Critical understanding of emerging schools of social work in Tanzania through Ubuntu perspectives

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Abstract
The article presents a comprehensive assessment of the emerging social work schools in Tanzania (formerly Tanganyika) through the Ubuntu perspective. Ubuntu formed the basis of educational pedagogy in pre-colonial Tanzania relevant to indigenous knowledge and practice but colonial rule imported Western social work approaches in the 1940s to replace it. The challenges include fragmented training with an influence of inherited colonial structure, outdated curricular, some irrelevant training materials that do not directly replicate African ecology and cultural values, indigenization of training is still sluggish, lack of adequate indigenous inputs while graduates do not fit into the global market. Moreover, existing theories and models are more Westernised. Despite the above challenges of emerging social work training schools, they have rendered several opportunities including social work research and consultancy, the emergence of indigenization of social work, an abundance of social work indigenous elites and literature, TESWEP transformed into ASSWOT that advocated and participated in social welfare policies review that contain more African requirements. Recommendations for key stakeholders to develop a comprehensive social work policy and related legislation to control the quality of training and practice for the realization of Ubuntu goals were made. Also, Ujamaa competence should be restored in the training package, TASWO and ASSWOT, to address the gap of educators and practitioners, speeding up the indigenization of social work education with Ubuntu values.

Keywords: Tanzania social welfare, social work, African ubuntu, social work education

INTRODUCTION
The history of social work education in Tanzania can be traced from pre-colonial Tanganyika with informal social welfare education that was practiced across the country based on the ecology and cultural perspective (Ubuntu) (Mabeyo et al., 2019). Inherited traditional social welfare knowledge and skills

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were imparted from one generation to the next generation through traditional means such as storytelling, poems, songs, cave writings and ritual practice, etc. (Manyama, 2018).

According to Asamoah (2018), related knowledge and practice were practiced across Africa on a voluntary and mutual basis. This type of traditional social welfare knowledge capacitated Tanzanians to master their environment through clearing community fields, gender roles, attending to sick people, counselling, spiritual services, rules for community peace, maintaining acceptable social behaviour, ritual ceremonies, and cultural ethical values (Asamoah, 2018).

The traditional social welfare education in pre-colonial Tanganyika aimed to serve vulnerable groups and people who were in need (Nyerere, 2011). For instance, children were regarded as children of the society, and all members of the community were obligated to raise or protect any child, regardless of the biological relationship. Also, this African ubuntu welfare knowledge and practice was extended to the elderly, widows, poor, sick people, pregnant women, and the disabled in the society (Mabeyo, et al., 2019). Also, informal welfare education in pre-colonial Tanganyika was delivered through a peer-based approach to specific groups, times, and occasions i.e., traditional ritual ceremonies, during natural calamities, marriage ceremonies, family, clan, or tribe gatherings etc. (Buhori, 2015). This informal traditional knowledge and skills practice is referred as an Ubuntu welfare education practice that envisioned to restore human functioning and traditional mutual support to each other in time of need (Nyerere, 2011). The statement above was supported by the African historiography that proposed various channels where ethnic structural institutions resembled contemporary economic and social welfare activity of the respective society (Herbst, 2000; Boone, 2003).

With the coming of the colonialists in search of raw materials, labour, and markets as well as areas of investment, there was a need to establish social work education with Western ideology to serve the colonial populations who resided within African countries including colonial Tanganyika (Mabeyo, 2014). This marked the historical process of importation of social work education from the colonial masters and declining of existing African social work in Tanzania (Nilsen et al., 2023). On the dawn of Independence Tanzania under the Late Dr. Julius Kambarage Nyerere strove to restore Ubuntu values and practices in the education system by reflecting all social work and related social welfare issues in the vital national document of Arusha Declaration of 1967 (Nyerere, 2011). Arusha Declaration marked the new course of the country in returning to African education and models under Ujamaa model that represents other Ubuntu models. In 1973, The Institute of Social Work (ISW) was established under Ujamaa policy and it remained a government monopolised social work

school for over three decades since its establishment in 1973 to provide social welfare services in local communities (ISW, 2010).

ISW became a social work education platform relevant to (re) introducing and restoring indigenous social work training to replace colonial social work education and also contributing to strengthening the Ujamaa Ideology of social protection for all (Mpangala, 2015). Ujamaa Ideology emphasizes education for self-reliance and collective welfare necessary for holistic community protection. The vision of Ujamaa education was to ensure traditional social welfare systems are the core part of protecting vulnerable populations and those in need as far as a social protection structure that would see Tanzanians remain equal (Nyerere, 2011). With this context therefore, most of the certificates, diploma, and advanced diploma graduates were absorbed by the government through The Department of Social Welfare to work in local communities (ASSWOT, 2014). Ujamaa held a strong bond with Tanzania's education and services targeting vulnerable populations then in the 1980s as the country experienced political change (Nyerere, 2011). Political change of moving out of Ujamaa ideology and socio-economic changes set complex social problems in Tanzania for both urban and rural populations (DSW, 2013). The social problems included social and family disintegration, chronic poverty, a rising rate of urban crimes, alcohol and drug abuse, child labour, and HIV & AIDS to mention a few. HIV & AIDS as a social problem resulted in an increase of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), and HIV & AIDS infected and affected people in need of linkage and monitoring of care and treatment psychosocial support due to stigma and discrimination (URT, 2013). Emerging socio-economic problems increased the demand for social workers in private and public settings which created opportunities for the establishment of social work schools to meet the market demands (TASWO, 2017). Despite the opportunities created, yet lack of political will to embrace Ubuntu values in social work education and practice influenced emerging schools of social work that lack sufficient Ubuntu competence relevant to addressing social economic problems in Tanzania (TASWO, 2015).

Therefore, for the past 15 years, Tanzania experienced a mushrooming of social work schools in the country and lack of social work education regulatory mechanisms was not in place to accommodate these new schools without relevant indigenous competence like Ubuntu to address the existing socio-economic problems (DSW, 2023). Despite abundant schools of social work yet there is a more fragmented social work curriculum and inadequate literature that reflects social work education in Tanzania, which is a necessity for this review.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This is a desk research design that involved the review of secondary data review that were pre-identified followed by purposive sampling of pre-identification criteria for both online and offline materials. The desk review was used to critically assess the implications of the emerging schools of social work in Tanzania and the review was supported by an evidence-based minimum set of items for reporting in systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA, 2022). The combination of the approaches rendered sufficient critical identification, analysis, and presentation of the findings. Moreover, preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) were used on various documents and purposive selection of online databases to search for pre-identified keywords of the study.

Study area

The study area was Dar es Salaam region of Tanzania. It was purposively selected for the study as it was thought to contain sufficient information based on the fact that 60% of emerging schools of social work are located in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania Association of Social Workers, 2017).

Sampling procedure

The study used the purposive sampling procedure to select Dar es Salaam region as the area of the study because there were a total of 20 studies and seven reports from there and some parts of Africa. The selected studies were screened and independently reviewed against predetermined criteria for eligibility. A systematic review was conducted to provide a comprehensive literature review on the emerging social work schools in Tanzania in Ubuntu perspective, and how this massive transformation brought challenges and opportunities for the same. The following databases were searched: AJOL, Google Books, Google Search, and SCOPUS. The final search was conducted on 04 October 2023. No date restrictions were placed on the search; key search terms were African social work education, social work education in Tanzania and Ubuntu education practice in Africa.

Exclusion and ineligibility

Reference lists and hand searching were undertaken to identify additional papers (Babineau, 2014). Papers were considered ineligible if they did not focus on Ubuntu and social work education in Africa, or were review articles, opinion pieces/articles/letters, or editorials. Duplicates were removed and title and abstract and full-text screening were undertaken using the Cochrane systematic literature review programme (Babineau, 2014).

Eligibility Criteria
Papers were considered eligible if they: were published in English; were published in a peer review journal; reported original research, written in African context and related to social work indigenous education in an African context. Systematic literature reviews were included in the wider search but were not included in the results (Hutchings et al, 2020).

Ethical considerations
In this study, there was no direct involvement with human respondents but the study identified and selected the study that embraced ethical consideration in their research process. To address the issue of bias author involved a second reviewer to assist the process selection and exclusion criteria of review in all stages of the review process; conflicts were resolved by consensus (Struwing and Stead, 2001).

FINDINGS
The historical development of formal social work training in Tanzania like the rest of Africa is influenced by the colonial powers (Hochfeld et al, 2006). In pre-colonial times, social work and social welfare education in East African contexts were based on mutual aid support that prioritised the welfare of vulnerable populations. Pre-colonial social work knowledge and competence in assisting people to undertake collective action in their communities with the primary aim of bringing benefits to such communities was the primary aim (Obar, Adekoya & Nkwocha, 2017).

Traditionally, the training and practice of social work in the pre-colonial era were embedded into a mutual collective or communal approach considering ecology and cultural values (Ubuntu). Thus, the realization of the community goals was the priority that went beyond the individual self-consciousness in an African context, and it was typically communal consciousness of culture as an essential aspect of community and welfare development (Chigbu, Izugbara & de Vries, 2018). In pre-colonial Tanzanian society like other African societies, tribal and mutual aid knowledge and practices that cannot be ignored existed. Traditional social welfare education that embraces ecology and cultural values through different types of mutual aid societies across the continent provided assistance to family members (Hochfeld et al, 2006). Some were family or kin-based (the largest category); others were cultural- and/or religious-based (such as rotating credit societies, and informal service societies) (Midgley, 1997).

This type of traditional social welfare education and practice could not exist over generation during pre-colonial Tanzania society if the knowledge and skills (education) were not properly acquired and transferred to the next generation. According to Apte & Grieco (1994, the African extended family, for example, has always operated as a social welfare system and they continue

to address the social welfare needs of a sizeable number of Africans who lack any form of social protection. The formalization of social work training replaced pre-colonial social welfare traditional knowledge and skills in Tanzania. The coming of colonialists influenced the new educational system including social work training in Tanzania which sometimes is referred to as an 'adopted child' from the colonial parent (Mabeyo, 2014: 127), thus indicating the foreign character of the profession's origin. The current social work education which is termed formal social work training came to replace pre-colonial traditional education practice thus scholars have considered it as a profession (with reference to social work ethics, principles, and models, etc.). According to TASWO and ASSWOT (2022) in the year 2021, there were more than 20 schools of social work providing social work education in Tanzania from certificate to doctorate social work programmes. These emerging schools of social work facilitated a paradigm shift in social work education and practice that brought both challenges and opportunities to the country.

While the African continent was experiencing a hot debate concerning the relevance of Western or colonial social work education in the context of African reality from the 1970s (Linda, 2012), in Tanzania from 1973 to 2005 there was the monopoly of only one social work school of social work (ISW) and indigenization process of social work training was a slow process as a result (DSW, 2013). However, despite the escalating of social work schools from the end of the 2000s to date, emerging social work schools still adopt training packages that do not directly replicate African ecology and cultural values (Manyama, 2018). Experience shows that when social work training is not reflecting the ecology and culture of that society then it automatically faces challenges to manifesting its objective towards addressing social, economic, health and political needs (Hochfeld, Osei-Hwedie & Rankopo, 2008; Gray & Fook, 2004). Some of the contents in the training package in Tanzania are still embracing the colonial legacy. They include theories, models and case studies that are heavily Western-oriented. This poses a serious challenge for students to apply social work competence during fieldwork placement and later professional intervention after graduation. The fact remains that both social work instruction and practice since colonial times still target colonial needs and disregard the African cultural context (Mungai, 2015).

According to Mathebane et al (2015), the social work profession has been marginalised and viewed by many as contributing to the destruction of local cultures, wisdom, knowledge, and morals. It is also believed that the profession is ineffective and culturally irrelevant in tackling social challenges in non-Western contexts. Despite this notion, social work teaching and practice are very much needed in African nations (Mathebane & Mungai, 2015). Change in political ideology that sidelined some aspects of Ujamaa that are relevant for the realization of Ubuntu in education and practice posed a serious challenge to

social work students as they tried to link classroom learning and the actual field (ASSWOT, 2017). Higher learning Libraries and related bookstores have inadequate books or literature that were written and published in Tanzania (Spitzer, 2014 & 2017). While evaluating social work practice and schooling in Africa, Kang'ethe (2014) observed that the profession in some African countries appears to display the following flaws: it continues to follow a curriculum that was crafted by Western world countries that does not adequately match the growth needs of African countries, it is not adequately addressing most of the social ills African countries are experiencing, and is usually eclipsed by other professions such as sociology, psychology and economics. Rankopo (2008) contended that the indigenisation of social work learning is also faced with the pressure to train graduates that fit into the global market and context (Osei-Hwedie and Rankopo, 2008).

Indigenisation of social work instruction is at a slow pace, and there still exists a gap between theory (social work education and research) and practice as faced by most African countries (Mungai, 2015). The transitional process is slowed down by a poor mechanism of checking and balancing the social work profession within the legal framework in the country. Social work educators have not envisioned adequate ways to explore further knowledge in the African cultural context. This will add credibility and fill the existing gaps in social work education and practice. On the other hand, Spitzer (2019) contended that the curriculum that the institutions have developed with assistance from foreign professionals needs to recognize local approaches that work, existing shortfalls in the practice, contextual cultural underpinnings and the kinds of services required (Spitzer, 2019).

DISCUSSION

Association of Schools of Social Work in Tanzania (ASSWOT) strives to solicit funds and technical support to develop and review social work curricula that are relevant to the Tanzania context. ASSWOT advocates for indigenization of social work education but still, there is no social work education council to facilitate the process (ASSWOT, 2015). Tanzania is still learning from other countries in the Sub-Saharan region such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, and Botswana, who have, over the years, worked hard to unveil an indigenous social work education and practice identity that can deliver relevant social development in their countries (Mathebane & Mungai, 2015). Despite the challenges that social work education is facing in Tanzania, it poses several opportunities that can be utilized for social, health, economic, and policy development in the country and elsewhere in Africa (Nilsen et al, 2023). It is obvious that there are many colonial historical influences that may have affected the introduction and evolution of social work education and practice in Africa, however, the emerging of schools of social work is widening the platform of social work elites and opening platforms to redefine social work

education and practice with reference to Tanzanian context (Manyama, 2018). Linda (2012) has also recognised the influence of colonial legacy on existing African social work practice and how it shaped schools of social work. Therefore, the importation of the social work profession into Africa and the institutions that struggled to define the social work profession's place on the continent are all part of the issue under discourse (Osei-Hwedie & Rankopo, 2008).

Schools of social work have contributed to the indigenisation process of social work education in the country whereby for the first time the country can boast of social work literature with indigenous components i.e., cultural values and African ecology. This was emphasized by Twikirize (2019) who noted that the process of developing indigenous knowledge and cultural competence cannot just start with practice but rather with research and indigenised education. Still, there is room to integrate more Ubuntu competence in social work education by creating a close linkage between social work research, theory, and training that aim to integrate these indigenous knowledge and practices into the mainstream, teach them in the classroom, and competently apply them in practice (Nilsen et al. & Lembuka, 2023). In the end, the gap between theory (social work education and research) and practice would be narrowed as argued by Healy (2014). Reflexivity would ensure that social work educators can investigate new knowledge and also add credence to the practice and existing gaps that could be incorporated into the curriculum (Ramkopo, 2008).

The existing curricular in the schools of social work in the country have the opportunity for curricular review either partial or full review, this is based on the Tanzania Commission for University (TCU) and National Accreditation Council for Technical Education (NACTE) guidelines that after three to five years of utilization of approved curricular, training institution can review the said curricular (ASSWOT, 2014). This is an open opportunity for indigenization of social work education and the integration of more African values and models like Ubuntu (Mabeyo et al., 2019). Moreover, the curricular review process if it is properly used, will render an opportunity for mobilizing relevant key stakeholders to go through this process of examining assumptions, critiquing, and building culturally relevant social work curricular (Nilsen et al., 2023).

Based on the findings and discussion of the review came with the following recommendations: There is a need for the enforcement of the indigenization of social work education and identifying some of those emerging social work competencies and making them compulsory courses in social work training. There is also a need to conduct annual refresher training for social work faculty members on Ubuntu competence for social workers so that they can impart indigenous competence to social work students. By identifying and integrating

African Ubuntu values and models and making them compulsory courses in social work curricula, the schools of social work will be able to engage in Ubuntu research that will open the door to addressing social problems and widening ingenious social work knowledge and practice.

CONCLUSION

The emerging schools of social work in Tanzania are plausible as it is widening the opportunities for social work professionalism and have brought an alarming vital call to all social work stakeholders to develop and review Tanzanian social work curricular and respective training education that is further relevant with Tanzania's ecology and culture, i.e., Ubuntu model. More importantly, the fact that the government has continued to engage in social work education and working closely with TASWO and ASSWOT has yielded tremendous results in standardization of social work education in the country. Despite the above opportunities, still social work education faces various challenges including outdated curricular that have the component of inherited colonial competence that is irrelevant to the Tanzanian context. Inadequate African literature related to social work practice is still a problem, while some social work schools have faculty members who lack social work education degrees as well as still a lack of African theories and models in the training package. In order to maintain the gained opportunities and address existing challenges of social work education in Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa, Ubuntu philosophy is key. African social work and indigenization of social work education must envision Ubuntu models that are appropriate in developing culturally responsive interventions, methods, and practice approaches to promote the welfare of individuals, families, groups and communities in the African context (Kalinganire, Gilkey & Haas, 2017).

Therefore, Ubuntu is becoming a global framework for addressing various socio-economic, political and health problems. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) has taken the lead by declaring Ubuntu as a global social work agenda from 2020 to 2030. This calls for Tanzania and other African social work stakeholders to embrace Ubuntu in social work education and practice since Ubuntu is the best gift that Africa can offer to the World in addressing contemporary socio-economic problems.

Conflict of Interests
I Meinrad Haule Lembuka, declare that I have no conflict of interest with any other part

Declaration
I declare that this paper has not been published elsewhere and that it has not been submitted simultaneously for publication elsewhere.

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