



Happiness as a complementarity to Ubuntu from a communitarianism perspective

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Abstract

Many philosophers and psychologists argue that happiness is a personal experience that can only be achieved through individual action and effort. This view is reflected in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which places happiness at the top of the pyramid of human needs. In contrast, African philosophy, rooted in the concept of Ubuntu, sees humanity as a community where communalism serves as a bonding force that brings people together. This concept of community can be linked to happiness, unity, love, and care, which are all important aspects of African philosophy.

The question that arises, is what the characteristics of both Ubuntu and happiness are. Emotions and sentiments are the characteristics that define these concepts, rather than specific individuals. However, these traits can become active when stimulated or triggered. This means that happiness and Ubuntu cannot exist in isolation but require a catalyst or enzyme to facilitate the process.

Through a qualitative research approach, the study aims to explore the relationship between Ubuntu and happiness from a communitarian standpoint. The findings suggest that ubuntu is an important concept in African philosophy to reveal the potential of happiness. Hence, interconnection in African communities is very important for a thriving happy society. Thus, the paper concludes that the two concepts (ubuntu and happiness) intersect and bring about a more comprehensive understanding of how community and personal happiness are intertwined especially in the African context.

Key words:

Happiness, Ubuntu, communitarianism, community, personhood, African philosophy

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Preamble

During my MPhil classes, Prof Anné Verhoef's teaching had a significant impact on my study. He introduced me to a new perspective on happiness that I, as an African scholar, had not encountered before. While I had read a lot about Ubuntu, the concept of happiness was not well defined. In Western philosophy, happiness is often viewed as an emotion that individuals must cultivate. From this perspective, happiness is something that can be fleeting, based on emotions and feelings that do not last forever. Therefore, it can be inferred that temporary emotions are dependent on humans and do not function without them. This same principle can be applied to Ubuntu. My research aims to identify the points of interaction that contribute to the communitarianism of both happiness and Ubuntu.

Chapter 1:

1.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem. Following the statement of the problem (are) the aims of study and the objectives. Next are the research questions. The purpose of the research question is to guide the researcher. Following the research question is the significance of the study and the methodology of the study, the finally the chapter summary.

1.2 Background of the Study

There is a connection between happiness and Ubuntu. This is evident in the African philosophy known as *Ubuntu*, in which happiness is displayed through communal life which advocates that individual happiness and communal happiness can be experienced simultaneously. Within the philosophical branch of virtue ethics, happiness (*eudaimonia*) is the goal and reward of life. This means that we experience happiness as external to virtue ethics in a class of normative ethical theories which treat the concept of moral virtue as central to ethics and happiness (*eudaemonia*).

Aristotle defines happiness as “the supreme good that supplies the purpose and measures the value of all human activity and striving” (Kenny 2011:49). Aristotle assumes that happiness as a virtue is part of the ethical considerations of humanity. This links to the moral claim of Ubuntu which is rooted in *being happy because others are happy*. Happiness is thus virtuous because it is centralised amongst people (community), and not individuals. This is affirmed by the well-known Bishop Desmond Tutu, who said that “*a person is a person through other persons. None of us comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think, walk, speak, or behave as human beings unless we learned it from other human beings. We need other human beings to be human*” (2004:25). We consequently need other people to be happy.

Aristotle describes happiness as a human goal that gives meaning to an individual’s life. However, whatever humans present as their ultimate goal must pass certain tests, as in Aristotle’s scheme, if it counts as happiness. From the aforesaid, the study surmises that the Ubuntu philosophy is centred around the belief that “*I am because we are.*” This ethos emphasises the importance of unity and seeing oneself as part of a larger community. It promotes living together in peace and encourages happiness. The Ubuntu philosophy is a cornerstone of progressive happiness amongst communities.

Ubuntu is a concept rooted in African philosophy that actively catalyses African ethics and gives meaning to the African worldview (Mbiti, 1990). In the African context, Ubuntu is richly invested in unity and collectiveness. True life satisfaction lies in working ethically together as a community to achieve a common goal. The idea of Ubuntu is a concept that promotes this sense of togetherness and collaboration, which can be understood as communalism collectiveness and moral interaction with other persons.

Communalism and collectivism are essential to the spirit of the African Ubuntu philosophy. Equally important in Ubuntu relationships is the aspect of working with others as a team (English, 2002:197; Poovan *et al.*, 2006:17). A spirit of solidarity simultaneously supports cooperation and competitiveness amongst the team by allowing individuals to contribute their best efforts for the betterment of the entire group.

Ubuntu can thus be understood as an old African word which explains the reflection of humanity unto others. Seeing others happy and bringing happiness to them displays virtue and good morals, not as a self-actualisation exercise (Lefa, 2015). However, the scholarship on happiness as an individual goal became dominant. This undermines the idea of unity and commonness which are some of the basic attributes of African philosophy and Ubuntu. Therefore, the study focuses on how happiness can be attained through human needs and goals as illustrated in Maslow's Theory on the hierarchy of needs.

Human needs and goals

According to Cherry (2024), throughout the history of humanity, there has always been a drive to seek and achieve goals. This ambition is what makes the world competitive and motivates people to explore new things, even if these goals seem unattainable. Cherry (2024) adds that this pursuit is often likened to hunting, where the focus is on capturing the prey, but little attention is paid to what condition the prey will be in when caught or whether the prey satisfies the need – like happiness or pride – despite the condition of the prey. Will it be what the hunter was hoping for, or will it have changed in appearance? The hunter's goal is to capture the prey, which brings a sense of achievement and satisfaction, as well as pride and happiness. However, the hunter may overlook the long-lasting impact of being disappointed when the prey does not satisfy their needs, and when catching the prey may not have a sense of satisfaction and achievement.

The study maintains that this analogy highlights how humanity's pursuit of happiness and fulfilment can sometimes be problematic because a hunter at a certain stage in life will get tired of chasing the prey, or their desire to hunt more to satisfy their needs may cause

frustration and impede happiness. Stage two (“esteem”) of Maslow’s hierarchy of basic human needs suggests that people strive for inner happiness, even if it comes at the cost of others’ happiness. The hierarchy emphasises that physiological needs are the foundation of human needs, which people strive for every day. At the top of his needs pyramid, Maslow describes self-actualisation as an individualistic achievement, and not as something for the community.

For Maslow, self-actualisation happens when one develops and fulfils his or her ambition. The self-actualisation of this ambition may set one’s mind at ease and satisfy one’s pride and self-worth. This fulfilment and experience can potentially be achieved. What is achieved, however, cannot be described merely as happiness, especially if happiness is understood to be found in other people. What is satisfied with self-actualisation is one’s pride and ambition, and not the achievement of happiness. It is not happiness because that would confine happiness to an individual space, while happiness (as Aristotle indicated) has to include others. To be happy, one needs others who love you and who can confirm your being. To be happy includes being loved and belonging to a group that gives meaning to one’s existence. This is the more communal understanding of happiness (as in African philosophy, where community existence is crucial). To only satisfy one’s inner needs, like self-actualisation, does not bring internal happiness in the more communal understanding of happiness, but rather fragmented pieces of happiness.



Figure I: Maslow hierarchy of needs (Cherry, 2024).

Figure 1 illustrates the hierarchy of individual needs, indicating that people strive to achieve something to attain survival. Maslow’s theory maintains that “the hierarchy of happiness is a concept that categorises different types of happiness into four distinct levels. These levels range from immediate pleasures to deep, lasting contentment. By

understanding and working through these levels, you can achieve a more balanced and fulfilling life.”¹ Therefore, true happiness arises only when an individual attains self-actualisation, which is the highest rank in the hierarchy. However, this position is often an individualistic approach that fosters ego and self-praising.

From the point of view of this study, the interpretation of Figure 1 is that individualism is the opposite of collectivism, which is not supported by the values of Ubuntu – an African philosophy that seeks to promote the unity of individuals, as a community. This would be for their true happiness. When people come together to achieve a particular goal, society can often achieve it quickly and easily. Teamwork is an excellent example of this, as it demonstrates how happiness is shared among team members when one individual scores in a football match. Although African philosophy does not contradict Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, it emphasises that individual goals and happiness must not harm anyone in society.

Therefore, self-actualisation is acceptable in Afro-communitarian as long as it does not harm anyone’s happiness and the attainment of Ubuntu. Ubuntu in this sense is a communal effort that promotes the collectiveness position to be displayed in the community. Therefore, the goal must be a communal effort that promotes everyone’s role in society, and it is about community members getting excited about something and using that energy to create change. In short, community organisation is all about empowering people to improve their lives. However, that might be best done in a way that embraces togetherness, so that when everyone is happy, an individual is happy too (Rothman *et al.*, 2001).

In self-actualisation, it becomes clear that happiness is an individualistic enterprise. This leads to questions, especially from an African philosophical point of view, whether happiness can be achieved independently, without relying on a community or society. It is therefore necessary to consider how an individual can be happy on their own even when humans are naturally social beings.

This study aims to investigate whether individualism or being in one’s cocoon can lead to self-actualisation and happiness. From a religious point of view, according to the Biblical story of creation, humans were not meant to be alone but to live in partnership and happiness, as God created Eve as a partner for Adam. This study seeks to identify

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<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://7summitpathways.com/blog/the-four-levels-of-happiness/&ved=2ahUKEwiA0te1sbiJAXvDU0EAHa1NfoQFnoECBsQAw&usg=AOvVaw1Svr9eSKCPJvfjdtz68b10>

complementarity and gaps that are visible between the concepts of Ubuntu and communitarianism and their respective attributes in attaining happiness. To this end, various scholarly works will be consulted.

1.3 Problem statement

From the above discourse, it is evident that there exist differences between the concepts of Ubuntu and happiness. This difference is highlighted in the explanations given by Aristotle (as quoted by Kenny, 2011) and Sambala *et al.* (2020). According to their articulations, happiness is considered a virtue that can only be attained through self-actualisation, as argued by Maslow in Cherry, 2024. Their perspective provides the view that happiness as an individualistic concept.

On the other hand, Ubuntu views happiness as a communal concept that is attained through the unity of the community through concepts such as compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality (Du Plooy, 2014:85). In other words, without communalism, there can be no happiness or community satisfaction. Happiness is not an individualistic concept but rather a collective ambition which must be cherished at all times in a communal set-up. The African view of happiness is holistic in its approach towards the human person and the community. The African view situates the human-person's well-being within a web of relationships, while the source of the web is in the Supreme Being. Whatever is placed out of balance in the human person causes spiritual, physical and mental disease (Mcunu 2004:8).

The utilitarian philosopher, Stuart Mills (1910), also argued from a Western perspective that happiness is communal and is not meant for a select few. Mills argued that utilitarian morality recognises the power of humans to sacrifice their good for the benefit of others. However, it does not consider such sacrifices to be good if they do not increase the overall happiness of the group. According to utilitarian morality, the only self-renunciation that is commendable is one aimed at promoting the happiness of others, either collectively or individually within the limits imposed by collective interests.

Furthermore, Mill (1910) defines happiness as "pleasure and the absence of pain" Therefore, a utilitarian thinks that actions are good when they increase humanity's net happiness, creating more pleasure than they cause pain; and actions are evil when they cause more pain than pleasure. Utilitarianism's ethical thinking advocates for the happiness of the masses. This means that it is ethically correct to satisfy the needs of many people rather than being selfish and satisfying the desires of a minority. Similarly,

African philosophy suggests that happiness is derived from two sources: the collectivist culture of communal bonds and a higher supernatural being (Mbiti, 1990). This indicates that from an African perspective, happiness is a collective ambition and not just an individualistic pursuit.

Scholars such as Kim and Hur (2019), Hole (2021), and Ng and Ng (2022) have emphasised Maslow's hierarchy of happiness as an individual pursuit. On the other hand, Kenny (2011) and Sambala *et al.* (2020) have commented on Aristotle's view of happiness as an ethical goal. However, these scholars have not fully explored happiness as a complementarity to Ubuntu from a communitarianism perspective, which is the focus of this study. As such, the study's problem statement is to explore happiness as a complementarity of Ubuntu from a communitarian perspective.

1.4 Aim of the study

The study aims to explore the commonality between happiness and Ubuntu, from a communitarian perspective.

1.5 Objectives of the study

- To understand the nature of happiness from a communitarianism perspective.
- To understand the nature of Ubuntu from a communitarian perspective.
- To understand the interconnected nature of happiness and Ubuntu from a communitarian perspective.

1.6 Research questions

- What is the nature of happiness from a communitarianism perspective?
- What is the complementary nature of Ubuntu from a communitarian perspective?
- What is the interconnectedness nature of happiness and Ubuntu from a communitarianism perspective?

1.7 Significance of the study

Happiness as self-actualisation has not been extensively discussed in African philosophy. This is because African philosophy believes that happiness can only be experienced within a community hence scholars such as Mangena (2012) discourages individual happiness. Hence, the happiness of an individual is closely tied to the happiness of the community. In

some Western philosophy, happiness is often seen as an individual pursuit that can be achieved in solitude.

Therefore, this study highlights that despite the differences in thinking, happiness can still be experienced collectively. The concept of communitarianism in African philosophy is grounded in the idea of Ubuntu, which serves as a contact point for experiencing happiness as a collective. By exploring this concept, we can create a platform for happiness that is both individual and communal. At the end of this study, these findings will be published in appropriate scientific journals.

1.8 Methodology

1.8.1 Research design

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:74), research design entails an overall strategy employed by the researcher in combining various components of the study in a manner that is logical and coherent. Babbie and Mouton (2001:74) contended that research design is a blueprint that exhibits the intentions of a researcher on how the study is to be conducted. Various research designs are, among others, action research, and ethnographical, experimental, sequential, and case studies (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:75). From this understanding, the researcher employed an exploratory research design.

Swedberg (2020:20) maintains that an exploratory research design is usually used when there is limited literature about the study. Therefore, it is employed to investigate research areas that have previously not been studied thoroughly. In this study, the researcher has realised that there is a scarcity of literature on happiness as a complementarity to Ubuntu from a communitarian perspective, and therefore the exploratory study design was employed to reach the objective of the study. Because there are few resources (literature) available on this theme, all the relevant resources will be consulted as far as possible.

1.8.2 Research methodology and technique

The study has adopted a qualitative research method to better understand the phenomena under study. Simkhada *et al.* (2013:263) note that qualitative research methods can be utilised to understand people's attitudes, behaviour and interactions with the phenomena. Since the researcher seeks to deal with material that is qualitative and not quantitative, this method helped provide a narrative and in-depth understanding of happiness as a complementarity to Ubuntu from a communitarian perspective. The material was sourced qualitatively from existing documents, journal articles, books and other existing literature,

as well as reports on happiness as a complementarity to Ubuntu from a communitarianism perspective. Braun and Clarke (2021) refer to the document thematic analysis research technique, which relies on various texts and sources on which the researcher relies to create new and better content of ideas or theories. Additionally, a desktop method, by acquiring data from search engines, articles from Google Scholar, books and other material which will add value to the study.

1.8.3 Ethics

The researcher must comply with the regulations of their institution regarding data analysis and dissemination of results. Most importantly, the researcher should not falsify, fabricate, exaggerate, manipulate, or plagiarise data. They must always act with integrity, honesty and transparency when reporting and publishing their findings. In summary, the researcher must maintain integrity throughout the entire research process.

1.9 Chapter summary

The chapter has presented the introduction, problem statement, research objectives and questions as well as methodology of the study. The current chapter further presented significance of the study, and the next chapter of the study pays attention to present the conceptual framework as well as reviewing the literature on the subject under study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, chapter one, introduced the present research by elucidating what the research seeks to investigate. This chapter aims to provide a review of the existing literature on the topic being studied. Specifically, it delves into the understanding of communitarianism and happiness, highlighting their differences in the context of the Ubuntu circle. The purpose of literature review is to identify how far other scholars have gone in dealing with this topic. This literature review will therefore demonstrate what other scholars have written and how they fall short in addressing the topic of this study. Reviewing literature is important as it will help the researcher to identify certain gaps that the existing literature has. The sections of the chapter are as follows: The chapter begins with understanding the nature of happiness (2.2), followed by Happiness, Religion and Transcendence (2.3), then positive psychology and happiness (2.4), followed by understanding the nature of Ubuntu (2.5). The next section is Ubuntu and happiness (2.6), Maslow's theory and Ubuntu (2.7), then Utilitarianism (2.8), followed by Communitarianism (2.9) and closing it with chapter summary (2.10).

2.2 Understanding the nature of happiness

The concept of happiness has been a topic of philosophical inquiry for centuries. Bett (2005) argues that Aristotle, Plato and Democritus are just a few of the philosophers who have explored the nature of happiness from a philosophical perspective. These thinkers believed that happiness was a fundamental human virtue. Democritus, for example, argued that being cheerful was essential to achieving happiness and that it was a crucial indicator of personal growth (Bett, 2005). Plato, on the other hand, believed that pursuing knowledge was the key to achieving happiness, as it would lead to a deeper understanding of oneself and the world around them. For Plato, true happiness was the result of self-realisation through the pursuit of knowledge.

Aristotle, who is also known as the founder of virtue ethics, coined the term *eudaimonia*, as the good life or happiness.² He believed that the goal of human thought and actions is to achieve happiness (Haybron, 2011). Although other scholars later translated *eudaimonia* as the idea of human flourishing, it is apparent that this concept promotes the

² *Eudaimonia* (Greek: εὐδαιμονία [*eudaimonía*]; sometimes anglicised as *eudaemonia* or *eudemonia*, /ju:di'moʊniə/) is a Greek word translating to the state or condition of “good spirit”, and which is commonly translated as “happiness” or “welfare”.

capacity for individual happiness. These philosophers viewed happiness as an individual pursuit to satisfy one's life, with the idea of virtue being a central component.

Haidt (2006) and Verhoef (2020) build on Aristotle's definition of happiness by proposing hypotheses that attempt to answer the question: "Where does happiness come from?" One hypothesis suggests that happiness arises from obtaining what we desire. However, research has shown that this kind of happiness is short-lived. Another more promising hypothesis posits that happiness comes from within and cannot be achieved by making the world conform to our desires.

To understand happiness better, scholars and philosophers have developed four distinct theories. According to Haybron (2011) in the Stanford Encyclopaedia, the first theory is hedonism, which identifies happiness with the balance between pleasant and unpleasant experiences. However, there is a difference between hedonist happiness and welfare hedonism, which emphasises the importance of happiness in human desire and social justice. Maslow's pyramid of the hierarchy of needs also supports this understanding.

The second theory identifies happiness as a positive attitude towards life. This perspective is based on global judgments that affirm one's life and how it is perceived or understood in its entirety.

The third theory defines happiness as an emotional state that is different from hedonism. According to this theory, happiness is not just a pleasant experience, but it is an individual's overall emotional condition. This includes emotions and moods that exclude pleasure but are habitual in nature and vary over time. In this theory, happiness is viewed as the opposite of depression and anxiety, and it is described as "psychic affirmation" or "psychic flourishing" in pronounced forms.

The fourth theory is known as the hybrid theory. It identifies happiness with both life satisfaction and pleasure or emotional state or satisfaction whether negative or positive. Hybrid theories are appealing because they include all components of subjective well-being, and no component of subjective well-being does not at times get included in "happiness" in ordinary usage.

In his work, Verhoef (2020) delves into the question of what happiness is. To answer this question, Verhoef references Augustine (354-430) and his Confessions, specifically Book XI, where Augustine states, "What, then, is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled" (1961:264). Similarly, happiness is a concept that we all have an idea of, but presenting a

satisfactory definition of it is a tricky task. Augustine's statement highlights the challenge of defining happiness.

2.3 Happiness, Religion and Transcendence

From a theological perspective, there are debates surrounding happiness and its role in being human. According to Holy Bible, New King James Version. (1982), happiness is something that can only be found in God and can be transmitted to other human beings through God's teachings. Theological discussions of happiness may draw on philosophical notions of the concept, but the key difference is that happiness is related to God, through "knowing, loving and enjoying God" (Charry 2006b:150). Marais (2015:8) states that "Ellen Charry argues for a salutary understanding of happiness, whereby she seeks to reconnect goodness to happiness." Charry observes that the Christian concept of happiness found in scripture and tradition may find suitable conversation partners in modern psychology and philosophy, as both Christian and non-Christian understandings of happiness and flourishing need to be judged by the "salutary principle".

The above statement illustrates that happiness, from a theological perspective, is an abstract concept that is embedded in God and can only be experienced or realised through God's presence. This means that there is a transcendence and immanency in expressing happiness, which can be directed towards either God or another human being. Theologically, happiness is something that can be realised in love, which is found and expressed in transcendence (e.g., with God) and immanency (e.g., with other human beings). After creating the world, God looked at his creation and was happy, which can be seen as self-actualisation in character, as described by Maslow's theory.

To fully understand the concept of happiness from a theological perspective, it is important to consider the thoughts shared by Marais (2015) in an article titled "Happy? A Critical Analysis of Salvation in Ellen Charry that portrays human flourishing as healing, beauty, and pleasure". Marais suggests that happiness is closely connected to soteriological and wisdom and is inherent in God's happiness. According to Marais, when God's happiness leads to salvation, it brings with it attributes such as healing, hope, mercy, grace, transformation, and restoration. This is exemplified in the story of the resurrection, which is based on the atonement at the cross. As per John 3:16, "God loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten son to save it". This salvific action resulted in "ultimate" happiness for God and human beings. Therefore, the Christian tradition may play a

significant role in developing a richer psychology for the Christian community³. Similarly, Ubuntu/Botho has religious connotations. Dumi Oafeta Mmmualefhe (2007:6) explains that “our relationality with each other is therefore indivisible from our relationship with the divine; this is the spiritual meaning of *Botho*”

According to Worthington Commentary (2025), A person as Adam was created alone in the garden of Eden, he has all the control and enjoyed the natural resource and the scenery as he wished. However, Adam lacked companionship. God realised that without companionship Adam will remain lonely as a person because in each an every person a need for companionship is compulsory and is basic. That why God create Adam and Eve existed as Adam companionship. This relation made both of them happy and the enjoyment of the environment that was placed under Adam jurisdiction was more enjoyable than before. This spiritual relationship between Adam and Eve was based on the respect of the environment as stewards of the earth. In essence it was *Botho* in action that culminated in happiness. Their emotional feelings of happiness was a spiritual phenomenon which brought happiness⁴.

However, Verhoef (2014:9) uses the analogy of Sisyphus⁵ to understand happiness as more immanent. Camus rejected in this myth all religious conceptions of an afterlife, or of the immortality of the soul, which he considered as illusory escapes from the unavoidable absurdity of life and death. His theory of absurdity is characterised by three consequences, which are my revolt, my freedom, and my passion. His existentialist thinking reflects that there is no existence of God, and therefore happiness cannot be exclusively understood in Christian terms.

Verhoef, in his discussion on happiness, utilises the basic view of happiness proposed by Haybron (2011:215-216) to address Camus’s views. Verhoef (publishing date) concludes that Sisyphus’s internal meaning of life, which is based on radical immanence as transcendence, is similar to the external meaning of life that one can find with God (as

³ The Greek terms *makarios* and *eudaimonia* are used to denote “happiness”. *Makarios*, in Homer, is used to describe the gods’ state of happiness beyond care. From the time of Aristotle, the term has become weaker, denoting any happiness, also for humans. Aristotle still uses *Makarios* to describe the gods’ happiness and uses *eudaimonia* to describe the happiness of humans. Seen in its Stoic context, *eudaimonia* is linked to the moral purpose (*proairesis*) of humankind, which means to live according to nature (*kata phusin*). It is further related to virtue (*arete*) and governed by reason (*logos*). So, for the Stoics *eudaimonia* is the ultimate goal in life, and it is primarily “to act virtuously so that one’s life is by universal nature.” Only secondarily it is “possibly a state of exhilaration” (*chara, euphrosune*) as a subsequent manifestation of virtuous activity (Van der Merwe 2015:698).

⁴ Worthington, A. 2025. “God created us for happiness” Harper Collins Christian Publishing

⁵ Albert Camus, in his 1942 essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*, saw Sisyphus as personifying the absurdity of human life, but Camus concludes “one must imagine Sisyphus happy” as “The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart.

radical transcendence). Therefore, Sisyphus might experience happiness in the same rewarding and substantial manner as those who find happiness with God.

2.4 Positive Psychology and Happiness

Positive psychology, as advocated by Seligman and Silver (2014), is one of the biggest and most positive contributors to happiness and its significance. According to positive psychology, happiness is often described as what makes life worth living. Although the factors contributing to happiness may differ from person to person, they provide meaning to their daily lives (Seligman, 2002). Furthermore, positive psychology suggests that happiness is subjective and varies for each individual. For some, it may be related to money, while for others, it may be family.

According to Seligman (2002), what makes an individual happy is subjective and varies from person to person. Positive psychology and the study of happiness have been topics within the psychology discipline for a long time, but it was officially recognised as a field only in the year 2000. Slavin, Schindler, Chibnall, Fendell, and Shoss (2012) believe that Seligman has made significant contributions to the field of positive psychology since its inception. Seligman developed the PERMA model, which characterises the factors essential for happiness and well-being (Seligman, 2018). The acronym *PERMA* stands for positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments. All these are factors that reflect the well-being of happiness:

- Positive emotions: Even though seeking positive emotions alone is not a very effective way to boost your well-being, experiencing positive emotions is still an important factor. Part of well-being is enjoying yourself in the moment, i.e., experiencing positive emotions;
- Engagement: Having a sense of engagement, in which we may lose track of time and become completely absorbed in something we enjoy and excel at, is an important piece of well-being. It is hard to have a developed sense of well-being if you are not truly engaged in anything you do;
- (Positive) Relationships: Humans are social creatures, and we rely on connections with others to truly flourish. Having deep, meaningful relationships with others is vital to our well-being;
- Meaning: Even someone who is deliriously happy most of the time may not have a developed sense of well-being if they do not find meaning in their life. When we

dedicate ourselves to a cause or recognise something bigger than ourselves, we experience a sense of meaning that there is simply no replacement for;

- **Accomplishment/Achievement:** We all thrive when we are succeeding, achieving our goals, and bettering ourselves. Without a drive to accomplish and achieve, we are missing one of the puzzle pieces of authentic well-being (Seligman, 2011).

According to PERMA's perspective, Seligman concludes that happiness is a combination of various elements. The PERMA elements are remarkably similar to the concept of communal happiness from the African viewpoint, where Ubuntu is strongly linked to aspects such as togetherness, unity, and positive relationships.

The study by Seligman (2011) recommends that people should focus on the positive aspects of their lives first. This means that they should interact more with positive-minded individuals in their community to build strong relationships. Quality of relationships should be prioritised over the quantity of relationships, particularly with close family and friends, or even colleagues.

Similarly, Seligman (2011) encourages people in society to seek out meaning; and if they do not find it through work, they should look for it in volunteering opportunities, personal hobbies or other leisure activities. Through the PERMA model, Seligman (2011) lastly documented that people should be focused on achieving their goals, but in doing so they should not focus too hard on any goal, but instead keep a balance between ambition and other important things.

2.5 Understanding the nature of Ubuntu

The word *Ubuntu* is (at least in the Western World) often associated with open-source software. In 2004, Linux was already established, but it was fragmented into proprietary and unsupported community editions. Free software was not a part of everyday life for most computer users. It was then that Mark Shuttleworth gathered a small team of Debian developers who founded Canonical. They set out to create an easy-to-use Linux desktop called *Ubuntu*. The word *Ubuntu* is an ancient African term meaning "humanity to others". It reminds us that "I am what I am because of who we all are". The mission of Ubuntu is both social and economic.

According to Karsten and Illa (2005:613), "Ubuntu expresses an African view of the world anchored in its person, culture, and society which is difficult to define in a Western

context.” The perception implies that Ubuntu as a component of African culture pivots around culture, humanism, and society. Importantly, Ubuntu cannot be experienced in a vacuum, but only around the people and their surroundings.

So, the characteristics of Ubuntu intertwine with those of African philosophy and serve as a compass of Africanism. The following attributes will serve to inculcate the objectives of the study. African philosophy is executed amongst a group of people, as affirmed by Ncube (2010:78) who stated that “Ubuntu is basically a cultural value system or worldview and is still in its emergent and exploratory stages as an articulated philosophy.”

Mabovula (2011:41) maintains that the prime in the Ubuntu set-up is the interrelationship which focuses on the collective notion. Thus,

one gains humanity by entering this relationship with other members of the family. This means that to be human is to affirm one’s humanity by recognising the humanity of others and, on that basis, establishing human respect for them.” It is therefore logical to contend that to denigrate and disrespect other human beings is (in the first place) to denigrate and disrespect oneself if it is accepted that one is a subject worthy of dignity and respect. A person’s (own) humanity is seen to be a gift. These are some of the values we grew up with as Africans in our community.

Ubuntu is not only a human characteristic, but it also highlights the importance of respect and tolerance. Ubuntu encourages individuals to respect each other and acknowledge human rights. This aspect of Ubuntu promotes collectivism and understanding, which nurtures an ethical culture of care within societies. Respect is expected from everyone, irrespective of their social status, and is instilled in young people from an early age. It is demonstrated in various settings such as schools, churches, and other community gatherings where people address each other with respect counterparts with respect, including women, children, and men. Mabovula (2011:42) asserts that

respect is an essential precondition for communication, teamwork, and productivity: a vital tool for addressing communal problems. An institution cannot function if mutual respect does not shape and inform its activities. In some of the most important international declarations that South Africa has ratified, and which are therefore legally binding on our country, South Africans have committed themselves to the values of respect and responsibility. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also states that education shall be directed to the full development of the

human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The other aspect is tolerance, as tolerance provides a platform for listening to each other and understanding each other's viewpoints. In this manner then communication becomes readily a means of easier relating to each other. This can be seen in relationships like marriage, the community and social projects. The other aspect of tolerance is that it brings families together. Hence, Mabovula (2011:44) argues that

tolerance is the idea that one must not disregard other people's points of view (not even about important moral issues). In addition, the value of tolerance has become even more important now that we live side by side with people who are very different from us. If a society is not tolerant, then there cannot be true freedom. Highlighting the importance of tolerance does not suggest that it is the only value that community members should live by, or even that it is the most important. However, when communities make moral evaluations, these evaluations must evolve from a continuous discussion and debate between various role-players in the community. Another important characteristic that nourishes the community structure is that of respecting each other.

Breda's (2019) abstract further elucidated this point:

Ubuntu is an African concept referring to humanness. It gives expression to deeply held African ideals of one's personhood being rooted in one's interconnectedness with others. Social workers seeking to develop an African framework for ecological social work practice turn repeatedly to Ubuntu for aid. But the term has, for the most part, been limited to the idea of mutual aid – people helping each other in a spirit of solidarity. This article endeavours to extend and deepen the Ubuntu concept to strengthen its potential as a theory informing social work practice. This is done by interweaving other African ideas with Ubuntu in three domains: ethics, sustainable development and eco-spirituality.

From the above, Ubuntu is not described as an isolated factor⁶ but a communal factor which embraces other aspects like sustainable development, ethics, etc. This embracement concretises that there exist other elements which are the basis of Ubuntu

⁶ A person is a person through other persons. None of us comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think, walk, speak, or behave as human beings unless we learned it from other human beings. We need other human beings to be human (Tutu 2004:25).

and that overarches the Ubuntu concept. They form the basis of Ubuntu and although Ubuntu could exist without them, it would not have much impact.

To illustrate the compactness of Ubuntu and its promotion of togetherness⁷, Akabor and Pasha (2022) pointed out in their abstract:

The African philosophical concept of Ubuntu is the sense of togetherness and collaboration, and viewing people as being one part of a larger whole. In other words, the success of one should be the success of all. The correlation between the concept of Ubuntu dovetails with the cooperative and collaborative values of an inclusive education system, is enshrined in our Constitution. However, many South African schools are characterised by a competitive value system encouraging learners to outperform their peers academically, subsequently rewarding the learners' individualistic efforts to do so. These rewarded learners, generally comprising less than ten per cent of the school population, experience privilege and distinction; their efforts are valued and celebrated. Their award-winning status allows them opportunities both within and post-school that are not afforded to the rest of the learners. The success of some learners occurs at the expense of other learners. Thus, there is a disjuncture between our sense of Ubuntu in proclaiming inclusivity on paper, and in practice, we continue to promote competitive values at our schools.

Motswaledi and Marumo (2022:198) propose that the Ubuntu philosophy represents the ethics of African society and reflects how humans interact with their community. By promoting ecological awareness, the implementation of the Ubuntu philosophy improves the environment of African organisations. Group unity is a key element of the philosophy and is essential for the survival of African societies. The Ubuntu philosophy encourages humility, reciprocity, equality, and humanity, which unleashes the potential of African communities. Practising philosophy is central to African belief systems and daily life and helps establish and preserve just and communal societies. By deconstructing past injustices based on gender, sex and masculinity, reciprocity becomes the central agent in promoting social justice.

⁷ This resonates with the inclusive education value of cooperative learning, whereby the accountability to achieve an outcome lies solely with the group. An individual is responsible for completing his/her small part of the group's task and for contributing to the success of the group (Tchatchoueng2016). This reflects the African aphorism "motho ke motho ka ba babangwe" or "umuntu ngu muntu nga bangwe", [that] a person is a person when s/he is in the midst of other people (translation) (Akabor & Pasha. 2022:3).

Ubuntu is a norm of commonality and communalism, and without these attributes, it loses its meaning in African philosophy. The collectivist aspect emphasises the importance of being part of a group and community to express Africanism. This aspect is crucial for decision-making, which is done through consensus in the Ubuntu understanding. According to African philosophy, ethical behaviour involves protecting, respecting and loving one another. These aspects promote better understanding and caring for each other as a community, rather than as individuals.

2.6 Ubuntu and happiness

In understanding the relationship between happiness and Ubuntu there are points of contact between the two concepts that are crucial to furthering the communitarian idea by combining African philosophy and Western thought. Ubuntu is a concept that is centred around people, and it is experienced through interaction and connection with others. It does not support individualism. To experience Ubuntu, one must engage in relationships with other people. Personhood is integral to the Ubuntu worldview, and it is through the existence of humanity that this perspective is shaped. It is important to note, however, that in environmental issues, Ubuntu can be applied as a principle of preservation, as the earth is viewed as a living being – Mother Earth – that produces and sustains life (Taringa, 2020). For instance, to take care of the environment around you it also promotes clean air, water and environment which will bear fruits for the community. In essence, when one takes care of the earth, the earth will also provide good products in return. This unique and special relationship with other beings is what makes Ubuntu a defining characteristic of African philosophy.

Bhuda and Marumo (2022) assert that Ubuntu can serve as a viable alternative to the individualistic and utilitarian ideologies that dominate the Western world. Ubuntu is a social ideology that upholds the interconnectedness of humanity and prioritises care, collective values, harmony, respect, and responsiveness. The use of Ubuntu philosophy in research among Indigenous peoples requires a social-ethical outlook that is inclusive of all individuals, as it emphasises good relationships between researchers and Indigenous communities.

Furthermore, Bhuda and Marumo (2022) argue that revisiting a community's origins and worldview is essential for gaining a better understanding of itself. Ubuntu serves as a tool for decolonising and indigenising research, which has been called for by many indigenous scholars. The study posits that when Ubuntu philosophy – an African indigenous

knowledge system and a way of life for African people – is accorded the esteem and dignity it deserves, it can restore indigenous values, heritage and cultures through research. This is why Ubuntu can be viewed as a feasible alternative to individualistic and utilitarian ideologies.

2.7 Maslow's Theory and Ubuntu

Maslow's theory was introduced earlier, but it needs to be discussed in more detail here to understand the link between Ubuntu and happiness. Maslow introduced the Maslow Hierarchy of Needs theory in 1954 to differentiate between deficiency and growth needs (Lussier, 2019; Kim & Hur, 2019). He represented this idea as a psychological hierarchical step in a pyramid that illustrates the model of human desires (Lussier, 2019). Maslow believed that some parts of human desires are more crucial than others, while some are mainly motivated by self-interest.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of requirements, demands are characterised as physiological (food and clothes) and safety (work security) (Kim & Hur, 2019). The bottom requirements are necessary for daily human needs and growth, whereas the top ones are not necessarily attained by everyone or are limited to a few, but are self-actualised human needs. The highest needs are always connected with the rich and are a luxury stage of an individual.

- Physiological needs are biological necessities for human survival, such as air, food, drink, shelter, clothes, warmth, sex, and sleep.
- Basic needs involve that people crave order, predictability and control in their lives. The family and society (e.g., police, schools, businesses, and medical care) can meet safety demands.
- A human emotional need for interpersonal interactions, affiliating, togetherness, and being part of a group is referred to as belongingness, e.g. fraternity, intimacy, trust, acceptance, receiving and giving affection, and love.
- The fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy is esteem needs, which include self-worth, accomplishment, and respect. Maslow divided esteem needs into two categories: esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence) and regard for others (reputation or respect).
- Physiological needs are biological requirements for human survival e.g., air, food, drink, shelter, clothing, warmth, sex, and sleep.

- Safety needs – people want to experience order, predictability and control in their lives. Safety needs can be fulfilled by the family and society (e.g., police, schools, business, and medical care).
- As far as love and belongingness needs are concerned, belongingness refers to a human emotional need for interpersonal relationships, affiliating, connectedness, and being part of a group (friendship, intimacy, trust, acceptance, receiving and giving affection, and love).
- Esteem needs are the fourth level in Maslow's hierarchy and include self-worth, accomplishment, and respect. Maslow classified esteem needs into two categories: (i) esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence) and (ii) the desire for reputation or respect from others.
- Self-actualisation needs are the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy and refer to the realisation of a person's potential, self-fulfilment, seeking personal growth, and peak experiences (McLeod, 2007).

According to McLeod (2007), Maslow's theory of motivation is more complex than simpler physiological explanations because it considers not only tension relief and survival but also growth and development. According to this theory, there are two sets of requirements humans must fulfil to achieve life satisfaction. The first four levels of the model are known as deficiency needs (D-needs), and the highest level is known as being needs (B-needs).

Maslow's theory suggests that to achieve full happiness, one must complete all the stages, which serve as building blocks towards happiness (Lussier, 2019; Kim & Hur, 2019). However, Maslow later acknowledged that these stages need not be met in an all-or-nothing manner, as he previously believed. To move to the next level, one must fulfil all the requirements of the previous stage. When needs are not sufficiently met, especially at the lower level of the hierarchy of requirements, it is referred to as a deficiency of needs. Only after the deficiency of needs is met can the following level be initiated. However, Maslow recognised that certain phases of the stages may not need to be completely met, as some phases require more attention than others.

According to Maslow, to attain genuine happiness, all stages of the paradigm must be strongly interrelated, and all must be activated to achieve the intended goals. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that some phases are not always met to their full potential, as McLeod (2007) has alluded to. Therefore, even though they are met with the understanding that they were begun, they can meet the individual's minimum needs and

push them toward the targeted goal (Wininger & Norman, 2010). Maslow believed that happiness can only be achieved when an individual meets certain criteria.

Despite not having reached their full potential in some cases, these stages' initiation establishes their value in achieving the desired goal. According to Maslow, an individual's happiness is their response or objective that can be accomplished once their D-needs and B-needs have been met, resulting in their life satisfaction (Lussier, 2019; Kim & Hur, 2019). This may be linked to the foundation of hedonic theory or psychological hedonism, which relates to human enjoyment. According to this viewpoint, each human is motivated by the desire to avoid pain, while seeking pleasure (Drakopoulos, 1990). Similar to Maslow, hedonism believes that happiness is an individual's life mission, and only they can express their entire happiness in their capacity.

It is important to note that Maslow's theory is rooted in basic needs which can have a significant impact on an individual. The study suggests that satisfying the needs of those who are most in need is what brings solace to an individual, and happiness plays a crucial role in making a person feel complete. There are certain needs that one cannot live without, and happiness is one of them. Although happiness can be described from different perspectives, it is ultimately what brings satisfaction and fulfilment to one's life.

Maslow lists the needs, which lead to the realisation of happiness and a particular degree of happiness. When one reaches a certain stage, the degree of happiness differs, meaning that they cannot say they are fully happy. When one reaches the climax, another need arises, provoking a desire for happiness, making happiness a continuous phenomenon that cannot be satisfied at once.

Humanity desires to be happy, but they have limitations in how they obtain and absorb happiness. This makes humanity an animal that is always "hunting" for happiness. But when they find it, they become bored and desire another source of happiness. This perspective on happiness can cause illusions, such as the desire to be happier than others, and that acquiring more happiness makes someone a better person.

Maslow defines happiness in the hierarchy of needs, from the base to the pivot, and from there, humanity should be satisfied with their desires. However, that is not the case because humanity desires to live in their own space.

2.8 Utilitarianism

Metz (2011) argues that to comprehend Ubuntu, one must focus on its collectivist aspect, which emphasises that no one is an island. For humanity to live and survive, people must live in harmony with each other. This creates a sense of collective effort and understanding. Therefore, one of the key aspects of leadership from an African perspective is consensus decision-making, which takes into account the views of the majority. According to the utilitarianism theory advocated by Mills, any decision-making strategy must always satisfy the majority. Decisions cannot be overruled by an individual, as the majority supersedes. To exhibit solidarity, people should engage in mutual aid and be sympathetic to the needs of the poor, thereby restoring their dignity and identity. In this way, Ubuntu serves as a principle of pulling one up when they are down and can contribute to happiness.

Mangena's (2012) views on happiness draw on the ideas of classic philosophers to address moral theory. He asserts that, according to Aristotle, justice is the most important moral virtue and the natural consequence of a virtuous person who strives to live a good life. For Aristotle, justice is both the end and means to happiness, and the most virtuous person makes moral decisions through intellect and reason. Aristotle considers happiness to be a virtuous activity that only a rational soul can achieve.

Mangena (2012) places the blame for unhappiness on individualism and unethical behaviour, which leads to morally wrong perceptions and causes unhappiness. He believes that if people are treated ethically and morals are upheld, humanity can produce a happy society. Essentially, Mangena advocates for pure ethics based on the right morals, which aligns with Mill's views. If all people are treated fairly and not oppressed or forced into poverty by the rich, and if they are allowed to retain their identity, they will be happy. According to Mangena, the key to happiness is to prioritise the people and not the individual.

He concludes that "in these communitarian cultures mentioned above, justice does not reside in the individual – it resides in the community of which the individual is part. In sub-Saharan Africa, the ideas of reason, spirit and desire which, in Platonic terms, define justice in the individual, project the individual as being part of a community. Thus, reason, spirit and desire exist as assets of the community and not as elements that make up an individual" (Mangena, 2012:8).

According to Mabvurira (2020), the theories of Utilitarianism and deontological practices of belief are derived from Western thought. These theories have been instrumental in understanding African philosophy, particularly the concept of Ubuntu. It is worth noting that Western theories promote human rights and dignity, despite some of them being flawed in advocating individualism instead of collectivism which embraces everyone in a community.

Mabvurira (2020) suggests that the concept of Ubuntu can help to solve ethical problems and dilemmas by prioritising the happiness and welfare of the community. According to Mabvurira (2020:74), ethical dilemmas in social work are rarely black and white and require practitioners to make decisions that align with the values of Ubuntu. Ethical decision-making in social work can involve issues such as privacy and confidentiality, conflicts of interest, and professional boundaries. Each case and client is unique, and practitioners must make well-informed decisions that are in line with the principles of Ubuntu.

Virtue plays a crucial role in happiness, as seen in the theories of Ubuntu, and Utilitarianism. It encompasses principles of honesty and fairness, which help build character. When one has a strong character, they are morally and ethically correct. All of these principles contribute to happiness because seeing others happy and enjoying themselves brings joy. However, if one finds pleasure in seeing others sad, that is morally and ethically wrong. This aligns with Benson Onyekachukwu Anofuechi's (2022:71) view that moral formation involves the cultivation of virtues and characters, resulting in behaviours such as service, reconciliation, love, forgiveness, and respect. This internalisation of moral norms and values leads to the expression of ethical principles and standards in one's life, contributing to individual or community growth and development. After analysing the works of various scholars, the study concludes that happiness is not based on one's skin colour or social status. Instead, it is a process that can be achieved through ethical understanding and integration of different cultures. Even in situations where there are ethical dilemmas that stem from different worldviews and cultural backgrounds, happiness can still be attained.

The study suggests that since human beings are social creatures, happiness can be found in communities. When people see others being happy, it can bring them joy as well. Happiness is a collective emotion that helps us understand life better. If the concepts of deontology and Utilitarianism are intertwined with Ubuntu or find common ground with its perspective, they can coexist harmoniously. Therefore, happiness is a result of communalism and community spirit.

2.9 Communitarianism

Ubuntu refers to an African way of life that accords respect to human dignity and equality. Any person, irrespective of status, is included in a communitarian sense. This means Ubuntu stands for solidarity⁸ of the community and embraces human rights and equality for all. From this premise, Ubuntu can be allocated a status of ethnic inclusiveness and upliftment of humanity in a unified society.

As per Daly's definition, communitarianism is a philosophical perspective that defines individuals based on their social connections and cultural traditions, rather than their traits. On the other hand, Kwame Gyekye argues that in African life, one's interests are closely tied to those of the community. This communal efficacy is a defining characteristic of Africanness.

Communitarian is not only community based but it has other human spheres that affect its existence. When a government is elected or is in power, especially in a democracy, the expectation is that it must serve the community as a matter of service delivery. The idea of providing basic services such as hospitals, schools, and industries to the people for their welfare applies to all, including communists and socialists. In exchange for these services, the people pay taxes and other levies as a reciprocity to the government. This type of arrangement is communal in character and leads to communitarianism, which makes the government and the people partners in the development of the community (Etzioni, 2003). Both parties benefit from this beneficial process, and there are no winners or losers: the government is allowed to serve the people, and the people have the opportunity to be served.

During the process of serving, there comes a stage of relationship-building and mutual understanding and trust between both parties. They come together to discuss matters of mutual concern transparently, taking into account the needs of the majority. This means that communitarianism is consensus-based, like Ubuntu, and it prioritises the needs of the community over those of the individual (Etzioni, 2003). All achievements are community-based in this spirit. The same can be said about how elections are conducted, which are community-based. The leader is chosen by the people and can be removed by the people. In communitarianism, therefore, the community has the final say in decision-making. This

⁸ Ubuntu values and principles are compassion, cooperation, co-existence, connectedness, inclusivity, respect, dignity, sympathy and peace according Letseka (2013:335).

also applies to Ubuntu, which emphasises humaneness and communalism. In Ubuntu, nobody should be seen as poor when there is a community that can help them become rich or enable them to sustain themselves. For example, in Ubuntu, when one needs to feed their family, they are given a cow, and the expectation is that the cow will give birth to a calf, which will sustain the family. This Ubuntu mindset applies to communitarianism.

African thinking is characterised by communalism and inclusivity. This sociality is deeply embedded in African culture, leading to a collectivist community. It is assumed that Africans/Ubuntu encourage communalism, which is the root of communitarianism. The concept of Ubuntu emphasises that decisions made by humanity should be based on consensus, and this is linked to Utilitarianism, which focuses on ethical decision-making for the benefit and welfare of the community. By bringing together the principles of individualism and collectivism, Ubuntu promotes complementarity between the two.

Chatters (2023) accordingly affirms: “[B]e strong to stand alone, be yourself enough to stand apart, but be wise enough to stand together when the time comes.” However, this notion promotes individualism; and collectivism is rendered useless for the community or the people.

2.10 Chapter Summary

Scholars from various disciplines and traditions have argued that despite the differences between Western and African philosophies, the desire for happiness is universal. It is the core of every living being because even if happiness cannot be sustained, it can be enhanced by fulfilling one’s needs as outlined by Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. The principle behind this is that when an individual’s needs are satisfied or met, they become happy. Happiness can only thrive if the needs are in place. On the other hand, African philosophy suggests that happiness can be achieved when the majority of people are happy. This is the foundation of communalism, which emphasises the importance of the community over the individual.

Chapter 3: Discussion of findings

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter referred to the literature review and theoretical foundation of the study. The chapter alluded to concepts such as nature of happiness, followed by Happiness, Religion and Transcendence, then positive psychology and happiness, followed by understanding the nature of Ubuntu. Additionally, Ubuntu and happiness, Maslow's theory and Ubuntu, then Utilitarianism and Communitarianism are some of the key concepts used to gather literature in the topic understudy. Thus, in this chapter the study presents the discussions of the findings based on the data gathered in the previous chapter and the conclusion of the study.

3.2 The interconnectedness of Ubuntu and Communitarianism about happiness

Various scholars such as Mabvurira (2020) have discussed the relationship between communitarianism and Ubuntu. They argue that while theories like utilitarianism and deontological support individualism, collectivism is needed if the world is serious about human rights. They also show that if individualism is prioritised, it can lead to a misunderstanding of the community's needs, which can cause people to become unhappy and result in chaos (Kim & Hur, 2019). Therefore, the needs of the community must take precedence over individual needs.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs outlines the basic human needs, starting from the most fundamental and progressing to the highest level of needs. According to this hierarchy, the pursuit of happiness is a primary objective. It suggests that happiness is not something that can be directly achieved, but rather a result of satisfying other needs. When these needs are met, an individual experiences a feeling of contentment. However, it is important to note that this hierarchy only considers individual needs and does not account for communal needs. In contrast, the African concept of Ubuntu prioritises the needs of the community over individualism.

Ubuntu is a concept that emphasises the importance of living with others and caring for them (Bhuda and Marumo, 2022). It promotes communalism and relationships and highlights the dignity and identification that comes from living together and caring for one another. This understanding influences decision-making and governance in African societies, where individualism is discouraged in favour of interdependence and mutual support. Ubuntu promotes love, respect, and care towards both neighbours and strangers,

regardless of their social status or position in the community. As a religious notion, it also recognises and embraces different religious sects.

The merging of communitarians and Ubuntu can be experienced through personal experience rather than relying on professionals. This is because the inner personhood that defines humanness brings forth a deeper understanding of community and the pursuit of happiness at all costs. This happiness reflects humanity's desire for peace and contentment.

In complementing this, Christian (2004:1) avows that:

“Ubuntu as a universal idea solidifies dialogic communitarianism and keeps it oriented intellectually. Ubuntu's total focus on humans and its insistence on the moral dimension of society produce an Ubuntu communitarianism that is the most mature version of any to date. As a normative paradigm for media ethics, Ubuntu communitarianism emphasises authentic disclosure for news and moral literacy as the media's mission. Its liberatory journalism empowers citizens to agree about social problems and solutions among themselves rather than depending on the political elite or professional experts.”

Interconnectedness is a concept found in the African philosophy of Ubuntu. Ubuntu embodies companionship, solidarity, identity, and a worldview in which every element exists as a unit. The essence of this connection is grounded in the history of African philosophy principles that stress the importance of the connection between oral and written information. In the oral stage, information was passed from one generation to the next through discussions around the fireplace. The younger generation would learn new information and teach the older generation, creating a cycle of interconnectedness.

This type of interconnectedness gave birth to a written record of African philosophy, which led to debates and contributions by African philosophers. It was in this context that Ubuntu was born to bring forth a new understanding of how communities are interconnected, from the oral to the written. Writing brought about a new dimension, which allowed for the recognition of contact points between African and Western philosophies, including communitarianism and Ubuntu. These practices are similar and should be recognised and appreciated. Storytelling and acknowledging the past promote happiness and self-actualisation.

According to Ude (2022:720), “Ubuntu, as lived knowledge, does not separate thought from life; indeed, the two are merged in that vision of living in harmony with the entire

creation, a vision similarly embodied in *sumak kawsay and suma kamana*.⁹ This means that for happiness to exist, we must all take responsibility for living in peace and harmony on this earth because if we fail to do so, Mother Earth will suffer. Therefore, it can be observed that communitarianism and Ubuntu are closely intertwined.

The relationship between Mother Earth and its inhabitants is mutual and reciprocal. Humanity should view Mother Earth as a provider and pay homage to her, as without her existence, humanity would have no place to call home, which would lead to unhappiness. Therefore, to experience happiness, humanity must play its part in providing service delivery to the community, which is an aspect of communitarianism. However, it is important to note that communitarianism cannot occur in outer space, as the provisions are supplied by Mother Earth. Marumo (2016) also resonates with the fact that you cannot live as a nomad. You need companionship and that is why stewardship is a sign of happiness and glorification to God. Being happy to serve Mother Earth implies working for the community in a communitarian state embedded in Ubuntu.

3.3 Chapter summary

. This chapter has presented the findings of the study, from that point it has provided a discussion on the interconnectedness of Ubuntu and communitarianism about happiness. The discussion reflects on how these are intertwined to bring about an individual's wholesome happiness, so they are all important components in the phenomena under study.

⁹Sumak kawsay, or "good life" in the Kichwa language, is an Indigenous principle promoting living in harmony with nature to achieve well-being for all.

Chapter four: Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the findings of the study, through that, it reflected on the interconnectedness of Ubuntu and communitarianism about happiness. This chapter will then present the conclusion and recommendations of the study on happiness being complementary to Ubuntu from a communitarianism perspective.

4.2 Conclusion

Both communitarianism and happiness identified the similarities as well as differences. This exercise depicted that in both notions there existed the presence of happiness. Happiness was seen as a catalyst that fluid the activities in each sphere. This important attribute was illustrated in Maslow's theory of needs and happiness and companionship were the need that humanity strives to achieve despite any circumstances. It further indicated that humankind cannot live in isolation and acquire happiness but needs to be in a company or communal relationship to be happy. The same was shown how communitarianism as an ideology calls for communal life and community relationships and that in itself bears the fruits of happiness.

Different sources by scholars were consulted about happiness. They brought attention to the fact that happiness is the embedded character of humanity and cannot survive in isolation. The crux of their argument was that happiness is clearly shown in humanity's emotions and desires. Everyone is eager to be happy at all times and abhors sadness. But what came up prominently in their discussion was whether there exists perpetual happiness or not. And the answer to that was not very clear and what was clear was that happiness was the essence of life and that can be achieved through living together as persons (communitarianism).

Drawing from the discourses, the study concluded that for happiness to exist it must be complementary of communitarianism. That complementary character is demonstrated as the cornerstone of humanity, needs and desires. The basics of humanity's life are centred around being happy in a communal space. Being in that space then both notions complement each other and promote peace.

The sources also assisted the study in comprehending the inner insights of happiness and communitarianism and their attributes in fostering complementarities around the world as

recorded in the creative narratives of Genesis 1, which reveal that happiness was concluded with the company of Eve and Adam as the birth of companionship. Besides Adam being enriched in living in the glories and beauty of nature in the garden of Eden, Adam was lonely. Beauty and splendour failed to bring happiness until a companion was made for him called Eden, the situation in the garden changed tremendously and Adam experienced happiness. The company changed the lonely times into happy times. The birth of happiness was a complementarity of communitarianism, meaning happiness is not a solo exercise and cannot be experienced in isolation.

4.2. Recommendations

For the complementarity to take effect the study recommends the following

- * That extensive conversation should be taking place among the studies of communitarianism and happiness as a means of getting more insight and knowledge inclusive of Ubuntu.
- * That this consultation should be a regular exercise so that awareness is stimulated to promote more interactions and collaboration.
- * That studies that are from an African thought like Ubuntu should be given space to participate in the western thought and that similarities be identified.
- * That after identifying the similarities check where they complement each other and produce new knowledge.

The study maintains that if the above recommendations can be implemented that will give passage to African philosophy to participate in the philosophy field and bring new knowledge. It will also foster that African philosophy is a complementary of other philosophies and can enhance that as partners in philosophy.

Importantly, the importance of the different philosophy coming together can bring similar similarities and contact points that were not visible and the visibility can add value to the philosophy field

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