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## Ubuntu and Client Service Charter Nexus

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*Findings-* Basing on key variables embodied in ubuntu philosophy, the study shows that a CSCF for CUT was non-existent, thereby creating service performance delivery gap. Research limitations – This study is exploratory, however, the findings could be generalised within African context as ubuntu is an African ethic.

*Keywords:* ubuntu, philosophy, vision, mission, strategy, service-charter.

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UBUNTU AND CLIENT SERVICE CHARTER NEXUS

*Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:*



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# Ubuntu and Client Service Charter Nexus

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**Research limitations –** This study is exploratory, however, the findings could be generalised within African context as ubuntu is an African ethic.

**Practical implications-** This study is significant to institutions and stakeholders involved in quality service delivery.

**Social implications-** This exploratory paper indicates constraints involved in the institutional management and socio-cultural characteristics as ubuntu is enshrined in African people and therefore strategies linking ubuntu and performance are of higher significance in the work-place.

**Originality/value-** This paper explores the distinctiveness of ubuntu and institutional performances, service delivery and management. Very scant research has been undertaken in this area of Afrocentric service delivery and management.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This article pursues the strategic imperative of reclaiming ubuntu philosophy as the kernel of CUT service delivery. The enduring legacy of slavery, colonialism (Letseka, 2011), Western education and missionary Christianity all but destroyed this cultural worldview - But conscious African men and women are finding a way to renegotiate their spiritual and African identity with ubuntu in mind (Ngunjiri, 2010). As Morrow (2007: 7) points out, colonialism “was a form of the politics of difference, in that, it deliberately prevented the development of social cohesion and hindered the

development of a shared moral discourse.” Ubuntu has always resided within the Africans through tacit community memory which needs to be invoked and operationalized. The term Africa is used in its geographical sense to mark Africa as different from other continents, thus adjective African has geographical, cultural and political slants without presuming any heterogeneity about Africa (Letseka, 2011).

The problem the article seeks to address is the erosion of community values. The study intends to explore the question: How can we retrieve the communal cultural values of ubuntu/unhu that can be linked to service excellence, enabling the devising of a Client Service Charter Framework? We draw from the argument advanced by Bhengu (2013), that the horizon of the present and the future cannot be formed without the past. While modernity and colonization have eroded African culture, much still remains intact, particularly the concept of ubuntu inherent in Africans which we seek to invoke and operationalize. The purpose of this paper is to explore how values of ubuntu maybe linked to service excellence at CUT. The results indicates coincidence between some of the values implicit in ubuntu and some of the values that are enshrined in the CUT Strategic Plan 2011 -2015 and on that basis, we argue that ubuntu has the potential to serve as a moral theory and public policy (Letseka, 2011; Tshoose 2009; Bekker 2006; Mokgoro 1998). This paper, thus aimed at examining the following objectives:

- To explore the embedded conceptual features of ubuntu/unhu.
- To highlight the Zimbabwean perspective of ubuntu/unhu and its relevance to CUT community.
- To investigate the practice of the African philosophy of ubuntu/unhu at CUT.
- To unravel problems that hamper the implementation of ubuntu/unhu at CUT.
- To advance an ubuntu/unhu-oriented client service charter for CUT.

Basing on key virtues as embodied in ubuntu philosophy and that ubuntu implies an interactive ethic in which humanity is shaped by interaction with others as co-dependent beings (McCluskey and Lephalala 2010; Cornell and van Marle 2005), the study therefore, advanced a Client Service Charter Framework for CUT. The absence of a service charter creates a service delivery performance gap, since there are no visible

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checks and balances. In tandem, we operationalize the value of 'culture of CUT, as a drive to ensure that the diversity of Zimbabwe's indigenous values and cultural heritage forms a significant component of professional and social life at the University' (CUT Strategic Plan, 2011 – 2015: 4). The 'lost' ubuntu philosophy, lack of client service charter and service delivery gap creates problems with internal and external clients as ubuntu is an element of culture. Organisation culture distinguishes CUT from other educational institutions and if the cited key elements are missing or not addressed, unfavourable organisational image could be created and communicating with stakeholders would be difficult and a possible dysfunctional CUT community could ensue.

The paper is divided into five sections: section One is the introduction, section Two gives the literature review, section Three gives the methodology, section Four is the findings and discussion and section Five gives the conclusion.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

*CUT community:* Mabovula (2011) maintains that the term community refers to any philosophical standpoint that defines a person in the context of social bonds and cultural traditions rather than through individual traits (Daly 1994). Ramose (2002) aver that an African community is an on-going dynamic association of men and women, who have a special commitment to one another and have developed a distinct sense of their common life. The common life, in this sense, is perceived as any public discursive space which members construct through action – in concert. In this context, the history of a person's life is the story of his or her transactions with the community's material and moral worlds, which, in effect, is the story of his or her relations with particular sets of social goods. This is called a social contract in which an individual's choice of way of life is a choice constrained by the community's pursuit of shared ends. Chimuka (2001) articulates that Africans' life was lived in the community and ultimately, the individual's conduct was sanctioned by the same society. The individual's conduct was considered to be good if it satisfied the requirements of ubuntu/unhu and was condemned if it did not. However, as Samkange (1980: 38) rightly observed, the conception of hunhu was bound to vary "to the extent that individual groups have undergone changes not experienced by others" as maybe informed through a CUT Service Charter Framework where members are socialized in ubuntu, especially the students so that the values would be carried forward. In general, however, conduct had to be in line with the community's conception of hunhu hwemunhu (the moral character befitting a cultured human being).

We view the notion of community to serve as a means to sustain social, political, technological and

economic transactions by CUT. The communitarian view of relationships, being values enshrined in ubuntu inclusive of cooperation, mutual respect and understanding (Meiring, 2007; Chimuka, 2001), would inform these imperative conditions. Aspiration to gain competitive advantage becomes the driving force to this solidarity. The Africans were quite aware that people had to work hard in order to improve themselves by transforming their environment through engaging themselves in the productive process (Meiring, 2007), much like CUT would be enabled through a Client Service Charter necessitating the group approach to the challenges of life, commercial awareness, competitive and business intelligence through service excellence delivery. We contend that the spirit of ubuntu, part of a deep cultural heritage of the majority of the population at CUT, would suffuse and be foundational in developing a world class centre of excellence for technological innovation and entrepreneurship. The CUT Annual Report (2012: 52) fomented that "only one thing has to change..., that is, where we focus our attention as the battle of life is a battle of focus" which we contend, can be attained through reclaiming and praxis of ubuntu for service excellence attainment.

Another essence of African cultural existentialism, the study unravels, is African communalism. Khoza (2005: 266) describes communalism as "a concept that views humanity in terms of collective existence and inter-subjectivity, serving as the basis for supportiveness, cooperation, collaboration and solidarity". In similar conceptual context, Gyekye (1987) connotes African communalism as a kinship-oriented social order, which is informed by an ethic of reciprocity. In a communal social order, one is brought up with a sense of solidarity with large groups of people. During the course of this "cohabitation," one comes to see one's interests as being bound up with the interests of the group over a great number of issues of life and well-being (Khoza, 2005; Mbiti, 2005; & Gyekye, 1987). This sense of community, according to Gyekye, was a characteristic of African life and indeed, to many Africans, this communal efficacy defines being an African. In the context of Gyekye's definition, this form of communalism signifies the human person as an inherently communal being embedded in a context of social relationships and interdependence, and never as an isolated, atomistic individual. In African community, people view themselves and what they do as equally good to others as to themselves.

A study by Barber (1998) asserts that people envisage civil society as complex social relations that tie people together. The initial social stratum is constructed first of all, into families and kinship, associations like clans, and then into clubs, neighbourhoods, communities, congregations, and more extended social hierarchies. This is the central notion of a community where people work together to create peace and love to

an extent that Mararike (1999) argues that employees occupy geometric and anthropic space guided by ubuntu/unhu (Ndoda, 2013; 2012). As such, the CUT community denotes CUT's structures and their symbiotic functions.

*The Philosophy of Ubuntu:* Bhengu (2013) posits that the debate of Pan-African integration and unity can only be achieved through internalization and fusion of ubuntu in all macro- and micro- Pan-African processes. On the contrary, Gade (2011) contends that ubuntu chronicles that have developed, are narratives of return in the context of social transformations where African postcolonial narratives contained the idea that in order to create a good future, society needs to return to something African rooted in pre-colonial times. We, however, argue that a return to the 'golden' age' is a denial of the dynamism of culture and that Africans do not romanticize ubuntu but rather, are reclaiming ubuntu inherent in Africans, as the crux of their existence, contending that some of the earlier writings on African culture and ubuntu were done in bad faith. If there can be no reversion to the pre-colonial starting point, how then do we fill that cultural gap, which

inhibit the service delivery challenges that face CUT? We attempt to answer this critical question. Studies on indigenous cultures in Zimbabwe, which were carried out by ethnographers before Zimbabwe's independence, were driven by Euro-centrism (Chimuka, 2001; Tsenay, 1997). The problem is not that the scholars were European, rather, the problem lies in the fact that they subscribe to Eurocentric conception of history that made them biased against Africans and their institutions. Tsenay (1997) defines Euro-centrism as a pervasive bias located in modernity's self-consciousness of itself which is grounded at its core in the metaphysical belief or idea that European existence is qualitatively superior to other forms of human life. Chimuka (2001) motivates that modernity has been construed as the globalisation of Europe which manifested itself in imperialism and colonisation projecting European existence as true human existence as explicitly expressed in the writings of Hume (1711-1776), Kant (1724 - 1804), Hegel cited in Trejo (1993), and Marx (1843- 1844), justifying empire building as a way of exporting European civilisation. This school of thought, it is argued had no respect for Africans (Bhengu, 2013).

We further motivate that ubuntu is an enduring philosophy as supported by Gade (2011) who posits that the term ubuntu has frequently appeared in writings, at least since 1846. African social institutions were based on Ubuntuism/Hunhuism philosophy forming an ethic for Africans not akin to those found in Europe (Bhengu, 2013; Khomba, Vermaak & Gouws, 2011; Eze, 2006; Ramose, 1999; Battle, 1997, Samkange & Samkange, 1980). Ubuntu is defined as the essence of being fully human, that is, African humanism, a

philosophy, an ethic and as a worldview (Gade, 2011; Ngunjiri, 2010). According to Battle (1996), the concept ubuntu originates from the Xhosa expression, 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye abantu' which means that each individual's humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with others (Khomba, Vermaak and Gouws, 2011; Gade, 2011; Mabovula, 2011), a thesis that this paper rallies on. Ubuntu consists of the prefix ubu- and the stemntu- evoking the idea of being in general, thus ubu-ntu is the fundamental ontological and epistemological category in the African thought of Bantu-speaking people (Ramose, 1999; Mabovula, 2011). The existential condition, namely being, is one and is pivoted on ubuntu/hunhu (Ramose, 1999). Hunhu is the ontological, epistemological and moral fountain of African philosophy hence he says:

The African tree of knowledge stems from ubuntu with which it is connected indivisibly. Ubuntu then is the wellspring flowing with African ontology and epistemology.

Since ubuntu/hunhu is the fountain of African thought, it may therefore, be invoked to explain language and conduct (Chimuka, 2001). 'Munhu', as part of hunhu (being) is a metaphysical entity, namely, the individual human being. However, since life is a shared enterprise, munhu vunhu, namely, one's humanity is affirmed as one affirms the humanity of others and vice versa. According to Mbigi (2000:7) quoting Tutu, therefore, says:

Africans have a thing called ubuntu; it is about the essence of being human, it is part of the gift Africa is going to give to the world. It embraces hospitality, caring about others, being willing to go that extra mile, one for another. We believe that a person is a person through other persons; that my humanity is caught up, bound up inextricably in yours. When I dehumanize you, I dehumanize myself. The solitary human being is a contradiction in terms, and therefore you seek work for the common good because your humanity comes into its own, in community, in belonging.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The primary data was obtained from CUT. The University community was taken as the population. A sample of 190 participants was picked using a simple random probability sampling method. A structured questionnaire was then used to collect data. CUT community was selected due to a number of reasons inclusive of proximity to the researchers, and that the institution does not have a client service charter and that primary data was collected using the qualitative research. The data was analysed using SPSS and content analysis. Data reliability and validity: Data reliability as a measure of internal consistency of the data constructs, was determined by means of the Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) – an  $\alpha$  coefficient above 0.7 is



considered reliable (Khomba, Vermaak & Gouws, 2011; Field, 2009; Costello & Osborne, 2005). In this study, the overall  $\alpha$  coefficient was 0.776, which suggests that internal consistency of the data was good. In terms of data validity, the questionnaire targeted a tertiary

institution where the level of conceptualization of variables by mature respondents was deemed to be very high with 58% being degree holders and 26% holding diplomas and in the process of upgrading to degrees.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

*Table 1.1 : Demographic Distribution of Surveyed Respondents (N = 157)*

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Proportion of Respondents (%)</b>
<b>Age</b>		
16 – 20	1	0.6
21 – 29	36	22.9
30 – 39	68	43.3
40 – 49	35	22.3
50 and above	17	10.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	97	61.8
Female	60	38.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Academic Qualifications</b>		
O' Level	19	12.0
A' Level	5	3.0
Diploma	40	26
Degree	91	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Survey Data, 2013.*

As reviewed in Table 1.1 above, most of the surveyed respondents (43.3%) belong to the age group 30 – 39 years, whilst the least number (0.6%) is aged between 16 and 20 years. Out of a total of 157 respondents, 22.9 percent were aged between 21 and 29 years; 22.3 percent fall under 40 and 49 years and 10.8 percent of the total respondents were above 50 years old. The data obtained from the study showed a gender imbalance where a greater proportion (61.8%) were male and 38.2 percent being female. The level of education of most of the sampled respondents was high as 58 percent were degree holders and 26 percent of them have diplomas, whereas the least number (3%) had A' Level with 12 percent having O' Level certificates.

*Case summaries:* Basing on the case summary for understanding ubuntu, the results indicated that, out of

157 respondents, a high response rate of 75% illustrated a good understanding, 19% showed a fair understanding with 6% exhibiting no understanding. An assessment of practice of ubuntu in the CUT community displayed a 61% of the respondents indicating ubuntu was inefficiently practiced, with 39% advocating that it was efficiently practiced. 76% of the CUT community is willing to embrace values of ubuntu, 14% tend to disfavour, and with 7% unsure and 3% were missing variables. A myriad of reasons were cited by respondents, as inhibiting the practice of ubuntu and these are illustrated in Table 1.2 below:

Table 1.2: Challenges inhibiting practice of *ubuntu* at CUT

Item	
1	No adequate social platforms to iron out problems.
2	No common theme to harness different cultures.
3	Class system tending to dominate practices.
4	Belittling each other, with selfish tendencies taking root.
5	People are failing to appreciate being African.
6	Lack of business practices to support and guide permeation of <i>ubuntu</i> in the community.
7	Discrimination by qualification.
8	Lack of shared values.
9	Inconsistent application of policies, & failure to understand ordinance.
10	Political tendencies dominating, instead of professionalism.
11	Shortcomings from upbringing, decadent behaviour and poor dress code especially by females.
12	Technology and modernity (societalization) have eroded <i>ubuntu</i> .
13	Community not united.
14	Colonial education instilled a foreign culture at the expense of <i>ubuntu</i> .
15	Loss of community memory.

Source: Survey data, 2013.

Out of 157 total surveyed participants, respondents indicated that community gatherings related to *ubuntu* played a leading role in building the CUT community together. In support of the activities that bind the CUT community together, 50 respondents

pointed out cultural activities, 52 out of 157 opted for religion, whereas 83 supported business practices, 50 noted family practices and the least (25 out of 157) noted youth activities.

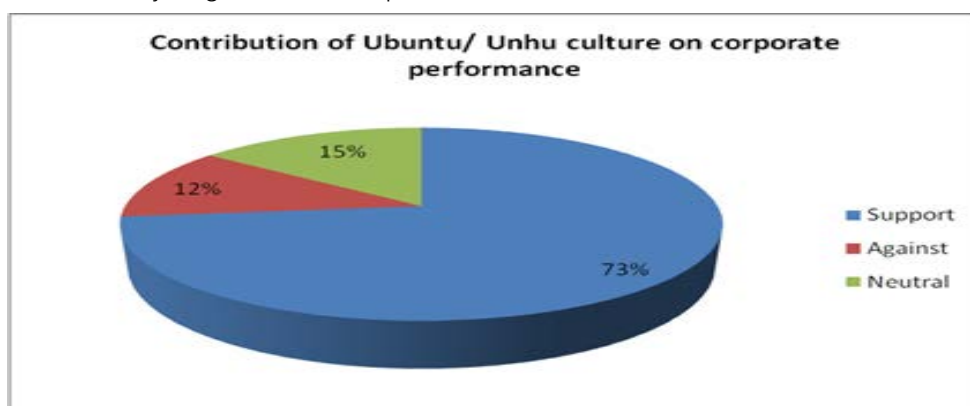


Figure 1.1 : Africanisation Values

Source: Survey data 2013.

Based on the research findings as illustrated in Figure 1.2 illustrated on the previous page, majority (73%) of the sampled respondents indicated that *ubuntu/unhu* culture greatly contribute to corporate performance as employees tend to have high morale

and productivity levels. Such positive trends towards corporate performance has also fostered change and growth in organisations that values *ubuntu/unhu* for corporate value creation to the outside world. Furthermore the study found out that a relatively few

number (12%) of total respondents were not convinced about the contribution of ubuntu/unhu culture on

corporate performance and 15 percent (that is, 23 out of 157) remained neutral on the question understudy.

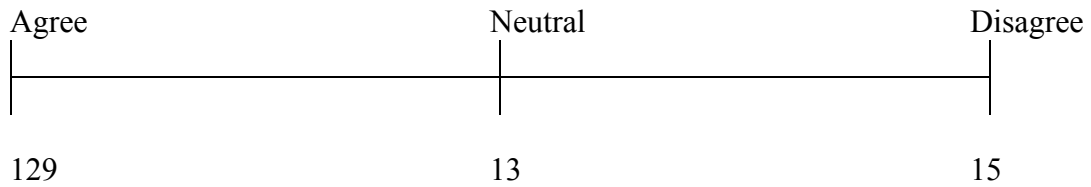


Figure 1.2: Impact of Ubuntu/Unhu culture in fostering service standards

Source: Survey data, 2013

The study reviewed that, out of 157 total sampled respondents, 129 pointed out that ubuntu/unhu fosters service quality, as shown in Figure 1.2 above, hence the need to be incorporated into organizational set-ups. Such a development would result in promoting customer orientation, however, a few respondents (15

out of 157) dismissed the arguments that ubuntu/unhu fosters service quality due to changes in the effects of globalization. However, the least number (13) of the surveyed respondents either agree or disagree to some extent on the impact of ubuntu/unhu culture in fostering service standards in organizations.

Table 1.3: Incorporating African Culture in Organizational Set – Ups (N = 157)

Response	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
Agree	111	70.70
Neutral	26	16.57
Disagree	20	12.73
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source : survey data

The findings from the Table 1.3 above, indicated that majority (70.7%) of the respondents greatly value the incorporation of African culture into organizational set-ups for corporate sustainability. This can be done through providing a mechanism that supports indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and processes in organisations and communities at large. A relatively lower proportion (16.57%) of the surveyed respondents remained neutral on whether African culture should be/or not be incorporated in organizational set-ups and the least (12.73%) of the total respondents did not realise the benefits of incorporating African culture in organizational set-ups due to lack of training in organisational processes and systems as these tend to be influenced by socio-cultural factors for wealth creation, innovation and technology (WIT).

*Values of Ubuntu:* Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe (2007) advances a strong argument, in that, with everyone in the world having opened up to the global village and with all foreign culture forces knocking at our doorsteps, Zimbabweans need to rekindle customs, values and those of our norms that are capable of laying a solid foundation for the resuscitation of the spirit of respect, integrity, tolerance, compassion, ubuntu/unhu

and at the same time fostering natural pride. The authors argue that, it is crucial that these virtues form the linchpin of our existence and are transmitted in all our postures so as to promote national identity which will enable the nation to adopt those global values that they would have assessed to have meaning in their Zimbabwean lives. The authors argue that social cohesion is elemental and the fulcrum, are a peoples system of values. Basing on this viewpoint and other advancements, we present the notion that adoption and integration of ubuntu philosophical framework for operations enhance the alignment of each individual staff and board member to the vision, mission and strategy (Ndoda, 2013). Furthermore, the authors argue that, The CUT Strategic Plan (2011 - 2015) is silent on the element of customer/communities perspective as an element of strategy and service delivery, thereby creating a service performance gap within the system. The system could be based on ubuntu values which encapsulate the need for sustainable existence akin to the survival of CUT as a corporate organization striving to be 'the CUT above the rest' in the incessant world of competition. Gelfand (1973) and Chimuka (2001) stated that:

When we speak of the teleology of the lymphatic system, of a human body, we are speaking about an end; the defence of a human system against bacterial invasion and the observable fact that the lymphatic system of the human body is a means towards an end. The reaction to an attack on the human system, when an epidermis is broken, is not conscious, but it does take place. In much the same way, the teleology of African (CUT) culture is not something of which the individual is conscious; it is rather something of which the observer of African (CUT) culture becomes aware the more he observes the people. The end of African (CUT) culture is survival. The means towards the end hinge on the complexes of beliefs, practices, taboos, social conventions and so on, that have, in fact, succeeded in assisting the people to survive as a people for a longer period of time.

Virtues considered fundamental for community life can be put into numerous "broad categories: 'kunuzwana' (mutual understanding), 'kugarisana' (peaceful coexistence), 'kuwadzana' (fellowship), 'hushamwari' (friendship), 'kudyidzana' (this word captures the idea of mutual hospitality but is not reducible to it), and 'mushandirapamwe' or 'shosholozana' (co-operation) (CUT Survey data, 2013; Nyaumwe & Mkabela, 2007; Chimuka, 2001: 32). These concepts express major ubuntu values, which could be broken down into minor values; the function of which was to facilitate conduct and survival in the community.

The authors' findings indicate that some of the values embodied in ubuntu are:

- Group solidarity, compassion, respect, human dignity, conformity to basic norms, collective unity, humanity, morality and mutuality (CUT Survey data, 2013; Bennett, 2011; Letseka, 2011).
- Solidarity, mutuality, generosity, and a commitment to the community wellbeing (CUT Survey data, 2013; Ngunjiri, 2010; Nafukho, 2006; Tutu, 1999; Battle, 1997; Mbigi, 1996).
- Truthfulness, humility, humanity, love, self-control, forgiveness, mercifulness, sufficiency, trustworthiness, strength, courage and industriousness (CUT Survey data, 2013; Gelfand, 1973).
- Tolerance, humanity, respect, caring, humble, thoughtful, considerate, understanding, wise, generous, hospitable, socially mature, socially sensitive, virtuous, and blessed: character attributes that veer away from confrontation towards conciliation (CUT Survey data, 2013; Mabovula, 2011).
- Politeness, kindness, humaneness, generous, humanity, greatness of soul (Gade, 2011).
- Self-identity, self-respect, self-control, self-discipline, human dignity, unity and achievement (Museka, Phiri, Kaguda, & Manyarara, 2013; CUT

Survey data, 2013; Letseka, 2011; Bhengu, 1999, Nziramasanga Commission, 1999).

- Hospitality, friendliness, community, family-hood, loyalty, communalism, cooperation, care (Nyaumwe & Mkabela, 2007; Karsten & Illa, 2005; Nziramasanga Commission, 1999).
- Teamwork implying synergies, group solidarity, trust, interdependence and spiritualism (CUT Survey data, 2013; Khomba, Vermaak & Gouws, 2011; Broodryk 2007; Muuka & Mwenda 2004; Mangaliso 2001; Mbigi & Maree 1995).
- Altruism, kindness, generosity, compassion, benevolence, courtesy, integrity, honesty, tolerance, diligence, responsibility, altruism, justice, respect, social cohesion, and concern for others (CUT Survey data, 2013; Letseka, 2011; Murithi, 2009; Bessler, 2008; Mokgoro, 2007; Tutu, 1999; Broodryk, 2002; Letseka, 2000)

Whilst values were identified, some vices such as detraction, lying, pride, covetousness, revenge, personal aggrandizement, xenophobia, hatred, ingratitude, negligence, tribalism, aggressiveness and selfishness were noted (CUT Survey data, 2013; Gade, 2011). Ubuntu adds to our understanding of leadership praxis contributing to the leaders' ability to build and sustain community (Bennett, 2011). Ubuntu becomes a common denominator for Africans, much like Confucianism is for the Japanese and the Chinese. Bennett (2011) adds that as a metanorm, ubuntu is necessarily generalised and has a much broader scope, suggesting that it is a representation of the right way of living akin to the notion of dharma.

Social harmony is at the heart of ubuntu, promoting cohesion (CUT Survey data, 2013; Bennett, 2011). Unionism at best, is enshrined in tolerance (CUT Survey data, 2013). Furthermore, Mabovula (2011) notes that tolerance is a value to be achieved by deepening people's understanding of the origins, evolution and achievements of humanity on the one hand and through the exploration of that which is common and diverse in cultural heritage on the other. Disagreements need not cause harm if there is tolerance and mutual respect for each other and people's viewpoint in the community structure, much like in structures of CUT (CUT Survey data, 2013). Further, Mabovula (2011) argues that 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 CUT communities make evaluations, it is important that these evaluations evolve from a continuous discussion and debate between various role-players in the community bound by mutual respect. Bennett (2011) held that fairness and civility were inseparable from ubuntu presupposing tolerance for those with whom one disagrees and respect for the dignity of those with whom one is in dispute elevating civility as a precondition for good functioning of contemporary democratic societies.



Gade (2011) claims that the term ‘quality’ appears in descriptions of ubuntu, and in many texts ubuntu is evidently considered to be a very positive quality which has potential benefits if manifested in service excellence at CUT. The CUT community may possess qualities of ubuntu in different extents and complexities, and thereby needing checks and balances in accordance with the principle of moderation regulating conduct and central to understanding and bridging service delivery performance gap (CUT Survey data, 2013). To this end, Gade (2011) informs that the concept of ubuntu/unhu also constitute the kernel of African jurisprudence as well as leadership and governance tending to support remedies and punishments that bring people together through a

demonstration of ‘ubuntu/unhu’. Ubuntu as a broad value expresses a unique quality about a person, which elevates him/her to a plane of godliness, virtues pivotal in the portfolio of service, standards and excellence. Ubuntu therefore, places service excellence in the hands of the community through values embodied in ubuntu, It is the thesis of this article, therefore, that Zimbabwe at large, has an indigenous philosophy, which could best guide and inspire thinking that once reclaimed and put into praxis, has the potential to bridge service delivery performance gap, gaining resonance with policies formulated and implemented in order to be consistent with Ubuntuism that ultimately would need to inform other models of development.

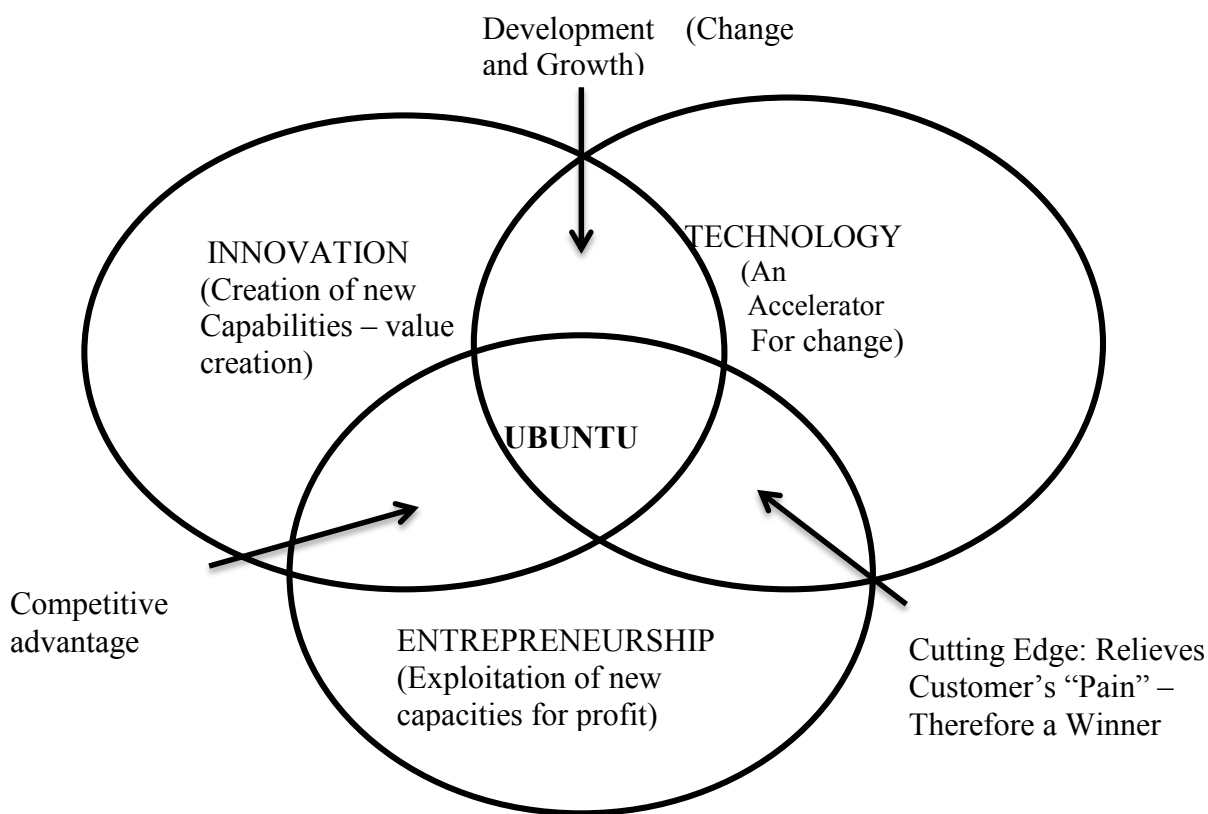


Figure 1.3: Re-alignment of CUT's Vision Model

Source: Adapted from CUT Strategic Plan (2011 – 2015)

We set forth that affirming the values of ubuntu philosophy and aligning them to the vision of CUT could give character, expand and entrench principles of restorative claiming of ubuntu and give unparalleled collateral to the institution. Centralising ubuntu, in essence, as shown in Figure 1.3 above, captures the philosophy, showing its permeation in the vision, locking it in so that it is not lost. Against this backdrop, we present that there is need for a comprehensive promotion of ubuntu through education given that the country is only just emerging from economic, political

and social instability era that was marked by tribal, racial segregation and discrimination, subordination and domination, and exclusion. Education thus needs to articulate a methodology for developing ubuntu social disposition (Museka, Phiri, Kaguda, & Manyarara, 2013; Khuzwayo, 2006).

a) *Ubuntu-Oriented CUT Client Service Charter (CCSC) Framework*

Ubuntu has the potential to serve as public policy. Persons living in communities that embrace ubuntu, would be marked by a commitment to treating

internal and external clients, stakeholders and shareholders with a sense of ubuntu, which entails treating them with justice and fairness (Letseka, 2011; Nkondo, 2007, Letseka, 2000). Ubuntu would articulate CUT community's inter-connectedness, common humanity, and the responsibility to stakeholders and shareholders that flows from connection. Ubuntu is a worldview that emphasises the commonality and interdependence of the members of the community. Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu or "a human being is a human being because of other human beings" (CUT is a 'being' ngabantu) resonates with Mbiti's (1971) maxim I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am, which articulates social interdependence or a deep rootedness in community (Letseka, 2011; Chachine 2008; Adonis 2008). For Sindane (1994: 8–9), "ubuntu inspires us to expose ourselves to others, to encounter the difference of their humanness so as to enrich our own" through service delivery. Ubuntu is a theory of right action in value creation (INNOVATION) to gain competitive advantage through the exploitation of new capabilities (ENTREPRENEURSHIP) thereby gaining a cutting edge for positive change (TECHNOLOGY) resulting in development (Figure 1.3 on the previous page). From the above argument, Ubuntu-oriented Service Charter Framework is therefore the engine and elixir for service delivery transformation for CUT and could be a means to engage internal clients in addressing challenges identified.

Ubuntu-oriented CCSC, as illustrated in Figure 1.4 on page 21, would equip CUT community with the tools to resolve the many problems that come with being human and running a corporate organization with one of these tools being the attitude to treat problems as challenges that need to be resolved through knowledge and understanding (Letseka, 2011; DoE, 2000) rather than to be regarded as unbearable burdens that are to be endured without solution. Ubuntu-oriented CCSC does not only enhance communication between management and employees, but provides a voice too (Karsten & Illa, 2005), that is, participatory interaction with stakeholders producing voice and inventive ways (Deetz, 2003) of transacting. The introduction of the ubuntu-oriented CCSC Framework would not replace the transfer of knowledge, like management concepts from the other worlds, but have instead, the foreign approaches supporting Afrocentric approaches as deemed necessary. Ubuntu then becomes the brand and label that covers the way CUT community engage in service delivery. In that sense, ubuntu fit the socialization process as described by Nonaka and Tekeuchi (1995) during which tacit knowledge becomes shared and concretised. Ubuntu therefore, strives to reach beyond a purely managerial approach and strengthens an attitude of open conversation including voices of all participants

in the organization and building consensus through the 'wisdom circles'.

"Ubuntu embraces a set of social behaviours like sharing, seeking consensus and interdependent helpfulness which, if recognised, valued and willingly incorporated in the culture of organizations, could exert considerable positive outcomes on business results" (Karsten and Illa, 2005: 614). Ubuntu-oriented CCSC can be used to dismantle the past organizational culture, promote the development of a new more inclusive culture and create a set of leadership skills and competencies that enable these processes. Ubuntu values become the roots out of which, a collective personhood and collective morality can flow (Colff, 2003).

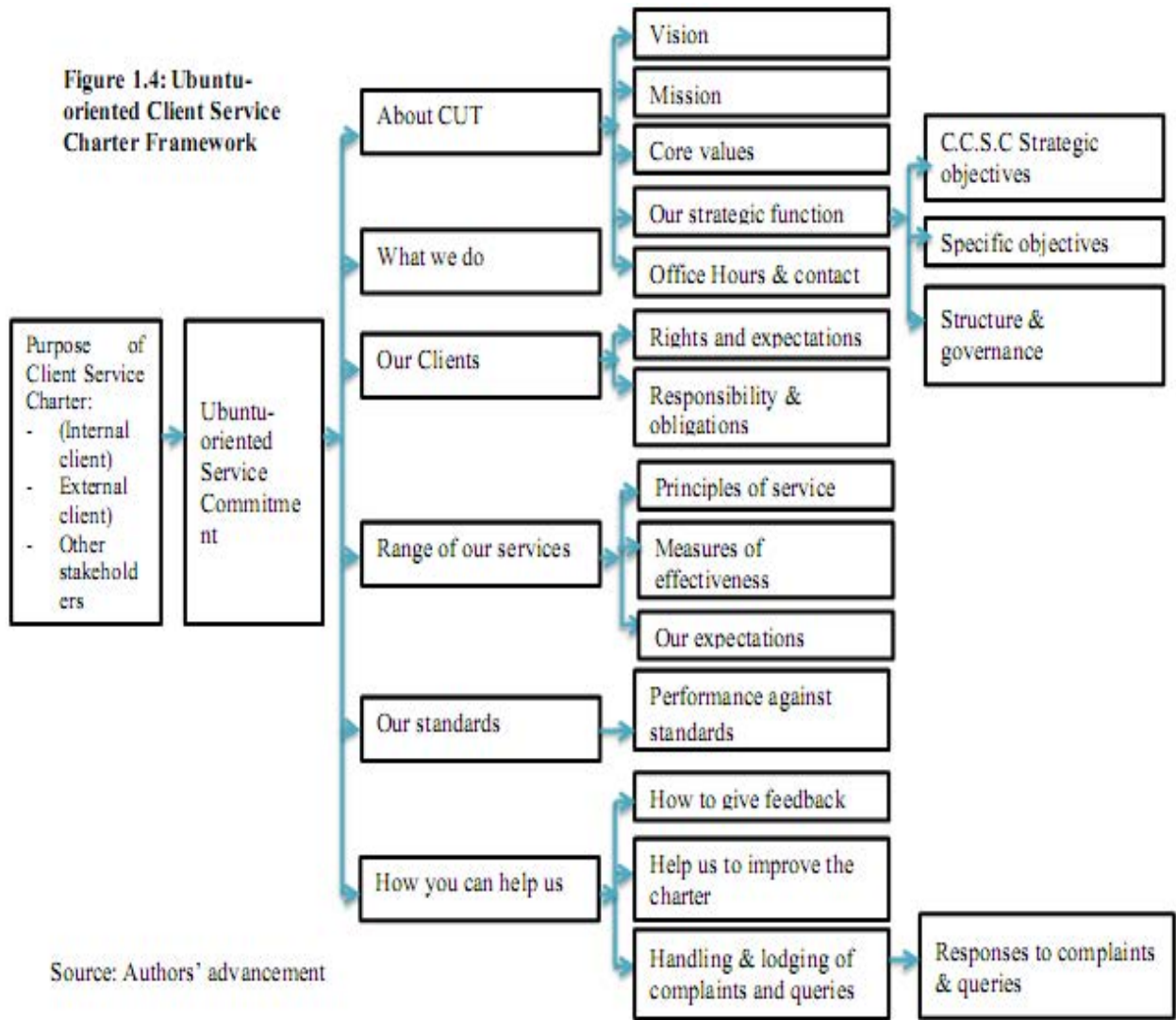


Figure 1.4: Ubuntu-oriented Client Service Charter Framework

## V. CONCLUSION

The study has revealed general issues regarding the African philosophy of ubuntu and service excellence delivery. The major theme governing the use of the Client Service Charter is “Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”. The factor Africanisation values addresses general issues related to the Africa socio-cultural environment anchored by ubuntu philosophy, while the factor learning values recognizes that when employees are trained and gain indigenous knowledge, their productivity and service performance delivery improve. The factor customer values focuses on Africanising customer care and satisfaction, an attribute Zimbabweans are well known for (Ndoda, 2013). Finally, the factor wealth creation, innovation and technology values, clarifies the unparalleled collateral in change and growth that are realized from skilled and motivated

employees. All values are positively correlated with one another and could add value to CUT corporate performance. The most important finding of this study is the significant contribution that indigenous knowledge and what an ubuntu philosophy could make to CUT corporate performance. The empirical evidence in this study suggests that the new Re-alignment of CUT’s Vision Model (Figure 1.3) and Client Service Charter Framework (Figure 1.4) of ubuntu-oriented perspective would be ideal tools to ensure better CUT corporate performance. The results suggest that an African philosophy of ubuntu-oriented client service charter addresses the socio-cultural frameworks of the continent and hence could be adopted by any organization based in Africa. The new ubuntu-oriented client service charter framework would represent African ideologies and socio-cultural contexts.

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