Humanising Higher Education: Three Case Studies in Sub-Saharan Africa[1]

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Abstract
Colonisation resulted in sub-Saharan Africa's indigenous traditions of humanising education being largely displaced by Western forms of schooling. Yet, a humanising education, which focuses on cultivating one's humanity, is critical to the work of universities seeking to address the current challenges facing the continent. This article is based on a study on the application of the African philosophy of Ubuntu and UNESCO's global citizenship learning outcomes at three universities, in Kenya, Rwanda, and Ghana. The data were gathered by means of classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with students, faculty, staff, and administrators. The findings show that the institutions' purposeful use of experiential learning and group work was effective in fostering students' critical thinking and empathy and that faculty modelled humanity through democratic interactions with students. However, the institutions showed less evidence of enabling students to develop a sense of belonging to humanity and appreciation for the interconnectedness of all life. In order to help students to develop the essential philosophical foundations of understanding what it means to become fully human, it is recommended that Ubuntu and African indigenous thought be incorporated into higher education in sub-Saharan Africa.

Key words: sub-Saharan Africa, higher education, humanising education, global citizenship, Ubuntu, African indigenous philosophy

La colonisation a eu pour conséquence le fait que les traditions autochtones d'humanisation des études dans l'Afrique sub-saharienne ont été

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largement supplantées par des formes occidentales de scolarité. Pourtant, une éducation qui s'humanise, qui se concentre sur le développement de l'humanité de chacun·e, est primordiale pour le travail des universités qui cherchent à faire face aux défis actuels lancés au continent. Cet article est fondé sur une étude de l'application de la philosophie africaine d'Ubuntu et ses résultats d'apprentissage dans trois universités au Kenya, Rwanda et au Ghana. Les données ont été rassemblées grâce à des entretiens semi-structurés avec des étudiant·es, des membres du corps professoral, du personnel académique et de l'administration, et des observations en classe. Il en résulte que l'utilisation de l'apprentissage empirique et du travail de groupe par les institutions était efficace afin de promouvoir l'esprit critique et l'empathie, et que les membres du corps professoral ont modelé l'humanité au travers d'interactions démocratiques avec leurs étudiant·es. En revanche, en général, les étudiant·es n'ont pas développé un sentiment d'appartenance à l'humanité, ni une reconnaissance que tout ce qui vit ou existe sur terre est interdépendant. Afin que l'on puisse aider la population étudiante à développer les fondements philosophiques essentiels qui permettent de comprendre ce que devenir pleinement humain signifie, il est fortement recommandé que la philosophie de l'Ubuntu et la pensée autochtone africaine soient incorporées dans l'Enseignement supérieur dans l'Afrique sub-saharienne.

Mots clés: Afrique sub-saharienne, Enseignement supérieur, humaniser l'enseignement, citoyennes et citoyens du monde, Ubuntu, philosophie indigène africaine

Introduction

After gaining independence, sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries celebrated the end of an era of colonisation, dehumanisation, and oppression at the hands of Europeans. Yet, over half a century later, the oppression continues in new forms. Armed conflict, corruption, and deep social and economic inequalities plague the continent. Education plays a critical role in empowering the youth with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to address these pressing contemporary issues. In the past 50 years, expanded access to primary and secondary education dramatically increased pre-tertiary enrolment rates in SSA; gross primary enrolment rates doubled, and gross secondary enrolment tripled from 1970 to 2014 (World Bank, 2017a, 2017b). As a result, demand for higher education (HE) has skyrocketed. Despite the proliferation of new private universities to fill this demand, access to tertiary education remains limited, with the most marginalised groups facing significant barriers (Darvas, Gao, Shen, and Bawany, 2017). Since universities shape the future of the continent by developing future leaders' capacity to enact change, there is an urgent need for HE reforms to unlock the vast human potential of the continent. This is where humanising education – an educational approach focused on cultivating each learner's humanity – can play an important role. This article sets out a conceptual framework to define humanising education and analyses its application and outcomes in three SSA universities. It contributes to the development of theory on humanising HE in the African context and will inform the practices of current tertiary institutions on the continent.

The article is structured as follows: Section two presents the problem statement by reviewing the current challenges confronting SSA universities and justifies the need for humanising HE in this context. Section three introduces a conceptual framework for humanising education based on Ubuntu and UNESCO's global citizenship learning outcomes. Section four discusses the methodology employed, while section five presents a summary of each case study institution's mission, founding, and application of humanising education. Section six analyses the results, discusses the study's limitations, and suggests future avenues of research. Section seven provides recommendations for HE in SSA, while section eight is the conclusion.

Literature Review

Universities in SSA face the challenge of transforming a dehumanising education experience. Firstly, they function under a Eurocentric, deficit-based system of education (Abdi, 2006; Whitehead, 1995), are modelled on Western institutions, derive most of their knowledge from Western sources, and require a level of Western assimilation for entry (Mazrui, 1992; Teferra and Altbach, 2004). During colonisation, Europeans founded many of the current public universities to train selected Africans for colonial administration. Examples include Makerere University (1922) in Uganda, Kenya's Egerton University (1939), the University of Ghana (1948), University of Ibadan (1948) in Nigeria, Ethiopia's Addis Ababa University (1950), and the University of Zimbabwe (1952) (Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck, 2013). Indigenous knowledge was excluded from formal schooling because it was viewed as backwards and uncivilized. Even after independence, little was done to decolonise education systems in Africa (Shizha, 2014). As a result, SSA students experience a dissonance between how and what they learn in school and their home culture (Shizha, 2014).

Second, the language employed in the policy documents of international organisations and national governments in SSA reflects an emphasis on the economic purpose of HE and the assumption that universities spur economic development (Government of Ghana, 2010; Republic of Rwanda,

2010; Republic of Kenya, 2016; World Bank, 2009). Research links HE to economic growth through facilitating technological catch-up and the maximisation of economic outputs (Bloom, Canning, and Chan, 2006). The challenges confronting SSA universities are usually framed in an economic perspective, with the poor quality of HE attributed to a lack of resources and misalignment between university curricula and the labour market (World Bank, 2009). While few studies critically analyse the predominantly economic leaning of the HE discourse in SSA, some have examined students' motivations for attending university. Gyamera's (2018) study of students in Ghanaian universities found that their dominant motivation for attending university was overwhelmingly economic; they foresaw that this would result in better employment opportunities and security, and their fields of study were also influenced by this economic imperative. Such instrumentalisation of education renders HE a means for students to gain access to economic opportunities while simultaneously making them a means to enhance national economic growth. Consequently, the dominant focus has been producing an efficient labour force rather than developing human beings as a whole. This can be described as a consumerist and managerial model of HE (O'Byrne and Bond, 2014).

The impact of colonial-based, instrumentalised education is reflected in SSA's leadership crisis; despite HE training, graduates from the most prestigious institutions enter political office and perpetrate gross abuse of power for personal benefit (Owoye and Bissessar, 2014; Swaniker, 2014). These challenges can be addressed through re-centring education on the human being – in other words, humanising education. Most of the literature on humanising pedagogy in Africa emanates from post-apartheid South Africa (Fataar, 2016; Geduld and Sathorar, 2016; Roux and Becker, 2016; Zinn, Adam, Kurup, and du Plessis, 2016; Zinn, Proteus, and Keet, 2009). Current studies explore the definition of and need for humanising pedagogy; however, little to no research has been conducted on actual examples of humanising education at the HE level in SSA beyond South Africa. This study aimed to address this gap by exploring three examples of HE institutions practicing humanising education in West, Central, and East Africa. The article explores the meaning of humanising education; how it is applied in SSA universities; and its outcomes.

Conceptual Framework of Humanising Education

Learning from indigenous philosophies is critical in addressing the current challenges confronting African education. This section conceptualises humanising education by drawing from Ubuntu, an African way of life that explains what it means to be human and serves as a guide to raise citizens that contribute to the betterment of the community (Venter, 2004). In this

sense, Ubuntu is also an African philosophy of education. Because African philosophy integrates all aspects of life, an African philosophy of life and African philosophy of education go hand in hand; furthermore, education is the means by which an individual develops and learns how to live the most meaningful life (Venter, 2004). While Ubuntu is a word of Bantu origin, I employ it in a broad sense as an African philosophy of humanism since the concepts of communalism and humaneness are expressed throughout indigenous cultures across the continent (Gyekye, 1996; Ikuenobe, 2006; Mosha, 2002; Venter, 2004). Thus, in using Ubuntu to define a humanising education, I also refer to the literature on African indigenous educational practices. I define such practices as the educational philosophies and pedagogies that were practiced among communities in Africa before European colonisation and continue to be practiced to some extent in areas that have been less influenced by westernisation. First, humanising education is based on an understanding of the interconnectedness and inherent dignity of all life. Ubuntu is a shortened version of the Xhosa proverb, "Umuntu ngumuntu ngamantu", which expresses that "[a] person is a person through other persons" (Tutu, 1999, p. 31). Humans and other living beings are inextricably connected and co-dependent; therefore, hurting another means hurting oneself, and conversely, helping others means helping oneself (Tutu, 1999). Thus, according to Ubuntu, becoming fully human means becoming an active participating and contributing member of the wider community. The purpose of a humanising education is thus to cultivate this appreciation for the dignity of life in each individual and to awaken each person to their role in contributing to the lives of others in a meaningful way.

This conceptualisation of humanising education is not to be confused with the Western humanist traditions that centre on the development of rational, autonomous individuals and privilege human beings over other beings. Le Grange (2018) argues that reliance on the cold rationality of humanist traditions has resulted in inhuman actions, including genocide, atomic bombings, and widespread destruction of the environment. In contrast, an education based on Ubuntu would help learners to develop the capabilities required to take action to enhance all life (le Grange, 2018). When Ubuntu is applied at the international level, learners develop a feeling of solidarity with people from different countries and take action to improve their collective wellbeing (Murithi, 2007). Since it is premised on the inseparable links between all life, Ubuntu contains inherent recognition of how one's local actions affect the global community. Being a global citizen means demonstrating a broadness of the mind and heart – traits required to be a positively contributing citizen of the wider world (Ikeda, 1996). Therefore, a humanising education should

produce humans who can develop and exercise their humanity at both the local and global level.

Second, because of the integrated nature of the world and all life, a humanising education is a holistic education that transforms each person into a good human being and global citizen. According to African philosophy, one becomes fully human by developing essential human virtues such as benevolence, empathy, and respect (Tedla, 1992). In traditional African societies, the entire community participated in educating each child, and children learned by observing and imitating an elder's behaviour (Okrah, 2003). Elders utilised multiple methods to teach the youth such as storytelling, proverbs, dance, and music (Okrah, 2003). Thus, a humanising education in the traditional African context was not accomplished merely through a certain curriculum but was lived throughout all interactions and aspects of life. Similarly, fostering global citizens requires a holistic, integrated experience that enables each learner to cultivate their humanity. UNESCO (2015) developed key learning outcomes of global citizenship categorised under three core dimensions:

Cognitive:

Learners acquire knowledge and understanding of local, national and global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations. They develop skills for critical thinking and analysis.

Socio-Emotional:

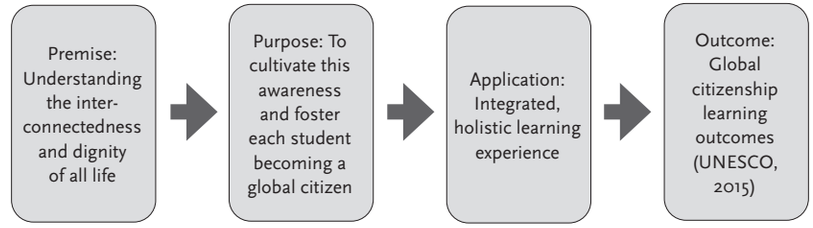
Learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights. They develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.

Behavioural:

Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world. They develop motivation and willingness to take necessary actions. (p. 22)

These learning outcomes are consistent with Ubuntu and can be used to measure the transformational outcomes of a humanising education. In seeking to understand the application and learning outcomes of humanising education at the case study universities, UNESCO's global citizenship learning outcomes are employed. The scope of the study was limited to the application of humanising education to two key areas: pedagogy – how teaching and learning happens; and student-faculty relationships – how students and faculty relate to one another. Figure 1 summarises the conceptual framework used to define humanising education in terms of its premise, purpose, application, and outcomes. This framework guides the analysis of the findings on the applications and outcomes of humanising education.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Humanising Education



Research Design

Three case study institutions were selected based on their accessibility, their mission, and their reputation for providing a humanising education. It should be noted that these institutions are not humanising in all aspects but have adopted initiatives to humanise their students' education experience. Table 1 shows how the case studies vary in terms of their location, size, and founding year. One is a graduate institute within a public university that was selected due to its unique educational programming.

Table 1. Case Study Universities Description and Statistics for the 2017-18 Academic Year

University	Public/ Private	Founding Year	Number of Students	Number of Full-time Faculty	Rural/ Urban	Country
Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies	Public	2012	52	4	Urban	Kenya
University of Global Health and Equity	Private	2015	46	6	Rural and Urban	Rwanda
Ashesi University	Private	2002	870	34	Rural	Ghana

Semi-structured interviews with students, faculty, staff and administrators, classroom observations, and document analysis were used to gather data at the three institutions during 2018. Snowball sampling was employed to select the participants. The interviews were transcribed, and process coding was used to analyse the data for the pedagogy used and student-teacher relationships. For outcomes, key words from UNESCO's (2015) global citizenship learning outcomes were used to code the transcripts. Classroom observations and university documents were used to triangulate the data. Table 2 shows the number and kinds of interviews conducted at each university.

Table 2. Number and Kinds of Interviews at each University

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Administration	All Interviews
Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies	5	1	0	1	7
University of Global Health and Equity	4	2	0	3	9
Ashesi University	6	6	2	1	15
Total	15	9	2	5	31

Case Study Universities

This section reviews each case study institution's mission, founding, and application of humanising education.

Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies (WMI), Kenya

A graduate school in environmental management, WMI is located on the lush, green University of Nairobi Kabete campus as part of the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Services. The institute was founded in 2010 by Wangari Maathai, the late Kenyan environmental activist and Noble Peace Prize winner. Its mission is "[t]o cultivate positive ethics, values and practices towards the environment by training stewards who foster peace, promote holistic sustainable development, and link theory with practice," and its vision is "excellence in experiential learning, transformational community outreach, and research for sustainable environments and cultures of peace" (WMI, 2009a). Founder Maathai obtained her PhD from the University of Nairobi and became the first indigenous woman to serve as associate professor in its department of Veterinary Anatomy (WMI, 2009b). In 1977, Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement to mobilise women's groups to plant trees for environmental conservation and self-empowerment (Green Belt Movement, 2018). The university and the movement received financial support from the University of Copenhagen, Energy Resources Institute, and the United States Department of State to establish WMI. Its curriculum reflects Maathai's desire to link theory and practice to raise transformative, "green" leaders and promotes interdisciplinary learning about peace, human rights, and development.

Experiential learning is central to WMI's curriculum delivery. All students undertake field research and investigate diverse topics, including land-based conflicts, climate change, and water resource management. Short-term experiential learning opportunities on sustainable land use management systems coupled with homestays enhance students' understanding of environmental issues. In keeping with WMI's focus on community engagement, the fieldwork concludes with a workshop, where students present their findings and recommendations to the community (WMI, 2018). In 2018, WMI constructed a new green campus, which is used for experiential learning and demonstrates best practices of environmental sustainability (WMI, 2009c). Faculty members and students said that they were inspired by Maathai and exhibited a strong passion for the environment. Lecturers commented that they encourage students to develop a sense of responsibility by asking them, "Who will benefit from the research you conduct?" Graduates from WMI go on to become consultants, lecturers, civil servants, and activists, among others to apply environmental sustainability in improving their field and continuing Maathai's legacy.

University of Global Health Equity, Rwanda

An initiative of Partners in Health (PIH), UGHE was built on PIH's three decades of experience in delivering health services to the poorest of the poor. During my visit in 2018, UGHE occupied half a floor of a building in Kigali and was in the process of constructing a campus in Butaro, three hours north of the capital. The UGHE's mission is "to radically change the way health care is delivered around the world by training generations of global health professionals who strive to deliver more equitable, quality health services for all," and its vision is "a world where every individual – no matter who they are or where they live – can lead a healthy and productive life" (UGHE, 2018). Non-governmental organisation PIH was co-founded by medical anthropologist and physician Paul Farmer, renowned for his work in serving the health needs of the poor across the world. Farmer criticised the notion of providing low quality care to the poor in the name of efficiency (Farmer, 2013). His ethos forms the basis of UGHE's programmes, which feature a strong experiential component of field visits to families and community health workers in disadvantaged areas.

Farmer's Vision, together with former Minister of Health Agnes Binagwaho's passion, and discussions with the Rwandan Ministries of Health and Education, resulted in planning for the new university. Early funding was provided by the Gates Foundation and Cummings Foundation through PIH, and the Rwandan government led by President Kagame donated in-kind land, roads, and utilities for the Butaro campus. The UGHE's curriculum is modelled on Harvard's Public Health programme, and the institution has attracted faculty with extensive experience in global public health from high-profile universities in the US. While it began as a master's program, UGHE hopes to offer undergraduate programmes in the

future. Most students are Rwandans from diverse backgrounds, and the university offers needs-based aid. Its courses are structured to ensure that, regardless of their academic background, students develop the foundational knowledge required to understand global public health. All students carry out a research practicum and they have investigated issues such as hospital management and health care for indigents.

Ashesi University, Ghana

Inspired by the liberal arts education he received at Swarthmore College in the US, Ghanaian millionaire Patrick Awuah founded Ashesi, the first liberal arts college in Africa, in 2002 (Bothwell, 2018). The mission of Ashesi, which means "beginning" in Akan, is "to educate a new generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders in Africa and to cultivate among students the critical thinking skills, concern for others, and courage it will take to transform a continent" (Ashesi, 2018c). Its vision is "an African Renaissance driven by a new generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders" (Ashesi, 2018c).

Ashesi initially operated under the mentorship of the University of Cape Coast, a public university in Ghana, but became an independent university that confers its own degrees in January 2018 (Ashesi, 2018c). While its tuition fees are amongst the highest in the country, the institution promotes diversity and 45% of its students received partial scholarships in 2017 (Ashesi, 2017b); about half the students were women, and international students from other African countries represented 20% percent of the student body (Ashesi, 2017b). Ashesi provides multiple avenues for individualised student support to its small student body. In line with its mission of raising generations of ethical African leaders, it creates opportunities for students to shape their own education. The first generations of Ashesi students significantly influenced the university's development by establishing the first honour code in Africa and campus-wide learning outcomes (Ashesi, 2017a, 2018b). Many began entrepreneurial endeavours during their time at university and one in every 25 graduates started their own businesses (Ashesi, 2018a). All students take a leadership sequence that challenges them to think about ethics and good leadership while fulfilling 40 hours of community service in orphanages, health centres, and schools (Ashesi, 2016). Contrary to the brain drain affecting SSA, in 2017, 90% of Ashesi graduates opted to work in Africa (Ashesi, 2017b).

Analysis

This section explores how humanising education is applied in the three SSA universities, and its outcomes. The first part examines pedagogy and student-faculty relationships, and the second looks at how these universities performed based on UNESCO's (2015) global citizenship learning outcomes.

Application of Humanising Education: Pedagogy

Two teaching and learning strategies were cited most often during interviews.

Experiential Learning. Twenty-two of the 31 respondents highlighted the impact of experiential learning on students. They explained that experiential learning shaped students with the drive to take risks, recognise the limitations of theory, critically analyse the complexity of every issue, and the humility to learn from and empathise with diverse and under-served communities. Whether it was through hands-on labs, student clubs, or entrepreneurial projects, students at Ashesi had ample opportunities to try things out and to learn by doing. Instructors contrasted the Ashesi experience with other Ghanaian universities, where students merely read abstract theories in books without hands-on learning opportunities. These plentiful experiential learning opportunities gave Ashesi students an edge as risk-takers, who were comfortable carving out unconventional career paths. Rather than being isolated ivory towers, the case study universities encouraged students to plunge into the community and regard it as a place of learning. Similarly, WMI's research methods class was animated by Maathai's grassroots community-based approach to promoting change and challenged students to think about who their research would benefit and to engage the community in their research. A WMI student shared that, after graduating, she planned to tackle an environmental problem in her home community using what she learned:

> Student: For instance, there is a challenge of deforestation in the entire country, but where I come from there are similar challenges and wildlife conflict…During the dry season, they come out and destroy crops and structures and sometimes there is even loss of life.
> Me: So using what you learned, how would you solve this problem?
> Student: (laughs) It's quite difficult. Because sometimes during the raining season, the elephants don't come because there is plenty of water. And during the dry season they come out. So the residents have a feeling that because there's an electric fence, they say that people responsible for the elephants open [it] so that they don't starve. But in the process of not starving them, they destroy the crops and leave.
> Me: Right. So would the solution be to feed them?
> Student: Not really. It's also a challenge. You know, the reason … why they come to destroy is because maybe we built or we have set up homes in an area which was part of their migratory routes. So the problem is quite a challenge. You can't tell people to move.

A narrow approach based on existing theories may have focused on the people's wellbeing and blamed the animals, or prioritised the animals' wellbeing and neglected the people. Through her experiential learning process, the WMI student was able to adopt a comprehensive approach that took into consideration the impact of the situation on people, animals, and the environment. Another WMI student shared that experiential learning taught her the power of public participation and always involving the recipients of services to help them own any environmental initiatives.

This humility to learn from the community translated into seeing marginalised people in a more humane way. Through their coursework, UGHE students learned the importance of understanding each patient's situation rather than scolding them for disregarding their health or for lack of compliance with doctors' orders. Based on this empathetic understanding, UGHE students went on field visits to interview patients and doctors at hospitals and community health centres. They visited patients at their homes and learned about their living conditions, which they realized had a strong impact on patients' health. They also interacted with health administrators and researchers who gave guest lectures, enabling them to gather multiple perspectives on their research topic and to learn how to communicate with people at all levels of the health system. This experiential learning process, which was informed by a social justice framework, facilitated students' holistic understanding of public health. A UGHE student shared how her education shifted her perspective as a health practitioner:

> I was fresh from medical school, fresh from science and diagnostics. I get into the hospital and I'm like, woah, this is different. You get to see people. You get to see the reality. People are poor. Sometimes I was like, why didn't you come to the hospital before? I was shocked sometimes. Some patients waited for four, six months, one year to come to the hospital. And I was shocked. Why didn't you come before? Some were saying I couldn't. I really couldn't. I tried. The long distance. The money. The familial issues. There were so many things involved that were not pure treating the patient. You get to know them. I was interested in something else than medicine. The other factors influencing someone's health. In that moment, I was confused about what I was doing. In treating patients, we treat their diseases, not patients... We had an entire semester on social justice... you get to really see how people are suffering. How vulnerable people are. You understand better why they are suffering and where that comes from...You develop another side. Another part of me became more compassionate and more attentive to social justice so now I understand when someone tells me, I'm sorry I couldn't come. I say, okay, we need to find a way. Instead of getting shocked and saying why didn't you do this, I get to understand better and realise that there are other factors involved. It gets you to really feel something.

The case studies demonstrated that impactful experiential learning was not merely about creating hands-on experiences but always encouraging students to think of the *why* and to reflect on *who* they are benefiting (or harming). Nonetheless, the three institutions' education models are strongly influenced by Western liberal arts colleges and universities, and little evidence was found of actively teaching indigenous epistemology and how to challenge dominant Western knowledge systems. However, experiential learning provided a means for the students to dive into local communities and learn directly from people. Students created new knowledge and had a deeper appreciation of marginalised viewpoints.

Group Work. Fifteen of the 31 respondents noted that group work was an important part of their institution's pedagogy. Students stated that learning from their peers was new and uncomfortable, but they learned to appreciate its value over time. Group work made the students more accountable for their learning. Rather than relying on the lecturer to explain things, they collaborated and reached their own conclusions. One Ashesi student shared:

> When you come [your] first year, we have orientation and they tell us that we are all from different backgrounds and we are all one background – we are all human. They teach us to be tolerant, ... to embrace diversity, so ... they try as much as possible to make the group diverse so the group will have a Ghanaian, a Zimbabwean, a Kenyan, or different people. Even for Ghanaians – from different regions ...they put us in groups with people from different economic, cultural backgrounds, and we are supposed to work on things together and come up with a successful outcome.

Working in diverse groups exposed students to different ways of thinking, and even though conflicts naturally arose while trying to achieve a shared goal, this was also an important part of their learning experience. Group work was effectively utilised in one observation, where faculty developed strong structures to enable students to understand how to complete the group work and provided them with full instructions. However, some classroom observations showed that group work was not beneficial. In these cases, it seemed that faculty had no prior experience of this kind of education. In one observation, the professor had groups of five to six students present an analysis of their assigned reading. Multiple groups were assigned the same reading, with the same concept presented by three different groups. The class began with the instructor reminding the students of their presentations as students began to hurriedly look through their notes.

Most students in the audience paid little attention to the presenters as they were busy with last minute preparations on their phones and laptops, even speaking to others in their groups. After their group's presentation was over, the students were disengaged and looking at their phones. At times, one or two students presented while the rest of the group stood silently behind them. It seemed that these students learned little or nothing from the session, especially considering the poor quality and repetitive nature of their presentations. A so-called student-centred pedagogy was adopted, but without a clear purpose and adequate accountability, group work was not student-centred.

The interview questions were initially designed to understand what a humanising pedagogy looks like in practice, but the findings reveal that such an approach only reveals the surface aspects of a complex process. While the positive outcomes of experiential learning and group work align with the literature on these methods and their effectiveness in fostering critical thinking and empathy (Hicks Peterson, 2009; Eyler, Giles, and Braxton, 1997; Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1998), the findings of this study also show that implementing a certain set of strategies is insufficient to actualise a humanising pedagogy. Just as elders in traditional African societies tailored teaching methods to foster the holistic development of each child into a person of excellent character (Fafunwa, 1982), the teaching strategies at the case study universities needed to link directly with the transformation of learners into global citizens. Simply implementing prescribed pedagogy without going through a process of deliberate decision-making can result in negative outcomes. In the classroom observation where group work was unsuccessful, it appeared that the faculty member was implementing this strategy because she was required to use student-centred methods even if she did not have adequate training on how to do this effectively. Experiential learning could also be detrimental if the volunteer work ends up harming the population it intended to serve. Universities need to take these potential deleterious outcomes into consideration in order to craft the best pedagogical methods that will enable their students to become people who have positive impacts.

Application of Humanising Education: Student-Faculty Relationships

Twenty-two of the 31 interviewees pointed to the accessible and proactive qualities of their instructors. Instructors made themselves accessible through various modes of communication beyond office hours, including phone, email, WhatsApp messaging, Skype video, and other means. The relatively smaller class sizes at the case study institutions helped facilitate access to lecturers. Beyond encouraging students to reach out to them, lecturers actively followed up with students who were falling behind and

collaborated with other staff to support all students and their unique needs. Taking the initiative to speak with students helped lecturers realise the diverse challenges students encountered. Students expressed their appreciation in this regard. One international student did not like to talk and was homesick; after class, he stayed alone in his room and did not speak to anyone. One of his lecturers noticed his silence in class and encouraged the student that if he had something to share, he should challenge himself to talk. Through his lecturer's encouragement, the student was able to become more fully integrated into the class and developed the courage to speak up and create friendships.

The lecturers at the case study institutions compared their students' education experience with their own. They commented that their lecturers did not seem to care about the students and made few efforts to ensure they all succeeded and benefited from the courses they taught. There were also many more students in the class, which made it difficult to provide one-on-one attention. Some lecturers set consultation times but did not show up consistently. One lecturer described the general current trend in university teaching as follows:

> A lot of times, education here in the country is involving, the teacher copies something from the book to the board, and the student copies from the board to the notebook and memorizes it; and that's the core of education.

According to the faculty interviewed, there was little to no engagement with students by lecturers at many SSA universities. Faculty were attracted to the case study universities because of the opportunity to help create a new kind of educational experience and to give back to their communities. One shared:

> I was finishing my PhD and I had a bit of time to finish up with my corrections. I'd had the idea of coming back home to teach. My idea was going to another university. I heard about Ashesi. The ideas. The liberal arts. The first liberal arts university in Ghana. The concept provided the aims of the university. Citizenship involving people, making them realise the roles they can play to have an effect in Ghana. I said, okay, compared to other universities around, this seems to drive my intention of having an impact on other people. That was one of the main selling points of Ashesi to me.

Faculty engaged with students based on their own passion to grow each one into a change maker. Many students said that their learning experience was very different from anything that they had experienced previously. It was a challenge to adjust, but they learned to appreciate it. Lecturers said that it took many sessions before students were more open to asking ques-

tions and speaking during class. One student contrasted her experience at Ashesi with her previous university:

> I was at public university X before coming to Ashesi. Everything that's being done there is the total opposite of what we're doing at Ashesi in that I never got to meet my lecturers; I never got to see who the dean of the school was; I never got to ask someone the vision of the business school…Moreover, we were 700 students in one class. Ashesi has a different way from the typical African education.

The typically hierarchical relationship between students and instructors and among students themselves at SSA universities was broken down at the case study institutions. One lecturer described the common lecturer-student relationship in the following manner: "You're down there, and I am up here." In this traditional understanding, the instructor is superior and has knowledge that is transmitted to the student. Many of the instructors at the case study institutions modelled an alternative approach based on mutual respect by giving students an equal opportunity to participate in the classroom and not buying in to existing social hierarchies. At UGHE, the hierarchical approach was flattened through opportunities to share food after every class and avoiding the use of titles like 'Doctor'. For every UGHE class, which often took place in the evenings after the students finished work, dinner was provided for the students and faculty. During a classroom observation, I saw that sharing meals facilitated interaction among the instructor and students and created time for them to get to know one another as equals. During one class, the lecturer humorously invited students to share a beer with her to discuss their questions in greater detail and invited the students to her home for dinner that weekend to revise for their exam. A faculty member spoke of how caring drove her passion for teaching:

> I have what I call the Mother Theresa complex, where I try to save the world and save people, and teaching has channelled that in a constructive way. I can be so generous because I am actually saving the world in this case, and it's great. Instead of looking for bad eggs and bad men to fix, I teach people. And I focus on statistics. So I've found a nice outlet for my red cross syndrome. To me there's nothing better than a good teacher. Last night, we had dinner, and a woman next to me was talking about her primary teacher, and she still has this amazing fondness for him. I'm thinking. That is very precious. Why are teachers nice? Probably because we care and we care. We do this because we care. I think it's a vocation.

These findings resonate with and contribute to the literature on student-teacher relationships in African indigenous pedagogies and on the importance of care in such relationships. In the Ugandan context, Isabirye (2019) describes how traditional master musicians taught learners a cultural dance by observing the learners' challenges, making suggestions, and participating with the students in the music and dance until the learners were able to do it on their own. The teacher became one of the learners rather than an authority figure, which enabled the students to develop confidence in performing the action. Moreover, education occurred in the traditional African community through diverse teachers, who took responsibility for raising each child (Okrah, 2003). It was thus based on a spirit of care and compassion, as the lecturers at the case study institutions demonstrated. At these universities, students learned from many of their lecturers how to lead with respect and care rather than power and authority, and the lecturers themselves strove to live up to the principles of humanity that they hoped to instil in the students. Elaborating on this concept of caring, Valenzuela (1999) explains that students seek a respectful, caring relationship with their teacher and that caring teachers devote their energies to supporting each student's unique needs. This humanises the student-teacher relationship. Without this caring, students feel that they are reduced to the level of objects. The contribution of these findings to the literature is the powerful impact of breaking down the typically hierarchical relationship between students and faculty in cultivating the humanity of each student. This is especially important in SSA, where combative relationships between students and the lecturers/administration at many universities have resulted in students feeling disempowered and resorting to violence in order to be heard (Fomunyam, 2017). The case studies illustrate that this relationship can be humanised into one committed to building the institution together through democratic and caring interactions.

Humanising Learning Outcomes

Table 3. Number of Interviews where UNESCO's (2015) Global Citizenship Learning Outcomes Were Cited

Global Citizenship Component	Learning Outcome	Number of Interviews
Cognitive	Learners acquire knowledge and understanding of local, national and global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations.	8/31
	Learners develop skills for critical thinking and analysis.	18/31
Socio-emotional	Learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights.	8/31
	Learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.	21/31
Behavioural	Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.	18/31
	Learners develop motivation and willingness to take necessary actions.	22/31

The above table shows the number of times key words from each global citizenship learning outcome were mentioned in the interviews with key informants. The case study universities were achieving global citizenship learning outcomes in some respects, while lagging behind in others. The majority of the respondents mentioned aspects of critical thinking, exposure to diversity, and taking action for a better world. The most frequently mentioned learning outcome was the behavioural component of developing the motivation and willingness to take necessary actions. Seventy-one percent of the respondents expressed their hope, desire, and sense of agency to make a positive impact on the world using education. While the students, faculty, and administration of these institutions recognised the challenges facing society, their responses showed that they chose hope over passively accepting the status quo. A WMI student explained her attitude towards societal problems by citing founder Maathai's telling of the hummingbird story: "We are taken to different places ...[that] have changed the narrative. Like the little hummingbird. They do their little thing. They take us to places where people ... have done a small little thing, turning negative to positive." In the hummingbird story, a forest caught fire, and all the animals stood petrified. Only the tiny hummingbird went back and forth between the lake and the fire, taking a drop of water and dropping it on the fire repeatedly as the other animals watched. When the other animals asked the hummingbird why it persisted in taking these seemingly inconsequential actions, the hummingbird replied, "I am doing the best that I can." The story conveys the empowerment achieved by taking a proactive approach to any situation, no matter how small one's contributions may seem. Based on this hope, especially in observing lecturers and fellow students making a difference, many respondents spoke of their desire to make a positive change and to serve those who are less privileged. A UGHE student compared his university to a church:

> This university works like a church. Church leaders, what they try to do is to change the hearts of the people. They are not giving the knowledge of the Bible, but they are using the Bible to change. This university is using whatever it can use to change people. If I look at my colleagues and myself, I think I have changed for the better. We used to think in Africa we go to school just because we need to have skills and a degree to get jobs, but with this university, but when you do that first course... it changes you as if you were in church. You have that sense of humanity until you decide I'll even work for nothing if I'm making sure I'm saving people... Plus, they lead by example. When you look at even those who are teaching you or if you read about them, it's really leading by example. It's something that they are doing. Some of them had many options but they chose to help communities, not money.

Even if he did not initially enter the university with a focus on helping others, UGHE sparked a passion for social justice in this student through the curriculum on global issues and the lecturers, who led by example by being researcher-practitioners.

Students' willingness to take the necessary actions stemmed from their sense of agency that they could make a positive impact. The problem-solving based approach common to all three institutions empowered students to develop this confidence. Whether the issue pertained to the environment, public health, or business, all encouraged students to analyse and understand the complexity of the issue, develop recommendations, and act to transform the situation. While engaging in problem-solving throughout their HE experience, students implemented their own projects to apply what they learned. For example, one student that was interviewed led a programme to provide access to menstrual pads for marginalised communities. In a classroom observation, a public health practitioner shared her experience of conducting research on nutrition and premature birth. The

students were able to apply what they learned about cross-sectional studies from that day's lecture and saw how they could use what they had learned to address a real-life issue affecting the health of the rural poor. Rather than being overwhelmed by the world's challenges, these students were trained to actively play a role in solving them. In other words, students at the case study institutions were trained in the why, the what, and the how in tackling the problems facing humankind. This understanding can be applied in any education context in SSA, especially in helping to empower those who have been marginalised and lost their sense of hope. Several African leaders and scholars have criticised the entrenched dependency mind-set in Africa due to reliance on foreign aid (Moyo, 2009; Mwenda, 2014; Akufo-Addo, cited by Lu, 2017). The case study institutions serve as a model to understand how to foster willingness and capacity to enact positive transformations on the continent amongst students.

The two learning outcomes cited the least frequently in the interviews were the cognitive component of understanding the interconnectedness of different countries and populations and the socio-emotional component of experiencing a sense of belonging to humanity. Asked about learning about global issues, the most common response was that students gained an awareness of international issues by analysing case studies of issues in other countries and through African Studies. Few mentioned how students developed an understanding about the interdependency of life. Others responded that global issues were not addressed unless necessary to the course content. One faculty member explained how the transformation of human beings impacts the environment:

> Without superhuman capital in any economy, it is impossible to talk about sustainable development. Human beings need to be happy first. If they have hope, they have power. Follow the characteristics of citizens who conflict over dwindling natural resources. They are people of low education because they cannot afford alternative livelihoods. If I have an alternative livelihood, then I can say I will leave it, or even help in reversing the situation of scarcity, turbulence to stability. So education is very important… Even at the level of [a] farmer who has been up to primary or even secondary level of training, when you share that knowledge with them, that is also empowerment. Then they won't do agriculture as business as usual. Acting locally but having a global impact.

Aside from these few examples, the first cognitive component rarely featured in the responses. The socio-emotional learning outcome of feeling a sense of humanity and respect for human rights was also not mentioned often, and if it was, it was usually in relation to social justice and equity, especially in terms of having these kinds of feelings for the poor or

underprivileged. The lack of the first cognitive and first socio-emotional learning outcomes reflects that these aspects of understanding the interconnectedness of life and one's entanglement in others' humanity, which are both articulated in Ubuntu, are not an explicit part of the curriculum and learning outcomes of the case study universities. Ultimately, all three case studies were modelled on Western institutions and featured little incorporation of African indigenous knowledge. They demonstrated the development of the essential skills of a global citizen, but when these skills are separated from a fundamental guiding philosophy and understanding of the world, this approach can pose the same dangers as the Western humanist paradigm that le Grange (2018) criticised. Critical thinking without a heart for humanity can lead to deconstructive, polarising outcomes with over-reliance on logic and a focus on taking apart others' arguments rather than trying to understand them (Doughty, 2007). Diversity without integration and a shared sense of belonging to one another does not necessarily foster empathy for all those who are different. Motivation to act and actions for a better world can have unintended negative effects. One respondent critiqued his university's concept of social innovation by citing an example of what he perceived to be a student capitalising on what he packaged as a high social impact business venture. The interviewee argued that it was essentially a highly profitable, low social impact business scheme:

> It has a lot of social currency dripping out of it, but you realise he's making very little impact and [a lot] of money. In order to get people to buy it, he's had to cover it up in a lot of social impact making. Because of this paradox, assuming I help, there's a rubbish dump. I basically help the people living in the rubbish dump by giving them a gas mask, one per person, and there's ten people working there. Then I advertise that on social media. It gets picked up on the big news. CNN gets it. Al Jazeera gets it. They actually did… if you actually strip it away and look at the impact, even if they stop dumping rubbish in it for the next 100 years, they still won't be able to clear it up.

While the student's critique did not necessarily prove the low social impact of the business venture he described, his comments lead to an important question: are students being trained to critically examine themselves to determine whether their well-intended actions are actually having a positive impact on those they seek to serve? Or is their education making them skilled at portraying themselves in a certain light to fit the image of what it means to be a good person? These are areas that merit further exploration as the case study institutions continue to develop their educational programmes to achieve their missions.

Limitations and Avenues of Future Research

The study has several limitations, which can be addressed by further research. First, it was limited to the university insider perspective and relied on self-evaluation of learning outcomes. Future research could evaluate humanising education from outside perspectives and explore its impacts on society as a whole. For instance, it could explore the impact that graduates are having in their workplaces and communities. Second, the study's scope was limited to pedagogy and student-faculty relationships. Other aspects of the university, such as finances and administration, could be analysed to understand how they can contribute to creating a humanising educational experience. Third, while I began by critiquing universities' overly career-focused orientation, this study showed that education can be both humanising and practical/career-oriented. However, balancing these two approaches can be difficult. Future research could examine how universities work to achieve their mission while remaining competitive and attractive in the broader society, where the outcome of employment may be most highly valued.

Recommendations

Incorporate Ubuntu in SSA Universities

It is recommended that Ubuntu and African indigenous thought be incorporated in SSA universities. As the section on the conceptual framework explained, the fundamental premise of a humanising education is essential in formulating an understanding of the purpose, application, and learning outcomes of such an education. While the case study institutions designed creative ways to apply humanising education and demonstrated several of the global citizenship learning outcomes, they can further advance their cause by returning to the roots of African thought that provide the foundation to nurture global citizenship. Various scholars have shared practical ways of applying Ubuntu and African indigenous philosophy to education (Higgs, Higgs, and Venter, 2003; Omolewa, 2007; Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019). In the same way that community members of a traditional African society worked together to raise every child, SSA universities could collaborate and convene a committee with representatives from different regions to explore how to incorporate Ubuntu and African indigenous thought into HE. It could conduct and compile relevant research, design and pilot sample curricula, and share best practices from other SSA universities. The committee could also extend its work to think about how other aspects beyond curricula, such as pedagogy and student-teacher relationships, can be re-examined by applying the concept of Ubuntu. This process does not entail blind acceptance of all aspects of traditional African thought and will require intensive research and re-

thinking. Implementation of such reforms would also differ to fit each university's unique context. The spiritual aspect of African philosophy, which is often overlooked, will also be difficult to factor into the highly secularised existing university curricula. Regardless of how challenging this endeavour will be, universities' efforts to learn from indigenous modes of thought will help shape learners who are in touch with their cultural roots and develop a holistic understanding of what it means to be human.

Conclusion

In many ways, the three case study universities serve as exemplars in terms of how to think about transforming HE in SSA to cultivate the humanity of each student. They demonstrate the importance of implementing student-centred curricula tied to intended outcomes and the empowering impact of horizontal student-teacher relationships based on care. The universities were most successful in helping students to develop the willingness and motivation to take necessary actions for the benefit of the world by helping each student develop the confidence required to do so. However, they did not fare as well in helping students to develop their sense of humanity and appreciation of the interconnectedness of all life. To address this gap, it is recommended that Ubuntu and African indigenous thought be incorporated into SSA HE. As noted in the problem statement, despite the rich tradition of indigenous education in Africa that developed over thousands of years, there is a disconnect between the values of Ubuntu and the educational approaches utilised in the modern classroom. The growing HE sector offers an unprecedented opportunity for scholars and practitioners to re-examine and transform SSA universities into communities where each student can learn how to become truly human.

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