


Emancipatory Tendencies of Ubuntu-like Classrooms as an Enhancer of Student Academic Prowess



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ABSTRACT

Classrooms are sometimes laced with various pedagogical styles, which even though professional, may be alien to the students, leading to demotivation. Such demotivation usually results from a lack of affectionate pedagogical processes that affect students' academic prowess, such as academic performance, achievement and attainment of academic goals. A teaching-learning process that does not accommodate professional affections may lead to an unpleasant end where the classroom purposes are defeated. Hence, this study presents Ubuntu as an emancipatory philosophy that ensures unhindered student achievement and performance. The study is positioned to answer a question: How can Ubuntu be presented to unravel ineffective classroom practices towards students' emancipation. The study is designed within the transformative worldview to emancipate students and challenge the classroom status quo. This study was analysed using conceptual analysis, in which concepts derived from Ubuntu are subjected to intellectual and deductive interpretation for meaning-making. In this study, Ubuntu is presented alongside its three cardinal assumptions based on the researcher's view. The assumptions (collaboration and togetherness; humanness; recognition and respect) were analysed and correlated with the classroom activities to promote students' academic prowess. The study concludes that Ubuntu-like classrooms are the dimension of productive classroom practices towards students' academic prowess. Therefore, the study recommended that classrooms be laced with collaboration, togetherness, and humanness, where students' voices and opinions are recognised and respected.

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INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, most learners from all levels of education struggle to find their fits in classrooms, which sometimes leads to poor academic prowess. Much research has been conducted to establish what leads to poor academic performance, poor achievement of overall goals and productivities amongst students.¹ Some

¹ Manizheh Alami, "Causes of Poor Academic Performance Among Omani Students." *International Journal of Social Science Research* 4, no.1 (2016):126-136; Pallavi A. Banerjee, "A Systematic Review of Factors Linked to Poor Academic Performance of Disadvantaged Students in Science and Maths in Schools." *Cogent Education* 3, no. 1 (2016): 1178441; Justina Georgewill, "Causes of Poor Achievement in West African School Certificate Mathematics Examinations in Rivers State Secondary Schools, Nigeria." *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology* 21, no.3 (1990):379-385; Christopher A. Wolters, Weihua Fan & Stacy Daugherty. "Examining achievement goals and causal attributions together as predictors of academic functioning." *The Journal of Experimental Education* 81, no.3 (2013):295-321.

of these reasons are the lack of teaching and learning that reflect interrelational experiences and school climate.² However, since Ubuntu education rests on principles such as interdependence and community building through social interaction with teachers and students,³ then it can be said that this teaching style brings about academic success and advancement among students.

Evidence from literature confirms that teaching styles adopted by teachers have a long way in promoting students' academic performance.⁴ To support this Gqweta argues that inappropriate and/or hostile teaching styles are synonymous with poor performance among students.⁵ It could be argued that the level of effective teaching style adopted by instructors in classrooms determines students' achievement and academic performance. Since academic performances and student achievement are presented as an indicator of classroom prowess in this study, it shows that the adoption of poor teaching styles and/or methods will significantly affect classroom prowess. This is consistent with the findings of Akiri and Ganyaupfu that students are underperforming because they lack effective teaching styles adopted by teachers.⁶ This is also consistent with Adeyemi and Bolarinwa's findings that schools teachers sometimes adopt an autocratic leadership style to manage their classroom, which affects their productivity.⁷ This is perhaps why Walton and Rusznyak argue that there is a need for an inclusive and all-encompassing teaching and learning process where all students are carried along in generating knowledge.⁸ In the same vein, this argument justified the researcher's observation that school teachers, including university lecturers, mostly use teaching styles that enable them to implement curriculum efficiently but without being effective.

However, this is an indication that classrooms need that selfless character among learners and teachers who know they need each other to convey certain success, which can be more effective when done collaboratively without considering personal gains. This also confirms the adage that the teacher is not given authority only but should also take responsibility for students' development because it is believed that students' individual makeup depends on their elementary teachers. Effective teaching styles in university classrooms, especially large ones, may not be what many instructors think it is. However, there is hope; it can be learned and mastered. Ubuntu philosophy is essential to address this because Ubuntu classrooms are nurtured to create an environment of academic success and advancement among students.⁹ The main concern

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- ² O.A.Asikhia, "Students and Teachers' Perception of the Causes of Poor Academic Performance in Ogun State Secondary Schools [Nigeria]: Implications for Counseling for National Development." *European Journal of Social Sciences* 13, no. 2 (2010): 229-242; Ndiku L. Makewa, E. Role, Jesse Role & E. Yegoh. "School climate and academic performance in high and low achieving schools: Nandi Central District, Kenya." *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education* 4, no. 2 (2011): 93-104; Wahyu Saputra, Agus Supriyanto, Budi Astuti, Yulia Ayriza and Sofwan Adiputra. "The Effect of Student Perception of Negative school climate on poor academic performance of students in Indonesia." *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 19, no. 2 (2020): 279-291.
- ³ Taiwo C. Omodan, and Cias T. Tsotetsi. "Framing Ubuntu philosophy to reconstruct principals' behaviour and teachers' effectiveness in secondary schools." *Journal of Education Research and Rural Community Development* 1, no. 1 (2019): 25-45. Carolyn A. Rassiger. *Student-teacher relationships and academic success in at-risk Latino and Black middle school students*. Adelphi University, School of Social Work, 2011.
- ⁴ Dario Colella and Cristina d'ARANDO. "Teaching styles and outdoor education to promote non-linear learning." *Journal of Physical Education and Sport* 21 (2021): 507-513; Christi Davis-Langston, *Exploring relationships among teaching styles, teachers' perceptions of their self efficacy and students' mathematics achievement*. Liberty University, 2012; Kathryn R. Wentzel "Are effective teachers like good parents? Teaching styles and student adjustment in early adolescence." *Child development* 73, no. 1 (2002): 287-301.
- ⁵ Ntokozo Gqweta. "Poor academic performance: A perspective of final year diagnostic radiography students." *Radiography* 18, no. 3 (2012): 212-217.
- ⁶ Agharuwhe A Akiri. "Effects of teachers' effectiveness on students' academic performance in public secondary schools; Delta State-Nigeria." *Journal of Educational and social Research* 3, no.3 (2013):105; Elvis Ganyaupfu, "Teaching methods and students' academic performance." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* 2, no.9(2013):29-35.
- ⁷ T. O. Adeyemi, and R. Bolarinwa. "Principals' leadership styles and student academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria." *International journal of academic research in progressive education and development* 2, no. 1 (2013): 187-198.
- ⁸ Elizabeth Walton and Lee Rusznyak. "Developing standards for inclusive teaching in South Africa: A dilemma analysis." *Southern African Review of Education with Education with Production* 25, no. 1 (2019): 89-106.
- ⁹ M.C.Maphalala, "Embracing Ubuntu in managing effective classrooms." *Gender and Behaviour* 15, no.4(2017):10237-10249.

here is understanding how Ubuntu philosophy as a teaching style can contribute to students' academic prowess. In this study, ineffective or poor classroom practices are seen as a systematic marginalisation that demands emancipatory conversation.

This study seeks to examine how Ubuntu can be presented to unravel ineffective classroom practices towards students' emancipation. This would be done through a presentation of the Ubuntu philosophy as an alternative to classroom practices/teaching styles. The study also identified and analysed assumptions of Ubuntu philosophy with its relevance to effective classrooms practices towards students' academic prowess. In this study, classroom prowess is defined along with students' academic performance, achievement and the attainment of various skills that assist students in navigating their schooling and society. However, the study is problematised on lack of students' achievement and performance as a result of alien classroom practices imposed by the curriculum and the kind of teaching and learning styles adopted by the teachers/instructors/lecturers. A point to note is that the words teachers, instructors and lecturers will be used interchangeably in this study to accommodate the trajectory of general pedagogical transformation without borders. Also, the students and learners are synonymous and they are used as such in this study.

METHODOLOGY

This study is lensed within the principles of transformative worldview by adopting a transformative paradigm. The transformative paradigm emerged from postmodernist thought, which questioned the knowledge-building practices from the enlightenment era. The modernist pursuit of objectivity led to a disassociation with what it means to be human, where objectivity was seen as a way of making knowledge disconnected from the human experience and is viewed as 'irrational' for not considering all possible variables involved in any situation. Transformative paradigms aim to redress this by encouraging researchers to reflect on their own experiences and biases within research projects.¹⁰ Transformative paradigm represents an effort to build 'emancipatory structures' which act with "an awareness of how power was historically distributed along the lines of domination. The goal is to transform these structures so that they serve everyone equally. The transformative paradigm also acknowledges that 'emancipation' is not just for those who were previously marginalised and that the researcher may be transformed by the research project.¹¹ That is, the transformative worldview does benefit not only the research focus but also the researchers.

It falls within a new paradigm in social science that seeks to emancipate marginalised groups who were previously viewed as objects or subjects.¹² Transformative approaches also offer alternatives to the positivist paradigm that marginalised groups had little input into or underestimated in mainstream research.¹³ Classroom activities should not be subjective but inclusive and collaborative to enable self-transformation among students. This is in line with the argument that transformative paradigms emphasises on the transformation of oppressive structures and seek more democratic forms of inquiry. This paradigm is appropriate to underpin this study because the article intends to transform the process of knowing (classroom activities) into what it calls student academic prowess. This transformative process of knowing contributes to personal and collective empowerment among students.¹⁴ Here, the ubuntu classroom is viewed as a transformational tool. Therefore in this study, the Ubuntu philosophy was presented and analysed using

¹⁰ Donna M. Mertens, "Transformative mixed methods research." *Qualitative inquiry* 16, no. 6 (2010): 469-474; Sadruddin Bahadur Qutoshi. "Auto/ethnography: A transformative research paradigm." *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 9 (2015): 161-190.

¹¹ Janet L. McCabe and Dave Holmes. "Reflexivity, critical qualitative research and emancipation: A Foucauldian perspective." *Journal of advanced nursing* 65, no.7 (2009):1518-1526, Norma R. A. Romm, "Reviewing the transformative paradigm: A critical systemic and relational (Indigenous) lens." *Systemic Practice and Action Research* 28, no.5(2015):411-427.

¹² Bente Heimtun, and Nigel Morgan. "Proposing paradigm peace: Mixed methods in feminist tourism research." *Tourist Studies* 12, no. 3 (2012): 287-304; Romm, "Reviewing the transformative paradigm, 411-427.

¹³ Margarita Corry, Sam Porter, and Hugh McKenna. "The redundancy of positivism as a paradigm for nursing research." *Nursing Philosophy* 20, no. 1 (2019): e12230.

¹⁴ Bonnie Thornton Dill and Marla H. Kohlman. "Intersectionality: A transformative paradigm in feminist theory and social justice." *Handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* 2 (2012):154-174; Donna M. Mertens "Transformative paradigm: Mixed methods and social justice." *Journal of mixed methods research* 1, no. 3 (2007): 212-225.

conceptual analysis. Conceptual analysis was appropriate to make sense of the theory because it allows for clarification of concepts based on deductive reasoning.¹⁵ This is also in line with Novaes's argument that conceptual analysis is a method that could be used to determine the precise meaning of concepts and linguistic expressions.¹⁶ The analysis was done by presenting Ubuntu philosophy, its assumptions, and making sense of the assumptions in relation to how it could enhance students' academic prowess.

Ubuntu Philosophy

Ubuntu is an African word coined from Xhosa words; "ubu" which means "being" and "ntu" which means "human".¹⁷ Though there are arguments that it did not originate from a single source of origin, it started with a few ideas mixed with a lot of other cultures to form the Ubuntu philosophy. From South Africa, in the Zulu language, Ubuntu means humanity or humanness, and from Zimbabwe, Shona and Ndebele languages have it as "unhu" and "ubuthosi" which means "being humane".¹⁸ Limitless to South Africa, Tanzania "bumuntu", Congo, Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda - "bomoto", "gimuntu", "umunthu", "vumuntu" and "umuntu" respectively.¹⁹ In the Yoruba language of Nigeria, "Isokan" means oneness even amidst various socio-cultural and dialectic diversities.²⁰ Each culture has added its own mix to give Ubuntu a sense of uniqueness because the idea has been passed through time and cultures until it reached its current form known as Ubuntu. From this, one can argue that Ubuntu is centred on humanity, being humane, and compassionate. This agrees with Khomba that Ubuntu is a humane philosophy that re-interprets people's interconnectedness and togetherness. This is also in line with the postulation that reiterated an adage that "I am, because we are", that is, people exist because of one another, which connotes that African people value oneness and empathy.²¹ Based on this, the author agrees that Ubuntu is an Africanised way of doing things that derives its value from togetherness, oneness, compassion, love and respect.

From all indications, ubuntu philosophy embraces ideas such as humanism, socialism, liberalism, which could bring out the best qualities in humans towards recognising equality among human beings. Ubuntu believes that every human being should have the liberty to express their views.²² Ubuntu does not believe in power structures where the rich rule over the poor, in this case, where teachers dominate and become powerful over the powerless (students). This philosophy is closely associated with the Ubuntu theology which is motivated by African traditional religion (ATR). There are many different ATR forms, but they all share some common ideas like ancestor worship, rituals and others. That is to say that Ubuntu influences religious, social and political aspects through the way people live together as one society. Therefore, Ubuntu can be called a lifestyle not just confined to the academic (classroom) sense of the word but with many different social implications that explain how Ubuntu becomes relevant to student academic prowess.

This theory is relevant as a concept that could transform classroom activities towards student academic prowess because it is a set of beliefs and values that underpins much of the work done in classrooms, mainly on relationships between the classroom stakeholders. It is a philosophy about what makes a good teacher

¹⁵ Kenneth Kendler and Michael Neale. "Endophenotype: a conceptual analysis." *Molecular Psychiatry* 15, no. 8 (2010): 789-797.

¹⁶ C.D. Novaes, *Formal languages in logic: A philosophical and cognitive analysis*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁷ Mogobe B. Ramose "African philosophy through Ubuntu." (Harare: Mond Books, 1999).

¹⁸ Stanlake J. T. Samkange and Tommie M. Samkange, "Hunhuism or Ubuntuism: A Zimbabwe indigenous political philosophy." (Salisbury, Graham Publishers 1980); Jacob Mugumbate and Andrew Nyanguru. "Exploring African philosophy: The value of ubuntu in social work." *African Journal of Social Work* 3, no. 1 (2013): 82-100.

¹⁹ Mugumbate and Nyanguru. "Exploring African philosophy: The value of ubuntu in social work.", 82-100.

²⁰ Bunmi I. Omodan and Olugbenga A. Ige. "Analysis of Ubuntu as a Transformative Strategy to Mitigate Social Unrest in the University system." *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences & Humanities* 7, no. 2 (2021): 76-86.

²¹ Faith W. Ngunjiri. "I am because we are" Exploring women's leadership under ubuntu worldview." *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 18, no. 2 (2016): 223-242; Dalitso Sulamoyo "I am because we are": Ubuntu as a cultural strategy for OD and change in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Organization Development Journal* 28, no. 4 (2010): 41-51; Marie Claire Van Hout and Jakkie Wessels. "'Ubuntu' I am because we are: COVID-19 and the legal framework for addressing communicable disease in the South African prison system." *International Journal of Prisoner Health* (2021).

²² Colin Chasi. "Ubuntu and freedom of expression." *Ethics & Behavior* 24, no. 6 (2014): 495-509; Colin Chasi, "Ubuntu and freedom of expression: Considering children and broadcast news violence in a violent society." *Journal of Media Ethics* 30, no. 2 (2015): 91-108.

and student because everyone has something to teach and everyone has something to learn; no one is seen as better than the other because they know more or can do more. Ubuntu does not put people into certain boxes according to ability but rather seeks to find the best in every individual, enabling them all as learners through mutual respect, shared responsibility and encouragement. The author also argues that this philosophy will enable teachers to become caring and attain the position of true parents to give students the best chance of learning. This sense of belonging encourages students to become lifelong learners, problem solvers and independent decision-makers making them ready for the world.²³ In implementing this, each school child should be viewed as an individual who has something to give, not just to receive. They have their own thoughts, ideas and feelings, which must be respected to create a teaching-learning community where there is mutual support in the form of collaboration and togetherness as well as humanity and equal recognition. These should be devoid of power differentials that are central to how things work.

Theoretical Assumptions of Ubuntu

Based on the above theoretical presentation, one can deduce that Ubuntu is centred on three major assumptions collaboration and togetherness, humanness, and recognition and respect. These are discussed below.

Collaboration and togetherness: From the above presentation of Ubuntu, one could deduce that it is a philosophy that constantly advocates for the spirit of collaboration and togetherness among people. That is, it values communal disposition where people come together under one mission to achieve a goal. This assumption is consistent with the argument that Ubuntu enhances collaborative and cooperative problem solving among community people, which in turn solidifies unity in diversity.²⁴ This also confirms the conclusion of Venter that Ubuntu promotes unity, builds individuals and groups, and solidifies people's relationships.²⁵ Therefore, Ubuntu is a dimension that ensures people's collaboration and togetherness, which is applicable not only in the African context but could stand as a tool for social and relational transformation.

Humanness: One could also deduce that humanness and being humane are at the forefront of ubuntu philosophy. This is captured in the argument that Ubuntu is the philosophy that preaches love, compassion, oneness, kindness and brotherhood.²⁶ Ubuntu promotes true love between and among people irrespective of their diversities. Being kind and compassionate also defines the operational tendencies of Ubuntu and among all, "I am because we are" is a spirit of brotherhood where everyone sees themselves as one and interdependent. People are unavoidably connected and therefore must understand the oneness in humanity towards humanness. This argument depicts that ubuntu is a peaceful philosophy needed to drive the human race.

Recognition and respect: As deduced from the above theoretical presentation, this assumption indicates that Ubuntu is laced with mutual respect and recognition for all and sundry. That is, everybody is assumed to respect and be respected, and that an individual must be recognised for being acknowledged as a living

²³ Mariëtte Koen, "Sustainable Future for Early Childhood: Applying the African Ubuntu Philosophy to Contribute to the Holistic Development of Young Children." *Sustainable Development in Africa* (2021): 131-146; Malephoto Lephoto.

"Adopting a relational leadership as a strategy for empowering teacher counsellors: a pathway to promoting learners' well-being and empowerment." *Gender and Behaviour* 17, no. 3 (2019): 13777-13793..

²⁴ Andani, Thakhathi and T. G. Netshitangani. "Ubuntu-as-Unity: Indigenous African proverbs as a 're-educating' tool for embodied social cohesion and sustainable development." *African Identities* 18, no. 4 (2020): 407-420; G.A.J. Van Dyk, and M. C. Nefale. "The Split-Ego Experience of Africans: Ubuntu Therapy as a Healing Alternative." *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration* 15, no. 1 (2005): 48-61.

²⁵ Elza Venter, "The notion of ubuntu and communalism in African educational discourse." *Studies in philosophy and education* 23, no. 2 (2004): 149-160.

²⁶ Beatrice Bondai, and T. M. Kaputa. "Reaffirming Ubuntu/Unhu mainstreaming in the education curricula: Panacea for sustainable educational change in Southern Africa." *International Journal of academic research and reflection* 4, no. 6 (2016): 37-44; Johann Broodryk. "The philosophy of ubuntu: some management guidelines." *Management Today* 22, no. 7 (2006): 52-55; S. Makhubu, M. Hlongwane, S. Govender, D. Kent, et al. "African centered investigation into ways in which Ubuntu can promote social coherence." *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems* 17, no.1(2018):53-66.

being in any organisation. This is in consonance with the argument that Ubuntu is a philosophy that strives to concretise mutual understanding among people, participation and recognition devoid of power differential, respect for one another which is fundamental to social interconnection.²⁷ The idea here is that any organisation that promotes mutual respect without any unethical power play could be regarded as transformational and emancipatory in nature because it will not allow any form of marginalisation.

Relevance of the Assumptions to Students' Academic Prowess

This section presents analytical arguments on how the assumptions of Ubuntu are relevant to promoting students' academic prowess. This is done under the following sub-heading; collaboration and togetherness, its implication of academic prowess, humanness and its implication of academic prowess, and recognition and respect and its implication of academic prowess. As indicated above, the term student academic prowess, according to this study, includes but is not limited to student performance, achievement, students' holistic development, which involves the attainment of skills that could assist students in and outside their school life.

Collaboration and togetherness, and its implication to academic prowess: Often time, collaboration among students and between teachers and students has been proven to be productive in teaching and learning systems.²⁸ This suffices the argument that teamwork among students in the classroom enables students to gain participatory skills, critical thinking skills, and other developmental skills.²⁹ Findings from Al-Rahmi et al. have also indicated that collaborative teaching and learning improve students' commitment to work and enhance academic performance.³⁰ In the same vein, the idea of togetherness among the students increased their sense of belonging and solidified love, enabling them to understand their diversities and how to live by them.³¹ This paper is the reason behind the argument of Ngubane and Gumede that true ubuntu-like classrooms foster unity and oneness towards a common goal.³² Therefore, for students to be emancipated, teachers and the student themselves must understand that there is benefit in working together within the purview of Ubuntu philosophy. This is also consistent with the conclusion of Mpofo that classrooms laced within the principle of Ubuntu are likely to produce a productive expected end.³³

Humanness and its implication to academic prowess: Humanness in this argument is viewed from the brotherhood perspectives where teachers see students' problems as their own and where students see teachers as their partners in progress. This could only be achieved in an environment where there is mutual love, compassion, oneness, kindness and the spirit of "I am because we are". This is to say that a classroom laced

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- ²⁷ Robert K. Chigangaidze, "An exposition of humanistic-existential social work in light of ubuntu philosophy: Towards theorizing ubuntu in social work practice." *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought* 40, no. 2 (2021): 146-165; Bagele Chilisa, "Decolonising transdisciplinary research approaches: an African perspective for enhancing knowledge integration in sustainability science." *Sustainability Science* 12, no. 5 (2017): 813-827.
- ²⁸ Marjan Laal, and Seyed Ghodsi. "Benefits of collaborative learning." *Procedia-social and behavioral sciences* 31(2012):486-490; Harvey Wiener, "Collaborative learning in the classroom: A guide to evaluation." *College English* 48, no.1(1986):52-61.
- ²⁹ Madan L. Gupta, "Enhancing student performance through cooperative learning in physical sciences." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 29, no. 1 (2004): 63-73; Nathalie K. Zgheib, Joseph A. Simaan and Ramzi Sabra. "Using team-based learning to teach pharmacology to second year medical students improves student performance." *Medical teacher* 32, no. 2 (2010): 130-135.
- ³⁰ Waleed Al-Rahmi, Mohd Othman and Lizawati Mi Yusuf. "The role of social media for collaborative learning to improve academic performance of students and researchers in Malaysian higher education." *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 16, no. 4 (2015); Waleed Al-Rahmi, Mohd Othman and Mahdi Alhaji Musa. "The improvement of students' academic performance by using social media through collaborative learning in Malaysian higher education." *Asian Social Science* 10, no. 8 (2014): 210.
- ³¹ Margaret L. Smith, Nomsa E. Geleta, Adrienne Dixon and Susan Curtin. "Collaboration rebuilds a sense of belonging for students of color using the sanctuary model® as a framework." *Making Connections* 16, no.1(2015): 27-34.
- ³² Ngubane Isabel and Mzuyabonga Gumede. "The use of ubuntu pedagogy to facilitate academic support in a higher education classroom." *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems* 17, no. 2 (2018): 245-258.
- ³³ Sonnyboy Mpofo. "Effectivity and productivity in education: An Ubuntu perspective." PhD diss., Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 2002.

with humanness will inculcate a selfless attitude into students, not only because it reflects moral values but also because it makes doing things the right way more fun and promotes love, compassion, oneness, kindness and among classroom stakeholders. This argument is confirmed by the findings of Konishi et al. and Sointu et al. that positive student-teacher relationships are significant to students' commitment and confidence in classrooms.³⁴ Since Ubuntu preaches love, compassionate operations, and all-around humanity, it could then be argued that displaying humanness in the classroom will enhance students' academic prowess.³⁵

Recognition and respect, and its implication to academic prowess: It is no gainsaying that people value respect and recognition. Everyone wants to be respected, though respect is reciprocal (mutual respect). Research has shown that when employees are recognised and acknowledged, they are motivated to perform better.³⁶ This is not also far from agitation that classrooms should be democratised by recognising the voice and opinions of students in the pedagogical process.³⁷ And that reciprocal forms of respect should exist between students and teachers and among students.³⁸ This further confirms the argument by Ahmad and Said that a democratic classroom where students are respected, valued, and recognised creates a positive attitude among students and thereafter enhances their academic performance. Based on this, one can then argue that when classrooms are designed within the purview of Ubuntu, recognising students' voices and respecting their views and opinions will emancipate them and promote their academic prowess.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a quest to ensure that students are holistically developed toward emancipation, Ubuntu as a philosophy was presented to unravel ineffective classroom practices towards students' emancipation. This process was lensed within the principle of transformative paradigm to ensure that there is a transformation in the classroom towards ensuring students' academic process. The study, therefore, concludes that ubuntu philosophy, through the implementation of its assumptions (collaboration and togetherness; humanness; recognition and respect), is an instrument that could emancipate students from the subjective process of knowing into transformative knowledge production process. Based on this, the study recommends that classrooms should be designed to promote collaboration and the spirit of oneness among students towards actualising the teaching-learning goals. The study also recommends the show of humanity and humane disposition among classroom stakeholders. This will promote the unity of purpose and enhance students' social awareness of society. Lastly, the study proposed that classrooms should be positioned to discourage power differentials by recognising and respecting students' opinions and views. These recommendations are expedient because Ubuntu has been proven as an agent of change in the pedagogical process. Therefore, Ubuntu and its deduced assumptions, when implemented in classrooms will surely enhance student academic prowess by promoting students' performance, achievement and holistic development across the board.

³⁴ Chiaki Konishi, Shelley Hymel et al. "Do school bullying and student—teacher relationships matter for academic achievement? A multilevel analysis." *Canadian journal of school psychology* 25, no. 1 (2010): 19-39. *School Psychology*, 25(1), 19-39. Erko T. Sointu, Hannu Savolainen et al. "Longitudinal associations of student—teacher relationships and behavioural and emotional strengths on academic achievement." *Educational Psychology* 37, no. 4 (2017): 457-467.

³⁵ Sinenhlanhla S. Chisale, "Politics of the body, fear and ubuntu: Proposing an African women's theology of disabili." *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 76, no. 3 (2020).

³⁶ Alkhaliel Abdullah, and Hooi Wan. "Relationships of non-monetary incentives, job satisfaction and employee job performance." *International Review of Management and Business Research* 2, no. 4 (2013): 1085; George Lăzăroiu, "Employee motivation and job performance." *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations* 14 (2015): 97-102; Chandra Sekhar, Manoj Patwardhan and Rohit Kr Singh. "A literature review on motivation." *Global business perspectives* 1, no. 4 (2013): 471-487.

³⁷ Kate Ferguson-Patrick, "Developing a democratic classroom and a democracy stance: Cooperative learning case studies from England and Sweden." *Education 3-13* (2020): 1-15.

³⁸ Monica Lloyd, "Mutual Respect: Implications for Classroom Effectiveness." *Masters in Teaching Program 2006-2008 Teaching the Child in Front of You in a Changing World* (2008): 161.

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