

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# AN EVALUATION OF UBUNTU AS AN AFROCENTRIC MANAGEMENT (AND) COMMUNICATION APPROACH

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- **The Lord God, for all His mercy and grace bestowed upon me.**

The four elements of Ubuntu are respect, hierarchy, violence and care. These elements proved to be unifying and transformational, exclusive to the African context, and indicative of the need towards a better approach to management.

## **SUMMARY**

African management communication research has been limited to the study of communication in the business environment.

This study endeavours to formulate a basis for theory development by comparing Western, Japanese and African management theories and philosophies, enabling the researcher to juxtapose these with the core value system, Ubuntu. These theories and philosophies are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, but rather interrelated. In general, the comparative analysis was roughly grouped into dimensions based on macro-, socio-structural processes and those based on interpersonal processes. Although this dichotomy is a simplification of a range of views, it provided a parsimonious way to begin discussing issues of management communication. Throughout the study, cultural comparisons between identity groups presented a mixture of similarities and differences. A description of a measurement instrument to monitor the existence and applicability of a uniquely South African management communication style was not described, and the broad aim of the study was to take the first steps in constructing a model that will, with further research, eventually result in such a measurement instrument. The initial and perhaps most important contribution of the framework was to create an awareness among management of the differences (and similarities), that may exist in organisations found in a multicultural society.

This study, which starts from the premise that communication is a basis for human organising and thus a management function, has maintained throughout that the organisation has elements interacting to form constantly changing meanings constructed through communication.

The core elements of Ubuntu are respect, dignity, acceptance and care - need elements that proved to be universal, and therefore not exclusive to Ubuntu. It is indicative of the need toward a softer approach to management, incorporating greater understanding of communalism and individualism in the South African organisation. It is recommended that exclusive concepts (Africanisation and Afrocentricity) should not be used but that inclusive (South Africanisation), be employed. Both traditionally Western and African mechanisms of communication have to be integrated in a new management framework. This will prove that empowerment is a global phenomenon, but that the way it is dealt with amongst cultures differs. Secondary research questions show that Africa's business environment is not homogeneous; that the problems experienced in South African organisations differ from the rest of Africa; values that are characteristically African are transcending African boundaries; and that these values are relevant to economic development, business management and to management communication in particular. Finally, the areas requiring further research are identified, and brief comments are made on the implication for communication in organisations.

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#### 1.1.1.1 THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MANAGEMENT

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## 2 BACKGROUND

Studying literature on the business environment in South Africa, the term "turbulence" seems to underlie all messages. Turbulence results from the increased intensity of causal interconnections between different facets of the environment as well as from the actions of interlinked organisations. Turbulence, therefore, will