Promoting Sustainable Development Goal 5 Through Ubuntu-Based South African Basic Education Curriculum

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**ABSTRACT**

Gender inequality is a pervasive problem worldwide and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) of gender equality is crucial for social progress. In South Africa, gender disparities persist in primary and secondary education, hindering girls' access to quality education and opportunities. This study explores the application of the Ubuntu socio-cultural principle in addressing SDG 5 in South Africa. Ubuntu, an African philosophy emphasizing interconnectedness and humaneness, offers insights into fostering social justice and equality. By integrating Ubuntu principles into education, South African secondary schools can promote inclusive classrooms, gender sensitization programs, peer support, and mentorship. Inclusive education ensures equal participation and opportunities for all students, fostering respect for diversity. Gender sensitization programs raise awareness, challenge stereotypes, and promote empathy and understanding. Peer support and mentorship programs create a supportive network, breaking gender barriers and fostering positive role modelling. Applying Ubuntu principles in South African secondary schools can contribute to achieving SDG 5 by creating an inclusive and respectful educational environment that values and respects all students, regardless of gender. By promoting empathy, understanding, and collective responsibility, Ubuntu can help challenge harmful gender norms and foster dialogue, collaboration, and transformative change towards gender equality.

**INTRODUCTION**

Gender inequality is a hydra-headed monster worldwide and one of the most researched problems among scholars. Gender inequality gives way to other social problems. Despite the efforts of world leaders to address it, gender inequality continues to linger and wax stronger in every sector where male and female presence exists. This problem has also permeated both primary and secondary schools in the education sector in South Africa. In the 21st century, both male and female are expected to acquire relevant skills that will make them function in the society (Olujuwon et al., 2021). Unfortunately, gender inequality has been a threat to the attainment of this laudable objective that will benefit society. Education inequality due to gender differences usually results in income inequality (Munir & Kanwal, 2020). Government and all citizens have great role to play to dismantle the shackles of gender discrimination in all ramifications. Several efforts are being made to make policies to institutionalize gender parity, but insincere implementation has made it a fruitless effort. However, there is need for caution when defining gender inequality because, according to Stoet and Geary (2019), women's rights movements and politically motivated definitions and measures usually determine the
highlighted gender inequality. It is important to consider the peculiarities of all genders, make provision for them for equitable wealth distribution and rancor-free society.

Gender gap is more pronounced in South Africa. Cultural practices in rural areas tend to be more traditional compared to urban settings, and poverty-stricken remote rural communities can impose greater restrictions on girls' education. According to Zuze and Beku (2019) Domestic responsibilities such as water and firewood collection, cooking, cleaning, and caring for siblings often limit girls' access to education. Boys in pastoral communities may also face constraints due to responsibilities like herding animals. In rural areas, both boys and girls had lower average test scores in mathematics and science compared to other locations. Notably, boys attending rural schools did not achieve better results than girls. The widest gender gap based on school location was observed in Grade 5 mathematics in remote rural schools, favoring girls. Gender inequality violates the fundamental rights of individuals, including the right to equality, dignity, education, and a safe environment, as outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Gender inequality in schools not only disrupts the learning environment but also has long-term negative effects on the mental and sexual health of the victims.

Regardless of one's circumstances of being born young, female, and poor, it is imperative that the essential rights of dignity and education remain inviolable. Every individual, regardless of their age, gender, or economic status, deserves to be treated with respect and provided with access to quality education (Crankshaw et al., 2020). These inherent rights should not be undermined or diminished due to the disadvantages imposed by such circumstances. The recognition and protection of the right to dignity ensures that every person is valued and afforded basic human rights, irrespective of their background. Simultaneously, the right to education serves as a transformative force, empowering individuals to overcome societal barriers and break the cycle of poverty. By upholding these rights for young, female, and economically disadvantaged individuals, society can foster equality, social progress, and empower future generations to thrive and contribute to the betterment of the world.

Following the endorsement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) by the United Nations in 2015 (Pita, 2021; UNDP, 2023), every continent has been actively seeking efficient approaches to accomplish the goals by 2030. Generally, the SDGs are introduced explicitly as a human rights agenda (Pita, 2021) designed to put an end to poverty, hunger, discrimination against the female gender and to achieve prospects, peace, and safe planets. Their creation aimed to establish a collection of universally relevant goals and tackle the three dimensions of sustainable development: environmental, social, and economic (Pathania, 2017). The SDGs are an expansion upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were the goals that preceded them. The world leaders gathered at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 25-27 September 2015 and reached a consensus on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) along with 169 targets. These goals were formally implemented on 1st January 2016. The ambitious and inclusive nature of the new global agenda is evident in these goals. Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs surpass the scope of poverty alleviation and tackle the root causes of poverty while emphasizing the importance of inclusive development. Each SDG has distinct targets to be accomplished by 2030. Notably, the SDGs apply to all nations, unlike the MDGs, which primarily target actions in developing countries. The SDGs are committed to upholding human rights for all individuals and aspire to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls.

Sustainable Development Goal number five, emphasizing gender equality, is a form of social sustainability. Social sustainability targets social growth and development (Pita, 2021; Purvis et al., 2019). As a critical sector in society, schools are meant to be the instrument of social justice. Hence, Teachers who interact with the students, especially in co-educational classrooms (Aznar et al., 2018), and school leaders are essential in achieving SDG number five. This presupposes that school leaders need a formidable strategy(ies) to actualize gender parity at the basic education level. The objective of Sustainable Development Goal 5 is to attain gender equality by eradicating any kind of discrimination, violence, or harmful practices targeting
women and girls in both public and private domains. Additionally, it advocates for the active involvement of women, girls, and equal opportunities for their leadership in all spheres of political and economic decision-making, regardless of hierarchical level.

The Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 emphasizes the importance of gender equality as a fundamental component of human rights, democracy, good governance, and inclusive and sustainable development. It acknowledges that gender inequality is rooted in unequal power relations between genders and biased social norms that result in discrimination against women and girls. These discriminatory practices marginalize women and girls, preventing them from benefiting fully from social, economic, and political advancements (Gender Action Plan, 2020).

To achieve sustainable development, Ubuntu encourages the expansion of the community spatially and across time (Breda, 2019). This involves recognizing and respecting individuals from diverse backgrounds and acknowledging and honoring ancestors who have come before and in future generations (Mndende, 2016; Nyaumwe & Mkabela, 2007). In African spirituality, ancestors are considered integral to the living community and mediate between the living and the Creator. Their reverence fosters a sense of historical rootedness and responsibility among the present generation (Mndende, 2016; Nyaumwe & Mkabela, 2007).

Gender inequality has caused a segregated society in South Africa and African continent at large. It is therefore important to curtail it with an effective method (Modiba, 2022). If the hydra-headed gender inequalities at basic education level in South Africa are not tackled, there will be persistent drop out and widened the gap of inequalities among male and female in the society (Rarieya et al., 2014). This will also expand gender differences in educational attainment (Zuze & Beku, 2019). In view of the identified gender gaps in the basic schools in South Africa, this study therefore provides areas where Ubuntu African philosophy can be adapted or integrated into the school programmes as panacea. It demands a comprehensive understanding of the basic assumptions of Ubuntu by the educational stakeholders comprising, the government, policy makers, educational planners, principals, teachers, parents, host community, non-government organizations (NGOs) and the students. The concept of Ubuntu, an African philosophy that highlights the interdependence and unity of humanity, as well as the importance of community, will be explored as a transformative perspective to eliminate gender inequality in primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, addressing gender discrimination goes beyond mere access to education. It requires comprehensive efforts to empower individuals within gender-segregated populations, promoting their self-worth, confidence, and agency (Modiba, 2022). By doing so, we can foster a more equitable and inclusive society where every individual, regardless of their gender, can thrive and contribute to the betterment of their communities and the world at large. Consequently, the questions as to what the socio-cultural principles of Ubuntu are, and how can the identified ubuntu socio-cultural principles be adopted for achieving SDG 5 on gender equality at basic education level.

**Research Objectives**
The present study is targeted at exploring Ubuntu African philosophy to address the issue of gender inequality in primary and secondary education tiers to attain sustainable development goal number five on gender equality.

**Research Questions:**
1. What are the assumptions of Ubuntu Socio-cultural Philosophy?
2. How can the identified ubuntu socio-cultural principles be adopted for achieving SDG 5 on gender equality at basic education level?
and barriers still need to be addressed in South Africa, as well as in other parts of Africa and the world, discriminatory practices based on gender continue to persist within the secondary schooling system (Modiba, 2022). These practices perpetuate inequality and hinder the progress of marginalized gender groups, ultimately jeopardizing their prospects. By excluding or marginalizing certain genders from accessing quality education, society loses out on the potential contributions and talents of these individuals. Notable among the challenges is gender disparities in access to education, which have significantly reduced in South Africa since the end of apartheid. However, challenges still exist, particularly in rural and disadvantaged areas. Girls may face barriers such as poverty, cultural norms, early marriage, and caregiving responsibilities, limiting their education access (Goldblatt, 2019). The use of gendered decisions on every activity at secondary school aggravates inequality among students. Modiba (2022) suggested the use of merit in making decisions that concern all students and not gender.

Furthermore, there is a problem with the high attrition rate in secondary schools in South Africa. While girls' enrollment rates in secondary schools have improved, retention and completion rates remain a concern. Factors such as teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, and inadequate support systems increase dropout rates among girls (Weybright et al., 2017). Girls' education is often interrupted, impacting their long-term educational and economic prospects.

In addition to the above is Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in secondary schools in South Africa. Gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and assault, is a significant concern in South African secondary schools. Girls may experience violence within school premises, on their way to school, or in their communities, creating an unsafe and hostile learning environment (Adewale et al., 2023; Zuze, 2015). Such incidents contribute to absenteeism, lower self-esteem, and diminished educational outcomes for girls.

Similarly, Stereotypes and gender bias persistence in South African secondary schools influence academic choices and career aspirations. Girls may face societal expectations that discourage them from pursuing fields traditionally dominated by males, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (Morrell et al., 2013). This limits their opportunities for personal and professional growth. Girls are often underrepresented in school leadership positions, such as student councils and sports teams. This lack of representation limits their participation in decision-making processes and can reinforce gender inequalities (Bhana, 2013; Potokri, 2022).

Teacher bias and classroom dynamics are another threat to achieving SDG 5 in South African schools. Teacher bias and classroom dynamics can perpetuate gender inequalities. Biased teaching practices, such as unequal attention, favoritism, or reinforcement of traditional gender roles, can affect girls' confidence and engagement in learning (Morrell et al., 2020). Creating inclusive and gender-responsive classrooms is crucial to address these issues.

Lastly are sexual and reproductive health challenges. Girls in South African schools are facing challenges related to sexual and reproductive health. Limited access to comprehensive sex education, lack of adequate facilities, and stigma surrounding menstruation can affect girls' health and educational outcomes (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019). Menstrual health and hygiene management remain challenging for many South African secondary school girls. Limited access to sanitary products, inadequate sanitation facilities, and the stigma surrounding menstruation can negatively impact girls' attendance and participation in school (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019). Addressing menstrual health needs is essential for ensuring gender equality in education.

**Gender Inequalities in Basic Schools in African Society**

The discussion on gender differences in schooling in African countries revolves around several key themes. Access to education for girls in developing countries has been a major concern, and efforts have been made by governments and international agencies to improve access and narrow gender gaps (Steenkamp, 2019). Differences in academic achievement between boys and girls in mathematics vary across African education systems, with boys generally achieving
higher scores (Saito, 2011). Factors contributing to these differences include school quality, family background, social and cultural practices, such as prioritizing marriage over education for girls (Steenkamp, 2019). Teenage pregnancy, the opportunity cost of girls' education, poverty, and unequal gender relations also impact educational outcomes (Zuze & Beku, 2019).

Successful efforts to promote gender equity in education require political support, involvement of civil society, and sustained investment of resources (Zuze, 2015). Within the classroom, differential treatment of male and female students by teachers and peer effects can influence academic performance and career aspirations (Zuze & Beku, 2019). However, the issue of gender differences in African education systems, particularly in co-educational primary and secondary schools, has not been adequately addressed on a cross-national basis.

Furthermore, the issue of reproductive health of female students especially their menstruation is another area of concern in at basic education level in Africa. There is a need for further engagement with educators to augment their understanding of reproductive health, encompassing aspects such as gender sensitivity, values clarification, and comprehensive knowledge. Moreover, it is crucial to ensure that school sanitation facilities meet certain criteria, including cleanliness, privacy, and safety (Crankshaw et al., 2020). This involves providing adequate waste disposal containers and implementing environmentally sustainable waste disposal systems, contributing to a healthier and more conducive learning environment.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses inductive and deductive approaches within the purpose transformative paradigm (Omodan & Makena, 2022). Transformative research paradigm allows for flexibility within holism using Multiparametric Design space (MDS) (Qutoshi, 2015). The transformative paradigm is used in social science to explain the rationale behind social injustices by examining the link between inequalities and power structure (Mertens, 2012; Phelps, 2021). The transformative paradigm in this study explains the causes of gender inequalities as a form of social injustice. After that, the assumptions transformative paradigm was used to explain ways of ensuring social justice and creating ways for marginalized groups.

Furthermore, a thematic analysis approach is adopted to analyses the subject matter comprehensively. Thematic analysis is a research technique for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting the paradigm of qualitative data meanings (Clarke et al., 2015). Thematic analysis often starts with familiarization with data, generating codes, constructing themes, reviewing the potential themes, defining, and naming the themes, and producing the reports (Terry et al., 2017). Thematic analysis is the ideal method for uncovering (Ibrahim, 2012) insights through interpretations in any study. It brings structure to data analysis, enabling researchers to link the occurrence of a theme with the entire content. This adds precision and complexity, enriching the overall significance of the research. Qualitative research entails comprehending and gathering a range of diverse aspects and data.

Following the suggestion by Terry et al. (2017) on how to conduct thematic analysis, this study locates its data in the African Ubuntu philosophy. This study familiarizes with Ubuntu philosophy, construct themes from it, reviews the potential themes identified, and makes sense of them by defining and naming them. Afterwards, the theme will be interpreted in line with the purpose of this study to produce the report. This data was gathered from reviewing relevant documents (Karppinen & Moe, 2023) on African Ubuntu philosophy.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

**Research Question One:** What are the assumptions of Ubuntu Socio-cultural Philosophy?

a) **The Assumptions of Ubuntu African Philosophy**

The study identified from the analyzed document, seven assumptions of Ubuntu African philosophy. Human interconnectedness, Community identity, human dignity, Relationship and Dialogue, ethical orientation, Ubuntu way of life, and Ubuntuism.
b) Thematic Areas Where Ubuntu Assumptions Can be Applied in South African Basic Schools

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<tr>
<th>Research Question Two</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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<td>How can the identified ubuntu socio-cultural principles be adopted for achieving SDG 5 on gender equality at basic education level.</td>
<td>i) Include inclusive education.</td>
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<td>ii) Gender sensitization programme</td>
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<td>iii) Peer support and mentorship</td>
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<td>iv) The life orientation curriculum</td>
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<td>v) Conflict resolution and restorative justice</td>
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<td>vi) Students’ leadership and participation</td>
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<td>vii) Parents and community involvement</td>
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Table 1 shows thematic analysis of how ubuntu socio-cultural principles can be adopted for achieving SDG 5 on gender equality at basic education level. The study identified seven ways that the Ubuntu African philosophy can be applied in south African basic education comprising primary and secondary schools to enthrone gender equality. These include inclusive education, gender sensitization programme, peer support and mentorship, the life orientation curriculum, conflict resolution and restorative justice, students’ leadership and participation, and parents and community involvement.
Discussion

Ubuntu originates from the Bantu languages of South Africa, deriving its core meaning from the term "NTU," which symbolises the fundamental essence of existence (Tschaepe, 2013). Ubuntu's core tenets, in their diverse applications, underpin African life and belief systems, reflecting the daily realities of its people. The philosophy is employed daily to resolve conflicts and disagreements at all levels throughout Africa, making it an integral aspect of understanding individuals and their cultural practices (Omodan & Makena, 2022). Ubuntu is not merely an abstract concept or philosophical theory; it is a lived experience and a way of life. It calls for active engagement and participation in the community, recognizing that one's actions and choices have a broader impact on others.

Ubuntu has been described in different ways as an African ideology encompassing qualities such as humaneness, reverence for the human race, ethical excellence, interdependence, empathy, unity within a community (Gade, 2013), and an individualism that places importance on the collective, while giving priority to the needs of the most disadvantaged, among other elements of the concept of Ubuntu (Radebe & Phooko, 2017). Ubuntu, which emphasises the interconnectedness of individuals, contributes to attaining social justice in education. In schools that embrace Ubuntu, teachers demonstrate respect, value, and inclusivity towards all learners, addressing their diverse needs (Lefa, 2015). Ubuntu is intricately linked to social justice through its focus on humanness. In Ubuntu societies, moral goodness is determined by upholding the dignity, respect, and well-being of others, aligning with the objectives of social justice (Breda, 2019). The idea of Ubuntu as a journey towards completeness forms the core of comprehending Ubuntu as an ethical notion. It establishes a fundamental framework for comprehending the diverse interpretations attributed to the term over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Tschaepe, 2013).

Ubuntuism refers to the practical application of Ubuntu principles in various aspects of life, including governance, justice, education, and social relationships. It seeks to promote social harmony, justice, and equality through the embodiment of Ubuntu values. Integrating Ubuntu practices into classroom activities offers educators an opportunity to foster connection, understanding, unity, collaboration, equality, and development among students and lecturers. Omodan and Makena (2022) believe this philosophy can cultivate inclusive classrooms where every student feels acknowledged, listened to, and appreciated while fostering student-lecturer relationships founded on respect, empathy, and nurturing. Educational institutions or societies embracing Ubuntu promote social justice by valuing diversity across race, gender, and social class. Efforts are made to enhance relationships among learners, dismantle barriers in diverse school settings, and challenge stereotypes related to race, gender, ability, language, and accent. Ubuntu is influential tool schools or societies employ to confront and address inequality and injustices (Lefa, 2015).

Application of Ubuntu in South African Basic Schools for Gender Equality

Ubuntu can be applied in South African secondary schools to address the challenge of gender equality (Nyaumwe & Mkabela, 2007) by fostering a sense of humaneness, interconnectedness, and respect among students. Here are some ways in which Ubuntu principles can be incorporated:

**Inclusive Education:** Ubuntu emphasises the interconnectedness of individuals within a community. Schools can create an inclusive environment that values and respects the contributions of all students, regardless of their gender. This can be done through inclusive teaching practices, ensuring equal participation and opportunities for boys and girls in all aspects of education. In educational settings where Ubuntu principles are embraced, teachers actively promote critical thinking and self-reflection among learners (Lefa, 2015). Teachers and educational authorities also collaborate to explore and implement pertinent concepts to transform the education system.
Gender Sensitisation Programmes: Ubuntu encourages empathy and understanding. Schools can organise gender sensitisation programs to raise awareness about gender issues, stereotypes, and discrimination. Integrating Ubuntu principles into gender sensitisation programs can create a supportive and respectful climate that challenges harmful gender norms and fosters dialogue and understanding among individuals (Eunifridah & Potokri, 2022; Mbilinyi, 2016). By emphasising Ubuntu’s core values of interconnectedness and compassion, individuals are encouraged to empathise with and understand the experiences of others, including different genders (Ndimande, 2015). This empathy and understanding can help promote a sense of collective responsibility for gender equality (Ndimande, 2015). The emphasis on community and collaboration within Ubuntu aligns with the need for collective action to address gender-based discrimination and violence (Ndimande, 2015).

By promoting a collective approach, Ubuntu encourages individuals to work together to challenge and transform gender norms and practices that perpetuate inequality and harm (Mbilinyi, 2016). These programs can promote empathy and foster a culture of respect and equality among students. Integrating Ubuntu into gender sensitisation programs can help create a supportive and respectful climate that challenges harmful gender norms and promotes dialogue and understanding. It encourages individuals to empathise with and understand the experiences of others, promoting a sense of collective responsibility for gender equality. Moreover, Ubuntu’s emphasis on community and collaboration aligns with the need for collective action to address gender-based discrimination and violence.

Peer Support and Mentorship: Ubuntu recognises the importance of community support. Schools can establish peer support and mentorship programs where older male and female students mentor younger students, providing guidance, encouragement, and support. This can help break down gender barriers and create a supportive network within the school community. Ubuntu recognises the value of shared knowledge and wisdom within a community. Peer support and mentorship programs can provide a platform for older students to share their experiences, skills, and knowledge with younger students, enabling a transfer of valuable insights and guidance (Swartz et al., 2016). Peer support and mentorship programs can be grounded in Ubuntu ethics and values like respect, kindness, and accountability. These values can guide the behaviour and interactions of older students towards their younger peers, promoting positive role modelling and fostering a sense of responsibility towards the well-being of others (Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012).

The Life Orientation Curriculum: Ubuntu can be integrated into the curriculum to highlight the contributions of women in history, literature, and other subjects. The Life Orientation Curriculum in South Africa aims to develop various skills, knowledge, and values for the overall growth of learners in personal, social, intellectual, emotional, and physical aspects (Weybright et al., 2017). It focuses on self-motivation, informed decision-making, and making choices in life (Adewale, 2022; Adewale & Adebayo, 2020). Including diverse perspectives and stories that challenge gender stereotypes can help promote gender equality and empower students to challenge societal norms. Integrating Ubuntu philosophy into the school’s curriculum can address problems like violence, drug abuse, disrespect, and property damage (Mbilinyi, 2016). By incorporating Ubuntu principles, it is believed that spiritual poverty can be mitigated, fostering an environment conducive to nurturing competent future leaders (Mbilinyi, 2016).

Conflict Resolution and Restorative Justice: Ubuntu emphasises forgiveness and reconciliation. Schools can adopt restorative justice approaches to address conflicts, including gender-based conflicts. Restorative practices provide dialogue, understanding, and healing opportunities, creating a more inclusive and harmonious school environment. Van Dyk & Matoane (2010) discuss the application of Ubuntu in psychotherapy and counselling. While their focus is on mental health, the principles can also be extended to
education. Ubuntu-based approaches emphasise the involvement of family members, extended networks, and community resources in addressing individual and social issues. In the context of gender inequality, Ubuntu-based interventions can encourage parents and community members to collaborate with schools to promote equal opportunities for girls and challenge harmful gender stereotypes.

**Student Leadership and Participation:** Ubuntu promotes egalitarianism and democratic values (Omodan & Makena, 2022), which recognises the value of everyone's voice. Schools can encourage girls to take on leadership roles and participate in decision-making. This can empower girls, promote self-esteem, and challenge traditional gender roles. By so doing, female underrepresentation in leadership positions within schools, such as student councils and sports teams, which limits their participation in decision-making processes and aggravates gender inequalities (Bhana, 2013), can be eradicated.

**Parent and Community Involvement:** Ubuntu emphasises the importance of community involvement and collaboration in addressing social issues, including gender inequality in education. Schools can engage parents and community members in discussions and activities that promote gender equality. This collaboration can reinforce the values of Ubuntu and create a united front in fostering gender equality within and beyond the school environment. In the context of South African secondary schools, Ubuntu principles can be applied to promote parent and community involvement in creating a supportive and inclusive educational environment. In education, Ubuntu calls for the active participation and engagement of parents and the broader community in supporting students' learning and holistic development (Gade, 2012). In a study by Theron and Phasha (2015), Ubuntu emerges as an important foundation for resilience among youth in South Africa. The authors argue that Ubuntu-based interventions that involve parents and the wider community can enhance resilience and address social challenges, including gender inequality. Research by Nkosi and Daniels (2007) highlights the significance of Ubuntu in promoting family values, cohesion, and mutual support. When applied to education, Ubuntu can encourage parents and families to engage in their children's schooling actively, participate in school activities, and advocate for gender equality within the educational system. When parents and community members actively participate in educational initiatives, they create a supportive environment that empowers students to excel. By integrating Ubuntu principles into South African secondary schools, educators can create a nurturing and inclusive environment that promotes gender equality, respect, and the holistic development of all students.

**CONCLUSION**

This study has dug deep into gender inequality, its causes, and threats to achieving the United Nations' sustainable development goal on gender equality in South Africa, especially in secondary schools. Anchoring upon transformative paradigm and Ubuntu assumptions, seven thematic areas that can be explored for dismantling gender inequality in secondary schools in South Africa were identified. Thus, SDG 5 which emphasizes positioning women and girls as cultural beings, and not cultureless beast will be achieved. The study, therefore, identified Inclusive Education, gender sensitization programmes, Student Leadership and Participation in parental and community involvement, among others, as the school practices that Ubuntu African principles could be introduced.

**Recommendation**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be recommended for the government of the republic of South Africa to conduct a comprehensive review of basic education curricular, in order to make allowance for practical application of Ubuntuism. Thus, individual differences will be considered when making gender-based decisions in schools in particular. Efforts must be made
to dismantle gender-based barriers in education and create inclusive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of all students. This entails implementing policies and initiatives that promote gender equality, providing equal access to educational resources, opportunities, and support systems for students of all genders. It also involves fostering a culture of inclusivity, respect, and acceptance within schools, challenging harmful stereotypes, and promoting gender sensitization among educators and students.

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https://scie-journal.com/index.php/SiLeT

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*PLOS ONE*, 14(1), 1–18.


[https://doi.org/10.7441/978-80-7454-682-2_4](https://doi.org/10.7441/978-80-7454-682-2_4)


[https://doi.org/10.1558/eph.v21i2.47](https://doi.org/10.1558/eph.v21i2.47)

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[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-18811-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-18811-5)

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