and helping one another at the university residence. According to the participants, these values bring a sense of togetherness and support, especially in the challenges they face as students. They also play an important role in enhancing the well-being of the students and in keeping the university residence as a healthy space. Consistent with Khoza (2005) who describes communalism within the context of Ubuntu as collective existence which serves as the basis for supportiveness, cooperation, collaboration and solidarity. Below the participants expanded on the values of Ubuntu by stating the following:

“Even though we fight sometimes but we always do not allow that conflict to disrupt our togetherness.” (Participant 4)

“At the residence, we are more than a family than just residence mates. The bonds we formed with my mates brought us closer to a point where we would share anything. The role I play is giving them emotional support whenever they need me and I always make sure that when someone needs help, I help them where I can or find someone who can help them. Living in large groups like the university residence can also be a bit challenging, like sharing a room with a stranger or someone you just met. But what we did was try to understand each other and the fact that we are from different backgrounds. When we had conflicts, we took our

differences into consideration and resolved them with respect and understanding of where one is coming from.” (Participant 12)

Akinola and Uzodike (2018) assert that the quest for peace has led to the resurgence of Ubuntu, which is regarded as an indigenous approach to conflict resolution and peace-building. The above perspectives by Participants 4 and 12 highlighted how students who are in conflict at the residence often use Ubuntu values such as tolerance, relatability and respect for other people’s differences, to resolve conflict and maintain peace. In addition, participants’ humanistic behaviours at the residence are in many ways influenced by Ubuntu values that they uphold including respect which plays an integral part in humanity. The notion of collective identity becomes important and is prevalent among residence students at the university. Chilisa, (2012) also argue how commonalities between individuals are more valued than individuality when it comes to Ubuntu.

4.5. Theme 2: Relevance and non-relevance of Ubuntu practices in student residences

Hailey (2008) highlights many ways that Ubuntu principles are practised and how the interconnectedness of all human beings is central to the application of Ubuntu in practice. According to Dreyer (2015), practising Ubuntu values is the result of processes of moral communication, formation and judgment. This theme yielded more sub-themes compared to other themes. The sub-themes include how participants view Ubuntu as part of student residences, the perceptions of Ubuntu in an African worldview, knowledge accumulation about Ubuntu from the Elderly peoples’ teachings, challenges of maintaining Ubuntu as a result of alcohol and substance abuse and dominance of Western ideologies on how Ubuntu is viewed in the African context. The logical basis behind the students practising or not practising Ubuntu is shared below.

4.5.1. Ubuntu as part of student residences

As the literature presented in Chapter two shows students are faced with different challenges in university residences. The researcher of this study was interested in understanding how students use Ubuntu values as a coping mechanism to deal with challenges in university residences. Initially, the following was stated by the research participants:

“We share food and have friendly conversations. We are like a family. We even wash dishes for one another when one finds dirty dishes in the kitchen. During times of exams, we would wake each other up.” (Participant 1)

“The majority of students still practice Ubuntu here because we still witness students gathering together; having drinks, eating together in different chilling spots within the residence. I have also met friends here who are like brothers to me now. We do most of the things together, such as buying groceries, and clothes and sometimes studying together. In doing so, we always try by all means to support one another so that we can maintain unity and friendship.” (Participant 4)

The examples above indicate how participants perceive themselves as a family at the university residence, which reflects Ubuntu values. They view activities like sharing meals, socialising, and spending time together as expressions of unity and solidarity within the university residence. Additionally, other participants provided more insight by explaining:

“We love each other and we give off our love for free. No one is to be a victim of any unknown force while we are there watching. And lastly and most important, we are all equal.” (Participant 5)

“We even always work together to find possible solutions that will better our lives as student populace. Here, we need support from other residence mates regardless of how popular or unpopular you are, rich or poor, coming from big cities or rural areas.” (Participant 13)

“One of the things I can quote to show how Ubuntu is practised here is when a residence student passes away. The university’s DSRA provides transport so that fellow residence students can accompany their late residence mate to the funeral. They do not only provide transport but also refreshments so that students can eat on their way to the funeral. For me, this is a major indication of how Ubuntu is being practised at the residence.” (Participant 15)

The data presented above highlights that the students themselves and some of the programmes in the student residences are rooted in Ubuntu practices and promote positive residence life. Participant 15, for instance, shared how the university’s DSRA, promotes Ubuntu values and encourages togetherness and unity in student residences. The DSRA practice of providing transport for students to attend funerals promotes social cohesion which encourages empathy

and good relations among people (Murithi, 2006). Participants 4 and 5 also emphasised that Ubuntu is practised in the form of treating other residence mates as your equals. This is aligned with the assertions by Bennett (2011) and Letseka (2012) who stated that Ubuntu can be implicitly practised by showing equal concern and respect for other people, showing a sense of justice and capacity to understand, apply, and act in fair terms.

“There is a lot that I can say in terms of how Ubuntu is being practised here, however, the truth is not everybody practises Ubuntu. Some people view Ubuntu as something primitive or as something that was practised in the olden days. Nobody wants to be seen as going backwards, especially in the world that emphasises going forward, in terms of lifestyle, culture and technology.” (Participant 15)

Apart from a consensus about how Ubuntu is practised at the university residence, some of the participants shared how some students do not practice Ubuntu principles at the university residence. The above statement from Participant 15 for instance stated that the students who do not practice Ubuntu because they fear being labelled barbaric and primitive. There are students who associate Ubuntu with being backwards and see being individualistic and minding your own business as being civilised. This shows the influence of Eurocentrism in African communities and students in African universities.

4.5.2. Perceptions of Ubuntu in an African worldview

Most participants of this study perceive and embrace the values of Ubuntu in conformity with the way Africans view the world. Literature suggests that Ubuntu is an ideology in the African culture that expresses compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interest of building and maintaining a community with justice and mutual caring (Mbiti, 1990). The people of African descent practise Ubuntu because it is a part of their culture and their way of life. Furthermore, Mugumbate and Nyanguru (2013) viewed Ubuntu as an integral value that is fundamental in all social relations in the African context. However, this study revealed that some students still hold this African value system. During the interviews, participants were asked about the reasons for practising the values of Ubuntu. Their reasonings were:

“I grew up in a rural area and Ubuntu was something I experienced on a daily basis. No one has ever told me directly to share and care for people around me... but I experienced the environment as very caring, loving and supportive. As a

result, I returned the same behaviour toward other people. There is reciprocity in terms of how we live in the village. You see all such even when there is a ceremony in the village, we gather with other community members so that we can go and celebrate with the family that is hosting the ceremony. Even when you were not invited to attend the ceremony you will be welcomed. So, all in all, what I can say is that the reason why I care about my residence mates and uphold the value of Ubuntu is because of the way I grew up.” (Participant 6)

“I practise Ubuntu because it is a fundamental aspect of my identity as an African. I identify with the values and principles shared among my people. This is because I form part of my people and I live with my people. Living through Ubuntu at the residence for us is because we are people who practise sharing, helping one another, and contributing to the success of others is part of our lives as Africans.” (Participant 13)

The above remarks emphasize that embracing Ubuntu plays a major role in their moral behaviours as Africans. Being African and practising Ubuntu for them meant transformation and resilience, which are values and principles that are shared throughout Africans in the continent. In addition, participants looked at their behaviours as strongly influenced by an African worldview learnt whilst growing up. Consistently to Mucina (2013), Ubuntu has a linguistic history among Black people in Africa. Further, the African worldview is all about placing people of African descent at the centre of any analysis that has to do with African phenomena (Asante, 2003; Chilisa & Preece, 2005; Falola, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020a; Lumumba-Kasongo, 2018). Participant 13 also shared the challenges that students who are against Ubuntu principles face when they isolate themselves from other students. This participant mentioned how support systems are very important and form a key to succeeding and flourishing at the university residence.

“I have observed the fact that there are students who appreciate being on their own and who are individually orientated in terms of their behaviour and how they conduct themselves. These students end up having difficulties in dealing with challenges they face as students because they do not use their fellow residence mates as a support system.” (Participant 13)

Mabovula (2011) assert that African people view themselves and what they do as equally good to others as to themselves. The African worldview of things is all about how people of African

descent view the universe, interpret events and make meaning of life (Mabovula, 2011; Masango, 2006). In addition, this worldview also includes the value of sharing, respect, love and being at one with the creator. During the interviews, it was clear that the participants perceived the value of Ubuntu as inseparable from them as they grew up in contexts where the African value system is strongly emphasised and linked to Ubuntu principles. In addition, participants also emphasised the importance of working together to find solutions to the challenges they face as students. It can be argued that this behaviour of students shows that the way they live together is communal in nature. Similarly, Mabovula (2011, p. 39) made a good example to help people understand this phenomenon, and they argue that “one can think of how things were (and still are) done in indigenous African settings in which people come together whenever problems arise, where ideas are shared, solutions are sought and found by all community members in a given real-life situation”. Therefore, the social supportive measures mentioned above are carried out to encourage peace, love, respect, and working together in social harmony (wa Thiong’o, 2009). Overall, it was notable that the participants maintained the fact that they practice the values of Ubuntu because they are a philosophy that is relevant among them as African people.

4.5.3. Elderly people’s teachings

During the interviews, participants took some time to discuss the influential role that elderly people from their hometowns played in shaping their understanding and practice of Ubuntu values in their everyday interactions. They acknowledged that the elderly people, as ‘seasoned’ community members, are crucial guides that impart a deep-rooted sense of interconnectedness, compassion, and mutual support. They believed that their [elderly] wisdom and guidance served as a constant reminder of the significance of fostering a harmonious coexistence among other students at the university residence. In addition, it became evident that the teachings and insights of the elderly had left a significant mark among participants, cultivating a commitment to Ubuntu that resonated in both their personal interactions with other students. Their remarks included:

“Helping each other and contributing to the wellness of others is what our parents and elders in the village taught us.” (Participant 6)

“My grandfather taught us to greet other people as this conveys respect and recognition. He used to say we must greet people even if we do not know them. That is why even here at the residence, we teach each other the importance of greeting one another. We do this especially in the morning before we go to campus, when I am going to the bathroom to take a shower and when I meet a person in the corridors I greet them and ask they are doing. We do this to show respect and recognition.” (Participant 12)

Research shows that children learn about Ubuntu from elderly people at home and in the community (Gumbo, 2014). Most African children grow up with Ubuntu principles from early childhood, particularly in rural African villages where people grow and relate to each other whilst they are taught by the elderly to pass on what they learn to another person (Masango, 2006). This suggests that some people of African descent are taught Ubuntu and ways of cohesive living at a very young age. Similarly, Gumbo (2014) assert that the concept of Ubuntu stems from the elders’ attempts to teach their children a way of life premised on humanism and communal relationships.

In this study, it was clear that most participants mentioned that the reason they practice Ubuntu is because of how they were raised back at home. Mabovula (2011, p. 3) also avers that “the most outstanding positive impact of Ubuntu on the community is the value it puts on life and human dignity, particularly its caring attitude towards the elderly, who played and continue to play an important communal role in consolidating Ubuntu values”. Another participant emphasised the role of greeting to show Ubuntu. Interestingly, they highlighted how greeting another person is also a sign of respect for their ancestors. This is in line with Nobles et al. (2016), who argue that when Africans greet each other, greetings cannot be isolated from the living dead, or rather ancestors, who are believed to be responsible for the health and well-being of the living.

“With me, my father used to always say when I greet someone I am not just greeting that person alone but I am also recognising the person’s family and his line of ancestry. This is the reason why even the language becomes plural when we greet each other as Africans. For example, we say ‘Ninjani’ [plural] instead of ‘Unjani’ [singular]. Being raised in a manner that promotes togetherness really made me have Ubuntu, and not look at Ubuntu as something that only exists in rural areas

where I grew up, but as something that is part of our culture as African regardless of geographical location.” (Participant 14)

Participant 10 also shared a different perspective of how they experienced and learned Ubuntu principles from their elders. This participant mentioned that their elders used to ask them to go to their neighbours and ask for salt when their own household supplies were depleted. In line with Waghid et al. (2023, p. 63), who asserts that “when one runs off the salt, it is a cultural practice to ask for it from a neighbour”. During the interview, the participants stated:

“My grandmother played a big role in teaching us the importance of Ubuntu and helping one another when we grew up. Sometimes when she was preparing a meal for the family, she used to send us to our neighbours in the village to ask for salt when we had run out of it at home. She used to encourage us not to be ashamed of seeking help from our neighbours and the fact that we were eating because of the contribution of our neighbours in the village. She instilled the idea that we are one big family as a community and therefore we should appreciate and value other human beings even if we are not related by blood. We grew up with this co-dependence since we were young, and the culture of giving and asking for help when one is in need has been part of our lives because of my grandmother’s teachings.” (Participant 10)

It was interesting to hear participants noting that Ubuntu was inculcated to them by the elderly people in the communities where they grew up. They also mentioned that these communities, especially in villages or rural areas, still uphold cultural practices and indigenous knowledge that is guided by and attached to Ubuntu’s philosophy. This was relevant when they mentioned principles of sharing through asking the neighbours for food items when one does not have them. This is in line with principles of care and community discussed in the literature by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) who argues that the spirit of Ubuntu accentuates the importance of interdependence and communalism. This demonstrates how the experiences of participants echo the Afrocentric ideals of collective well-being, interdependence, and community care, which reinforces the relevance of Afrocentrism in understanding and appreciating Ubuntu philosophy.

4.5.4. Alcohol and substance abuse as a barrier to maintaining Ubuntu

There are certain factors that contribute to the demise of Ubuntu, including the damage done by colonialism to African identity, cultural globalisation and modernisation of traditional African culture (Eliastam, 2015). During the interviews, it was clear that alcohol and substance abuse challenges the full functionality of Ubuntu in university residences. Participants claimed that harmful drinking is caused by the autonomy they endure after the transition from high school to tertiary. Furthermore, the participants also highlighted the anxiety and stress that they endure while completing their degrees. The causality of this stress is mainly the increased academic pressures, lack of funding and peaceful accommodation (Lei et al., 2018). Therefore, alcohol and other drug substances are used as a coping mechanism by students to cope with the stresses of university life (Tsfai, 2016). This, in turn, has a negative impact on how they relate to community and relationships, and on the overall functionality of Ubuntu among students residing in university residences. Participants also mentioned that alcohol is a barrier to other students' successes because it isolates them from social responsibilities that are a foundation for the transformation of their own lives and community as a whole.

"I come from a very poor family and that alone makes it hard for my family to support me with financial needs. But being away from home and being able to make my own decisions about my life has been good for me. My family does not know that I am drinking but I have been drinking since high school." (Participant 8)

"I think the issue is that some fellow students do not talk especially when faced with difficulties of life. They resort to high consumption of alcohol to deal with such difficulties. As much as I love helping people, I cannot assume what is troubling a person. I had a friend here at the residence, we were very close and we used to talk about everything. He then changed and joined a company of friends that do not prioritise academics like we used to do together. He has been struggling with finishing his degree and he constantly uses alcohol. I do not even know how I can help him because we no longer even talk. The only time we speak now is when we are greeting each other in the corridors here." (Participant 12)

In the above quotation, Participant 12 reported that alcohol consumption by students also leads to difficulties in coping with studies. Although alcohol is highlighted to be a problem among students at university residences, it also plays a significant role in strengthening relationships and building unity among them. The unity of people is strongly emphasised in the philosophies

of Ubuntu and social cohesion (Mabovula, 2011). During the interviews, participants also highlighted how alcohol use and substance abuse have the power to eliminate respect among them as students. As mentioned before, respect is one of the key principles of Ubuntu and its value is noticed when two or more individuals are considerate of each other's feelings and differences. In addition, showing respect to others shows signs of honesty and trustworthiness (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho, 2008). One participant mentioned that their friend almost sold them to men without them knowing and this was one way of showing them that they had become disrespectful and dishonest towards them. They stated:

“I think alcohol is a big problem among us, and it continues to ruin our lives more than any other social problem we have in South Africa. I used to drink with my friend at the residence in her room in one of the off-campus residences. One day she said let us go out with her friends. Only to find out that she had already allocated me a boyfriend without me knowing. I was very angry at her because of what she did to me, and I was insulted by taking the decision to leave after knowing what the gathering was all about. Now I hear from other people that she engages in transactional sex to sustain her life. Even that time in 2017 she did not have funding, but she used to always dress nicely and she used to always buy wine and other drinks for us at the residence. I am sure that she had been living this life without me knowing as her friend.” (Participant 7)

In addition to Blessers, another participant made reference to having a friend who used to make their living through Blessers at the residence. This participant also noted that men at their residence could not afford them the luxury of buying alcohol and living an expensive life because they were students and did not have money. Hence, they opted for Blessers who gave them a luxurious life. This showed how Ubuntu was tested among participants who earlier mentioned that they shared everything at the residence. However, when times are tough, they look for opportunities outside the residence, from people who can afford their standard of living. The study conducted by Hunter (2002) suggested that transactional sex is always associated with financial concerns. Hunter's (2002) study is also in line with what Participant 8 shared about her interaction with Blessers, who shared that their disadvantaged background was the reason for her to be involved in relationships that are characterised by monetary benefits. This suggests that students have turned to solutions of modern life to sustain their livelihoods and to cope with their socio-economic challenges. This in a way hinders them from exploring the ancient value systems of Ubuntu, including being assisted by their community

(students at the residence) through the spirit of togetherness, care and responsiveness (Nabudera, 2005).

“I met friends on campus in my first year and my friends introduced me to the ‘Blessers’. These men did not have a problem with buying us alcohol and taking us to expensive clubs and restaurants, which is something that men at the residence could not do because the majority of us are on the same level. As much we do drink alcohol with our residence mates, the male ones to be specific but sometimes we need to understand that they are still students and most of them are not working. I did not come here to be a burden to my fellow res mates. I do not see anything wrong with dating a blesser for monetary benefits, it is not like we have a serious relationship. It is just always no strings attached.” (Participant 8)

Other participants highlighted that the consumption of alcohol and substance abuse is likely to result in physical violence and assault among students at the residence. According to Tesfai (2016), alcohol consumption is likely to result in physical and psychological harm. Participants expressed that high consumption of alcohol is a direct contributing factor to the demise of Ubuntu. During the interviews, they noted:

“I always see when they drink alcohol, it always starts as fun - students playing music, dancing and screaming words of happiness. The problem starts when they are intoxicated, especially male students, who tend to engage in physical fights. In these fights, some students suffer serious injuries. I was not familiar with violent behaviour, but I experienced a lot of it at the residence. To witness such behaviours is very traumatic, especially to see people who stay together and who share a room having a physical fight, which results in serious injury.” (Participant 9)

It is clear from the above response that the use of alcohol has negative impacts on the values of Ubuntu among university residence students. Findings suggest that students find themselves suffering in isolation as a result of socio-economic issues. Some engage in risky behaviours to make a living and this in turn poses a threat to their moral judgement and well-being. The study conducted by Mogotsi et al. (2014) suggests that most students acknowledge that moderate and responsible alcohol consumption is essential. However, when alcohol is not consumed responsibly, individuals often end up engaging in violent acts (Mogotsi et al. 2014). Similar to this study, participants mentioned that when they start drinking, everything always seems under

control until they are intoxicated. Over and above, this intoxication results in them engaging in physical fights, which leaves other fellow students traumatised after witnessing the fights.

Although a profound understanding of the philosophy of Ubuntu is easily conveyed, there is limited literature on how university residences become spaces of violence as a result of alcohol and substance abuse (Kyei & Ramagoma, 2013). As evident, alcohol and substance abuse were some of the factors that participants noted to contribute to the demise of Ubuntu. Mogotsi et al. (2014) found alcohol use and substance abuse as the detrimental challenges that slowly attempt to eliminate Ubuntu values in African societies. Further, unhealthy and problematic use of alcohol and other substances among students continues to have negative implications on their overall well-being and values of Ubuntu.

4.5.5. Dominance of Western ideologies

Participants reported that Ubuntu is slowly being dismissed as simple African thinking in the university because of how learning and teaching are structured in African universities. Amidst the dominance of Western values within South African universities, participants voiced experiencing a sense of isolation. This arises from the mismatch between Western values and the strong sense of togetherness that is part of their own culture, also emphasised by Afrocentrism. The following are some statements from the participants.

“I love my culture very much as an African and the way I was raised at home was with respect. At home, we still do cultural practices, but I know most of us as black students hide that we still believe and do cultural practices back at home. Usually, they ridicule you at the residence and call you uMkhaya [a traditional and primitive person] if you continue being rooted in what you believe in. That is why it is not easy to be who we truly are because we are at the university and we want to keep up with modernism. Modernism is inculcated in us through the education curriculum we study in school. This is the reason most of us at university try to mimic Western culture because the whole education system is Western and that is how Western values end up dominating our minds.” (Participant 6)

“I believe it is not easy to practice our African value systems and cultures because the disciplines we study at university were created by Europeans and we study them

in a language that is not ours. This has an influence on our behaviour as students.”

(Participant 13)

“There is always this urge among us of wanting to fit in into the Western culture at university because that is the only culture that is dominant at university. This makes us end up forgetting who we are and see our culture as backward and we also laugh at one another when one reveals himself as a cultured being.”

(Participant 14)

The above extracts show how the domination of Western values among university residence students is a key reason for some students feeling isolated. Moreover, participants viewed the education system as a significant factor in eroding the African culture and Ubuntu values. In the literature, it is clear that Western ideologies encourage individualism (Mabovula, 2011). On the contrary, African value systems encourage communalism, which is one of the characteristics of Ubuntu (Gumbo, 2014). The study conducted by Gumbo (2014, p. 68) asserts that “Western ideologies and culture were being hammered into the African child at the expense of African values and culture to ensure the deadness of Africanness and implantation of Westernness”. Another research shows that Ubuntu was unknown in Western society and in most African academic institutions, which function from a Western Eurocentric scholarly worldview (Mucina, 2013).

Participants shared further insights on how the idea of Westernisation prevails at the university residence. One participant highlighted that some students do not even care to greet you because they walk around with headphones on and listen to music and they care less about community interaction. In addition, another participant expressed that they are moving with time and they should not be held accountable for not practising what their ancestors used to do in their times. During the interviews, they expressed that:

“I do not see a need of going back and study how our ancestors use to live their lives, we are going forward and not back. I personally see some of the things our ancestors used to do as irrelevant in this modern society.” (Participant 7)

“One of the reasons is that people are slowly adopting a Western culture of self-centredness and not upholding the values of Ubuntu.” (Participant 10)

“You find others always putting their headsets on, listening to music and minding their own business. To me, this shows that this fellow student was not raised in

Ubuntu's philosophy and communalism. This can also be caused by the fact that the fellow student is more into the Western culture where this thing of being self-centred and self-reliance is a priority." (Participant 12)

This current study shows that there is a disjuncture between African and Western value systems. This disjuncture makes students of African descent adopt Western value systems. Western value systems are hammered into African students through the education system (Gumbo, 2014). Ali and Shishigu (2020) also assert that the Ethiopian education system is conquered by Western ideologies, which reflect values that are different from those that are indigenous to the people. Participants stressed that the curriculum they study at university is carried out in a language that is eccentric and alien to them as the natives. Similarly, the work of Ngugi wa Thiong'o "*Decolonizing the Mind*" is in line with what was found in this study. wa Thiong'o (1992) argue that if a colonised person is stripped away his language, he is also stripped away his culture and identity. In addition, language carries culture and a sense of being (wa Thiong'o, 1992). wa Thiong'o (1992) also argue that the African child who encounters literature in a colonial school or university where they experience the world as defined and reflected in the European experience of history. In this current study, participants viewed the dominance of Western value systems in South African universities as one of the contributing to the demise of Ubuntu. Consequently, this dominance directly influences the behaviour of students in university residences.

4.6. Theme 3: Guiding principles of Ubuntu in building social cohesion

The last theme interrogates how the philosophy of Ubuntu promotes social cohesion among students at the university residence. The researcher was particularly interested in exploring the guiding principles that Ubuntu has to build and maintain cohesive living among students. Sub-themes that emerged from this theme include the importance of social support from the university in the form of residence parties, food parcels and sharing of communal residence facilities. During the interviews, participants mentioned that social programmes appear to infuse the culture of social cohesion among students and are perceived to be shaped by the guiding philosophies of Ubuntu. In addition, the sharing of communal spaces and facilities also injects the principles of togetherness and social cohesion.

Participants of the current study viewed the university's DSRA as playing a major role in infusing the culture of social cohesion among students staying at university residences. According to Stanley (2003), social cohesion refers to the willingness of members of a society to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper. The university's DSRA hosts a number of social programmes and events monthly to promote and ensure cohesive living in student residences. During the interviews, participants mentioned two programmes that they are familiar with, which include residence parties and the distribution of food parcels to students in need. In addition, participants reported that this is a university's DSRA mandate of ensuring that students who come from poor socio-economic backgrounds are assisted with food and resources. On the contrary, participants also reported the dynamics that accompany the provision of these services.

4.6.1. Residence parties

During the interviews, three participants expressed their feelings on the programmes that the university's DSRA run to ensure cohesive living in student residences. They mentioned that residence parties have the ability to bring students together to socialise, get to know each other, network and build new friendships, which is something they do not normally do on a day-to-day basis. Participants noted that residence parties hosted by the university's DSRA are fun and they purport to encourage a culture of social cohesion among students. The findings also reveal that such social events are intended to encourage togetherness and a sense of social security among students. Students stated:

“Residence parties are always exciting experiences; I have been attending them since my first year. They understand that we are facing a lot of pressures as students, so I think this student housing [DSRA] hosts these parties for us to distress from all the academic pressures we face during the academic year. These parties also help us as Residence mates to socialise because some of us do not even have fun as a result of our studies and other academic responsibilities. It is always fun. I do not know how this happens but you find even quiet people laughing, singing and playing with others, of which is something they do not always do. So, residence parties always bring that togetherness among us.” (Participant 1)

“Student housing [DSRA] hosts these parties for us to socialise as students of the same residence.” Participant 4)

“I think what is fun about residence parties is not only the braai and cold drinks but being together as students of Alert Luthuli Residence is always good. We play games together; we eat together and sometimes you get to speak with residence mates that you never spoke to before. This on its own shows that student housing wants us to socialise and have fun as students.” (Participant 8)

Participants also highlighted the ‘vibe’ and social atmosphere that gatherings such as the residence parties come with. They expressed feelings of happiness and togetherness among students through elements of singing and dancing that make such social gatherings to be enjoyable. Similarly, this draws into one of the five principles and values of Afrocentrism which is the ‘spiritual nature of human beings’ (Reviere, 2006). This principle suggests that people of African descent value togetherness over materialism. Singing and dancing together in social gatherings are spiritual for Africans. In another work that is consistent with this study, Mbiti (1990) assert that African religion and philosophy define the spirituality of people of African descent as an invisible substance that connects people with the creator (God) and something special.

4.6.2. Distribution of food parcels

During the interviews, the university’s DRSA programmes were reported to not only create cohesive living but to generally enhance the well-being of students in the university residences. This subtheme looks at how the programme of food parcel distribution initiated by the university’s – Campus Clinic and Campus HIV/AIDS Support Unit (CHASU) supports the values of Ubuntu. CHASU has been distributing food parcels to students in need within the university residences. They do this with the help of Residence Assistants (RAs), who attend to student-related matters in allocated university residences. This initiative highlights the spirit of giving and sharing, which are principles of communalism that are shaped by the philosophy of Ubuntu (Mabovula, 2011). During interviews, students who had received food parcels shared their experiences. Although they were grateful for the opportunity to receive food parcels, they noted that it is embarrassing to be seen collecting free food. This is in line with a recent study in South Africa, which explains the phenomenon of peer pressure among students with the

IsiXhosa phrase “*Bazo thini abantu?*” – translated to “What would people say?” to highlight how students care about how others perceive them (Mansvelt et al., 2022). The participants’ remarks were:

“I have taken the food parcel from our RA before. As much as I know that I needed food, it is always not easy to take without feeling a bit embarrassed. I know it would have been easy if it was given to everybody at Res. There is that tendency that everybody would know that when you take the food parcel, it means you do not have money to buy whatever you like or you are poor. I do not like to be seen in the receiving hand. You know especially us as girls, we like to gossip - everybody will be speaking about me. No!” (Participant 3)

“I have never taken food from RA. But I think the distribution of food parcels is very important, I know a friend who ends up using his NSFAS money to support his family. He always takes food parcels and they have been very helpful to him.” (Participant 13)

“When we are called to go and take food, I go and take mine even if I still have food. I do this because people are always embarrassed to take food and I do not know why. They give us this food because they know some of us do not have funding and some of us are coming from poor backgrounds.” (Participant 15)

The above extracts illustrate the pivotal role of the university's programmes in integrating Ubuntu philosophy into student residences. The values and principles of Afrocentricity and Ubuntu are evident in the aforementioned programmes by the University. The findings also uncover participants’ positive responses to food assistance. However, some of them felt uneasy about accepting this aid, expressing a preference for more discreet methods. One participant mentioned discomfort with being seen as a recipient, a sentiment that appears contradictory to Ubuntu’s principles, as giving and receiving are inherent to the philosophy (Mabovula, 2011). This points towards a shifting landscape, marked by the increasing influence of Western values among university students. The latter is highly dominant in the Western context, emphasising individualism and self-centredness of human beings (Asante, 2003).

4.6.3. *Sharing of residence facilities*

This sub-theme zooms into the sharing of facilities within student residences, encompassing areas such as bathrooms, kitchens, refrigerators, and television rooms. During the interviews, participants discussed their encounters with sharing facilities and the challenges that arise when differing preferences clash. Mazama (2003) and Mabovula (2011) viewed sharing as strongly influenced by the philosophy of Ubuntu. Sharing is also in line with the definition of social cohesion. On the contrary, the sharing of resources is sometimes viewed by participants as part of the causes of conflicts that generally arise in student residences. Zululand Observer (2018) reported a murder case at the UNIZULU, where one student from Port Shepstone was stabbed to death by his roommate whom he shared with the residence bedroom. During the interviews, participants mentioned that:

“Sharing is good if you happen to find a person that you can get along with. A person that you can talk to and a person with respect. The problem is that sometimes you get to be allocated with a scruffy person. In that case, it is inevitable that a conflict will arise. I like to stay in a clean room, and even in the morning I wake up and do my bed. Some roommates do not want to even sweep the floor. The conflicts always start when you try to confront a person and sometimes it does not end well. In 2018 I had to be separated from my roommates because of such issues.” (Participant 1)

“I think the problem is allocating people who are totally different in one room. It will definitely be hard for them to stay together. There were two roommates in one of the off-campus residences I was staying in, these two roomies use to always fight and sometimes we use to mediate when a conflict arise between them. The other one was too focused on his studies, and he use to study in their room when he is not on campus. The other one was full of life and he used to invite his friends to come over and drink alcohol. That is why there was always a conflict between them because they were totally different in terms of their lifestyle.” (Participant 10)

“In this residence, we do not share rooms, but I once had a roommate off-campus and we had a very good relationship - we were like brothers. But I am aware of the conflicts that usually take place at student residences. In my own experience off-campus, my roommate was fighting because one of them was not taking responsibility to make the place clean. He used to come with his girlfriends without

letting the other roommate be aware of such. This used to cause inconvenience to the other roommates which is why they were always fighting.” (Participant 15)

While sharing rooms in university residences is often intended to foster connections and strengthen social unity among students with diverse backgrounds, the findings of this study unveil a surprising aspect. Participants mentioned that the shared use of residence facilities has emerged as a primary trigger for conflicts among university residence students. The root causes appear to be the lack of effective communication and the variations in lifestyles. These factors perpetuate disputes and conflicts among students staying in university residences. Consequently, this mix of conflicting behaviours presents a notable challenge to maintaining harmonious communal living among room-sharing students. In addition, some students possess traits of self-centeredness and individualism, lacking fundamental respect for their peers and deviating from the Afrocentrism principles. Reviere (2006) argues that people of African descent value interpersonal relationships. Therefore, reported conflicts between students are not in line with African value systems and principles (Reviere, 2006). Furthermore, such conflicts also differ from communal cultural values noted by Mabovula (2011).

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings and the analysis emanating from the insightful interviews between the researcher and participants. Using 15 in-depth interviews, this study’s findings were presented through thematic analysis. Interestingly, the three objectives of this study were explored and the findings resonated with some previous literature and Afrocentrism principles. The findings revealed that participants possess a good grasp of the Ubuntu philosophy and its principles. However, the findings also indicated that understanding Ubuntu alone is not sufficient, putting it into practice presents its own challenges. These challenges encompass factors such as excessive alcohol and substance use, the dominance of Western values among students and conflict arising from shared living spaces. The study also zoomed into initiatives by UKZN, which aimed at promoting unity and social cohesion among students. Participants highlighted the lack of proper supervision during residence parties, which could disrupt Ubuntu values.

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the findings and discussions of this study, in alignment with available literature and Afrocentrism theory, were presented and guided the structure of this current chapter. This chapter delves into the recommendations and major conclusions derived from the findings. As discussed in Chapter four, this study provided students with a platform to share their lived experiences regarding the philosophy of Ubuntu within university residence spaces. By employing the Afrocentric paradigm and theory, this study allowed participants to express their experiences, values, beliefs, and epistemologies in a culturally relevant manner reflective of an African identity. However, it was evident that some students embraced Eurocentric ideologies in their daily practices, which were perceived as a threat to Ubuntu by other participants in the study.

5.2. Major conclusions based on objectives

Based on these findings, three main themes emerged, each encompassing at least two sub-themes that collectively narrate the overarching narrative of the study. Significantly, each theme was aligned with the objectives of the study and Afrocentric principles. University residences were acknowledged as spaces that offer opportunities for embracing Ubuntu principles, albeit contingent on how students shape their environment – whether as a harmonious communal space or one of isolation. Overall, this study found that the values of Ubuntu foster social cohesion among students at university residences. This was evident in how students share food and residential utilities, relate to one another during social events, show empathy during times of grief, and support one another by helping with schoolwork and sometimes cooking and eating together. Notably, despite growing up in an era where technology and social media often prioritise individualism, as influenced by Western values, it was striking that participants continue to embody the Ubuntu values instilled in them by their elders. Additionally, it was clear that they effectively applied the values of Ubuntu in communal living spaces with other students. Furthermore, the study corroborated the underlying assumption mentioned in Chapter one, particularly concerning some students’

tendencies towards isolation due to challenges in interpersonal communication. In this section, the major conclusions for the three objectives are presented:

Objective 1: To explore the knowledge and understanding of Ubuntu among university residence students.

In this study, the researcher aimed to explore participants' understanding of the concept of 'Ubuntu' and how they articulated it in their own words. Interestingly, all participants demonstrated an understanding of Ubuntu, as they defined it with common and thematically related words such as humanity, respect, sharing, and living in harmony with others. Additionally, most participants referenced the well-known Ubuntu idiom "Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu," translating to "I am because we are." This idiom has been widely used by African scholars to illustrate unity among Africans and emphasise the Afrocentric perspectives that are integral to African ways of living. As a study of African university students, this highlights that Ubuntu, as an African-coined concept, is widely recognised among Africans because the university students were able to define it from their own African knowledge point and perspectives, which was free from any imposition of Eurocentric views on African life.

This study also aimed to understand the shared values of Ubuntu within university residences. During interviews, participants highlighted that they demonstrate Ubuntu in university residences through sharing, collaboration, and mutual respect. Moreover, participants expressed the belief that embracing values of communalism, such as supportiveness, cooperation, solidarity, and collaboration, is essential for survival in university residences. These values helped them combat feelings of isolation and loneliness. Furthermore, participants mentioned using Ubuntu principles for conflict resolution by acknowledging their differences and showing tolerance towards each other, being relatable, and respecting others' differences. This aspect was particularly intriguing, considering that university students often come from diverse backgrounds and often clash (i.e. through fights) if they are not willing to understand each other's perspectives. However, the findings of this study revealed that participants were consistently willing to work together to resolve their differences during times of conflict. This emphasises the importance of promoting Ubuntu principles to create a harmonious and supportive living environment in university residences. These findings related to the theory of Afrocentricity, as they suggest the importance of African perspectives, values

and experiences in shaping societal structures and interactions among university residence students.

Objective 2: To examine the practice (or lack thereof) of Ubuntu in university student residences.

Ubuntu as a philosophy of African living is commendable, yet some individuals struggle to translate its values into practice. This study aimed to explore how participants embody Ubuntu in their daily lives. Through interviews, it became evident that participants actively apply and uphold Ubuntu values within university residences. It is noteworthy that participants utilise Ubuntu principles as coping mechanisms to address challenges such as loneliness, hunger, and poverty. They engage in activities like food sharing, socialising, and spending time together to nurture a sense of community. Moreover, participants highlighted university programmes that promote Ubuntu values by fostering togetherness and unity. These initiatives include providing transport for students to attend the funerals of their fellow residents, which showcases empathy and nurturing positive relationships within the community of students. This emphasises how people of African descent cultivate social relationships and connections during times of grief and adversity, suggesting that being African entails ‘doing everything together’ and that ‘if you're hurt, let us all feel the pain that you feel.’ Therefore, it was striking to observe that students also employ such practices within university residences.

During the interviews, participants were asked why they practice the values of Ubuntu. Many cited being raised with a strong emphasis on community. It was evident that participants perceived the value of Ubuntu as an integral part of their identity, having grown up in environments where the African value system, closely linked to Ubuntu principles, is strongly emphasised. Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of working together to address the challenges they face as students in university residences. This behaviour demonstrates a communal approach to living, consistent with how African scholars describe African communities and how people of African descent relate to one another. It suggests that African individuals often view their actions as equally beneficial to others and themselves, reflecting a deeply ingrained sense of collective well-being.

Related to the above, another major conclusion drawn from the study is that participants highly valued the role their elders played in their upbringing, particularly in instilling the values of

Ubuntu. They attributed their practice of Ubuntu values, such as sharing and living cohesively with other students, to the upbringing they received at home. During the interviews, participants expressed that the wisdom and guidance of their elders served as a constant reminder of the importance of coexistence among students in university residences. This highlights the enduring influence of intergenerational teachings on fostering harmonious living in diverse environments such as university student residences. Additionally, this aligns with one of the seven principles delineated by Mazama (2003, p. 27) regarding “African experience guiding and informing all inquiries”, which emphasises the significant importance of communal learning and the role of elders in transmitting knowledge.

Finally, participants believed that the use of alcohol and substances in university residences poses a significant challenge to the full application and functionality of Ubuntu in university residences. While participants acknowledged that drinking alcohol as fellow residents can foster socialisation and help them learn more about each other during social events hosted by DSRA, they were also aware of the negative impacts alcohol has on maintaining peace. It was particularly striking that participants associated alcohol and substance abuse with misbehaviour during conflicts, viewing such behaviours as un-African. This suggests that anything leading them away from upholding their African values of Ubuntu, such as respect and living in harmony, is considered un-African and a threat to African identity. Additionally, they linked the non-application of Ubuntu to the dominance of Western ideologies, noting that learning and teaching in African universities are predominantly influenced by Western literature and perspectives.

Objective 3: To determine the potential of Ubuntu in promoting and fostering social cohesion among university residence students.

The final objective aimed to determine how Ubuntu values promote and foster social cohesion among students in university residences. During the interviews, participants expressed the belief that the university’s DSRA effectively promotes and fosters social cohesion in university residences. They highlighted that the DSRA organises annual residence parties, with an aim to bring all students within each residence together to socialise, get to know each other, and build new networks. Additionally, participants mentioned the food parcels programmes, also run by the DSRA, which aim to enhance the well-being of students who cannot afford to buy their own groceries. This implies that initiatives deeply rooted in Ubuntu values, such as those

implemented by DSRA, have the power to foster a supportive and cohesive community of students within university residences because they promote social interactions and address the basic needs of students. Despite considering all other experiences of participants, this finding also intrigued the researcher because they can attest to its validity based on their firsthand experience. As an “active participant”, as delineated by the third principle outlined by Mazama (2003, p. 27) regarding the importance of “Involvement in the subject” during their tenure at the university residence, serving on the House committee, and collaborating with DSRA, the researcher witnessed this phenomenon firsthand.

Sharing, as a principle of Ubuntu, was highlighted as a way to promote and foster social cohesion in university residences. Participants noted that while sharing rooms is intended to foster connections and strengthen social unity among students from diverse communities, it can also be a primary trigger for conflicts, especially when roommates do not get along. Participants believed that sharing rooms works when roommates adopt Ubuntu values, understand each other and acknowledge their differences. However, they also noted that some students exhibit self-centeredness and individualism, lacking fundamental respect for their peers and deviating from Afrocentric principles. This suggests that while the principle of sharing has the potential to foster social cohesion, its success depends on the interpersonal dynamics and mutual respondents among university residence students.

5.3. Recommendations

This section presents the recommendations derived from the findings of this study. Firstly, this study advocates for ongoing mass conscientisation regarding the philosophy of Ubuntu in building communities and fostering positive social relations. The DSRA, together with the university management, should continue leading initiatives and implementing programmes that are characterised by Ubuntu values. Ubuntu, which encapsulates the idea of “I am because we are,” serves as a powerful framework for promoting collective responsibility and empathy in social relations (Ajitoni, 2024). This study revealed that there is a lack of proper supervision during DSRA programmes such as residence parties, brawls, sports days, and soccer games. Therefore, it is recommended that there should be strong supervision during social gatherings, involving entities like RMS and representatives from DSRA. This supervision will ensure that students comply to rules and regulations promulgated by the DSRA.

This study emphasises that there is an important role that elders play in instilling the values of Ubuntu in younger generations. Elders serve as custodians of cultural wisdom and values, and their involvement can bridge the generational gap, ensuring that traditional values are preserved and passed down (Morse, 2018). If practised, this ancient value system prevents chaos and disruption in institutions of higher learning. Considering that the world has changed and often favours Western ideologies, it is recommended to incorporate Ubuntu principles into school curricula and educational programmes at all levels in Africa. Furthermore, Ubuntu is against all forms of oppression, exploitation and violence, highlighting the need for conscientisation in all spaces where human beings interact with one another, including schools, universities and places of work. This study, alongside previous works by African scholars, emphasises that Ubuntu philosophy is not only limited to the understanding of the concept alone but it represents a pinnacle of human existence requiring practical application. Therefore, efforts should be made to integrate Ubuntu principles into everyday life to recreate a culture of empathy, respect, and communal responsibility.

This study has revealed that there is a dominance of Eurocentric values among students in university residences, which signals a high level of historical amnesia among them (Chiumia, 2012). This lapse in memory regarding the rich history, values, and epistemologies specific to university residences emphasises the need for more intensive research. Thus, this study recommends that social scientists should conduct comprehensive research and investigations into African Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Such research would need to explore how this body of knowledge can be utilised in contemporary and modern society to restore humanity and positive social bonds in society. Moreover, this research could extend its focus to university student residences to effectively restore humanity and promote social cohesion within these spaces that have unfortunately become spaces of chaos, violence and immoral behaviours deviating from African beliefs.

The findings of this study revealed that Eurocentric value systems, which often promote and prioritise individualistic behaviours, fall short of maintaining humanity and positive social relations among students staying in university residences. As a result, this study recommends embracing *Sankofa*, a Ghanaian principle that encourages looking back to the past to retrieve what is valuable and applying it in the present. The Sankofa paradigm serves as a strategy for reclaiming the African people's optimal cultural space, with the aim of shifting the African-centred frame of reference from the periphery to the core of African life and cultural creativity (Tondi, 2017). Additionally, researchers can also engage with knowledge keepers of African

Indigenous Knowledge Systems such as Mkhulu Nsingiza from the Great Empire of Kemet, to gain deeper insights and perspectives. Collaborating with such custodians of ancient wisdom allows for a more authentic integration of indigenous epistemologies, which would enrich contemporary scholarship and foster a holistic understanding of African cultural heritage and its relevance in addressing modern challenges (Ihejirika, 2024).

In South Africa, where the cultural tapestry is rich and diverse, the need for culturally relevant approaches in student counselling departments cannot be overstated. Although unrelated to the findings of this study, incidents that occurred during the interviews involved participants tapping into their past negative experiences. In response, the researcher, who is trained in social work and psychology, provided counselling support to the participants. As institutions responsible for nurturing holistic student development, South African universities must ensure that their counselling departments embrace approaches that resonate deeply with the cultural contexts of their students. A culturally competent counselling approach can empower students to navigate their challenges with a sense of belonging and identity (Fields, 2020). This means that universities should adopt an African-centred approach within South African university counselling departments, particularly through the inclusion of social workers well-versed in understanding the African value systems. The significance of African-centred approach in counselling lies in its recognition of the unique cultural, historical, and societal factors that shape the experiences and worldviews of African individuals and communities. This approach also acknowledges the strengths, resilience, and collective wisdom inherent in African cultures, offering a framework that resonates with the lived realities of South African students. By integrating such an approach, counselling departments can better serve the diverse needs of students and empower them to navigate their personal and academic challenges in a much more aligned way with Afrocentrism.

Some key components of an African-centred approach include cultural competence, where social workers within university counselling departments should possess a deep understanding of African cultures, including their norms, belief systems, and healing practices. This entails ongoing cultural competency training and engagement with diverse African communities to ensure sensitivity and relevance in counselling interventions. Additionally, Ubuntu philosophy should be integrated as it is an African philosophy that emphasises interconnectedness, empathy, and communal support, which should serve as a guiding principle in counselling interactions. Incorporating Ubuntu into counselling practices can create a nurturing environment that promotes healing and reconciliation (Chigangaidze, 2022). Social workers

can infuse Ubuntu into therapeutic approaches, which would foster a sense of belonging and collective responsibility for counselled students. Furthermore, indigenous healing practices should be incorporated. These healing practices should include storytelling, rituals, and community ceremonies, which can provide culturally meaningful avenues for students to address psychological distress and promote holistic well-being. Social workers should also collaborate with traditional healers and elders to honour and integrate these practices into counselling services. Lastly, intersectionality and contextualisation are also vital for an African-centred approach. Recognising the intersectionality of identities and experiences within the African context is crucial. Social workers should contextualise counselling interventions within the broader socio-political, economic, and historical realities of South Africa, which would address systemic injustices and empower students as agents of change.

5.4. Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to explore the value of Ubuntu in fostering cohesive living among students residing in university residences at a university in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Using qualitative approaches alongside the Afrocentrism paradigm and theory, the study conducted in-depth interviews with 15 undergraduate and postgraduate students residing at Albert Luthuli residence from UKZN. The study had three objectives, including exploring the knowledge and understanding of Ubuntu among university residence students, examining how Ubuntu is being practised or not practised in university student residences, and lastly, determining the potential of Ubuntu in promoting and fostering social cohesion among university residence students. Interestingly, the findings of this study were directly aligned with each of these objectives and the Afrocentrism theory.

During the interviews, participants reflected on their experiences of living at a university residence in relation to how they and other students uphold Ubuntu philosophy within these spaces. The findings revealed that participants have a solid grasp of the understanding and knowledge of Ubuntu philosophy and its underlying principles. Participants frequently used terms like respect, humanity, sharing, and living in harmony to describe Ubuntu. They also stressed that a core value of Ubuntu is assisting others without expecting reciprocation, which embodies values such as humility, solidarity, hospitality, and mutual care. However, the findings also indicated that comprehending Ubuntu alone is insufficient, as putting it into practice presents challenges. Participants mentioned that while some students find it easy to

apply Ubuntu values to cope with university life challenges, others resort to alcohol and substance abuse due to feelings of isolation or familial issues they prefer not to share. The influence of Eurocentric values at university residences was also noted, which was anticipated as universities often impart Eurocentric and Western ideas through the curriculum, and some students lack exposure to Ubuntu from older generations at home.

Participants highlighted challenges related to sharing spaces and facilities, when they have conflicting ideas with other students or if there is inconsiderate behaviour from other students, which then leads to conflicts. They also noted the lack of proper supervision during social gatherings, which they believed could undermine Ubuntu values of respect and harmony. In response to the findings, in the previous section (5.2), the study emphasised the importance of integrating an African-centred approach in all facets of African society, from child-rearing to education and social work practices. Besides identifying research gaps that were mentioned in 5.2, which necessitates future exploration of African value systems, further research should also explore how the current generation can impart Ubuntu values to future generations, considering the evolving world and technologies that sometimes challenge and undermine African value systems.

REFERENCES

- Achebe, C. (1958). *Things fall apart*. London: Heinemann.
- African News Agency. (2018). *Universities are for learning, not murder – ANC*. Independent Online (IOL).
- Agherdien, N., and Petersen, N. (2016). The challenges of establishing social learning spaces at a Johannesburg university student residence: Student views. *Africa Education Review*, 13(2), pp. 64-81.
- Ajitoni, B. D. (2024). Ubuntu and the philosophy of community in African thought: An exploration of collective identity and social harmony. *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, 7(3), pp. 1-14.
- Akinola, A. O., and Uzodike, U. O. (2018). Ubuntu and the quest for conflict resolution in Africa. *Journal of Black Studies*, 49(2), pp. 91-113.
- Ali, T., and Shishigu, A. (2020). Implications of ubuntu/synergy for the education system of Ethiopia. *Education Research International*, 2020(1), pp. 1-11.
- Ani, M. (1994). *Yurugu: An Africa-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior*. Trenton: Africa World Press
- Asante, M. K. (1983). The ideological significance of Afrocentricity in intercultural communication. *Journal of black studies*, 14(1), pp.3-19.
- Asante, M. K. (1990). *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge*. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Asante, M. K. (2000). *The Egyptian philosophers: ancient African voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten*. Chicago: African American Images.
- Asante, M. K. (2003). *Afrocentricity: The theory of social change*. Washington, D.C.: African American Images.
- Asante, M. K. (2018). The classical African concept of Maat and human communication. *Black/Africana communication theory*, pp. 11-23.
- Asante, M. K. (2019). *The history of Africa: The quest for eternal harmony*. New York: Routledge

- Babbie, E. R. (2010). *The practice of social research*. Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage.
- Beauchamp, T. L. (1982). *Ethical issues in social science research*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Bennett, T. W. (2011). Ubuntu: an African equity. *Potchefstroom electronic law journal*, 14(4), pp. 30-61.
- Bertram, C., and Christiansen, I. (2015). *Understanding research: An introduction to reading research*. Hatfield: Van Schaik Publishers
- Biko, S. (2017). *I write what I like: Selected writings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bodibe, R. C. (1993). What is the truth? Being more than just a jesting Pilate in South African psychology. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 23(2), pp.53-58.
- Bornman, E. (2014). Post-apartheid South Africa: A United or a Divided Nation?. In *Symbols that bind, symbols that divide: The semiotics of peace and conflict* (pp. 181-205). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., and Terry, G. (2019). Thematic analysis. *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences*, pp. 843-860.
- Chigangaidze, R. K. (2022). Utilising Ubuntu in social work practice: Ubuntu in the eyes of the multimodal approach. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 36(3), pp. 291-301.
- Chilisa, B. (2012). *Indigenous research methodologies*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington, DC.: SAGE Publications.
- Chilisa, B. (2017). Decolonising transdisciplinary research approaches: an African perspective for enhancing knowledge integration in sustainability science. *Sustainability Science*, 12(5), pp. 813-827.
- Chilisa, B., and Preece, J. (2005). *Research methods for adult educators in Africa*. Cape Town: Pearson Education.
- Chilisa, B., and Kawulich, B. (2012). Selecting a research approach: Paradigm, methodology and methods. *C Wagner, B Kawulich, & M Garner, Doing social research: A global context*, pp. 51-61.

- Chiumia, C.C. (2012). *Historical amnesia: A study into the causes of the disconnection between communities and their rock art sites at Chongoni rock art World Heritage Site* (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand).
- Clarke, J. H. (1974). *Cheikh Anta Diop and the New Light on African History*. Chicago: Brawtley Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative and mixed methods approaches*. London and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., and Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Diop, C. A. (1988). *Precolonial Black Africa*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press.
- Diop, C. A. (1989). *The cultural unity of Black Africa: The domains of patriarchy and of matriarchy in classical antiquity*. London: Karnak House Publishers.
- Diop, C. A. (1991). *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology*. New York: Lawrence Hill.
- Diop, C. A. (1993). *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*. New York: Lawrence Hill.
- Dowding, D. (2013). Best Practices for Mixed Methods Research in the Health Sciences Qualitative Methods. *Qualitative Social Work*, 12(4), pp. 541-545.
- Doyisa, N., Maharaj, P., and Dunn, S. (2023). Older men, younger women: blesser–blessee relationships among university students in Durban, South Africa. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 25(11), pp. 1530-1542.
- Eliastam, J. L. (2015). Exploring ubuntu discourse in South Africa: Loss, liminality and hope. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 36(2), pp. 1-8.
- Engelbrecht, L.K. (2019). Towards authentic supervision of social workers in South Africa. *The Clinical Supervisor*, pp. 1-25.
- Falola, T. (2017). *Africanizing knowledge: African studies across the disciplines*. London: Routledge.

- Fanon, F. (2008). *Black skin, white masks*. New York City: Grove press.
- Fanon, F. (2007). *The wretched of the earth*. New York City: Grove/Atlantic, Inc.
- Fields, C. W. (2020). In the Spirit of Ubuntu: Educating and Leading Through an African-Centered Paradigm. *Journal of Education Human Resources*, 38(2), pp. 173-193.
- Firth-Cozens, J. (2001). Medical students stress. *Medical Education*, 35, pp. 6-7.
- Fisher, S., and Hood, B. (1987). The stress of the transition to university: a longitudinal study of psychological disturbance, absent-mindedness and vulnerability to homesickness. *British journal of psychology*, 78(4), pp. 425-441.
- Gbadegesin, J., Marais, L., Von Maltitz, M., Cloete, J., Lenka, M., Rani, K., Campbell, M., Denoon-Stevens, S., Venter, A., Koetaan, Q., and Pretorius, W. (2022). Student Housing Satisfaction at a South African University. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, pp.1-21.
- Gisele, M. (2002). Stress in graduate medical degree. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 177, pp. 10-11.
- Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2016). Ubuntu and the challenges of multiculturalism in South Africa. *Journal of Moral Education*, 45(1), pp. 41-54.
- Graham, M. J. (1999). The African-centered worldview: Toward a paradigm for social work. *Journal of Black Studies*, 30(1), pp. 103-122.
- Gumbo, M.T. (2014). Elders Decry the Loss of Ubuntu. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(10), pp. 67-77.
- Gyekye, K. (1996). *African cultural values: An introduction*. Chicago: Sankofa Pub Co.
- Hailey, J. (2008). *Ubuntu: A literature review*. London: Tutu Foundation.
- Handongwe, S. (2017). Ending poverty through ubuntu. *Psychology Research*, 7(11), pp. 592-603.
- Harwood, S. A., Hunt, M. B., Mendenhall, R., and Lewis, J. A. (2012). Racial microaggressions in the residence halls: Experiences of students of color at a

- predominantly White university. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 5(3), pp. 159-173.
- Henrard, K. (2002). Post apartheid South Africa's democratic transformation process: Redress of the past, reconciliation and 'unity in diversity'. *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, 1(3), pp. 18-38.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (1982). Political Violence and Political Murder: Comments on Franklin Ford's Essay. *Social Protest, Violence and Terror in Nineteenth-and Twentieth-century Europe*, pp. 13-19.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (1992). *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hunter, M. (2002). The materiality of everyday sex: thinking beyond 'prostitution'. *African studies*, 61(1), pp. 99-120.
- Idoniboye-Obu, S., and Whetho, A. (2008). Ubuntu: 'You are because I am' or 'I am because you are'?. *Inform*, pp. 69-70.
- Ihejirika, C. (2024). Harnessing African Indigenous Knowledge Systems for Knowledge Production: A Redefinition of a Culture-Centric Epistemology. *Journal of Contemporary Philosophical and Anthropological Studies*, 2(1), pp. 3-14.
- Kamri, K. A., Abd Hamid, A. H., Zan, U. M. S. M., Abdullah, A., Jalil, F., and Noor, M. M. (2021). Social Cohesion Strengthens Social Ties among University Students in Malaysia. *South Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(6), pp. 14-25.
- Karenga, M. (2003). *Maat, the moral ideal in ancient Egypt: A study in classical African ethics*. London: Routledge.
- Khoza, R. J. (2005). *Let Africa lead*. Sunninghill: Vezubuntu.
- Kushner, H.I., and Sterk, C.E. (2005). The limits of social capital: Durkheim, suicide, and social cohesion. *American Journal of Public Health*, 95(7), pp. 1139-1143.
- Kyei, K.A., and Ramagoma, M. (2013). Alcohol consumption in South African universities: Prevalence and factors at the University of Venda, Limpopo province. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 36(1), pp. 77-86.

- Lee, J., and Graham, A. V. (2001). Students' perception of medical school stress and their evaluation of a wellness elective. *Medical education*, 35(7), pp. 652-659.
- Lei, J., Calley, S., Brosnan, M., Ashwin, C., and Russell, A. (2018). Evaluation of a Transition to University Programme for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, pp. 1-15.
- Letseka, M. (2012). In defence of Ubuntu. *Studies in philosophy and education*, 31, pp. 47-60.
- Lincoln, Y.S., and Guba, E.G. (1986). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New directions for program evaluation*, 1986(30), pp. 73-84.
- Lumumba-Kasongo, T. (2018). Ubuntu and Pan-Africanism: The Dialectics of Learning About Africa. In *Re-Visioning Education in Africa* (pp. 35-54). Manda: Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Lushaba, L. S. (2009). *Development as modernity, modernity as development*. Leiden: African Books Collective.
- Lushaba, L. S. (2013). Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity. *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, 17(1), pp. 139-145.
- Lushaba, L. S. (2015). *Theoretical reflections on the epistemic production of colonial difference* (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand).
- Mabovula, N. N. (2011). The erosion of African communal values: A reappraisal of the Ubuntu philosophy. *Inkanyiso: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(1), pp. 38-47.
- Mahlangu, T., and Mphahlele, M. J. (2019). An investigation into the challenges experienced by students in university residences in South Africa. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 7(1), pp. 1-17.
- Mamdani, M. (2018). *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Mansvelt, N., Schenck, R., and Soji, Z. (2022). Students' Conceptualizations of Student Hunger. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 36(5), pp. 219-239

- Maree, K. (2007). *First steps in research*. Hatfield: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Masango M. J. S. (2006). African spirituality that shapes the concept of ubuntu. *Verbum Et Ecclesia Jrg*, 27(3),pp. 930-943.
- Mawondo, S.Z. (2006). Villagers in the city: re-examining the African sense of persons and community. *Boleswa Occasional Papers in Theology and Religion*, 2006(1), pp.12-20.
- Mbembe, A. (2001). *On the postcolony (Vol. 41)*. California: University of California Press.
- Mazama, A. (2003). *The Afrocentric Paradigm*. Trenton: Africa World Pr.
- Mbembe, A. (2015). *Decolonizing knowledge and the question of the archive*. Johannesburg: WISER.
- Mbembe, A. (2016). Decolonizing the university: New directions. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 15(1), pp. 29-45.
- Mbembe, A. (2017). *Critique of black reason*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Mbembe, A., and Nuttall, S. (2004). Writing to the world from an African metropolis. *Public Culture*, 16(3), pp. 347-372.
- Mbiti, J. S. (1990). *African religions & philosophy*. Boston: Heinemann.
- Mbiti, J. S. (2015). *Introduction to African religion*. Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc.
- Mbokane, A. (2009). *Research Design, Research Method and Population*. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Mignolo, W. D. (2000). *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- Mignolo, W. D. (2007). Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality. *Cultural studies*, 21(2-3), pp. 449-514.
- Mignolo, W. D., and Walsh, C. E. (2018). *On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Mkabela, Q. (2005). Using the Afrocentric method in researching indigenous African culture. *The Qualitative Report*, 10(1), pp. 178-189.

- Mkhize, S. P., and Mthembu, A. (2023). Unpacking pervasive heteronormativity in sub-Saharan Africa: Opportunities to embrace multiplicity of sexualities. *Progress in Human Geography*, 47(3), pp. 377-391.
- Mogotsi, M., Nel, K., Basson, W. and Tebele, C. (2014). Alcohol use by students at an emerging university in South Africa. *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, 5(2), pp. 187-195.
- Mokgoro, J.Y. (1998) Ubuntu and the law in South Africa. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad*, 1(1), pp. 1-11.
- Monyae, M. D. and Du Plessis, T. (2019). Residences and social issues: Exploring the experiences of students in a South African university. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, 15(1), pp. 1-9.
- Moodley, K., and Adam, H. (2000). Race and nation in post-apartheid South Africa. *Current Sociology*, 48(3), pp.51-69.
- Morse, S. (2018). *Mind the Gap: The Potential of Generational Wisdom towards Sustainable Communities* (Master's thesis, Prescott College).
- Msibi, T. (2019). An Ubuntu framework for student support services in South African universities. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 7(1), pp. 1-18.
- Mucina, D. D. (2013). Ubuntu Orality as a Living Philosophy. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 6(4).
- Mudimbe, V.Y. (1988). *Liberty in African and Western Thought*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Independent Education.
- Mudimbe, V.Y. (1994). *Race and science*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Mugumbate, J., and Nyanguru, A. (2013). Exploring African philosophy: The value of ubuntu in social work. *African Journal of Social Work*, 3(1), pp. 82-100.
- Murithi, T. (2006). Practical peacemaking wisdom from Africa: Reflections on Ubuntu. *The journal of Pan African studies*, 1(4), pp. 25-34.
- Mutwa, C. V. M. (1969). *My people, my Africa*. New York: John Day Co.

- Mutwa, C. V. M. (1998). *Indaba, my children*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books.
- Muwanga-Zake, J. W. (2009). Building bridges across knowledge systems: Ubuntu and participative research paradigms in Bantu communities. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 30(4), pp. 413-426.
- Mzinyane, B. M. (2017). *Implementation of Diversion Services for Young Offenders Within the Emnambithi/Ladysmith Municipal Area: The Experiences and Perceptions of Key Role-players* (Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal).
- Nabudere, D.W. (2005). Ubuntu philosophy: memory and reconciliation. *Texas Scholar Works*, pp. 1-20.
- Nabudere, D. W. (2011). *Afrikology: Philosophy and Wholeness: An Epistemology*. Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa.
- Nabudere, D. W. (2012). *Afrikology and transdisciplinarity: A restorative epistemology*. Oxford: African Books Collective.
- Naidoo, V., and Mokoena, S. (2017). Accommodation challenges in higher education institutions in South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 51(2), pp. 99-109.
- Ncube, L.B. (2010). Ubuntu: A transformative leadership philosophy. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 4(3), pp.77-82.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2007). *Giving Africa voice within global governance: oral history, human rights and the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council*. Switzerland: United Nations.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2017a). The emergence and trajectories of struggles for an ‘African university’: The case of unfinished business of African epistemic decolonisation. *Kronos*, 43(1), pp. 51-77.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2017b). Decolonising research methodology must include undoing its dirty history. *Journal of Public Administration*, 52(1), pp. 186-188.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2018a). *Epistemic freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and decolonization*. London: Routledge.

- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2018b). The Dynamics of Epistemological Decolonisation in the 21st Century: Towards Epistemic Freedom. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 40 (1), pp. 16-45.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2019). Provisional Notes on Decolonizing Research Methodology and Undoing Its Dirty History. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 35(4), pp. 481-492.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. (2020a), Revisiting Nguni Formations, the Mfecane and Migrations in South-Eastern Africa. *Makerere Institute for Social Research Review*, 3, pp. 8-45.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. (2020b). Decolonization/Decoloniality: Converging African/Latin American Thinking. *Makerere Institute for Social Research Review*. 3, pp. 112-140.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2020c). The cognitive empire, politics of knowledge and African intellectual productions: reflections on struggles for epistemic freedom and resurgence of decolonisation in the twenty-first century. *Third World Quarterly*, pp. 1-20.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2020d). *Decolonization, Development and Knowledge in Africa: Turning Over a New Leaf*. London: Routledge.
- Neuman, W. L. (2011). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Neuman, W. L. (2014). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. London: Pearson Education.
- Nganase, T., Basson, W., and Van Rooyen, C. (2017). Student Perceptions and Experiences of the Living Conditions in a University Residence: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 52(1-3), pp. 155-161.
- Ngcobo, N., Mzinyane, B., and Zibane, S. (2023). Responding to Concurrent Disasters: Lessons Learnt by Social Work Academics Engaging with Flood Survivors during a COVID-19 Pandemic, in South African Townships. *The Impact of Climate Change on Vulnerable Populations*, pp. 1-19.
- Nkrumah, K. (1965). *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. London: PANAF.

- Nkrumah, K. (1978). *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization*. London: PANAF.
- Nobles, W. W., Baloyi, L., and Sodi, T. (2016). Pan African humanness and Sakhu Djaer as praxis for indigenous knowledge systems. *Alternation Journal*, (18), pp. 36-59.
- Ntshangase, N. (2016). *An examination of the implementation of Khulisa Social Solutions' juvenile diversion programmes in KwaZulu-Natal* (Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal).
- Nyaumwe, L. J., and Mkabela, Q. (2007). Revisiting the traditional African cultural framework of ubuntuism: A theoretical perspective. *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, 6(2), pp. 152-163.
- Pillay, A.L., Edwards, S.D., Sargent, C., and Dhloomo, R.M. (2001). Anxiety among university students in South Africa. *Psychological Reports*, 88(3_suppl), pp.1182-1186.
- Polit, D. F., and Beck, C. T. (2017). *Nursing Research: Gathering and Assessing Evidence for Nursing Practice*. Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer Health/Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins.
- Prah, K. K. (2018). *The challenge of decolonizing education*. Cape Town: Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society.
- Ramose, M. B. (1999). *African philosophy through Ubuntu*. Indiana: Mond Books.
- Ramose, M. B. (2002). *African philosophy through Ubuntu (Rev. ed.)*. Harare: Mond Books.
- Reviere, R. (2006). The canons of Afrocentric research. *Handbook of Black studies*, pp. 261-281.
- Shaikh, B. T., and Deschamps, J. P. (2006). Life in a university residence: issues, concerns and responses. *Education for Health*, 19(1), pp. 43-51.
- Shutte, A. (1990). Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu: an African conception of humanity. *Philosophy and Theology*, 5(1), pp. 39-54.
- Shutte, A. (2001). *Ubuntu: an ethic of a new South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster

- Singh, N., and Nkambule, M. (2018). The challenges of student accommodation in South Africa: A case study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(5), pp. 43-53.
- Stanley, D. (2003). What do we know about social cohesion: The research perspective of the federal government's social cohesion research network. *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie*, pp. 5-17.
- Statistics South Africa. (2023). *Census 2022 Population Count Results 10 October 2023*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- Streubert, H. J., and Carpenter, D. R. (2011). *Qualitative Research in Nursing: Advancing the Humanistic Imperative*. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Strydom, H., and Venter, L. (2005). Sampling and sampling methods. In *De Vos, AS, Strydom, H., Fouché, CB & Delpont, CSL*, pp. 192-203. Pretoria: JL Van Schaik Publishers.
- Swartz, L., and O'Neill, V. (2011). *Psychology: An introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tesfai, A.H. (2016). *Alcohol and substance abuse among students at University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa: the protective role of psychological capital and health promoting lifestyle* (Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal).
- Thyer, B. A. (2010). *The handbook of social work research methods*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Tondi, P. (2017). The role of the African organic intellectuals in the (re) centering of African cultural values and practices: Towards the Sankofa paradigm. *Gender and Behaviour*, 15(2), pp. 8600-8605.
- Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal. (2020). *Doing Business in KwaZulu-Natal: Economic Overview*. Pietermaritzburg: TIKZN.
- UCSF, Anova Health Institute., and WRHI (2015). *South African Health Monitoring Study (SAHMS), Final Report: The Integrated Biological and Behavioural Survey among Female Sex Workers, South Africa 2013-2014*. San Francisco: UCSF.

- UKZN-DSRA. (2022). Student Residence Policy: *Principles and Procedures*. Retrieved from <https://college.mandela.ac.za/College-of-Humanities/Resources/Downloads/UKZN-Student-Residence-Policy-2021.pdf>
- UKZN. (2022). *Annual Report 2022*. Westville: UKZN.
- wa Thiong'o, N. (1986). *Language of African Literature.*” *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: Currey.
- wa Thiong'o, N. (1992). *Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature*. Nairobi: East African Publishers.
- wa Thiong'o, N. (2009). *Re-Membering Africa*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd.
- wa Thiong'o, N. (2012). *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- wa Thiong'o, N. (2016). *Secure the base: Making Africa visible in the globe*. Kolkata: Seagull Books.
- Waghid, Y., Terblanche, J., Shawa, L. B., Hungwe, J. P., Waghid, F., and Waghid, Z. (2023). Communitality, Responsibility and Public Good for Social Justice in University Education: Some Critical Reflections on an African University. In *Towards an Ubuntu University: African Higher Education Reimagined* (pp. 59-75). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Woolman, D.C. (2001). Educational reconstruction and post-colonial curriculum development: A comparative study of four African countries. *International Education Journal*, 2(5), pp. 27- 46
- Zibane, S. Z. (2017). *Negotiating sexuality: informal sexual cultures amongst young people at a township high school in KwaZulu-Natal* (Doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal).
- Zibane, S. (2021). Ukushela: Teenage girls and boys negotiating courtship at school. *Gender, Sexuality and Violence in South African Educational Spaces*, pp.159-180.

Zondi, N. (2021). *Exploring child participation in parental divorce matters in African indigenous communities of KwaZulu-Natal* (Masters dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal).

Zululand Observer. (2018). *Bloody Sunday at Unizulu campus*. The Citizen.

ANNEXURE A: UKZN STUDENT RESIDENCE POLICY

The University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Residence Policy on Principles and Procedures outlines the financial procedures related to student residence management. The policy ensures that financial resources are managed efficiently and effectively, and that the financial interests of both the University and students are protected.

According to the University of KwaZulu-Natal (2021) some of the key financial principles and procedures outlined in the policy include:

1. **Tuition and Accommodation Fees:** All students residing in the University's student residences are required to pay tuition and accommodation fees in accordance with the University's published fees structure.
2. **Payment of Fees:** The policy stipulates that students must pay their fees upfront, and in full, at the beginning of each academic year or semester. Payment plans and financial assistance are available to qualifying students.
3. **Refunds:** The policy outlines the circumstances under which students may be entitled to a refund of their accommodation fees. This includes cases where the student withdraws from the University, is expelled or suspended, or where the student is transferred to another institution.
4. **Debt Management:** The University has the right to withhold the academic results, certificates or transcripts of students who have outstanding debts to the University. Students are therefore encouraged to ensure that their accounts are up-to-date and that they settle their debts promptly.
5. **Budgeting and Financial Planning:** The policy requires that each student residence must have a budget and a financial plan. The budget must be based on the projected income and expenses for the academic year, and the financial plan must outline the procedures for managing the residence's finances.
6. **Finance:** Students must demonstrate their ability to pay the required residence fees, for example: via evidence of a suitable financial aid package, sponsorship or by paying the required amount in cash or by other approved methods (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2021).

The above promulgated principles and procedures regarding finance, students residing in UKZN residences are bound to pay the required residence fees. However, some students do not have financial aid to pay the residence fees. This touches on the issues around financial distress which is one of the predicaments students are faced within university residences in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This further leaves students feeling helpless and isolated since some of them are afraid to speak about their issues. Consequently, they may not get assistance about any problem they are faced with.

According to the University of KwaZulu-Natal (2021), the policy aims to ensure that the financial resources of the University and its student residents are managed in a responsible and transparent manner, and that students are able to access the support and assistance they need to manage their finances while studying at the University.

ANNEXURE B: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT (ENGLISH)

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

Date: _____

Dear student

My name is Sthembiso Phoswa, I am a Master's student from the School of Applied Human Sciences in the Discipline of Social Work at University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College.

My contact details are as follows;

Cellphone Number – [REDACTED]

Email Address – [REDACTED] or 215062156@stu.ukzn.ac.za

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research about exploring existence or non-existence of Ubuntu in a residence at University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College. The aim of this research is to explore the role of Ubuntu in building social cohesion among students staying in residences at a university in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The study is expected to enroll 15 participants in total. These participants should be registered at UKZN Howard College from 2021 academic year. Moreover, the participants of the research should reside at Albert Luthuli (Tower) which is a UKZN Howard College residence. It will involve the following procedures: the researcher will ask participants questions using an interview schedule or guide. These interviews will be conducted within Albert Luthuli (Tower) residence. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be not more than 60 minutes.

The study will not involve any risks. However, it may evoke discomfort, this may because a participant might have had an unpleasant experience during his or her stay in a residence. The study will provide no direct benefits to participants. This research will contribute to the production of knowledge. The study will also conscientize students and the university management about the influence of Ubuntu philosophy in building social cohesion in university residences. The researcher must disclose in full any appropriate alternative procedures and treatment etc. that may serve as possible alternate options to study participation.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: 00003684).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at (██████████) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants may withdraw participation at any point. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled. There will not be any consequences to the participant for withdrawal from the study.

The Data will be stored in the voice recorder and be locked in the shelf. Only the researcher and supervisor will have excess to the data. The researcher will destroy this data after five years.

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled (Cohesive Living: Exploring the Value of Ubuntu Among Students Staying in Residences at a University in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa) by Sthembiso Phoswa.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at ([REDACTED] ([REDACTED] or 215062156@stu.ukzn.ac.za).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes	YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

ANNEXURE C: ISHIDI LOLWAZI KANYE NEMVUME (ISIZULU)

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

Usuku: _____

Ngiyabingelela

Igama lami ngingu-Sthembiso wakwaPhoswa. Ngingu mfundi wase Nyuvesi yaKwaZulu Natali, ngenza iziqu zeMasitazi ngaphansi kophiko lwezenhalakahle, ngaphansi komaluleki uDkt.S. Zibane.

Ngenza ucwaningo olunzulu oluhlose ukuhlola ukusetshenziswa koBuntu phakathi kwabafundi kwizizinda esikhungweni semfundo ephakeme KwaZulu-Natal, eNingizimu Afrika. Lokhu kuqonda ngizokuthola ngokucwaninga ngiphinde ngixoxisane nabafundi Lesi isiqephu sokucela imvume kubantu abawunsinsi wokuzimilela kulendawo yaseMabomvini, amalunga ophakathi asemukantsha ubomvu ezindabeni ezithinta isihloko kanye nalabo abangabaholi bomdabu.

Ukubamba iqhaza kuzohlenganisa lokhu:

Ngicela imvumo yakho ukuthi ube ingxenye yalolucwaningo. Uma uvuma, ngithembisa lokhu okulandelayo

- Ukuxoxisana okufishane nomuntu ngamunye okuzohlenganisa nemibuzo engahleliwe, okungathatha cishe imizuzu engama-60.
- Sizocela ukuqopha izingxoxo ngenhloso yokuzibhala phansi kanye nokuzihlaziya.
- Silangazelele ukuzwa imibono yakho, khumbula azikho izimpendulo ezilungile noma ezingalungile kodwa nje imicabango kanye nokuqonda kwakho mayelana.

Njengomcwaningi ngizoqikelela lokhu okulandelayo:

Labo abazinikele ekubambeni iqhaza kunezinyathelo ezizolandelwa ukuze kuvikeleke

imininingwane.

- Unemvume yokukhetha ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo. Lokho kusho ukuthi ukhululekile ukukhetha ukuthi uyalibamba iqhaza noma cha. Ngaphezu kwalokhu, uvumelekile ukuhoxa noma yinini; ngeke uhlawuliswe ngalokho, nganoma iyiphi indlela. Ngamanye amazwi, ukuhoxa ngeke kube nomphumela omubi kuwe.

- Uma ubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo, igama lakho lizovikeleka. Ukuqinisekisa lokhu, igama lakho langempela ngeke lisetshenziswe; uyonikezwa igama locwaningo (pseudonyms). Izingxoxo eziqoshiwe ngiyozigcina endaweni ephephile iminyaka emihlanu ngaphambi kokuba zishatshalaliswe futhi akekho umuntu oyovunyelwa ukuba azisebenzise ngaphandle kwemvume yakho. Lonke ulwazi ngawe oluyoqhamuka ngesikhathi socwaningo luyofihlwa noma laziwe njengolomuntu ongaziwa ngumcwaningi embikweni wakhe ukuze avikele imininingwane yakho.
- Imibuzo ezobuzwa ayidingi ukuba unikezele ngemininingwano yesenzeko ngaphandle uma wena uzithandela ungakwenza lokho, mhlawumbe ngosuke wakubona ngaphambilini, kukuwe ukuthi uzizwa ukhululekile ngokunikezela ngolwazi olungakanani. Ulwazi lwakho luyosetshenziswa njengocwaningo lwami olufushane lweziqhu zeMastazi. Imiphumela yocwaningo kungenzeka ishicilelwe kumaJenali ezemfundo, izincwadi, noma yikuphi lapho kutholakala khona isikhala. Kukho konke lokhu, imininingwane ephathelene nawe siqu sakho, iyohlala iyimfihlo. Ngingakuthokozela ukuthi uvume ukuthi ube ingxenye yalolucwaningo. Ngiyathembisa ukuthi lonke ucwaningo ngizolwenza ngenhlonipho futhi abukho ubungozi abangazithola bekukho ngenxa yokuba ingxenye yalolucwaningo Ngiyojabula uma isicelo sami siphumelele.

Yimina ozithobayo,

uSthembiso wakwaPhoswa

Inambolo yocingo: [REDACTED],

I-imeyili: 215062156@stu.ukzn.ac.za or [REDACTED]

Noma

Ungaxhumana nomqondisi ka mngcwaningi,

u- Dkt Zibane, Inombolo yocingo: 031 260 1216,

I-imeyili: ZibaneS@ukzn.ac.za

Noma

UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee,

EZOKUPHATHWA KWEZENQUBONHLE KWEZOCWANINGO EKOLISHI

LEZESINTU ESIKOLENI SEZIFUNDO NGENHLALO YOMPHAKATHI

Ihhovisi LezoCwaningo, iKhempasi i-Westville

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Ucingo: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

I-imeyili: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

UKUVUMA UKUBAMBA IQHAZA

Mina.....ngazisiwe kabanzi ngocwaningo,

Ngiyakuqonda inhloso kanye nemigomo elawula ucwaningo . Ngilifundile futhi ngaliqonda

ulwazi olubhaliwe. Nginikeziwe ithuba lokubuza imibuzo ukuze ngicaciseleke ngocwaningo futhi ngithole izimpendulo ezingigculisayo, futhi ngavuma ukuba yingxenywe yalomklamo wocwaningo.

ANNEXURE D: INTERVIEW GUIDE (ENGLISH)

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Pseudonym:

Age:

Gender:

Language:

Duration of stay at Res

Section 1: Understanding Residence Life

1. How long have you stayed in Albert Luthuli residence?
2. How would you describe the support structures of this residence?
3. How would describe your relationship with other students in this residence?
4. Would you say there is social cohesion in this student residence?

Section 2: Understanding of Ubuntu

5. How would you define Ubuntu?
6. How is Ubuntu being practised in this university residence?
7. What values have you seen within this residence that makes you think of Ubuntu?
8. Would you say every student in this residence knows that values of Ubuntu?
9. How would you explain the reasons behind students practising Ubuntu in this residence?

Section 3: Is Ubuntu being practised in University residence

10. Elaborate on instances that have made you think that Ubuntu is being practiced?
11. According to your understanding, what could be the reason behind Ubuntu being practiced in university residences?

Section 4: How can Ubuntu promote social cohesion among students residing at a university residence?

12. Have you ever attended any social event or programme that was hosted by this university residence?
13. Would you say the aim of this social event or programme promoted the objectives of social cohesion in residences?

14. Would you say students were communicating (or rather having friendly conversations) during this social event?
15. Would you say Ubuntu has the ability to promote social cohesion within university residences?

ANNEXURE E: UHLAKA LWEZINGXOXO ZOCWANINGO (ISIZULU)

Imininingwane yabantu ababambe iqhaza

Igama mbumbulu:
Iminyaka:
Ubulili:
Ulimi:
Isikhathi asihlalile ezizindeni

Isigaba sokuqala: Ukuqonda kabanzi ngesimonhlalo

1. Usuhlale isikhathi esingakanani?
2. Ungakuchaza kanjani ukubambisana kulesizinda?
3. Ungabuchaza kanjani ubudlelwane bakho nabanye abafundi abahlala kulesizinda?
4. Singavumelana ukuthi kunehlalakahle kulesizinda?

Isigaba sesibili : Ukuqonda kabanzi Ubuntu

5. Ungabuchaza kanjani Ubuntu?
6. Iziphi izindlela ezikhombisa Ubuntu kulesizinda?
7. What values have you seen within this residence that makes you think of Ubuntu? Iziphi izenzo okewazibona kulesizinda ezikhombisa Ubuntu?
8. Ungasho yin ukuthi abafundi bakulesizinda banolwazi ngoBuntu?
9. Ngokucabanga kwakho iziphi izizathu ezenza abafundi bephilisane ngoBuntu?

Isigaba sesithathu: Ukuqonda kabanzi ngokuphilisana ngoBuntu

10. Chaza kabanzi ngezimo ezikwenza ucabange ukuthi kunokuphilisana ngoBuntu kulesizinda?
11. Ngokwakho iziphi izizathu eziholela ekuphilisane ngoBuntu kulesizinda seNyuvesi?

Isigaba sesine: Ubuntu bungakugququzela kanjani ukuphilisana phakathi kwabafundi abahlala ezizindeni zemfundo ephakeme?

12. Engabe sekewawuthamela umcimbi ohlelwe ilesizinda senyuvesi?
13. Ungasho ukuthi inhlosonezinjongo zalomcimbi ziyakugququzela ukuhlala ngokuphilisana kulesizinda?
14. Ungasho ukuthi kulomcimbi abafundi babeaxoxisana futhi benokukhululekelana ndawonye?
15. Ngokubuka kwakho engabe Ubuntu bungakwazi yini ukugququzela ukuphilisana nehhlalakahle ezizindeni zemfundo ephakeme?
 - Ngicela ungiiphe izibonelo

ANNEXURE F: ETHICAL APPROVAL



Mr Sthembiso Phoswa (215062156)
School Of Applied Human Sc
Howard College

Dear Mr Sthembiso Phoswa,

Protocol reference number: 00003684

Project title: Cohesive Living: Exploring the Value of Ubuntu Among Students Staying in Residences at a University in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Exemption from Ethics Review

In response to your application received on 30 August 2019, your school has indicated that the protocol has been granted **EXEMPTION FROM ETHICS REVIEW**.

Any alteration/s to the exempted research protocol, e.g., Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment/modification prior to its implementation. The original exemption number must be cited.

For any changes that could result in potential risk, an ethics application including the proposed amendments must be submitted to the relevant UKZN Research Ethics Committee. The original exemption number must be cited.

In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE:

Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Ruth Elizabeth Teer-Tomaselli
Academic Leader Research
School Of Applied Human Sc

UKZN Research Ethics Office
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

ANNEXURE G: TURNITIN REPORT

7/8/24, 1:17 PM

Turnitin - Originality Report - MA Thesis

Turnitin Originality Report

Processed on: 03-Jul-2024 10:15 AM CAT
 ID: 2411987404
 Word Count: 34716
 Submitted: 1

Similarity Index 9%	Similarity by Source Internet Sources: 8% Publications: 3% Student Papers: N/A
--	--

MA Thesis By Phoswa Sthembiso

< 1% match (Internet from 16-Dec-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/17366/Dlamini_Thuthukani_Siphamandla_2018.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 22-Aug-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/16576/Mthembu_Zinhle_2017.pdf?s=

< 1% match (Internet from 26-Aug-2021)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/19701/Makhanya_Thembelihle_Brenda_2020.pdf

< 1% match (Internet from 10-Jan-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/19882/Campbell_Bridget_2017.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 26-Aug-2021)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/jspui/bitstream/10413/18790/1/Klaas-Makolomakwe_Gladys_Nkareng_2019.pdf

< 1% match (Internet from 31-Mar-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/20083/Gumede_Thulani_Welcome_2021.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=3

< 1% match (Internet from 04-Nov-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/21068/Gumede_Sphamandla_Simphiwe%20%202021.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 24-Sep-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/19770/Mapumulo_Sphindile_Nonhle_2021.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 24-Sep-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/20104/Awotunde_Matthew_Olusegun_2021.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match ()
 Govender, Anbanathan.. "Motivation and its impact on the performance of the supply chain department at Scott Bader.", 2018

< 1% match (Internet from 26-Aug-2021)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/jspui/bitstream/10413/15001/1/Lembede_Lunelle_P_2017.pdf

< 1% match (Internet from 15-Dec-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/13085/Muchaonyerwa_Ndakasharwa_2015.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 16-Dec-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/14671/Maharaj_Ashika_2014.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 24-Sep-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/20771/Ngcobo_Gugulethu%20Ntokozo_2019.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match ()
 Chetty, Renitha.. "Exploring the implementation of knowledge management at a contact centre in Durban.", 2016

< 1% match ()
 Mnikathi, Phumlani Samuel.. "Perspectives of principals on the position of deputy principals in selected secondary schools of uMlazi district.", 2022

< 1% match (Internet from 24-Sep-2023)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/22295/Khumalo_Eugenie_Thandeka_2023.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match ()
 Mbanga, Nandipha.. "Perceptions of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) lecturers on digital learning: a case of Umfolozi TVET.", 2017

< 1% match (Internet from 24-Sep-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/11934/Kempster_Wendy_2013.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match ()
 Reddy, Devendren Vengatas.. "An appreciative inquiry into factors inspiring strategic shared vision among leadership at the Durban University of Technology.", 2012

< 1% match (Internet from 09-Aug-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/20187/Abiwu_Lawrence_2021.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

< 1% match (Internet from 26-Jan-2023)
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249914265_Building_bridges_across_knowledge_systems_Ubuntu_and_participative_research_p

ANNEXURE H: GATEKEEPER'S LETTER (ENGLISH)



2021 May_____

████████████████████
████████████████████
4041

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Sthembiso Phoswa, a Master's student from Applied Human Sciences in the Discipline of Social Work at University of KwaZulu-Natal Howard College. I am writing to request permission to undertake research in one of your on-campus residences, Albert Luthuli (Tower).

The title of my study is Cohesive Living: Exploring the Value of Ubuntu Among Students Staying in Residences at a University in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The main aim of this study is to explore the value of Ubuntu in fostering cohesive living among students residing in university residences at a university in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Moreover, and how can the Ubuntu philosophy influence social cohesion among student in university residence.

I hope to conduct the research over a period of 5 weeks. The research will require 15 students both males and females. These students will be interviewed within their residence using an interview schedule. Participation in the study will be voluntary and non-threatening. There is no possibility of discomfort or danger that I think would be involved in my research. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured by using coded and pseudo names in the report for students who will require to disclose personal and sensitive information. Furthermore, students will be given informed consent. So that they are informed that their participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw or discontinue participation at any time. They will also have the right to refuse to answer certain questions if they choose to.

It will be greatly appreciated if permission to conduct this study would be granted. As a former House Committee and DSRA staff member, I view the proposed study as my community service to the University and the beginning of a long-term professional relationship with it.

Your co-operation in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Thank You.

Yours faithfully

Researcher: Mr. Sthembiso Phoswa

Master's student Faculty of Humanities,

School of Applied Human Sciences

Discipline of Social Work

UKZN Howard College

Cell No. [REDACTED]

Mail: [REDACTED] or

215062156@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr Sibonisile Zibane

Faculty of Humanities, School of

Applied Human Sciences

Discipline of Social Work

Howard College, Durban 4000

Tel No. (w) 031 2601216

Zibanes@ukzn.ac.za

ANNEXURE I: INCWADI YOKUCELA IMVUME (ISIZULU)



2021 May_____

4041

Ngiyabingelela

ISICELOMVUME SOKWENZA UCWANINGO

Igama lami ngingu-Sthembiso wakwaPhoswa, ngenza izifundo ze Mastazi ngaphansi kophiko lwezenhlalakahle eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natali. Ngibhala lencwadi ukucela imvume yokwenza ucwaningo kwenye yezizinda zenyuvesi ezihlala abafundi – iAlbert Luthuli, eyaziwa nge-Tower. Isihloko socwaningo sithi; Inhlalakahle: ukuhlola ukusetshenziswa koBuntu phakathi kwabafundi ezizindeni zesikhungo semfundo ephakeme KwaZulu-Natali, eNingizimu Afrika. Inhloso yalolucwaningo ukuhlola ukusetshenziswa Kanye nokungasetshenziswa koBuntu phakathi kwabafundi ezizindeni zesikhungo semfundo ephakeme KwaZulu-Natali. Lolucwaningo luphinde lubheke ukuthi Ubuntu bungakugququzela kanjani ukuphilisana phakathi kwabafundi basezizindeni zemfundo ephakeme. Ucwaningongizolwenza amasonto amahlanu alandelanayo. Ucwaningo luzobandakanya abafundi abayishumi nanhlanu (15) abesilisa nabesifazane. Izingxoxo zobuso nobuso sizozenzela esizindeni lapho kuhlala khona abafundi. Ukuzibandakanya kulolucwaningo akunabo ubungozi futhi umuntu uyazikhethela ukuthi uyazibandakanya no cha.

Umfundi uma edalula inkulumo ebucayi izogodlwa ihlale phakathi komcwaningi, umqeqeshi wocwaningo kanye nomfundi. Igama lomfundi kanye neminingwane yomfundi izogodlwa. Abafundi abazozibandakanya kulolucwaningo bazoninkwa incwadi yokubacela imvume ukuba bebambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo. Lesicelimvume siyakudalula ukuthi umfundi unalo ilungelolokuhoxa ekubambeni

iqhaza ocwaningweni uma ezizwa engasaphathekile kahle. Lesicelinvume siphinde sikudalule ukuthi umfundi unalo ilungelo lokwenqaba ukuphendula umbuzo othile.

Ngizojabula kakhulu uma ningangipha imvume yokuthi ngenze lolucwaningo esizindeni seNyuvesi. Njengomuntu oseke waba ilunga lekomidi elimele abafundi kanye nokubhekelela ukuhlala kwabafundi esizindeni senyuvesi, ngibuka lolucwaningo njengosizo engilinika umphakathi wasenyuvesi kanye nokwakha ubudlelwane bobungcweti obude nenyuvesi.

Ozithobayo,

Umcwaningi: Mr. Sthembiso Phoswa

Master's student Faculty of Humanities,

School of Applied Human Sciences

Discipline of Social Work

UKZN Howard College

Cell No. 0749232633

Mail: [REDACTED]

215062156@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Umqeqeshi: Dr Sibonisile Zibane

Faculty of Humanities, School of

Applied Human Sciences

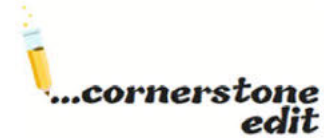
Discipline of Social Work

Howard College, Durban 4000

Tel No. (w) 031 2601216

Zibanes@ukzn.ac.za

ANNEXURE J: EDITING CONFIRMATION LETTER



Tel: +27 [REDACTED]

Email: info.cornerstoneeditors@gmail.com

Date: 30 April 2024

Confirmation of Professional Editing

Student Name: Sthembiso Phoswa

Student Number: 215062156

Degree: Master of Social Science

Title of Dissertation: Cohesive Living: Exploring the Value of Ubuntu Among Students Staying in Residences at a University in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

To Whom It May Concern:

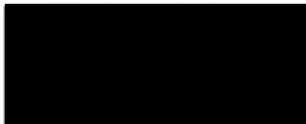
This letter serves as confirmation that the dissertation, associated with the aforementioned student's details, has undergone professional editing by an editor at Cornerstone Edit. We assure 100% language accuracy in the text and affirm that the dissertation has undergone thorough proofreading and editing to ensure proper usage of the English language, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and overall style. The assigned professional editor is duly registered as a member of the Professional Editors' Guild.

All modifications were accurately tracked using the Microsoft Word 'Track Changes' feature, providing the student with the option to either accept or reject each change individually. We trust that the dissertation, in its current state, meets the high standards set by the School/Department.

Kind regards,

--

Cornerstone Edit (PTY) LTD



CORNERSTONE EDIT (PTY) LTD

Registration number: 2021/515817/07