Journal of the Academy of Business and Emerging Markets 2023, 3(2), 41-54
abem.ca/journal ISSN: 2563-6960

Ubuntu's business edge: a systematic literature review and future directives

*Mpumelelo Longweni**, *North-West University, South Africa*
Lerato E. Mdaka, *North-West University, South Africa*
Corresponding author: junior.longweni@nwu.ac.za

This systematic literature review explored the application of Ubuntu, an African philosophy, in business contexts. Ubuntu has been increasingly recognized for its potential to advance positive outcomes in various settings. However, despite its growing prominence, a comprehensive understanding of Ubuntu's antecedents, descriptors and consequences is still required. This paper analyzed existing articles, using a thorough search strategy to identify relevant literature. The findings of this paper reveal that the most ubiquitous precursors of Ubuntu in businesses are a mandate for corporate social responsibility and cultural diversity. A business culture of fairness was found to be the most prevalent driver of implementing this philosophy. Conversely, individualism was determined to be the prevailing inhibitor of Ubuntu. Humanness and interdependence were found to be the most frequently used descriptions of Ubuntu in the included articles. Increased collaborative decision-making and better stakeholder relations are the most common outcomes found. This study concludes with managerial implications and recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Africa, systematic literature review, Ubuntu

Received July 10, 2023; Revised Sept 27, 2023; Accepted Sept 30, 2023

Cite as: Longweni M & Mdaka LE 2023. Ubuntu's business edge: a systematic literature review and future directives. Journal of the Academy of Business and Emerging Markets, 3(2), 41-54. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10183190

(c) Copyrights with the authors. This Open Access article is distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0)

Introduction

Africa has characteristics that make it poised to be an ideal setting for international business scholars to create pioneering ideas that may be used in numerous situations worldwide. The continent's outstanding cultural, political and economic variety presents many prospects for research and analysis into various philosophies, business models, methods and practices, adding to the body of knowledge in management sciences (Nachum et al. 2022). As a setting, Africa is not only a breeding ground for revolutionary research but also contributes unique angles to traditional business and management problems, such as Africapitalism and Ubuntu (Kamoche & Wood 2023), where Africapitalism refers to a cutting-edge strategy for attracting private capital wealth creation for the individual as well as the community at large (Elumelu 2014). Correspondingly, Ubuntu is an idealistic philosophy rooted in compassion, kindness and interconnectedness of individuals for the advancement of society (Etieyibo 2020). Additionally, it strives to harness the true potential in the self by recognizing and activating the true potential of the other. When

put into the perspective of a business setting, Ubuntu is commonly linked to ethics. Notably, regardless of the context wherein it is applied, the major tenets of this philosophy remain the same. These tenets are uniquely aligned to achieve the outcomes presented in this review by being encapsulated in a single construct (Etieyibo 2020). Taylor (2014) asserts that in a practical sense when managers make decisions that aid the cohesion among individuals and mutual beneficence, they are morally correct. Conversely, pursuing choices that diminish interconnectedness and devalue any individuals or groups are deemed morally incorrect actions. Adopting the philosophy of Ubuntu can enhance business success by promoting discipline among employees, creating an environment that facilitates collaborative leadership styles and unlocking a business's creative potential by promoting enhanced divergent thinking.

Based on the observed advantages of Ubuntu, one would expect exhaustive empirical inquiry into its application in businesses, particularly in developing countries. However, although there has been some research interest in the topic, most publications are theoretical. Likewise, although previous authors conducted various literature reviews of Ubuntu (Ewuoso & Hall 2019, Molefe & Magam 2019), some even in business settings (Mangaroo-Pillay & Coetzee 2022, Thakhathi 2021), there has never been one explicitly and exclusively focused on empirical studies. The authors of this review paper focused on empirical studies to differentiate it further from existent works.

Additionally, this paper highlights these empirical studies and stimulates additional interest in the topic. Thus, this study aims to encourage more research on Ubuntu in corporate settings by providing specific guidelines for established authors and emerging researchers. Additionally, this paper intends to streamline the implementation of the philosophy in business by exploring the contextual variables that proved favorable in the past, determining the factors that drive and hinder this process, and outlining the expected results of its application. The rest of this paper provides an overview of the background literature related to this study and the research question. After that, the method followed to answer this research question was discussed. Thereafter, the reviewers discuss their findings and make recommendations for future research endeavors. The penultimate section covers managerial implications. This study concludes with closing remarks.

Literature Review

The concept of Ubuntu, the African philosophy, has garnered attention in various fields. This section presents an overview of the literature used to formulate and conceptualize this study regarding Ubuntu's antecedents, descriptors and outcomes in business settings. Interest in the topic of Ubuntu is not new; it has been on authors' radars as far as 27 years back (Gyekye 1996). In addition, the term evolved from referring to *human quality* to relating to the Nguni adage *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* since the 1990s. The Nguni proverb means *a person is a person through other persons*. More nuanced interpretations are, *I am because you (we) are*. This means our humanity is inherently connected and dependent on the humanity of others. Moreover, people's capacity to be just and good toward others relies on the justice and good nature (or lack thereof) seen in others.

Benefit of Ubuntu is that it acknowledges the value of relationships and promotes compassion, respect and empathy towards one another, which may lead to more fruitful interpersonal interactions and meaningful relationships (Akpey-mensah & Muchie 2020). Ubuntu's basic tenets strongly emphasize teamwork and finding mutual understanding, which may lead to more collaborative, deliberate and efficient decision-making. People are more likely to be driven and effective when they have a connection to their work and their coworkers. Equally, workplace productivity may increase because Ubuntu fosters a sense of belonging and purpose (Mangaliso et al. 2018). Ubuntu promotes treating others with dignity and deference, which may improve customer service and foster closer customer relations. Ubuntu stresses the importance of giving back to the community, which may encourage a sense of social responsibility and motivate people and organizations to do the same (Etieyibo 2020).

With all the perceived benefits of Ubuntu, there have been significant academic inquiries into the topic. However, Ubuntu also has its drawbacks. The term is often misused to exploit others, particularly if there is a resource disparity (Imas & Weston 2012). Respectively, a compulsion to adhere to group standards can occasionally result in a focus on community and consensus-building, restricting individualism and creativity.

The Ubuntu ethos highlights the common good and communal prosperity, often at the price of personal motives and objectives. Moreover, focusing on harmony and reaching consensus can occasionally result in a low tolerance for disagreement or criticism, preventing the possibility of fruitful discourse and differing points of view (Mangaliso et al. 2018). Additionally, the many translations in different languages and cultures may cause some confusion about philosophy's implementation (Imas & Weston 2012). Notably, there is no consensus on authors' criticisms of Ubuntu; in fact, the criticisms are not unanimously held. Similarly, while Ubuntu may offer several advantages, it is crucial to remember that it is not a cure-all or a universally applicable solution. Furthermore, the advantages of Ubuntu differ based on the circumstance and cultural setting, which creates a need for more research and nuance in this area.

Research Gap and Research Question

From a broad perspective, Africa needs knowledge production. Past scholars have suggested that Africans create knowledge form Africans and for Africa (Hountondji 2009, Nabudere 2006, Okolie 2003). Another publications cite the importance of ownership of knowledge creation, dissemination, and positioning (Arowosegbe 2016, Oppong 2017). This knowledge should be accessible, self-reliant and for the betterment of African societies. This advancement, however, could also benefit foreign societies. Language usage and emergent African concepts are crucial to understanding how research and, more importantly, business is done on the continent (Kamoche & Wood, 2023; Nachum et al., 2022). Preceding scholars have called for more research on Ubuntu in business (Ewuoso & Hall 2019, Mangaroo-Pillay & Coetzee 2022). To aid Nachum et al. (2022) in their specific call for international business scholars to take an interest in Africa, utilizing guidelines set out by (Kamoche & Wood 2023) and understanding that systematic literature reviews are often used as a tool to generate more academic attention to specific topics (Goyal et al. 2021) the authors of the current manuscript sought to answer the following research question: What are the antecedents and outcomes of Ubuntu in a business context?

Bridging the Gap

The reviewers present this study to aid in knowledge creation in Africa by Africans. This paper attempts to provide a comprehensive conceptual framework of Ubuntu's antecedents, descriptors and consequences in a business environment by incorporating principles of a systematic literature review. Before conducting this study, the authors sought previous publications and discovered that many reviewers had taken an interest in Ubuntu. However, most previous works are not related to the manifestation of Ubuntu in the business world. The authors of this paper could only find two preceding works in business and management sciences. Mangaroo-Pillay and Coetzee (2022) investigated the similarities between Ubuntu and lean manufacturing to aid in accepting lean principles and philosophies in South Africa. Thakhathi (2021) sought to understand the inhibitors of the inclusive long-term potential of developmental corporate social responsibility. The background literature presented above elucidates the potential benefits of Ubuntu's implementation in business settings, such as superior collaboration, enhanced employee engagement and satisfaction and improved corporate social responsibility. However, criticisms such as potential exploitations and restricted individualism should be noted before applying the philosophy. This overview sets the stage for this review by highlighting the need for more research on Ubuntu. The reviewers were particularly interested in regional settings, methodological coverage, as well as the antecedents, descriptors and outcomes of its adoption in a corporate context.

Methodology

The current review can be described as an overview with elements of a systematic literature review. The reviewers applied a systematic search for the inclusion of research articles, summarized and tabulated characteristics of relevant studies and presented a conceptual framework that answers the research question. The rest of this section discusses the search strategy implemented and explains the section criteria, quality assessment and data extraction.

Search Strategy

In this systematic review, the authors developed a search strategy to identify relevant literature sources. This search strategy was tailored to four comprehensive databases: Web of Science, Scopus, Emerald Insight and Science Direct and the following search terms were used: Ubuntu and Business. All searches covered sources published until the end of 2022; only English research journal articles, review papers and conference proceedings were included. The 2022 sources were included to provide as many records as possible and report the most up-to-date findings and trends while preserving replicability. With a combined 654 works, there is a significant interest in the concept of Ubuntu in a business context.
Table 1 shows the search stings used in the four selected databases.

Table 1. Search Strings with Resulting Outputs

Database	*Search string*	*Hits / Results*
Web of Science	"Ubuntu*" (Title) OR "Ubuntu*" (Abstract) AND business* (Abstract) "Ubuntu*" (Author Keywords)	538
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Ubuntu*") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (business*)	101
Emerald insight	(content-type:article) AND (title:"Ubuntu*" OR (abstract:"Ubuntu*") AND (abstract:"Business*"))	13
ScienceDirect	Title, abstract, keywords: "Ubuntu" AND Business	2

Source: the authors

Selection Criteria

The Page et al. (2020) guidelines were employed in developing the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) statement presented in Figure 1. The study was focused on mapping available literature on Ubuntu in the field of economics and business management. All other publications were deemed ineligible for inclusion. The authors narrowed the subject to business and management sciences fields. The research span was from inception to 2022 (ending the inclusion of sources in December of 2022), which allowed the authors to include some of the most recent records. No geographical limitations have been put on the records included, as the initial results provided a scope of the inquiry that was sufficiently narrow. The total goes from 654 to 58 research articles identified at this stage of the review process. Figure 1 (PRISMA statement) illustrates inclusion and exclusion of at every stage of the systematic review.

Quality Assessment

This study was only concerned with original research articles, review papers and conference papers. To increase the quality of this systematic literature review, the reviewers identified six duplicate records by using the sorting function in Microsoft Excel; these records and four other review articles were removed from the consideration list. The result of these removals left 48 articles that were assessed for eligibility by

reading their full abstracts. This stage of the screening process resulted in removing 17 articles; two were removed for being related to the Linux computer program, 13 were removed for being conceptual papers, and two were deemed inedible because they were not business-related.

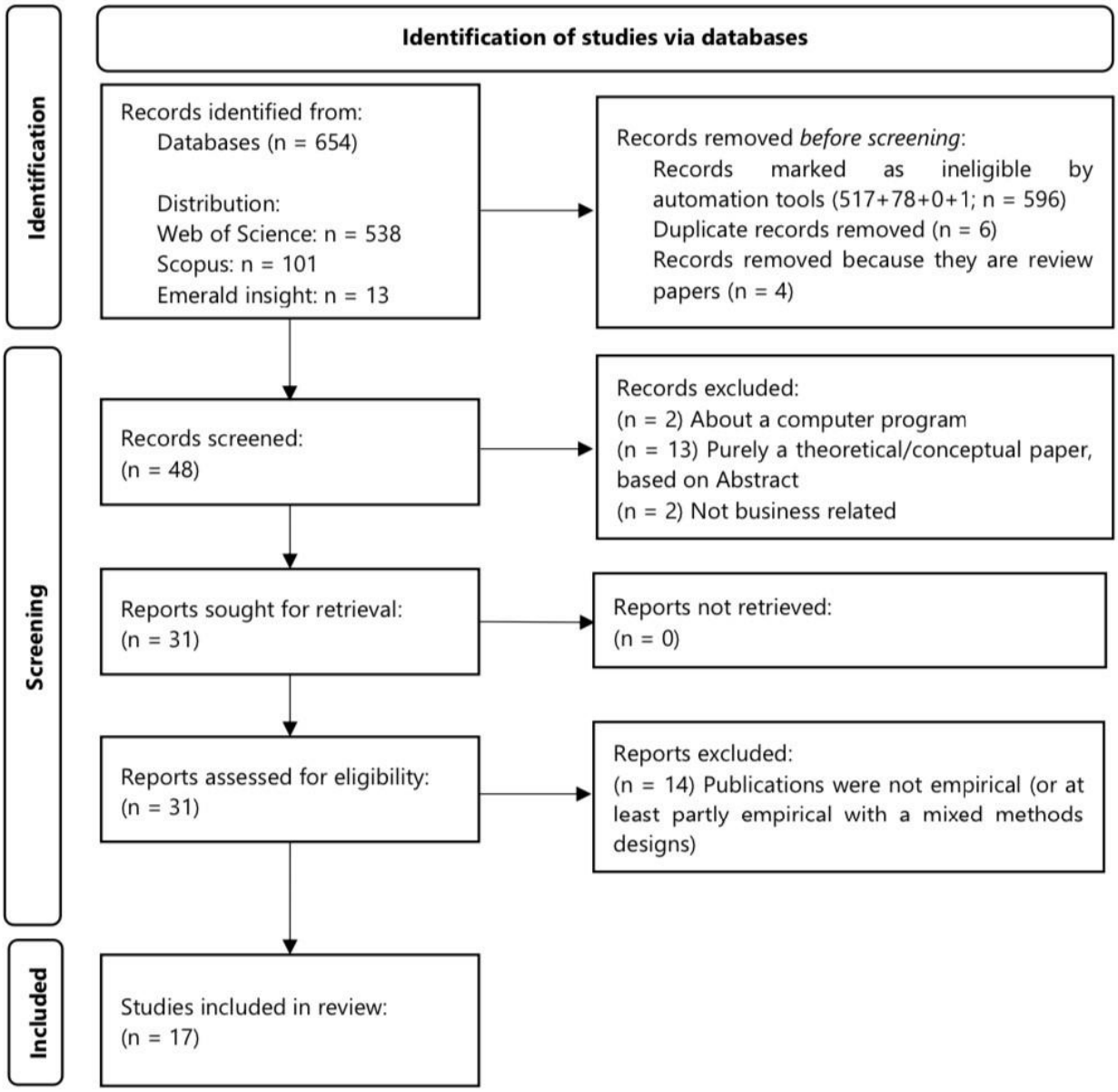


Figure1. PRISMA Statements
Source: the authors

All 31 articles remaining at the second screening stage could be retrieved for full-text assessment. Upon scanning the complete records, 14 articles were excluded because they were not empirical studies (or at least partly empirical studies), leaving 17 articles determined to be edible to answer the research question posed in this study. Moreover, the included works must have mentioned Ubuntu in the article's title, abstract or/and keywords, and the study must have been conducted within a business context.

Data Extraction

In the data extraction phase of this review, 17 articles were selected, and the characteristics extracted were: Original research manuscripts that were peer-reviewed and published as articles, conference papers or review studies. Conceptual papers, reports and case studies were excluded. The outputs must have been published in English in the discipline of managerial sciences. From these papers, the reviewers were interested in the following aspects of the articles: The abstract of the research output to determine and/or confirm the inclusion of the article; The literature review portion was used to determine the relevant aspects of Ubuntu covered in the publication and conceptualize and comprehend the antecedents, mediation, moderation and consequences presented in the findings; The methods followed in the study to make methodological recommendations for future empirical works; and, The paper's results, findings and/or conclusions to finalize the empirical advancement section and resulting conceptual framework presented in the current study. Notably, the reviewers placed no limitations in terms of the aspects of Ubuntu during their analysis of the 17 included articles. The reviewers we interested in all forms and descriptions of the phenomena.

Results and Discussion

With reference to methodical summary, a variety of research approaches in empirical articles about the practice of Ubuntu within businesses was noted. Due to the reviewers focusing on purely empirical works, mixed-methods papers that emphasized systemized literature review portions were not included. Notwithstanding, as a result, data collection from respondents often employs both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Survey methods were chosen as the primary method of data collecting for the studies under consideration. Consequently, we implemented either exploratory and confirmatory analysis or content analysis. We find that there were no causal studies conducted on the topic under discussion. We suggest investigating the causes and effects of the acceptance and/or rejection of the Ubuntu philosophy among modern managers. Additionally, future emergent researchers can find inspiration in conducting this kind of research because the included articles have an average of 37 citations, indicating marginal research interest.

Now we discuss the geographical settings used to execute the studies used in this systematic analysis. Although no geographical limitations were placed on the inclusion criteria for the articles in this study, there is clearly a focus on the African continent when empirically investigating Ubuntu in businesses. Nevertheless, there is an impressive regional spread within the continent, considering that 25 African countries were represented in the included articles. Encouragingly, particularly for future prospective researchers outside of Africa, the topic under discussion was researched in North and South America, i.e., USA and Brazil. Content analysis shows that South Africa and Mozambique were the most popular destinations for conducting Ubuntu research within businesses. This trend is unsurprising as the philosophy is mainly associated with Bantu cultures and Nguni languages. As per the Kamoche and Wood (2023) mandate and the rationale of this systematic literature review, we suggest that future researchers focus on the Americas for managers' application of the Ubuntu philosophy in businesses. Researchers may also choose to start in the USA and Brazil, as previous publications have proven these countries feasible for this kind of research. We used the Table 2 information to exhibit these regional contexts and make suggestions for future researchers based on observed trends and identified research gaps.

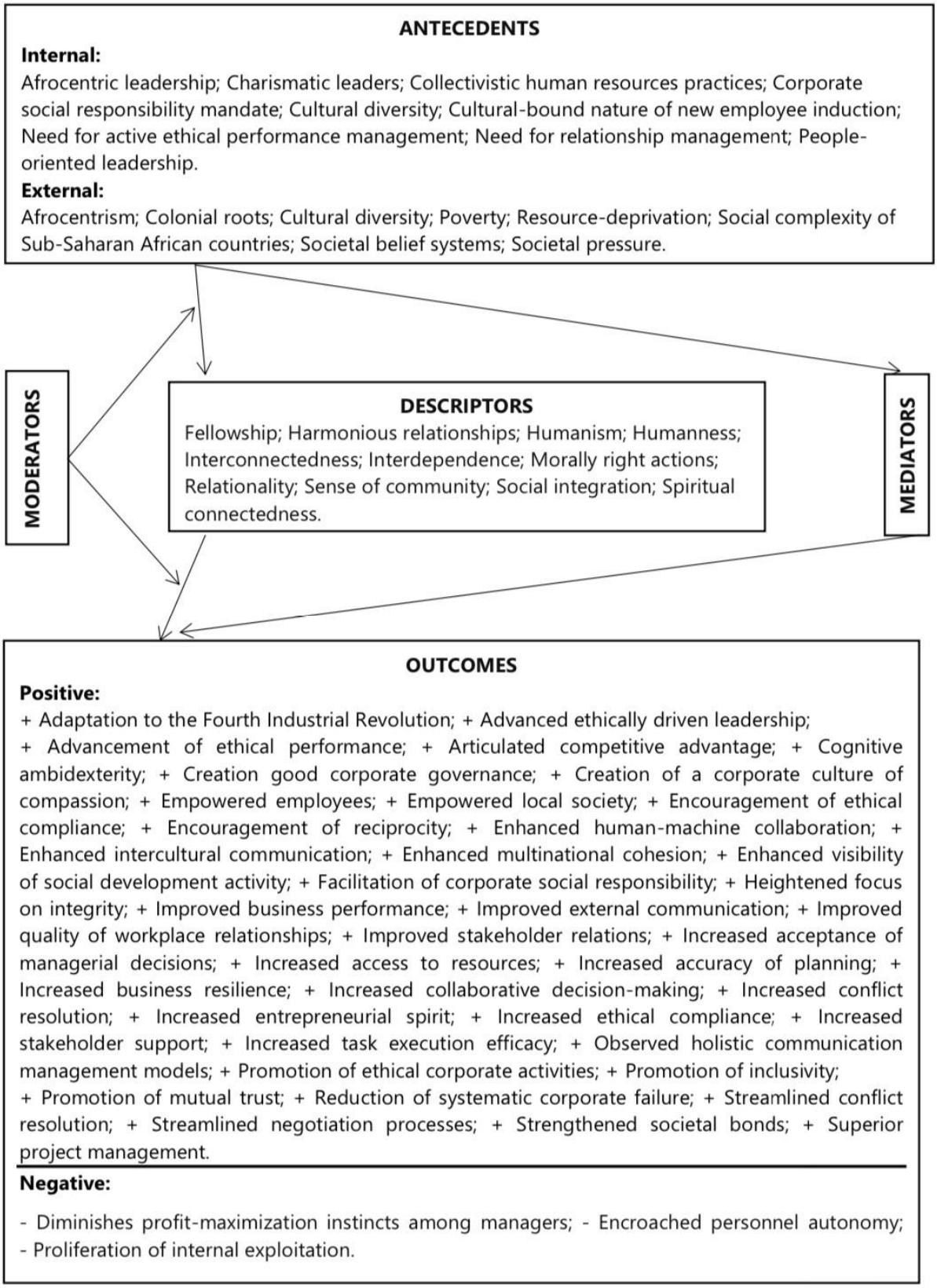
The authors of future works are aided by additional categorizations made through content analysis. Notably, due to the use of general categories, there is some overlap between different aspects of the conceptual framework presented. The antecedents are divided into internal and external items. The papers highlighted nine internal variables and eight external factors that may lead to implementing Ubuntu in businesses. Micro-environmental factors that businesses and/or managers have complete control over are classified under internal antecedents. In contrast, market and macro-environmental factors that can only be influenced to a certain degree or not at all are articulated as external antecedents.

Table 2. Regional Summary

Publication	*Single Country*	*Multi-country*	*Continent*
Rwelamila et al. (1999)		Malawi; Mauritius; Mozambique; Namibia; South Africa; Swaziland; Tanzania; Zambia	Africa
Sartorius et al. (2011)	Mozambique		Africa
Wanasika et al. (2011)		Nigeria; Zambia; Zimbabwe; South Africa	Africa
Imas & Weston (2012)		Brazil; Zimbabwe	South America; Africa
Mària et al. (2012)	Malawi		Africa
Mashingaidze (2014)	Mozambique		Africa
De Villiers Scheepers et al. (2018)	South Africa		Africa
Steenkamp & Rensburg (2018)	South Africa		Africa
Grobler & Singh (2018)		Mozambique; Namibia; South Africa; Swaziland; Zimbabwe	Africa
Niankara (2018)	United States of America		North America
Okereke et al. (2018)	Nigeria		Africa
Eyong (2019)		Cameroon; Nigeria	Africa
Grobler et al. (2019)	South Africa		Africa
Schultz (2021)	South Africa		Africa
Phaswana & Pelser (2021)		Angola; Botswana; Côte d'Ivoire; Ethiopia; Ghana; Kenya; Lesotho; Malawi; Mauritius; Mozambique; Namibia; Nigeria; South Africa; South Sudan; Swaziland; Tanzania; The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe	Africa
Lerutla & Steyn (2021)		Angola; Botswana; Comoros; Lesotho; Madagascar; Malawi; Mauritius; Mozambique; Namibia; Seychelles; South Africa; Swaziland; Zambia; Zimbabwe	Africa
Ferri et al. (2022)	Mozambique		Africa

Source: the authors

Future researchers can use the same distinctions in their empirical works. Moreover, a corporate social responsibility mandate is the most ubiquitous antecedent, followed by cultural diversity within business



Source: Authors' compilation

Figure 2. Antecedents, Descriptors and Outcomes of Ubuntu in a Business Context

and society. It is noteworthy that cultural diversity has been grouped under both internal and external categories because a business's ability to have diversity is directly dependent on the variety within the social environment.

Although some aspects presented in Figure 2 may seem self-evident, this review is the first to compile them in a single conceptual framework, making them more practicable to future researchers. Figure 2 derives the antecedents, determinants, and outcomes (ADO) model, providing a digestible answer to the research question (Goyal et al. 2021). The reviewers followed the logic of preceding publications for the categorization of the elements found in Figure 2 (Aparna & Menon 2020, Goyal et al. 2021). Future scholars can empirically test the various mediators and moderators in the figure in multiple ways.

We found 25 unique mediators of Ubuntu in a business setting in their interpretation of the included articles' text. These were grouped into five categories: business culture, demographic, external factors, leadership, and skills. Business culture mediators were accountability, cultural hybridization, desire for resilience, effectual logic, fairness, internal group solidarity, respect, responsibility, transparency, and trust. Experienced staff members were the demographic mediator. The external factors were ethical pressure, institutions of governance, and resource abundance. Seven leadership mediators were found, these were ethical leadership, humane oriented leadership, Jewish business ethics system, management programs, paternalistic leadership, performance management, and training. The skills-based mediators were casual logic, commercial awareness, interpersonal skills, and systems thinking. Fairness, accountability, ethical leadership, respect, responsibility, training, and transparency were discovered to be the most prominent. Therefore, conducive business culture was determined to be the most crucial driver for the successful application of Ubuntu. Empirical researchers are advised to focus on business culture as a mediator in their research models. The items mentioned can be used to explore, validate, confirm, and form the construct for testing in qualitative or even quantitative designs. Only 18 possible moderators were found through analysis of the included works. The reviewers categorized them under the same groupings as the mediators, except for skills. The moderator categories were business culture, demographic, external, and leadership factors. Business culture moderators were a capitalistic mindset, a culture of corruption, elitist mindsets, individualism, poor relationship management, profit-seeking emphasis, self-interest, tribalism, and Western business approach. Business size and hyper masculinity were the two demographic moderators. The external factors were corruption, institutional voids, overbearing political figures, and outdated systems. There were three leadership moderators were found; these were a formal culture management committee, inappropriate business structures, and inappropriate project structures.

Individualism was determined to be the most prevailing moderator of Ubuntu in businesses. A Western business approach is the only other item to appear more than once. However, tribalism, as an inhibitor of Ubuntu, might present a more feasible and exciting avenue for future research endeavors. Consequently, the reviewers recommend that academics focus on individualism and tribalism as moderators of Ubuntu in proceeding publications. The descriptors of Ubuntu in businesses were mainly classified according to the nine core aspects as discussed by Ewuoso and Hall (2019); namely, fellowship, harmonious relationships, interconnectedness, interdependence, morally right actions, reconciliation, relationality, sense of community and social integration. However, these nine aspects were insufficient to cover all of the ways that the included articles describe, interpret and apply the philosophy of Ubuntu; thus, the reviewers added the humanism stance, as explained by Pietersen (2005), the state of humanness and the feeling of spiritual interconnectedness or *moya* which transcends the physical realm and recognizes that individuals are also linked by their connected ancestors (Rathbone 2006). Notably, none of the empirical works covered reconciliation as a descriptor of Ubuntu.

Humanness, interdependence and morally right actions were the most prevailing descriptors of Ubuntu, whereas *moya* and social integration were the least prevalent determinants. A qualitative investigation may seek to affirm the corporate relevance of describing Ubuntu; these terms could be a worthwhile project. An interviewer could directly ask top managers about their views on the accuracy of

describing Ubuntu as it occurs in their businesses as spiritual interconnectedness and then confirm this description with middle managers in the form of focus groups. Future quantitative researchers can use the descriptors presented in Figure 2 as items that form the Ubuntu construct in surveys or even treat each descriptor as its own constructs that reflect the concept of Ubuntu in the business environment. The reviewers of this paper were able to discern 47 outcomes from the included papers, 40 of which were considered positive and three outcomes were deemed negative. Notably, there were four instances where a neutral effect was present, meaning Ubuntu had no bearing on the envisioned outputs. For this reason, they were not included in the conceptual framework, as they do not represent attractive avenues for future research. Increased collaborative decision-making and better stakeholder relations are the most common outcomes found. Any combination of the recommendations made can be used to confirm these outcomes. Notably, articles where Ubuntu was linked to enhanced collaboration in decision-making mostly collected quantitative data. In line with this, emerging researchers may use questionnaires to corroborate the preceding works. In contrast, advanced future researchers may consider using quantitative and qualitative techniques to triangulate the true nature of the linkages proposed.

Managerial Implications

The benefits of Ubuntu are readily apparent; however, managers should be conscious of potential problems in its implementation. Consensus-building and seeking harmony may silence dissenting opinions and stifle effective conflict resolution. To ensure employee autonomy, managers must encourage meaningful debate and tolerate opposing viewpoints while avoiding exploitation. Managers can leverage Ubuntu's principles to promote collaborative decision-making and inclusivity within their businesses. To fully unearth the advantages of the philosophy, managers are advised to encourage a positive and balanced work culture based on the recognition of individual contributions and collective goals. Doing so will boost employee engagement and satisfaction. Managers can also integrate Ubuntu into corporate social responsibility initiatives; aligning business objectives with the values of the philosophy to enhance the business' reputation and deepen the societal impact Ubuntu can be particularly beneficial in multicultural and multinational businesses. The challenges that arise through the diversity in these businesses can be smoothed by the philosophy’s emphasis on fellowship and relationality. This paper creates a foundation for managers’ understanding of the principles of Ubuntu. Having a nuanced grasp of Ubuntu is necessary for applying its tenets and applying them is likely to improve team cohesion in highly diverse businesses. Leading by example is crucial for managers to set the stage for Ubuntu's implementation, instilling interdependence, empathy, respect, and fairness in their interactions with all stakeholders. They are also required to effectively communicate the principles and expected benefits of applying the philosophy to obtain buy-in at all levels of the business. Finally, managers must evaluate the success of adopting Ubuntu with measurable indicators and transparent evaluation methods. This paper can be used as a benchmarking tool to aid this endeavor. In summary, adopting Ubuntu requires being aware of its challenges, promoting inclusion and diversity, and leading by example, effective communication, and developing assessment techniques for long-term success.

Conclusions

This systematic literature review bolsters the foundation of the existing body of knowledge by emphasizing the included articles and making them more accessible to researchers and business leaders. Likewise, this review can be a jump-off point for those who want to educate themselves on applying Ubuntu within a corporate context. The authors of this review suggest that conformist empirical researchers should continue the documented trend of focusing on Africa when investigating Ubuntu in businesses. These researchers may elect to conduct exploratory, survey-based studies in South Africa, the

most common setting and design of such studies. However, future studies may be more valuable by conducting the research in a different emerging market like one of the many African countries where such studies have not been conducted yet. Other emergent markets outside Africa are equally viable, particularly for comparative studies. Contrarian scholars may rather elect to focus on the causes and effects of the acceptance and/or rejection of the Ubuntu philosophy among modern managers in North and South America since this is a clear research gap found in this paper. The adoption of Ubuntu's philosophies in businesses is a micro-environmental issue. Correspondingly, the antecedents, mediators and moderators are mostly internal variables. Future researchers who wish to follow a more established path can focus on empirically proving or discounting these interactions with the positive outcomes depicted in the conceptual framework. This is the primary directive of this systematic literature review, and it is particularly suited for more novice researchers. More established academics, conversely, can instead pursue the least beaten path of external antecedents, with external drivers and inhibitors of Ubuntu's application in businesses. These researchers can focus on the negative consequences of Ubuntu, which were found to be either under-reported or rare. Regardless of their experience level, quantitative scholars can use the descriptors presented in this study as items or constructs in their questionnaires. Managers who want to adopt Ubuntu can use this study to determine the factors that will aid the success of their efforts. Additionally, the variables that can undermine the Afrocentric manager's efforts can be mitigated proactively. Finally, through this systematic literature review, managers are alerted to Ubuntu's potential positive outcomes and negative consequences. This information assists in identifying what to expect when implementing this philosophy. In conclusion, managers will likely observe elevated collaborative decision-making by applying Ubuntu's business philosophy.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Professor Roland Goldberg, who availed himself as an independent reviewer of the inclusion of sources in case of inclusion discrepancy among the authors.

References

Akpey-mensah TL & Muchie PM 2020. Application of Ubuntu as innovative human resources practice to retain academic staff at Sunyani Technical University, Ghana. Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, 19(1), 47–57.

Arowosegbe J. 2016 African scholars, African studies and knowledge production on Africa. Africa, 86(2), 324–338. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972016000073

De Villiers Scheepers MJ. Boshoff C & Oostenbrink M 2018. Entrepreneurial women's cognitive ambidexterity: career and cultural influences. South African Journal of Business Management, 48(4), 21–33. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajbm.v48i4.40

Elumelu TO 2014. African entrepreneurs will create the jobs africa needs. https://www.africanglobe.net/business/african-entrepreneurs-create-jobs-africa

Etieyibo E 2020. African moral theory. In M Rathbone (Ed.), Understanding business ethics (pp. 159–178). Van Schaik Publishers.

Ewuoso C & Hall S 2019. Core aspects of Ubuntu: a systematic review. South African Journal of Bioethics and Law, 12(2), 93. https://doi.org/10.7196/sajbl.2019.v12i2.679

Eyong JE 2019. Leadership for high performance in local councils in Cameroon and Nigeria: examining deviant and concordant practices to the philosophy of Ubuntu. Africa Journal of Management, 5(2), 138–161. https://doi.org/10.1080/23322373.2019.1631030

Ferri LM Pedrini M & Minciullo M 2022. Corporate social responsibility and stakeholder dialogue under institutional voids: decoupling the role of corporate motives, ethics and resources. Journal of Management and Governance, 26(1), 159–188. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10997-021-09598-2

Goyal K, Kumar S & Xiao JJ 2021. Antecedents and consequences of personal financial management behavior: a systematic literature review and future research agenda. International Journal of Bank Marketing, 39(7), 1166–1207. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-12-2020-0612

Grobler A & Singh M 2018. Leadership in Southern Africa: a regional Afrocentric hierarchical taxonomy. Insight on Africa, 10(2), 169–193. https://doi.org/10.1177/0975087818772236

Grobler A, Grobler S & Mathafena R 2019. Measurement of the perceptions of human resource practices in a seemingly collectivistic culture. South Africa Journal of Human Resource Management, 17, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v17i0.1069

Gyekye K 1996 African cultural values: an introduction. Sankofa Publishing. https://philpapers.org/rec/GYEACV

Hountondji PJ 2009. Knowledge of Africa, knowledge by Africans: two perspectives on African studies. RCCS Annual Review, 1. https://doi.org/10.4000/rccsar.174

Imas JM & Weston A 2012. From Harare to Rio de Janeiro: Kukiya-Favela organization of the excluded. Organization, 19(2), 205–227. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508411429397

Kamoche K & Wood G 2023. International business and Africa: theoretical and applied challenges and future directions. Journal of International Business Studies, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-022-00589-5

Lerutla, M & Steyn R 2021. African business leadership: perspectives from aspiring young leaders. South African Journal of Human Resource Management, 19, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v19i0.1467

Mangaliso MP, Mangaliso Z, Knipes BJ, Jean-Denis H & Ndanga L 2018. Invoking Ubuntu philosophy as a source of harmonious organizational management. Academy of Management Proceedings, 2018(1), 15007. https://doi.org/10.5465/ambpp.2018.15007abstract

Mangaroo-Pillay M & Coetzee R 2022. A systematic literature review (SLR) comparing Japanese lean philosophy and the South African Ubuntu philosophy. International Journal of Lean Six Sigma, 13(1), 118–135. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJLSS-11-2019-0118

Mària JF, Mickson Kayuni H & Tambulasi RIC 2012. Ubuntu and corporate social responsibility: the case of selected Malawian organizations. African Journal of Economic and Management Studies, 3(1), 64–76. https://doi.org/10.1108/20400701211197285

Mashingaidze S 2014. Ethical intelligence: espousing African ubuntu philosophical business approach with Jewish business ethics systems as panacea for corporate failure in Africa. Corporate Ownership and Control, 12(1CONT5), 473–489. https://doi.org/10.22495/cocv12i1c5p3

Molefe M & Magam N 2019 What can Ubuntu do? a reflection on african moral theory in light of post-colonial challenges. Politikon, 46(3), 311–325. https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2019.1642669

Nabudere DW 2006. Towards an Afrokology of knowledge production and African regeneration. International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity, 1(1), 7–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/18186870608529704

Nachum L, Stevens CE, Newenham-Kahindi A, Lundan S, Rose EL & Wantchekon L 2022. Africa rising: opportunities for advancing theory on people, institutions and the nation state in international business. Journal of International Business Studies, 54,1–18. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-022-00581-z

Niankara I 2018. Organisational management culture and employers' health insurance offering strategies in the USA: an Ubuntu-based random utility modelling approach. Global Business and Economics Review, 20(4), 503–520. https://doi.org/10.1504/GBER.2018.092767

Okereke C, Vincent O & Mordi C 2018. Determinants of Nigerian managers' environmental attitude: Africa's Ubuntu ethics versus global capitalism. Thunderbird International Business Review, 60(4), 577–590. https://doi.org/10.1002/tie.21974

Okolie AC 2003. Producing knowledge for sustainable development in Africa: implications for higher education. Higher Education, 46(2), 235–260. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024717729885

Oppong S 2017. Indigenizing knowledge for development: epistemological and pedagogical approaches. Africanus: Journal of Development Studies, 43(2), 34–50. https://doi.org/10.25159/0304-615x/2300

Page MJ, Mckenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, Shamseer L, Tetzlaff JM, Akl EA, Brennan SE, Chou R, Glanville J, Grimshaw JM, Hróbjartsson A, Lalu MM, Li T, Loder EW, Mayo-Wilson E, Mcdonald S … Moher D 2020. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71

Phaswana I & Pelser T 2021. A corporate governance and business ethics framework: the case study of bank subsidiaries in an emerging country. Journal of Governance and Regulation, 10(3), 30–43. https://doi.org/10.22495/JGRV10I3ART3

Pietersen HJ 2005. Western humanism, African humanism and work organisations. South African Journal of Industrial Psychology, 31(3), 54–61. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v31i3.209

Rathbone M 2006. Interaction between scholarly and non-scholarly reading of Genesis 11,1-9 in the South African context [Stellenbosch University]. http://scholar.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.1/1455

Rwelamila PD Talukhaba AA & Ngowi AB 1999. Tracing the African Project Failure Syndrome: the significance of "ubuntu." Engineering Construction and Architectural Management, 6(4), 335–346. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-232x.1999.00120.x

Sartorius K Merino A & Carmichael T 2011. Human resource management and cultural diversity: a case study in Mozambique. International Journal of Human Resource Management, 22(9), 1963–1985. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.573973

Schultz CM 2021. The future and the role of human resource management in South Africa during the Fourth Industrial Revolution. South African Journal of Human Resource Management, 19, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v19i0.1624

Steenkamp H & Rensburg R 2018. Utilising an Ubuntu-centred communication management framework to analyse csr messages on SNSS. communicatio, 44(3), 17–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/02500167.2018.1541914

Taylor DFP 2014. Defining Ubuntu for business ethics- A deontological approach. South African Journal of Philosophy, 33(3), 331–345. https://doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2014.948328

Thakhathi A 2021. Advancing transcendent development: an in-depth review of developmental corporate social responsibility's value proposition, inhibitions and inclusive sustainable development prospects. Business Ethics, Environment and Responsibility, 30(S1), 103–125. https://doi.org/10.1111/BEER.12353

Wanasika I Howell JP Littrell R & Dorfman P 2011. Managerial leadership and culture in Sub-Saharan Africa. Journal of World Business, 46(2), 234–241. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2010.11.004

Authors

Mpumelelo Longweni (OrcID 0000-0001-9670-3648) is a Lecturer of Management Sciences in the Faculty of Management and Economic Sciences at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa. Mpumelelo teaches operations management and problem-solving for managers courses and conducts research in the areas of managerial competencies and business management. He can be contacted at junior.longweni@nwu.ac.za.

Lerato E. Mdaka (OrcID 0000-0002-9761-1291) is a Lecturer of Management Sciences in the Faculty of Management and Economic Sciences at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa. Lerato teaches strategic management and entrepreneurship courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and conducts research in the area of innovation and entrepreneurship. She can be contacted at lerato.mdaka@nwu.ac.za