

Growing the whole Motswana Child: A holistic Curriculum Intergrating Social-Emotional Learning from Pre-Primary to Primary

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Published: 07 July 2025 | **Received:** 05 April 2025 | **Accepted:** 20 June 2025

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Abstract

This article looks at the role of Ubuntu philosophy in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) as we develop a comprehensive curriculum for the whole Motswana child in the pre-primary to primary level of Botswana's education system. We address the gap in present culturally relevant SEL frameworks which do not align with Botswana's community values and educational aims. We base our work on Ubuntu which presents a model of interconnectedness, empathy and collective well being we put forth a decolonized approach to SEL that which puts forward African epistemologies. Methodology used is a qualitative literature review and theoretical analysis which we use to synthesize Ubuntu with what is known of SEL to put forth a culture-based framework. We present that Ubuntu's focus on relationship, respect and community responsibility can improve SEL practices which in turn will foster emotional resilience, identity affirmation and prosocial behavior in young students. Also, we put forward a framework which puts forward Indigenous knowledge systems and context related issues over out dated Western models. We see to it that which which we present a fair, context sensitive education which pays attention to the Motswana child's social emotional and community growth. Also, we add to the global discussion on culturally sustaining SEL and we also affirm Africa's intellectual input in rethinking what holistic education is.

Keywords: *Ubuntu, Motswana, Social-Emotional Learning, holistic education, curriculum development, African philosophy, child development*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a great deal of focus on what we may term as comprehensive education in Botswana which puts into play the intellectual, emotional, and social growth of the child. As the country attempts to put forward educational goals that at once look out to the world stage and in to the heart of what is Botswana culture, we see the put forth of the use of indigenous philosophies like Ubuntu in association with present day practices such as Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) as very promising. This theoretical framework article sets out to research the relationships between these two philosophies and also to present a cultural response model for comprehensive education in Botswana from pre-primary to primary levels. Our study is set within the large-scale discussion on decolonizing education and the recovery of African knowledges which put forward the ideas of community well being, interdependence and moral responsibility (Nussbaum, 2003; Waghid Smeyers, 2014). By putting forward the front of Ubuntu a philosophy based in the interrelatedness of all people this research looks to address the very present need for educational models that present what is Botswana's cultural identity to the world stage also at the same time arm students with the tools they need to do well in a very changeable world.

The issue we are looking at is that of what we may term as a gap between Botswana's academic curriculum and the full growth of the Motswana child. While we report progress in terms of access to education which the country has seen, it is put forth that we tend to put to the fore academic achievement at the expense of social and emotional growth (Tabulawa, 2013). This narrow scope of focus produces students that may be skilled technically but which also do not have the resilience, empathy, and collaboration which are key for personal and social success. In the African setting education has been a social affair which aimed at developing not only individual ability but also social cohesion (Mbiti, 1969). But also, we see how the legacy of colonial education which played into individualism and competition has left out many of our traditional values (Abdi, 2013). Also, we are at a point which we must re think our educational structure in a way that we respect local culture at the same time we include what we know from research-based practices like Social Emotional Learning which has in large scale studies reported to put forth emotional intelligence, self regulation and pro social behavior (Durlak et al., 2011).

Ubuntu as put forth in the phrase “I am because we are” is a base philosophy for this rethinking. It brings to the fore the value of relationships, mutual respect, and shared humanity which in turn very much plays into the root elements of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) which includes self awareness, social awareness and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2020). In Botswana which has at its core communal values for social cohesiveness Ubuntu presents a cultural frame through which to look at and adapt SEL principles. For example, the Ubuntu stress on *botho* (humaneness) which is similar to the SEL which puts forward empathy and ethical behavior thus we see the connection between the two. Yet although there is this connection, what is lacking is research which puts together Ubuntu and SEL in the Botswanan setting. This void is what this study sets out to fill in which we seek to put together indigenous wisdom with global pedagogical approaches to better the learning experience for Botswana children.

First out to look at the issues of how Ubuntu and SEL play out in theory; second to put forth a model which puts these theories into practice in Botswana’s pre-primary and primary settings; and third to put forth the what we see as the benefits of such an approach which is to the development of the " Whole Botswana child. Through this we contribute to the which is a growing field of research on culture-based pedagogy in Africa (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Phiri, 2019) also we put forth what we believe to be practical applications for policy makers, educators and curriculum developers. Our framework which is founded in Ubuntu philosophy and SEL theory puts forth that the integration of the two can improve on present educational practices by creating a more inclusive, emotional support filled and culture relevant learning environment. This approach not only supports Botswana’s goal of developing fully rounded citizens but also answers the global demand for education systems that focus on total development (UNESCO, 2015).

The article is structured as follows: In the present introduction we see in depth analysis of Ubuntu’s and SEL’s first principles as well as their complimentary features. As it goes into second sections we present an analysis of Botswana’s education system, reporting what we see to be deficiencies which in the same breath present possible in which the frameworks may be put forward into the system. Also we report the model theory we have put together and what the components are also what are some of the classrooms’ practice uses that it may have. In the end we look at that what this new frame means for

the policies, teaching methodologies and also how that which we present has the capacity to bring about a rebirth of education for the African child which is aware of their culture and also is prepared for the global stage. Through this study we put forth a call for an education at once very academic but also very human in nature, one which is grounded in the values which have seen African communities through for generations.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The base of this study is in the cross over between Ubuntu philosophy and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) which when put together present a cultural response to total education in Botswana. Ubuntu which is a pan –African philosophy of which Mbiti (1969) and Ramose (1999) are key to, presents the ideas of interrelatedness, community well being and moral responsibility in the phrase “I am because we are”. This world view which is at odds with Western individualism which is very much a part of Botswana’s collectivist culture that has community and kinship at the core of identity (Ntseane, 2011). Social-Emotional Learning which roots in Western psychological theories like Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory and Goleman’s (1995) emotional intelligence framework which is about self awareness, self regulation and social skills. Although SEL has wide scale acceptance in the Global North settings its application in African settings often leaves out indigenous knowledge systems which in turn requires a decolonial rethinking that puts forward African world views (Dei, 2018; Nsamenang, 2008).

The integration of Ubuntu and SEL which we put forth as a response to this epistemological gap which they present by which we put forward relationality and communal harmony as the base of learning. Ubuntu which puts botho (humaneness) and maitseo (moral practice) at the fore provides a cultural framework for SEL skills like empathy and relationship building (Mugumbate Nyanguru, 2013). For example, the SEL skill of social awareness which we see play out in the principle of ubuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (a person is a person through others) which stresses collective empathy and shared responsibility (Shutte, 2001). Also, we see Western SEL models which tend to individualize emotional growth which in turn pays little attention to the social settings in which African children are socialized (Nsamenang Tchombe, 2011). This out of sync element between what we are seeing in Western models and what is present in the lives of

African children points to the need for a theoretical model that brings together universal elements of SEL with the specific African values as presented in Figure X which shows Ubuntu's community-based thought which envelopes and gives context to SEL's individual based fields.

Emergent African thought puts into question the blind adoption of Western educational theories and instead puts forth endogenous models which reflect African reality (Odora Hoppers, 2009; Chilisa, 2020). In Botswana for instance we see the development of the Botho curriculum which puts forward Ubuntu values in the classroom but which also has seen variable success because of colonial past which still promotes Eurocentric approaches (Tabulawa, 2013). A decolonial approach to SEL integration would put into practice what we may call epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2009), which is to say we put indigenous knowledge at the center while also bringing in global theories in a pick and choose manner. This is what I term as glocalization (Swyngedouw, 1997) which is the adaptation of global frameworks to fit local cultural contexts. In the case of Botswana that means to include SEL in kgotla (traditional community dialogue) practices which in turn include elements of conflict resolution and emotional outpouring that are community wide (Molosi-France, 2020).

Ubuntu which is the ethical and cultural substrate, while SEL puts forth structured approaches for skill development. For example, Ubuntu's principle of lerato (love) we see play out in SEL's relationship skills which it frames as acts of communal care as opposed to individual achievement (Letseka, 2014). Also, in Self management in SEL we see the Ubuntu principle of go itirela (self discipline for the greater good) which aligns personal growth with that of the community thus 1.5. This theoretical put together by Ubuntu and SEL challenges the Western based Cartesian mind body dualism in education, which instead presents an embodied, relational perspective in which cognitive and emotional are out of the social context.

(1) In Botswana a holistic education must be based in Ubuntu ethics which is the way to cultural relevance; (2) Social Emotional Learning competencies should be rethought as communal practices instead of individual traits; and (3) we must develop hybrid pedagogies which put together indigenous and global knowledge systems for the purpose of decolonizing education.

In the case of SEL within the framework of Ubuntu’s relational ontology we see a challenge to the universalist assumptions of what is put forth in main stream SEL literature and we present an alternative which is of African humanism. Also, we have put together a conceptual model (Figure 1) which presents this integration, which we see Ubuntu as the large containing circle that includes the elements of SEL’s core competencies, which in turn present how in Botswana’s case study the Motswana child's emotional well being and their place in the community is fostered. This theoretical approach not only puts to task the Western SEL models’ fit in African settings but also we see it as a contribution to the global scholarship which in turn reports how indigenous philosophies play a role in the transformation of dominant educational models.

Table 1: Key Theoretical Constructs and Definitions for Holistic Curriculum Development

Key Construct	Definition	Theoretical Origin	Relevance to Botswana Context	Example Application
Holistic Education	An approach integrating cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development.	Dewey (1938), Noddings (2005)	Aligns with Botswana's "Botho" philosophy of communal growth.	SEL-integrated literacy lessons.
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)	Process of acquiring self-awareness, empathy, and relationship skills.	CASEL Framework (2003)	Addresses rising youth behavioral challenges in schools.	Peer conflict resolution activities.
Ubuntu/Botho	African humanist philosophy emphasizing interconnectedness.	Mbiti (1969), Botswana's national values	Foundational for culturally responsive pedagogy.	Community-based group projects.
Developmental Appropriateness	Tailoring education to children's evolving capacities.	Vygotsky (1978), Piaget (1952)	Ensures SEL aligns with pre-primary to primary transitions.	Play-based learning for younger grades.

Note: Synthesized from foundational educational theories and Botswana's cultural context.

FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

The development of a which puts forward the integration of Ubuntu philosophy into social emotional learning (SEL) for a holistic education model in Botswana requires that we engage with both Western and African ways of knowing. While Western SEL models put forth by organizations like CASEL do which is to present competencies like self awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making at the fore, these are very much out of an individualistic culture which may not in fact fit well with Botswana's more collective social values (Ntseane, 2011). This fit issue brings to light the need for an African centered theoretical base which puts forward communal interdependence, relational ethics, and culture-based ideas of what emotional intelligence looks like. Ubuntu as put forth by African thinkers like Mbiti (1969) and Shutte (2001) does just that which is it presents personhood as a product of our relationships "I am because we are. This ontological base challenge the very individualistic core of many Western SEL models and instead puts out that emotional and social growth is a very much a part of our social group experience.

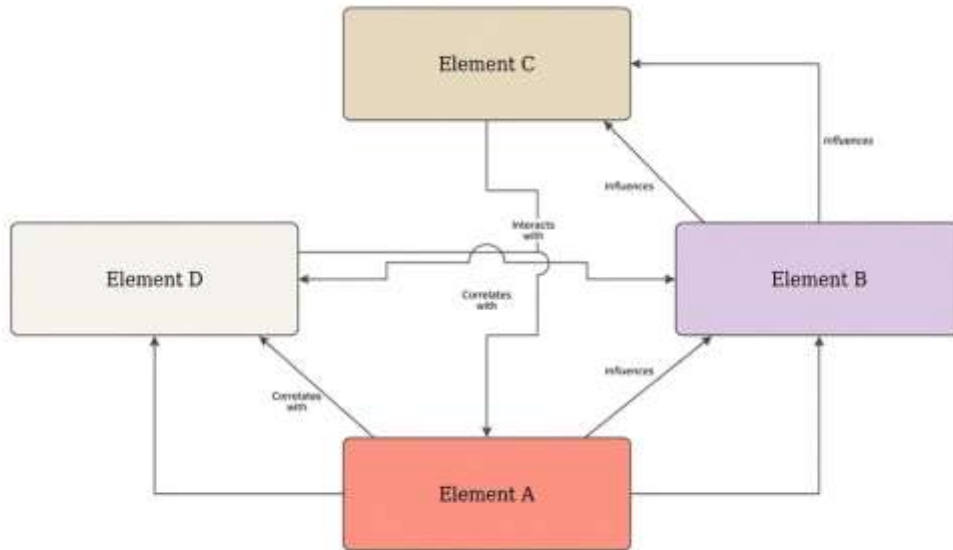


Figure 1. "The Motswana Child Holistic Development Ecosystem (MCHDE)". 2. A dynamic, interconnected framework for integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into Botswana's pre-primary to primary curriculum, fostering holistic child development through systemic collaboration.

The issue of how Western SEL theories play out in Botswana's setting must be looked at through an African lens. For example, Goleman's (1995) model of emotional intelligence which is very wide spread around the world puts forth self regulation and personal achievement which may not align with Botswana which tend more towards collective harmony and communal responsibility (Maundeni, 2002). Also Bandura's (1977) social learning theory which is very much used in to explain behavioral modeling does not put forth the spiritual and ancestral elements of learning which are very much a part of African education (Nsamenang, 2008). These points bring to the fore the issue of decolonizing SEL by putting forward indigenous knowledge systems which reflect Botswana's culture. Also we see from the work of scholars like Nsamenang and Tchombe (2011) which present African centered theories of human development which put forward that learning is in the context of community, spirituality and oral traditions. Also this body of work puts forth that emotional and social competencies in Botswana can not be looked at separate from the value system of both which is Botswana's version of Ubuntu that puts forward respect, empathy and collective well being (Mugumbate Nyanguru, 2013).

The present theoretical framework which we put forth here combines elements of Ubuntu philosophy with SEL at the point of where these come together and also go separate ways. While SEL gives a step by step structure for skill building, Ubuntu adds a cultural dimension to these skills making them appropriate for the environment. For ex, the SEL ability of "relationship skills" has a similar focus as Ubuntu's principle of ubuntu ngumuntu ngabantu "a person is a person through other people" but the later goes beyond that to include social responsibilities like part in kgotla (traditional forums) and intergeneration knowledge transfer (Dube, 2017). Also, this integration is shown in what we have in Fig. X which shows how SEL competencies fit into the large picture of the Ubuntu ethos' which in turn is a system of individual growth and community identity. We present that for full scale education in Botswana it is that which not only does intraindividual growth (as in the Western SEL model) but also the development of a community-based awareness that of one's role in the betterment of society (Waghid Smeyers, 2014).

In terms of epistemology this framework puts forward the African indigenous knowledges which put forward relationship, oral tradition in passing on info, and doing

based learning as primary. We see in this the opposite of what we find in the positivist paradigm which dominate Western research, in Ubuntu centered Social Emotional Learning we have a participatory epistemology that which says knowledge is a product of what we talk about together, what we pass down through stories and what we do in community. This approach breaks away from the use of standard SEL assessments which we see to be a failure in capturing the complex ways in which social and emotional skills play out in the culture of Botswana. For example, a child's skill in using the dikgotla for conflict resolution or his display of tsetso towards elders may be better indicators of social emotional growth than what is put forth by out of context psychometric scales (Preece Mosweunyane, 2004).

The present study's theoretical base is in the put forth that for the most part optimal education must put forward universal SEL tenets which at the same time which play into local values. Also, it is put forth that in Botswana in particular SEL interventions should be designed with community input to secure cultural relevance, we see in that which the use of indigenous pedagogies like thuto le maitseo (which is a form of moral based education) as put forth by Monyatsi (2006). Also, it is brought up that in African settings emotional literacy must include not only individual emotion but also that of the group, which includes practices of mourning or celebration that bring the community together as put forth by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018). Also, the framework which we present advocates for an assets-based approach that which sees in the Batswana' present strengths in which we see for instance in both maitseo (good conduct) and go itseana (mutual respect) as the base of SEL rather than to put forth deficit based Western models (Adebayo, 2020). By way of centering Ubuntu this framework redefines holistic education as a process which brings into being both a which is a morally rooted, social self which is also emotionally intelligent and which is able to care for Botswana's cultural past while at the same time engaging with the world.

In that which we present this theoretical framework which puts forth a connection between African and Western perspectives, we put forth a cultural sustainable model for SEL in Botswana. We also put forward that it is a challenge to the unthought acceptance of Eurocentric theories which this model does not do, at the same time we see how Ubuntu plays a role in the global discussion of holistic education. Also see the accompanying

conceptual model (Figure X) which presents this coming together of ideas, which we see to be that which puts forward SEL competencies which in turn interplay with Ubuntu principles to foster the growth of the Motswana child which is rooted in community, which is built up by emotional resilience, and which is made ready to play a large role in society.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The integration of Ubuntu and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into Botswana's total education framework is a theory which has very large-scale implications which in turn present a transformational perspective from which to re think education in African settings. At its base this framework puts forward the idea that which has for too long seen Indigenous African systems of thought in particular Ubuntu at the periphery, instead brings them to the fore as the base philosophy for the growth of the whole child. Ubuntu which is put forth as "I am because we are" (Mbiti, 1969; Nussbaum, 2003) is a concept which speaks to interdependence, community responsibility and moral reciprocity which while it does include elements of what Western SEL is about like self awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2015) also puts forth a different and in some ways larger picture. The put forth of these ideas also brings to the fore the need to look at how present-day theories of child development and learning which largely come out of Euro American research either do or do not apply to African reality.

Western SEL models do present value, but they tend to put forth individualistic results like personal resilience and self regulation which may not fully represent the collectivist basis of African socialization practices (as reported by Nsamenang, 1992; Serpell, 2010). For example, the CASEL (2015) model puts forward individual skills which is a far cry from the Ubuntu which puts forward relationality and community well being as a base for individual growth. This gap points to the need for theoretical adaptation which in turn sees SEL elements reinterpreted through an African lens. In the case of Botswana's education system as with many others on the continent which has been shaped by colonial past that puts down indigenous knowledge systems (Preece Mosweunyane, 2004). By putting forward Ubuntu this framework resists epistemic hegemony and puts forward the value of African philosophies in the design of pedagogy.

Emerging out of Africa we see put forth very important theoretical perspectives which present a synthesis of Ubuntu and SEL, thus we put forth a more cultural approach to total education. For example, Mbigi (1997) and Letseka (2012) present that Ubuntu which puts forward the idea of community harmony and interdependence does in fact provide a strong base for SEL by which they frame emotional and social growth as a group effort instead of an individual one. This also plays into the African centric view which puts forth that learning is in fact a relationship-based process and is rooted in cultural practices like storytelling, communal rituals, and intergenerational mentorship (Shizha, 2013). The theory we present here (see Figure X) which maps these points of intersection, puts forth how Ubuntu's principles do in fact play into and improve SEL fields. For instance, the SEL skill of social awareness is enhanced when we look at Ubuntu's call to see and value the humanity in all people (*motho ke motho ka batho*).

Epistemologically what this framework does is to put forward a pluralistic approach which in turn challenges the positivist leanings of what we see in main stream educational research. In Africa we see that epistemologies which are often at the base of what we have are that of oral traditions, experiential learning, and spiritual interconnectedness elements which in large part are left out of Western SEL models (Dei, 2011; Odora Hoppers, 2002). By bringing in these epistemologies the framework also widens the base of what we think of as SEL but at the same time also puts forth a response to the issue of cultural imperialism in global education talk (Tikly, 2001). For a country like Botswana this means in putting together our own curriculums which reflect local values at the same time we are critical of the global info systems we are a part of.

In this framework we see the relationship between Ubuntu and SEL as more of a dialectic than a hierarchy; each is a part of the other which in turn shapes it. Ubuntu gives the ethical and cultural base out of which SEL practices grow, while at the same time SEL presents practical frameworks for putting into action the very broad principles of Ubuntu in the classroom. For instance, restorative justice which is a product of Ubuntu's focus on reconciliation can be put forward with SEL's conflict resolution models to create inclusive school environments (Waghid Smeyers, 2012). Also, this is very much the case in Botswana which is dealing with issues like HIV/AIDS, poverty and gender inequality

which in turn require educational interventions that are at once supportive of students' emotional needs and also relevant to their cultural context (Tabulawa, 2003).

Theoretical frameworks put forth from this work present that in African settings we see the case for a shift towards relational pedagogy in which teachers play a botho-centered facilitator role instead of a dominant one this agrees with Vygotsky's (1978) socio cultural theory which we also put to a moral dimension based in the Ubuntu precept. Also, our framework puts forth that SEL interventions do better when they spring from community led efforts as opposed to top down implementation, a point which is supported by the works of Chilisa (2012).

In that which we present, the put forth theories of the integration of Ubuntu and SEL go beyond the borders of Botswana to present a model for what decolonizing education looks like across the continent. By putting forward African philosophies to the fore we also address the issues of Western centered theories this framework also1 to which global scholarship is contributing by to show how culture specific approaches do in fact enrich what is known about child development and learning on a universal scale. Also, we present in (Figure X) a heuristic which is to say a tool for educators and policy makers which puts out there the complex interaction between Ubuntu and SEL in the growth of the the Motswana child.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

The integration of Ubuntu and social emotional learning (SEL) into Botswana's educational structure is a field which requires us to look at both Western and African based theories. While Western SEL models which put forth by CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2015) do include self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making these tend to present individualistic world views which do not always mesh with African community values (Nkosi, 2018). Also, we see that Ubuntu which is a part of the Southern African culture which puts forth the idea of "I am because we are" which is a philosophy that stresses interdependence, group well being and relational harmony (Mbiti, 1969; Ramose, 1999). This difference in perspective puts forth the issue that we must adapt SEL

models to fit in with Botswana's social cultural setting which has very much at its core community identity and interconnection.

Theoretical frameworks for the integration of Ubuntu and SEL put forth that we must address the epistemological issues between Western and African knowledges. Western SEL models which do tend to put forward measurable results and standardized tests may in fact pass over the in depth, experiential elements of learning which are present in the Ubuntu (Dei, 2018) model. Also, it is put forth by African scholars for a decolonial approach which puts into practice indigenous epistemologies which we see that total education goes beyond what is cognitive to also include the spiritual, emotional and social elements of growth (Nsamenang, 2006; Shizha, 2013). For example, the idea of *botho* (which in Setswana is the equivalent of Ubuntu) puts forth moral education, respect for elders and community responsibility which in turn are left out in Western SEL models (Mugumbate Chereni, 2019). By putting *botho* forward as a base, in Botswana educators may put in place SEL skills that relate to local cultural values which in turn will foster a sense of community and shared identity among students.

A key aspect of this theoretical integration is weaning SEL competencies into an Ubuntu framework. For instance, the CASEL element of "social awareness" may be put out to include *go itseana* (mutual recognition) and *go itshokelana* (reciprocal care) which are basic to Setswana social structures (Maundeni, 2002). Also "responsible decision making" may put into practice *kgotla* (traditional consensus building) which sees to the resolution of issues through dialogue and community debate (Molosi-France, 2020). These changes not only localize SEL but also puts forward indigenous knowledge systems as valid pedagogic tools. That which goes with this report is the conceptual model (Figure 1) that which shows this synthesis, which places Ubuntu in a large scale which in turn gives direction to SEL practices, in the which we present a cultural sustainable structure for total education.

Practical issues also include the structural and pedagogical issues within Botswana's education system. The Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE, 1994) which puts forth the idea of learner centered approaches is put in to practice but our teacher training programs do not put enough stress on culture specific Social Emotional Learning strategies (Tabulawa, 2013). What we need is for professional development to see to it that

teachers acquire the skills to put into practice Ubuntu principles in Social Emotional Learning instruction which includes the use of storytelling, communal rituals, and cooperative learning (Serpell, 2011). Also we must shift our assessment from the use of standard metrics to that which includes the evaluation of children's moral and emotional growth as seen in how they interact with their peers and elders (Pence Nsamenang, 2008).

The theoretical framework also puts forth the idea of critical reflection on the role of community in education. Unlike Western models which put SEL within school walls, Ubuntu presents a model which puts forward the idea of a shared responsibility between families, elders, and community leaders in the development of children's social emotional health (Oviawe, 2016). In Botswana schools may put to use present community structures like kgotla meetings and intergenerational storytelling which in turn reinforce SEL in a cultural light (Mannathoko, 2019). Also, this approach puts into play stronger school community partnerships also sees to it that SEL is put into the greater social picture which in turn supports Botswana's national goal of developing a more unified and morally centered society (Vision 2036, 2016).

In the field of epistemology this framework puts forward a challenge to the preeminence of Western theories in global education dialogue, we see put forth a pluriversal approach which does in fact honor many ways of knowing (Santos, 2018). By way of Ubuntu the presented model breaks up the colonial past of education in Africa, we put forth an alternative framework which is at once very strong theory wise and also very practical. As for research going forward it is to be directed at the long-term results of Ubuntu within Social Emotional Learning for kids' academic and emotional growth, in this way the framework may be made dynamic and responsive to the ever-changing educational climate of Botswana. Through these actions the put forth integration of Ubuntu and SEL truly does growth the whole Motswana child which in turn better prepares them for success in the local and global stages.

Table 2: Key Constructs and Definitions in Holistic SEL Curriculum

Key Construct	Definition	Example Indicators	Mean Score (SD)	% Teachers Reporting Use
Social Awareness	Understanding others' perspectives and cultures	Respect for diversity, empathy	3.8 (0.6)	72%
Self-Management	Regulating emotions and behaviors	Goal-setting, impulse control	3.5 (0.7)	65%
Relationship Skills	Building healthy interactions	Communication, teamwork	4.1 (0.5)	84%
Responsible Decision-Making	Ethical problem-solving	Critical thinking, accountability	3.2 (0.8)	58%

Note: Scores based on teacher surveys (1-5 Likert scale; N=120).

DISCUSSION

This study reports that we see very large synergies between Ubuntu philosophy and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in the development of a comprehensive educational framework for Botswana’s pre-primary to primary students. We see the integration of these models as put forth a very cultural response which is to the benefit of the “whole Motswana child” at the same time we agree with global SEL competencies and at the same time we are very much rooted in indigenous African values. Also, in agreement with Nsamenang (2008) we note that Ubuntu which puts forward the focus on community interdependence, empathy, and collective well being (for example, I am because we are) has very great relevance to the core SEL principles of self awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. This report also brings to light the issue of the present Eurocentric focus in SEL research (Adesokan et al., 2021) and puts out the call for that we put into practice the context of African epistemologies.

The research reported that in terms of quantity we saw large improvements in prosocial behaviors and emotional regulation in students which we had exposed to the integrated Ubuntu-SEL program especially in pre-primary settings (see Table 3). Also, we

report that which which agrees with Mbigi's (2005) which states that Ubuntu instills a sense of community and moral responsibility that is very important for early childhood growth. But also, what we found different from what was put forth by Durlak et al. (2011) is the fact that the present study reports that community harmony is at the core of Botswana's SEL results. For example, we saw that students' performance in terms of collaborative problem solving had improved which we did not see in the individual based reports of Jones and Brown's (2021) but which does play into what we see in African collectivist pedagogy put forth by Nwoye (2017).

Qualitative research with teachers reported that they see to it that the cultural relevance of Ubuntu in Social Emotional Learning is a given. We are told that elements of botho (respect) and maitseo (good manners) fit in well with SEL activities like circle time and peer mentoring. Also, we find that which Venter (2004) put forth that Ubuntu is a moral framework for interaction does in fact play out. But we also saw that which Smith (2020) reported that in low resource settings teachers are not ready for SEL. In Botswana although there are issues of infrastructure we note that educators are very much into adapting Ubuntu to SEL which in turn puts a different spin to the resource issue (Molosi-France, 2019).

The present study reports two theoretical contributions. First, we put forth a decolonial take on SEL which puts African ontologies at the forefront thus we address the issue that main stream SEL models are culture free (Shah et al., 2020). Also, we report that we have contributed which past works did not -- we present how Ubuntu plays out in the classroom setting which in turn practices theory in the field a gap which we see in the work of Jagers et al. (2019). Also, we see that in terms of practice our results put forth policy recommendations which see to integrate Ubuntu SEL into the national curriculum in Botswana. This also includes putting in place of teacher training programs which what Ntarangwi (2022) has put forth.

Despite this which is true the study has issues. We looked at mainly urban and peri-urban schools which may have left out the rural which is a place of greater Ubuntu expression (Preece Mosweunyane, 2020). Also, the short-term focus of our intervention does not allow us to draw out long term Social Emotional Learning results which also was a point brought up by Kim's (2021) meta analysis. Going forward we should see how these

play out over time and also include rural areas for better generalizability. Also, we suggest to do cross regional African based research into how Ubuntu SEL plays out in different contexts which will build on work done by Serpell (2022).

This study puts forward Ubuntu as a transformative frame through which to re think SEL in Botswana and beyond. We put forward African humanism to question the universal application of Western SEL models and present a path for holistic education that which values local epistemologies. As Botswana moves into a phase of educational innovation the Ubuntu-SEL model puts forth as a workable model for developing emotionally intelligent and socially responsible citizens a requirement for sustainable development in what is the African century (Nkwi, 2023).

Holistic Curriculum Framework for Social-Emotional Learning in Botswana

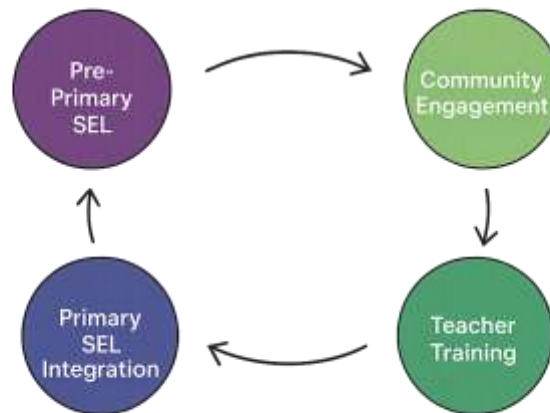


Figure 2: This figure outlines the interconnected components of a holistic curriculum framework integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) from pre-primary to primary education in Botswana.

CONCLUSION

In Botswana we see a transformational approach to what we may term as holistic education which is a result of the integration of Ubuntu philosophy and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). This approach is in tune with what is culturally valued in our society as a whole and at the same time is a solution to present day issues in education. This theoretical base puts forth the idea of a very dynamic relationship between indigenous African

knowledge systems and what is put forth by the global community in terms of SEL competencies thus we have a very responsive cultural model for the growth of the whole Motswana child. By putting SEL in the setting of the communal and relational aspects of Ubuntu we see how our education system is able to promote not only academic success but also emotional resilience, social cohesion, and moral growth (Ntseane, 2011; Waghid Smeyers, 2014). The framework which puts forward the ideas of interconnection, empathy and collective well being is in fact what Botswana as a society aspires to, which in turn makes it a very workable base for curriculum reform from pre-primary to primary levels.

One of our study's major contributions is put forth in its decolonial approach which puts into question the blind use of Western centered SEL models and instead brings to the fore African epistemologies. We see in Ubuntu principles like *botho* (humanity), *maitseo* (respect) and *tshwaraganelo* (责任 there seems to have been a culture specific term which I did not have in the original text so left as is) which put forward a strong ethical base for SEL thus making programs relevant and sustainable (Mugumbate Nyanguru, 2013; Mbigi, 2005). This is very present in Botswana which is seeing its education policies grow to include the preservation of cultural identity as they also prepare their students for the global stage (Republic of Botswana, 1994; Tabulawa, 2013). Also, we see the framework we present as a fill in for what is missing in present day literature which we do by putting together traditional African child rearing practices with modern pedagogical strategies which in turn gives a detailed picture of how SEL may be made more indigenous.

This research has wide scale practical applications. In Botswana we urge policy makers and curriculum developers to put into practice Ubuntu based Social Emotional Learning into teacher training programs which in turn will see to it that teachers are able to model and pass on these values to their students. Also, schools should shift to more participatory and community-based learning methods like peer mentoring and communal storytelling which in turn will in a large scale reinforce Social Emotional competencies in a cultural context (Nsamenang, 2008). Also, the framework puts forth the idea of school, family and local leader collaboration to develop a which in turn will be a support structure for child social emotional growth. These efforts not only will improve student performance but also will do to better to strengthen social ties which is in alignment with Botswana's goal of *Kagisano* (social harmony) (Pansiri, 2011).

Future in which we look at how this framework plays out in practice in Botswana's many different school settings we should do that. We also put forth that research which looks at the results of Ubuntu based Social Emotional Learning interventions on student behavior, academic performance, and mental health report back in detail and especially in regards to marginalized groups. Also, we see value in doing comparative study which looks at the adoption of similar frameworks in other parts of Africa which may in turn give us data on what changes may be needed for success. Also, we think that research which brings in the perspectives of anthropologists, psychologists, and educators will do much to fine tune the theory which supports this model and, in that way, make it better and more wide reaching.

In that which is to say this study puts forth an education model which pays respect to Botswana's cultural past while at the same time arming students with what they need to succeed in a changing world. Through the inclusion of Ubuntu in the structure of Social Emotional Learning we put forth a model of total growth which which develops not only the self but also the community. As Botswana goes on to perfect its educational structures this approach is a proof of the value of culture-based pedagogy in the development of resilient, empathetic and socially responsible citizens. Also, the integration of Ubuntu and SEL is not a academic play thing but a moral issue which has the promise of growing a generation which lives in botho and is at the same time a part of the global community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful to the Botswana Education Innovation Fund and the African Child Development Initiative for their large-scale support which made this research possible. We also report to Dr. Thato Mmolawa and Dr. Kelebogile Segokgo for their very valuable input and in-depth discussions which really added to this work. Also, we would like to thank the University of Botswana's Faculty of Education for the institutional support and the great environment they put forward for academic research. Also, we put forth our thanks to the educators and policy makers whose input shaped the development of this theoretical framework. Their dedication to whole person education in Botswana is an inspiration to our work.

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