Understanding Emerging Schools of Social Work in Tanzania through the Ubuntu Perspective

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ABSTRACT
The article presents a comprehensive assessment of the emerging social work schools in Tanzania through the Ubuntu perspective. Ubuntu formed the basis of educational pedagogy in pre-colonial Tanzania but colonial rule imported Western social work approaches in the 1940s to replace it. The challenges include fragmented training with an influence of inherited colonial structure, outdated curricula, training materials that do not replicate African ecology and cultural values, indigenization of training, and lack of indigenous inputs even as graduates do not fit into the global market. Despite the challenges, emerging social work training schools have rendered several opportunities including social work research and consultancy, the emergence of indigenization of social work, abundance of social work indigenous elites and literature, TESWEP transformed into ASSWOT that advocated and participated in social welfare policies review that contain more African requirements. The paper recommends that key stakeholders should develop a comprehensive social work policy and related legislation to control the quality of training and practice for realization of Ubuntu goals. Also, Ujamaa competence should be restored in the training package while TASWO, and ASSWOT should address the gap between educators and practitioners while speeding up the indigenization of social work education with Ubuntu values.

Key Words: Tanzania social welfare, social work, African ubuntu, social work education

Introduction
The history of social work education in Tanzania can be traced from pre-colonial Tanganyika and also informal social welfare education that was practiced across the country based on the ecology and cultural perspective (Ubuntu) (Mabeyo, et al, 2019). Inherited traditional social welfare knowledge and skills were imparted from one generation to the next generation through traditional means such as storytelling, poems, songs, cave writings and ritual practice etc. (Manyama, 2018).

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

The traditional social welfare education in pre-colonial Tanganyika aimed to serve vulnerable groups and people who were in need (Nyerere, 2011). For instance, children were regarded as children of the society, and all members of the community were obligated to raise or protect any child regardless of the biological relations. Also, this African ubuntu welfare knowledge and practice was extended to the elderly, widows, poor, sick people, pregnant women, and the disabled in the society (Mabeyo, et al, 2019).

Also, informal welfare education in pre-colonial Tanganyika was delivered through a peer-based approach to specific groups, times, and occasions such as traditional ritual ceremonies, during natural calamities, marriage ceremonies, family, clan, or tribe gatherings (Mushi, 2009). This informal traditional knowledge and skills practice is referred to as an Ubuntu welfare education practice that is envisioned to restore human functioning and traditional mutual support to each other in times of need (Nyerere, 2011). The statement above was supported by African historiography which noted that various channels existed in the ethnic structural institutions that resembled contemporary economic and social welfare activities of the society (Herbst, 2000 & Boone, 2003).

With the coming of the colonialists in search of raw materials, labour, and markets as well as areas of investment there was a need to establish Western education such as social work education with Western ideology to serve the colonial populations who resided within African countries including colonial Tanganyika (Mabeyo, 2014). This marked the historical process of importation of social work education from the colonial masters and declining of existing African social work education in Tanzania (Nilsen et al, 2023).

On the dawn of independence, Tanzania under the Late Dr. Julius Kambarage Nyerere strived to restore Ubuntu values and practices in the education system by reflecting all social work and related social welfare issues in the vital national document of the Arusha Declaration of 1967 (Nyerere, 2011). Arusha Declaration marked the new course of the country in returning to African education and models under the Ujamaa model that represents other Ubuntu models. In 1973, The Institute of Social Work (ISW) was established under Ujamaa policy and it remained a government monopoly social work school for

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

ISW became a social work education platform relevant to (re) introducing and restoring indigenous social work training to replace colonial social work education and also contributing in strengthening the Ujamaa ideology of social protection for all (Mpangala, 2015). Ujamaa ideology emphasized education for self-reliance and collective welfare necessary for holistic community protection. The vision of Ujamaa education was to ensure traditional social welfare systems are the core part of protecting vulnerable populations and those in need as far as a social protection structure that would see Tanzanians become equal (Nyerere, 2011). With this context therefore, most of the certificates, diplomas, and advanced diploma graduates were absorbed by the government through The Department of Social Welfare to work in local communities (ASSWOT, 2014).

Ujamaa held a strong bond for Tanzania's education and services targeting vulnerable populations then in 1980s when the country experienced a political change (Nyerere, 2011). Political change of moving out of Ujamaa ideology and socio-economic changes set complex social problems in Tanzania for both urban and rural populations (DSW, 2013). The social problems included social and family disintegration, chronic poverty, rising rate of urban crimes, alcohol and drug abuse, child labour, HIV and AIDS to mention a few. HIV and AIDS as a social problem resulted in an increase of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), and HIV and AIDS infected and affected people in need of linkage and monitoring of care and treatment psychosocial support due to stigma and discrimination.

Emerging socio-economic problems increased the demand for social workers in private and public settings which created opportunities for the establishment of social work schools to meet the market demands (TASWO, 2017). Despite the opportunities created yet lack of political will to embrace Ubuntu values in social work education and practice influenced the emergence of schools of social work that lack sufficient Ubuntu competence relevant to addressing social economic problems in Tanzania (TASWO, 2015).

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

Methodology
The article used Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) to assess the challenges and opportunities of social work. PRISMA is an evidence-based minimum set of items for reporting in systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA, 2022). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) were used on various documents and purposively selected from an online database to search for the required information with pre-identified key search words of the study.

A total of 20 studies and 07 reports from Tanzania and some parts of Africa were purposively selected, screened, and independently reviewed against predetermined criteria for eligibility. A systematic review was conducted to provide a comprehensive literature review on the emergence of social work schools in Tanzania from the Ubuntu perspective, and how this massive transformation brought challenges and opportunities for the same. The following databases were searched: AJOL, Google Books, Google Search, and SCOPUS. The final search was conducted on 04 October 2023. No date restrictions were placed on the search; key search terms were African social work education, social work education in Tanzania, and Ubuntu education practice in Africa. Papers were considered eligible if they: were published in English; were published in a peer review journal; reported original research, were written in African context, and were related to social work indigenous education in the African context.

Systematic literature reviews were included in the wider search but were not included in the results (Hutchings et al, 2020). Reference lists and manual searching were undertaken to identify additional papers (Babineau, 2014). Papers were considered ineligible if they focused on Ubuntu and social work education in Africa, or were review articles, opinion pieces/articles/letters, or editorials. Duplicates were removed and title and abstract and full-text screening were undertaken using the Cochrane systematic literature review program (Babineau, 2014). To address the issue of bias, the author involved a second reviewer to assist with the process of selection and exclusion criteria of review in all stages of the review process. Conflicts were resolved by consensus.

Development of social work
The historical development of formal social work training in Tanzania like the rest of Africa was influenced by the colonial powers (Hochfeld et al, 2009). In pre-colonial times, social work and social welfare education in East African contexts was based on mutual aid support, and the welfare of vulnerable populations was prioritised. Pre-colonial social work knowledge and competence in assisting people to undertake collective action in their communities with the primary aim of bringing benefits to such communities

(Obar, et al., 2017). Traditionally, the training and practice of social work in pre-colonial Tanzania were embedded into a mutual collective or communal approach considering ecology and cultural values (Ubuntu). Thus, the realization of the community goals was the priority that went beyond the individual self-consciousness in the African context, and it was typically communal consciousness of culture as an essential aspect of community and welfare development (Chigbu, et al, 2018).

Pre-colonial Tanzanian societies like other African societies existed on the basis of tribal and mutual aid knowledge and practice that cannot be ignored Also traditional social welfare education that embraced ecology and cultural values through different types of mutual aid societies provided assistance to family members (Hochfeld et al, 2009). Some were family or kin-based (the largest category); others were cultural- and/or religious-based (such as rotating credit societies, and informal service societies) (Mupedziswa, 2001; Midgley, 1997).

This type of traditional social welfare education and practice could not have existed over generations during pre-colonial Tanzania society if the knowledge and skills (education) were not properly acquired and transferred to the next generation. Apt and Gricco (1994) argued that the African extended family, for example, has always operated as a social welfare system and they continue to address the social welfare needs of a sizeable number of Africans who lack any form of social protection.

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

Challenges facing social work in Tanzania
While other countries in the African continent were experiencing hot debates concerning the relevance of Western or colonial social work education in the context of African reality from 1970s, Tanzania from 1973 to 2005 had a

monopoly of only one school of social work (Institute of Social Work [ISW]) and indigenization process of social work training was a slow process (Kreitzer, 2012; DSW, 2013). However, despite the escalation of social work schools from the end of 2000s to date, there are still no social work schools with training packages that directly replicate African ecology and cultural values (Manyama, 2018). This is a major challenge.

Experience shows that when social work training is not reflecting the ecology and culture of the society then automatically students face the challenge of how to manifest the objectives of their training towards addressing social, economic, health, and political needs (Hochfeld, 2010; Osei-Hwedie & Rankopo, 2008; Gray & Fook, 2004). Some of the contents in the training package in Tanzania are still embracing the colonial legacies. For instance, theories, models and case studies are western-oriented. This poses a serious challenge for students to apply social work competence during fieldwork placement and later during professional intervention after graduation. The fact remained that both social work instruction and practice since colonial times were targeted to colonial needs and disregarded African cultural context (Mungai, 2015).

Mathebane et al (2015) have argued that the social work profession has been marginalised and viewed by many as contributing to the destruction of local cultures, wisdom, knowledge, and morals, and ineffective and culturally irrelevant for tackling social challenges in non-Western contexts. Despite this notion, social work teaching and practice are very much needed in African nations such as Tanzania. Change in political ideology sidelined some Ujamaa aspects relevant for the realization of Ubuntu in education and practice posed a serious challenge to social work students to link classroom learning and the actual field practice (ASSWOT, 2017).

Higher learning libraries and related bookstores have inadequate books or literature materials that were written and published in the country (Spitzer & Twikirize, 2014). While evaluating social work practice and schooling in Africa, Kang'ethe (2014) observed that the profession in some African countries appears to display some flaws such as continually following a curriculum that was crafted by Western world countries that does not adequately match the growth needs of African countries. Also it was also reported that the curriculum is not adequately addressing most of the social ills African countries are experiencing. Again it has been noted that social work is usually eclipsed by other professions such as sociology, psychology and economics. Rankopo (2008) contended that the indigenisation of social work learning is also faced with the pressure to train graduates that fit into the global market and context (Osei-Hwedie and Rankopo, 2008).

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

The Association of Schools of Social Work in Tanzania (ASSWOT) strives to solicit funds and technical support to develop and review social work curricula that are relevant to Tanzania context. ASSWOT advocates for indigenization of social work education but still there is no social work education council to facilitate the process (ASSWOT, 2015). Tanzania is still learning from other countries in the Sub-Saharan region such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, and Botswana as over the years worked hard to unveil an indigenous social work education and practice identity that can deliver relevant social development in their countries (Mathebane, 2015; Mungai, 2015).

Prospects of social work education in Tanzania
Despite the challenges that social work education is facing in Tanzania, yet there are several opportunities that can be utilized for social, health, economy, and policy development in the country and elsewhere in Africa (Nilsen et al, 2023). The emerging schools of social work are widening the platform of social work elites and opening platforms to redefine social work education and practice with reference to the Tanzanian context (Manyama, 2018). Currently, schools of social work have contributed to the indigenization process of social work education in the country. As a result for the first time the country's social work literature is being touched with indigenous components that include cultural values and African ecology.

 There are many colonial and historical influences that have affected the introduction and evolution of social work education and practice in many parts of Africa including Tanzania. Osei-Hwedie and Rankopo, (2008) and Kreitzer (2019) have also noted that many schools of social work in Africa are trying to build something on the colonial legacy of existing African social work practice and how it shaped schools of social work. This was emphasized by Twikirize and Spitzer (2019) when they noted that the process of developing indigenous knowledge and cultural competence cannot just start with practice but rather

with research and indigenised education which can only be kick started by what is already existing.

There is still room to integrate more Ubuntu competence in social work education through creating a close linkage between social work research, theory and training that aim to integrate these indigenous knowledge and practices into the mainstream, teach them in the classroom, and competently apply them in practice (Nilsen et al 2023; Lembuka, 2024). In the end, the gap between theory (social work education and research) and practice would be narrowed as argued by Healy (2014). Reflexivity would ensure that social work educators are able to investigate new knowledge that adds credence to the practice and existing gaps that could be incorporated into the curriculum (Mupedziswa, et al, 2019).

The existing curricula in the schools of social work in the country have the opportunity for curricula review either partial or full review. The Tanzania Commission for University (TCU) and National Accreditation Council for Technical Education (NACTE) have developed guidelines that have made it mandatory for schools of social work to review their curricula after three to five years of utilization of approved curricula (ASSWOT, 2014). This is an open opportunity for the indigenisation of social work education and integration of more African values and models like Ubuntu in Tanzania (Mabeyo et al, 2019). Also, Nilsen et al, (2023) have noted that the curricula review process if properly applied can be an opportunity for mobilizing relevant key stakeholders to go through this process of examining assumptions, critiquing, and building culturally relevant social work curricula.

Recommendations
In the light of the above, this paper recommends the following:
- There is a need to reinforce the indigenization of social work education and identify some of those emerging social work competencies and make them compulsory courses in social work training.
- It is important to conduct annual refresher training to social work faculty members on Ubuntu competence to social workers so that they can impart indigenous competence to social work students.
- Social workers in the country need to identify and integrate African Ubuntu values and models and make them compulsory courses in social work curricula.
- Schools of social work in Tanzania should engage in different aspects of Ubuntu research that will open doors to address social problems and widening indigenous social work knowledge and practice.

Conclusion
The emerging schools of social work in Tanzania are plausible as it is widening the opportunities for social work professionalism and it has brought an alarming

vital call to all social work stakeholders to develop and review Tanzanian social work curricula and respective training education that is further relevant with Tanzania's ecology and culture More importantly, the government continued engagement in social work education and close association with TASWO and ASSWOT has yielded tremendous results in standardization of social work education in the country. Despite the above prospects, social work education faces various challenges including outdated curricula that have the component of inherited colonial competence that is irrelevant to the Tanzanian context, inadequate African literature related to social work practice, while some social work schools have faculty members who still lack African theories and models in the training package.

Moreover, to maintain the gained opportunities and address existing challenges of social work education in Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa. Ubuntu philosophy is relevant in African social work and the indigenization of social work education must envision Ubuntu models that are appropriate in developing culturally responsive interventions, methods, and practice approaches to promote the welfare of individuals, families, groups and communities in the African context. (Kalinganire, et al, 2017).

Therefore, Ubuntu is becoming a global framework for addressing various socio-economic, political and health problems globally taking a cue from The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) which declared Ubuntu as a global social work agenda from 2020 to 2030. There is also a need call for Tanzania and other African social work stakeholders to embrace Ubuntu in social work education and practice since Ubuntu is the best gift that Africa can offer to the World in addressing contemporary socio-economic problems.

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