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Nyerere's Philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance and Its Implications for Enhancing the Socio-Economic Dimension of Current Kenyan University Education

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Abstract. While considerable attention has been devoted to exploring the potential of higher education in driving economic development, comparatively less focus has been directed towards its role in nurturing social imperatives associated with education. In the same vein, the economic benefits of a university degree in Kenya have been emphasised, while the social relevance of serving society has not received enough attention. In order to strengthen the social and economic paradigms of higher education in Kenya, the article examine the unique contribution of Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance in the realm of African educational philosophies. The purpose of this study was to analyse what educational implications Kenyan universities can adopt from Nyerere's education for self-reliance philosophy using a literature-based research approach. The methodology of the study used was a multifaceted technique that comprised a literature review, conceptual analysis, a comprehensive content analysis and triangulation for evaluating relevant books, research studies, scholarly works and official papers about the socio-economic role of university education and Nyerere's philosophy of education. The study's findings indicated that the Nyerere educational philosophy, which is characterized by its invaluable lessons on the roles of the teacher, curriculum development, and the purpose of university education, may have

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beneficial implications on Kenyan university education. The socio-economic dimensions of university education emphasize enhancing society through problem-solving, community engagement, and career-oriented learning. The study also underscored the vital need for training for jobs in both white-collar and blue-collar fields by universities, the incorporation of problem-solving skills relevant to the 21st century, on-going professional development, and benchmarking. These recommendations could be the cornerstone of socio-economic education reforms at Kenyan universities, which could prepare its youth for the dynamic opportunities of the twenty-first century, positioning Kenya as a forerunner in the global advancement of socio-economic dimension of university education.

Keywords: Nyerere, self–reliance, community-minded, problem-solving, work-oriented, university education

Introduction

Scholarly examination of the function and significance of university education on a global scale has been continuous. According to Kibona and Woldegiorgis (2023), the function of higher education is to generate knowledge and distribute, apply, advance, control, protect, and utilise it for economic benefit. Within this framework, universities function as profit-driven corporate entities, treating knowledge as a means of production (Khelalfa & Hadidane, 2023). While it is true that universities play a crucial role in economic growth and development, it is equally important to consider social imperatives rooted in education for self-reliance within these institutions. This article focused on universities as social institutions that could play a pivotal role in shaping self-reliant graduates through Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance (ESR). The paper contended that Nyerere's philosophy of education can serve as a framework for universities, enabling them to promote education not only for economic benefits but also to foster self-reliant students who are sensitive to the social dimensions of their society. This idea aligns with Muideen's (2017) assertion that Nyerere's socially-based educational system, similar to the capitalist-based system, also contributes to achieving economic objectives. The foundation of Nyerere's educational philosophy lies in "Ujamaa," an African philosophy that Ashu (2021) attests to as having a unique contribution. Ashu (2021) further observes that research on other African philosophies, such as ethno-philosophy, African socialism, negritude, and "Ubuntu," has primarily focused on leadership and school administration in Africa, rather than education for self-reliance. This study explored the aspects of Nyerere's educational philosophy, including a culture of community-mindedness, work-oriented education, and problem-solving learning (Nyerere, 1967; Sanga, 2016). Consequently, this study investigated Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance and the potential lessons that modern Kenyan universities could learn from it. Additionally, the basis for this study was the relative obscurity of Nyerere's views on education in mainstream studies of university education in Africa.

Research Problem

Higher education in Kenya has commonly been discussed in terms of its economic benefits. However, it is important to further explore the potential implications of Nyerere's philosophy of self-reliance in university education in Kenya. This philosophy emphasises social responsibilities, problem-solving skills, and work-oriented training. By reconsidering and

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drawing lessons from Nyerere's Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) ideals, university education has the potential to contribute to the improvement of quality education in Kenya and Africa as a whole. This is particularly important in addressing the current challenges faced by university education, such as inadequate funding, graduate unemployment, limited community involvement, a lack of job-ready individuals, and a decline in problem-solving learning (Salaries and Remuneration Commission, 2023; Pee & Vululleh, 2020; Kigotho, 2023; Ayiro, Murithi & Munyao, 2023).

Research Focus

The study focused on Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance and its relevance to university education in Kenya. This educational philosophy encompasses not only the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and expertise for economic prosperity post-graduation, but also the assimilation of fundamental social principles of self-reliance, such as community awareness, problem-solving abilities, and work-focused training.

Research Aim and Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to highlight the idea of Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance and the lessons Kenyan universities can borrow from the philosophy. The article's objectives were divided into many sections that illustrate the concepts of Nyerere's philosophy of education and its application to higher education in Kenya. The primary objectives of this investigation were as follows:

1. To explore the brief biography of Julius Kambarage Nyerere to lay the foundation for his philosophy of education for self-reliance.
2. To examine Nyerere's perspective on education for self-reliance, where education is, positioned as changing the mind-set from dependence to independence.
3. To propose a theoretical framework for the study that aligns with Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance.
4. To analyse the socio-economic implications of Nyerere's education for self-reliance in university education in Kenya.

Literature Review

This section examines the literature under the following subheadings: Julius Nyerere's biography; Nyerere's thoughts on education for self-reliance; the theoretical framework used for the study; and, finally, the socio-economic implications of Nyerere's education for self-reliance for university education in Kenya.

Brief biography of Julius Nyerere

The former President Julius Kambarage Nyerere is widely recognised not only as one of the most esteemed statesmen in history, but also as a persuasive advocate for African liberation and dignity, as well as an innovative and creative thinker in the field of education. Before delving into his educational philosophy, it is important to provide a brief overview of his

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background. Nyerere was born in 1922 in Tanzania, near Musoma. After completing his primary and secondary education, he enrolled at Makerere College in Uganda, where he earned a teaching diploma in 1945. Following his time at Makerere, he returned to Tanzania and worked as a teacher at St. Mary's School until 1949. Subsequently, he received an educational grant to study at Edinburgh University, where he earned a Master of Arts degree in 1952. Nyerere was the first Tanzanian to study at a British university and to be awarded a master's degree. He was also the second African to earn a university degree outside of Africa. During his time at the University of Edinburgh, Nyerere was profoundly influenced by Fabian socialism, shaping his political and educational convictions. It was during this time that he began to conceptualize the idea of linking African communal living with socialism (Okanda & Mwebi, 2015). The Fabian Society sought to advance socialist ideals through diverse channels, including public gatherings, discussion forums, seminars, publications, conferences, and political organisations. However, the Fabians espoused a belief in progressive socialism rather than revolution (Lönneborg, 1999).

After returning home, he became actively engaged in Tanganyika politics. In 1959, he was elected as a member of parliament in Tanganyika's inaugural election, having established TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) in 1954. In 1960, he was appointed as the nation's inaugural chief minister, and in May 1961, he assumed the role of Tanganyika's prime minister. Following his victory in the first presidential contest in 1962, Nyerere became the first African president. He went on to win subsequent presidential elections until 1985, when he willingly retired from both active politics and the presidency. However, he continued to actively participate in local and international affairs until his passing on October 14, 1999 (Okanda & Mwebi, 2015). In addition to his political career, Nyerere was an eloquent education philosopher whose ideas were of great significance. Consequently, Nyerere holds a special place among recognised African political and educational philosophers (Mazrui & Mhando, 2013). The cornerstone of his educational philosophy was education for self-reliance.

Nyerere's perspective on education for self-reliance

The fostering autonomy, or the ability to make independent decisions, is a crucial aspect of the concept of self-reliance (Huntington, 2021). Tanzania's development should be reliant on the nation's own natural resources, according to Nyerere, who advocated for the policy of self-reliance (Nyerere, 1967). In this context, the researcher argues that self-reliance involves a shift from depending on others to adopting an independent mind-set. Sanga (2016) emphasises that education for self-reliance (ESR) entails that learners in educational institutions acquire confidence, responsibility, autonomy, and actively engage in democratic processes. Furthermore, Nyerere (1967) suggests that the self-reliance in education involves equipping students with the necessary skills and moral qualities to live freely and independently within a community, for oneself, with others, and for others. Drawing from the works of Nyerere (1967) and Sanga (2016), it can be inferred that educating students for self-reliance entails equipping them to become proactive contributors to society as self-sufficient individuals, thus promoting a transition from socio-economic dependency to an independent mindset.

From the researcher's perspective, the eight components of education for self-reliance (ESR) encapsulated in Nyerere (1967) and the Tanzania Ministry of Education (1982) have

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several implications. Firstly, schools should aim to provide young people with skills that are employable in Tanzania's primarily rural and agricultural society. This is attributed to the higher concentration of individuals living in rural areas, thus emphasising the importance of education tailored to meet the needs of rural livelihoods. Additionally, educating students to be self-reliant entails equipping them to take initiative and take care of themselves in the community rather than expecting others to assume responsibility for them. Hence, the concept of education focused on the community and work becomes evident.

Secondly, Nyerere proposed that educators and learners being engaged in collaborative, meaningful projects such as crop farming and animal husbandry. In organising these activities, students should actively participate in the planning and decision-making processes. Nyerere strongly emphasised the idea that each educational institution should have its own crop farm, farm animals, or workshop that generates food for the community. To prepare students for future careers in agriculture, they should actively involve themselves in manual labour on the school's farm. Nyerere believed that education should equip individuals to pursue jobs that benefit the community, regardless of whether they are white-collar or blue-collar professions. Thus, a work-focused education paradigm is apparent in this context.

Thirdly, embedding theory within practical applications should constitute a core component of the school curriculum. Such integration would furnish students with meaningful experiences directly applicable to real-world work scenarios. The objective of merging theory and practice is to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to address societal challenges. In this case the principles of work-based education, community-focused learning, and problem-solving education are highlighted.

The fourth element involves reducing the significance of examinations, as they primarily assess a student's ability to memorize and regurgitate information within a limited timeframe. Instead, assessments should consider other attributes, such as practical work, reasoning skills, and a willingness to assist others. Consequently, the goal of education for self-reliance (ESR) is to foster in individuals a practical understanding, an inquisitive mind-set, an open attitude, the ability to learn from others, a fundamental sense of confidence, and the capacity to advance knowledge, ultimately making substantial contributions to society. By minimising the emphasis on exams, practical learning, critical thinking, curiosity, and the ability to acquire knowledge from others - all of which are crucial for the problem-solving education and preparing students for the real world - would be encouraged.

Fifth, students continuing their education beyond any level should possess the maturity and skills necessary to sustain themselves and contribute meaningfully to their community upon graduation. Higher education should prepare its few sponsored students to serve others, or else there is no justification for burdening the majority with the cost of educating these individuals. Graduates should be able to apply their skills and expertise to address the needs of their local community. Consequently, education should promote the social objectives of collaboration to achieve the common good. The community should benefit from the education of these select few. The concepts of contributing to society and engaging in meaningful work underscore the significance of an education that is both vocational and community-centred.

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The sixth principle proposed by Nyerere is that all levels of education should be self-contained, meaning they should provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be self-reliant, rather than solely preparing them for further education. The ultimate goal of education should be to equip students at all levels with the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes required for success in their respective careers. Therefore, the emphasis here lies in the career-focused education.

The seventh viewpoint of Nyerere posited that education must be provided in a manner that cultivates creativity and an inquisitive mind in learners. Consequently, education should aim to nurture curiosity, open-mindedness, self-confidence, and the ability to contribute to society in every learner. The concepts of creativity and curiosity imply the necessity of an education system that encourages the problem-solving, while the idea of contributing to society refers to education that promotes community-mindedness.

The eighth aspect emphasised the incorporation of Ujamaa, or a socialist perspective, into education. This facilitates the understanding, appreciation, and cultivation of Tanzanian culture, which upholds the nation's traditions, individual freedom, accountability, tolerance, and respect. Education should instil a sense of allegiance to the nation and prioritize the promotion of acceptable cultural values in contrast to those associated with the colonial past. Equality and the responsibility to serve others and advancement of societal values should be given particular emphasis in the classroom. The researcher concludes that upholding national traditions, values, equality, accountability, respect, and tolerance are essential socialist components for nurturing education that emphasizes community-mindedness and communal welfare.

An education that fosters the self-reliance requires the integration of the aforementioned eight characteristics. This implies a focus on the socio-economic dimension of learning, encompassing problem-solving, a work-oriented mind-set, and a commitment to community. Consequently, education for self-reliance (ESR) should be acknowledged as a comprehensive and essential form of education within universities. The researcher suggests that the self-reliant education has the potential to address numerous challenges prevalent in higher education, including insufficient funding, diminishing social participation, moral decay, poverty, economic dependence, and exploitation.

Theoretical framework

Both the Marxist and the conservative theories were employed in this study. The two theories were chosen as they complement each other and share certain aspects of Nyerere's concept of education for self-reliance. The term "conservatism" refers to political ideologies that support gradually evolving institutions, customs, and practices as symbols of stability and continuity. "Traditions" are defined by cultural, religious, or national beliefs and practices. Conservatism emphasises the benefits of maintaining customs and traditions. The word conservatism originates from the Latin verb conservare, meaning "to safeguard from loss or injury". Conservatism can serve different purposes across civilizations, as the values and traditions upheld can differ significantly among cultures. Some conservatives aim to maintain the status quo or make gradual changes to society, while others seek to return society to its historical aspirations (Viereck et al., 2024).

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Viereck et al. (2024) further highlights that conservatives are concerned with preserving the status quo, which expects a specific order to be steadfastly maintained. For example, conservatism views society as an organic, hierarchical structure, where social classes are complementary and should be upheld. Typically, conservatism is promoted by the elite, who utilize the state apparatus to preserve societal norms.

According to the studies, Nyerere's worldview generally aligns with conservative thought. This is because he advocated for Ujamaa, an African socialism with conservative elements, as the foundation for economic and social progress. Nyerere understood Ujamaa to embody three principles: respect for human dignity, equitable distribution of collectively generated resources, and the participation of all individuals in productive work (Nasongo & Musungu, 2009). After gaining independence, Tanzania was to adopt and adapt traditional African socialism in line with Ujamaa principles. Furthermore, Nyerere promoted the embrace of indigenous values, such as deference to the wisdom of elders. Similarly, Nyerere's concept of education for self-reliance incorporated the Ujamaa or socialist perspective, which aligns with conservative ideals. Education was intended to cultivate Tanzanian culture and traditions, including the promotion of individual freedom, accountability, tolerance, and respect. The classroom was also meant to emphasise concepts such as equality, the duty to serve others in society, and the advancement of social values. Similarly, in order to be more relevant to students and society at large, the content of university curricula should take into account traditional Kenyan beliefs and customs.

The Marxist perspective posits that competition for material resources and wealth is the primary cause of conflict within society. Marxism is an ideology encompassing economic, social, and political dimensions, exploring how the ruling class exercises power over the oppressed workers, leading to an unequal distribution of wealth and societal benefits. The ruling class not only controls the means of production, but also shapes contemporary thought. To maintain the existing order, the ruling class-controlled state employs various mechanisms, including state machinery, ideology, and even religion. Inequalities spur workers to combat injustice, ultimately culminating in a revolution against the ruling class. This revolutionary transformation would usher in a classless and egalitarian society rooted in socialism (Panayotidis & Grimsley, 2023). This represents the Marxist concept of an ideal society.

Nyerere's vision of creating an equitable society rooted in indigenous values shares similarities with the non-revolutionary Marxist social paradigm. In his book titled Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism, Nyerere (1968) argues that pre-colonial African society was both classless and socialist. He denounces capitalist societies as "survival of the fittest" societies. However, Nyerere does not advocate for a popular revolution to embrace African socialism. Similarly, Nyerere's educational philosophy, grounded in a socialist perspective, should also strive to foster a society devoid of class distinctions and characterised by equality. Subsequently, in the context of this study, Kenyan universities should develop programs that endorse African socialism and indigenous value systems for the betterment of society as a whole and to advance equality.

The preceding discussions on theories illustrate a scenario in which Nyerere's ideas exhibit closer alignment with conservatism and Marxism. Although Nyerere does not explicitly

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align himself with either ideology, his educational philosophy appears to incorporate certain principles from both systems. The subsequent section examines the relevance of Nyerere's the concept of education for self-reliance within Kenyan university education.

Implications of Nyerere's education for self-reliance for university education in Kenya

In order to extrapolate any potential implications of Nyerere's educational philosophy for Kenyan universities, it was imperative to firstly emphasise the commonalities and disparities in the social, economic, and political contexts of Kenya and Tanzania following their respective independence. Conducting a comparative analysis of these two nations in terms of their socio-economic and political landscapes will aid in determining the applicability of Nyerere's educational philosophy to the realm of Kenyan university education.

Economic and socio-political backgrounds of Kenya and Tanzania

It is worth noting that Kenya and Tanzania are both East African countries with a sharing cultural heritage. Furthermore, both nations were colonized by Britain and therefore have similar histories of colonial education, with their educational systems inherited from colonial Britain. Besides, both countries have agro-based economies, with a majority of their populations residing in rural areas and engaging primarily in agricultural activities. However, Kenya had a capitalist economic and socio-political system at the time of independence, whereas Tanzania's political, economic, and social systems were primarily socialist after gaining independence. Tanzania, despite having more land and numerous national parks, has a relatively weaker economy, estimated at $85 billion in 2023, compared to Kenya's $118 billion, which is the largest in East Africa. Kenya, although smaller in terms of land area, is better equipped with more lodges, airports, and transportation options compared to Tanzania (The Citizen Reporter, 2023). It's crucial to underscore that Nyerere's educational philosophy was crafted to meet the particular requirements and cultural context of Tanzania during that era. These are some areas in which the economic, political, and social environments of the two nations are both contrasting and similar.

After analysing the differences and similarities between the socio-economic and political environments of Tanzania and Kenya, it is still possible to extract implications for Kenyan university education from Nyerere's concept of education for self-reliance. This is because the philosophy presents certain timeless ideas that are applicable to higher education, regardless of Tanzania's historical or social context. In this sense, Kenyan university education can greatly benefit from learning invaluable lessons from Nyerere's notion of education for self-reliance.

Implications on the role of the educator, the purpose of education, and development of curriculum

Nyerere's educational philosophy is widely recognised for its significant impact on the role of teachers, the purpose of higher education, and the development of curricula in universities. His educational theory has proven its universal applicability and endurance beyond the socio-cultural context of Tanzania. As a result, there are valuable insights to be gained from Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance that are relevant to the role of educators in Kenyan universities. Nyerere, known as Mwalimu or "The teacher," emphasised

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the transformative influence of educators in shaping the lives of young individuals and guiding them in shaping the future of society (Kassam 1983; Missokia 2023; The Citizen 2019). Furthermore, Nyerere advocated for fostering community consciousness among students, with educators prioritising the imparting of societal norms and values within the classroom. Additionally, he proposed equipping students with a diverse range of knowledge and skills that would enable them to become self-reliant and realize their full potential (Ulimwengu, 2023). Research conducted by Missokia (2023), The Citizen (2019), and Kassam (1983) provides support for the conclusion that university educators should act as role models for their students, encouraging active participation and collaboration in the learning process. Additionally, educators in Kenyan universities should instil the values and traditions essential for smooth integration into society, alongside providing students with the knowledge and skills needed to become self-reliant individuals.

Regarding the purpose of higher education, Chachage and Cassam (2010) argue that Nyerere believed Tanzanian higher education should cultivate citizens who possess a societal consciousness that aligns with socialist principles. Therefore, higher education should prioritize service rather than self-centeredness while preparing students for self-reliance. For privileged students pursuing higher education, there is also an obligation to contribute to improving the socio-economic conditions of their community, regardless of their level of social background. According to Nyerere, the government funds higher education because it believes it benefits both the individual and the community. Educated individuals, once aware of their role in society, should serve the community. Odhiambo (2018) asserts that the aim of higher education in Kenya is to cultivate capable individuals with specialized skills that enrich national heritage and enhance the intellectual, economic, and cultural prosperity of society. Both Chachage and Cassam (2010) and Odhiambo (2018) propose that the goal of higher education is societal development. Consequently, it is imperative for Kenyan university education to nurture socially conscientious graduates who enhance not only their own well-being but also that of their communities. Nyerere argued that the curriculum must serve as the fundamental basis of any educational system (Mbogoma, 2018). The revision of Tanzania's curriculum aimed to better meet the nation's socio-economic needs while incorporating indigenous values (Nyerere, 1967). Furthermore, Nyerere (1967) emphasised the importance of a curriculum that integrates theory and practice in order to foster self-reliance in education. Consequently, the curriculum placed strong emphasis on practical subjects, equipping students to return to their communities and contribute effectively to their society's economic development (Nyerere, 1967; Major & Mulvihill, 2009). Moreover, Nyerere made substantial contributions to the global dialogue on the pedagogy of liberation, aiming to emancipate individuals culturally, economically, socially, intellectually, and spiritually through education (Otunnu, 2015). Similarly, the review of the curriculum was crucial for liberating individuals and society from the constraints of imperialism, neo-colonialism, colonialism, and all forms of exploitation (Sanga, 2017). Moreover, Nyerere advocated in Sanga (2017) for the replacement of traditional examinations that merely assess rote memorization with assessments that promote practical learning, curiosity, and critical thinking skills.

Given this viewpoint, it is crucial for the curriculum at Kenyan universities to incorporate the values and traditions of Kenyan society to ensure that students do not feel disconnected

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and out of touch with their own culture. The curriculum should prioritize practical fields of study, such as agriculture. Consequently, universities should engage in agricultural initiatives to achieve financial self-sufficiency and address the longstanding issue of inadequate funding that has affected higher education in Kenya. In this way, Nyerere's educational philosophy offers pertinent concepts for improving the university funding paradigm.

Implications for community mindfulness, work-oriented, and problem solving education

In order to promote the well-being of the community and society, Kenyan universities should develop curricula that are relevant to the communities in which their educated citizens reside. This view aligns with the concept of community mindfulness. It is crucial to depart from the colonial view of education, which tends to detach itself from society, and instead embrace an integrated approach that caters to the needs of society, as advocated by Nyerere (1967). Nyerere (1967) further asserts that education should contribute to the collective efforts of society in achieving common goals. It must equip students with the ability to actively and constructively contribute to the development of a society where fairness and the well-being of the community take precedence over material possessions such as fancy cars, buildings, or properties either owned by the government or privately.

Okanda and Mwebi (2015) also support Nyerere's vision of socialist-based education, highlighting his desire for higher education to prepare students who are community-oriented, capable of responding to everyday situations in their communities, and have the mind-set to serve society rather than merely govern it. According to Sanga (2016), unlike Plato, Nyerere did not prioritize the welfare of the individual over that of the community in his recommendation for educated individuals to serve society. Plato advocated for elite education catering to a select few, whereas Nyerere believed that societal engagement leads to comprehensive fulfilment. Nyerere believed that every individual—be it social or political—exists within a society to some extent, and possesses unique talents such as political leadership, teaching, engineering, or farming, among others. However, the ultimate aim in honing these skills should be to strengthen society as a whole (Sanga, 2016). Based on Sanga (2016) argument, it can be deduced that the most significant value and contribution of an individual lies in their membership and involvement in society.

In regards to this matter, the integration of community service as a mandatory course in the curriculum of Kenyan universities is essential to ensure the relevance of higher education to the community. Students who participate in community service acquire the theoretical and practical knowledge needed to work effectively in fields such as welfare, advocacy, and community engagement. It is important to note that community service programs should prioritize the needs of the community rather than the participants, distinguishing them from job training or placement programs (Mohale, 2023). Thus, the researcher suggests that university students' involvement in community service can foster a sense of service and societal improvement, as well as promote the collective pursuit of social goals.

Similarly, Kenyan universities should align their curriculum with the needs of the community in order to educate individuals who can effectively navigate the realities of Kenyan

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life, apply their education to address local challenges, and contribute to society as a whole. The Presidential Working Party on Education Reform (2023) has emphasised the inclusion of community service in the current competency-based curriculum (CBC) for primary and secondary school students. This allows students to collaborate with community members to address local issues and learn first-hand from their experiences. Furthermore, participation in community service programs encourages students to adopt values such as giving back to the community. The Teacher (2022) elaborates on this further, saying that community service programs also emphasise the importance of equipping students with 21st century aptitudes and skills. These include entrepreneurship competencies and fortifying collaborations with the private sector to achieve national goals. The idea presented by The Teacher (2022) aligns with the social pillar of Kenya Vision 2030, which aims to establish a fair and inclusive society that upholds social justice and environmental sustainability. However, it is important to note that this study focuses on the relevance of community service in higher education in Kenya, addressing a research gap not covered in current studies by the Presidential Working Party on Education Reform (2023) and The Teacher (2022), which primarily address the importance of community service within primary and secondary education frameworks.

Regarding work-oriented education, Kenyan university education should provide learners with the necessary skills to appreciate both white-collar and blue-collar employment. According to Nyerere (1967), Education should serve as a platform for work, enabling citizens to effectively utilise and harness Tanzania's natural resources for the benefit of the nation's workforce and rural population. Nyerere (1967) further argues that education should not solely focus on elitist ideals of preparing for white-collar jobs, but should also emphasize vocational training. Socrates, in addressing issues of illiteracy, poverty, and disease in society, advocated for the education of individuals in specialized vocations. However, he cautioned that specialization must be accompanied by excellence and efficiency. According to Socrates, the only way to achieve results that benefit every member of society is to collectively address the challenges faced by society as a whole. In his book "Education for Self-Reliance" (1967), Nyerere emphasizes the importance of physical labour for all capable individuals, including intellectuals. He states:

The truth is that many Tanzanians view education as implying that an educated man is too valuable for the uneven and destructive life that society continues to live. Even during the holidays, we believe that young people and women should be safeguarded from uneven work; neither they nor society expect them to spend their time performing strenuous physical labour or working in jobs that are uncomfortable and unpleasant. It reflects the mind-set that we have all adopted (Nyerere, 1967).

Nyerere further emphasised that self-reliance should be practiced in all levels of education, from primary to secondary and higher institutions, through activities like farming and entrepreneurship. Nyerere insisted that:

It is imperative that schools transform into communities that uphold the value of self-reliance. This implies that all schools—higher education included—especially secondary schools and other educational institutions—must support their own operations; they must function as both social and educational communities and economic ones. Every school need to

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have a farm or workshop on the school that supplies the community's food needs and contributes to the nation's overall total income (Fafunwa & Aisiku, 1982).

This insight of Nyerere concerning self-reliance in learning institutions is supported by Rutayongororwa (1987) who noted that the importance of manual labour in education has been defended and emphasised throughout the history of education, despite the prevailing viewpoint of Platonic educational philosophers who look down upon manual labour and undermine its educational value. As a result, teachers and other members of the society widely believed that performing manual labour, like agricultural work, rendered them inferior. Although Rutayongororwa's (1987) concept of self-reliance was originally discussed in the context of secondary school curricula in Tanzania, its relevance persists in the realm of university education, as demonstrated by this study focusing on the Kenyan university education curricula.

Mkonongwa (2018) goes on to point out that education for self-reliance, according to Nyerere, is a work-oriented education that aims to deliver actual solutions to societal problems. This type of education promotes equal effort and fair distribution of resources among individuals in society. Additionally, Mkonongwa (2018) highlights the need for adequate teaching and learning facilities to support practical activities in education for self-reliance. Many of these facilities, such as laboratory equipment and chemicals, are produced in factories, which calls for the establishment of more industries. Considering these points, it can be deduced that education for self-reliance is crucial for the development of the industrial economy.

In addition, according to the Presidential Working Party on Education Reform (2023), work-oriented education in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has the potential to stimulate rapid economic growth by harnessing new technologies and engaging the young population in employment that leads to innovation and entrepreneurship. Work-oriented education is crucial for bridging the skills gap and preparing individuals for the workforce. Unlike the report by the Presidential Working Party on Education Reform (2023), which targeted TVET institutions, this study examines the significance of work-oriented education in Kenyan universities.

Another implication is that university education should be geared toward problem-solving. Educated from universities should serve the community and contribute to solving societal challenges. In this context, the educational process should include hands-on problem-solving activities to provide training in specific skills and procedures. This educational approach will empower graduates with the insight to adeptly navigate and shape the world, fostering personal fulfilment and enabling them to make meaningful contributions to the welfare of society as a whole (Sanga, 2016). Furthermore, Nyerere's emphasis on Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) advocated for a downsizing in exams in favour of assessment techniques that encourage reasoning and an open mind as essential elements of problem-solving education (Nyerere, 1982).

Regarding the advantages of problem-solving in the Kenyan Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) education, Muchira, Morris, Wawire, and Oh (2023) elaborate that learners who possess these skills have an edge in independently devising solutions for new problems

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compared to their peers whose education does not prioritize this fundamental ability. Similarly, the Presidential Working Party on Education Reform (2023) taskforce report states that the CBC can equip students with the skills they need to thrive in the twenty-first century, including problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork. According to the insights provided by Muchira et al. (2023) and Kenya (2023), problem-solving education aids students in devising solutions for challenges encountered in educational environments as well as in their future professional endeavours. However, it is important to note that the aforementioned research studies on problem-solving techniques primarily focused on basic education rather than university education, which is the specific subject of this study.

Materials and Methods

With a focus on fostering self-reliance in Kenyan university education, a multifaceted research technique rooted in literature to investigate the socio-economic implications of Nyerere's educational philosophy was employed in this study. The research process included a comprehensive review of relevant literature, as well as the use of conceptual analysis, content analysis, and triangulation. The literature review encompassed an extensive analysis of academic publications, books, research projects, and official papers pertaining to Nyerere's education for self-reliance (ESR) and the socioeconomic role of university education. Conceptual analysis, which involves a rational dissection of ideas and language to enhance reader understanding as explained in Ominde, K'odhiambo, and Gunga (2021), was utilized to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the various concepts and statements employed in the study. This analysis focused on concepts such as self-reliance, community-centred education, work-focused education, and problem-solving education, all linked to Nyerere's educational philosophy. Furthermore, the concept of the socio-economic dimension of university education was scrutinised to achieve clarity.

The application of content analysis enabled a systematic and thorough evaluation, interpretation, and analysis of qualitative secondary data sources. Content analysis was performed on key documents, policy papers, and educational reports concerning Kenyan university education and Nyerere's educational principles. Triangulation as a qualitative research technique was applied to cross-reference information from multiple sources to ensure their validity and credibility (Triangulation in Research ~ Definition & Examples, 2023). The cross-reference data was pertaining Nyerere's educational philosophy and the socio-economic role of higher education.

Results

The results of this study reveal that the foundation of Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance was his familiarity with Fabian socialism. As a result, the Ujamaa, or socialist, perspective informed his ideas on education. He utilized his political leadership to promote his concept of education for self-reliance through published books, speeches, conferences, and the ideology of the Chama Cha Mapinduzi Party. Nyerere's educational philosophy ultimately aimed to establish Tanzania as an independent nation, where its citizens would harness the country's resources for the collective welfare of the community. As an educational thinker, the researcher infers that Nyerere's education philosophy advocates for community-focused education, work-

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oriented education, and problem-solving education. The theoretical framework employed in the study was based on Marxist and conservative theories. Despite the fact that Tanzania embraced a socialist economy at independence while Kenya followed a capitalist one, both East African nations share similar political, economic, social, and cultural roots. The socio-economic similarities between these two countries could provide a valuable opportunity for Kenyan universities to draw lessons from Nyerere's educational principles. These principles have demonstrated their resilience and applicability beyond Tanzania's specific historical and social context.

The first implication is that educators at universities should serve as role models for students, in accordance with Nyerere's educational philosophy. Additionally, educators should support active engagement and participation in the classroom to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to become independent after schooling. In order to educate students for successful integration into society, educators at Kenyan universities have a responsibility to emphasise values and customs in the classroom.

The second implication is that the goal of higher education should be to create socially conscious citizens. Furthermore, education at postsecondary institutions should focus on serving society rather than being purely self-serving and individualistic.

The third lesson is that university curricula should be redesigned to better reflect indigenous values and meet the nation's socio-economic needs. Moreover, the curriculum should incorporate a blend of theory and practice with a focus on practical courses. An emancipating pedagogy, which liberates students and society as a whole from the shackles of colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, and all other forms of exploitation, should also be integrated into the curricula. To make room for students' practical learning, curiosity, open minds, and a fundamental sense of confidence in their own place in the classroom, examinations should be de-emphasized.

The fourth lesson for Kenyan universities is that education should be structured to be relevant to society and serve it through community service. Fifth, university education should equip students for the workforce, whether they choose to pursue careers in white-collar or blue-collar fields that genuinely address societal problems. The sixth lesson emphasises the promotion of 21st-century problem-solving skills through education. These findings underscore the relevance of Nyerere's concept of self-reliance education and its significance in addressing the social and economic imperatives of Kenyan universities.

Discussion

The results of the study suggest that Nyerere's time at the University of Edinburgh in Britain had a profound influence on his educational, socio-economic, and political ideologies. Studying in Edinburgh exposed him to Fabian socialism, which inspired his self-reliant education system focused on community-based learning, work, and problem-solving. Suell (2022) supports this assertion by stating that Nyerere often referenced the theories of British Fabian socialists in developing his own form of socialism (Ujamaa). According to East African Community (2024), Nyerere developed his unique vision of tying socialism with the traditional African socialism (Ujamaa) while living in Edinburgh, in part because of his exposure to Fabian thought. As a result, his ideas on African socialism (Ujamaa) served as the foundation for his concept of education for self-reliance. This study examined the socio-economic implications of

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Nyerere's education for self-reliance founded on African socialism within the context of contemporary Kenyan university education.

The findings affirm Nyerere's belief that education for self-reliance should equip students with the knowledge, skills, and moral values necessary for independent living within a community, while shifting their mind-set from dependence to autonomy. By focusing on community engagement, work oriented learning, and problem-solving education, his educational philosophy could enhance the socio-economic role of university education. This contrasts with Monash University's (2024) view that university education primarily prepares students for the workforce and economic prosperity, neglecting the social aspect of education. Therefore, it is imperative to further explore the role of university education in nurturing self-reliant individuals with socio-economic impact in the Kenyan context.

The study's outcomes also highlighted the alignment of conservatism and Marxist perspectives with Nyerere's educational philosophy. Nyerere's approach to education for self-reliance embodied elements of a modified conservative African socialism (Ujamaa), emphasizing Tanzanian culture, indigenous values, and social responsibility. This finding is consistent with Nasongo and Musungu (2009) suggestion that Nyerere's educational worldview resonates with traditional principles to some extent. This finding suggests that the curriculum in Kenyan universities should be rooted in local culture and customs in line with a conservative perspective.

Nyerere's educational philosophy, grounded in Marxist socialism, emphasized classlessness and equality in Tanzanian society while promoting collaboration for societal welfare. Suell (2022) supports this finding, stating that Nyerere's appreciation for Marx socialism and scorn for dogmatic Marxism illustrates his focus on Tanzania's unique material conditions, which he anticipated would eventually require the development of its own indigenous form of socialism. Consequently, the pedagogy of Kenyan university education should also foster social equality and collaborative efforts for societal well-being.

The study revealed that Nyerere's education for self-reliance has implications for the role of educators, the purpose of education, and curriculum expansion in Kenyan universities. First, lecturers should serve as role models for students, imparting knowledge, skills, and values while instilling social norms that facilitate harmonious societal interactions.

Second implication on the purpose of the Kenyan university education, is to produce competent individuals capable of advancing intellectual, social, political, and economic aspects of society while preserving cultural heritage. Graduates should be socially accountable individuals prepared to give back to their communities. This finding is in concurrence with the perspective of Muideen (2017), who specified that Nyerere's purpose of education is to impart skills that empower individuals to achieve social goals, make them independent as political individuals, free as economic agents and self-reliant as metaphysical individuals.

Third, the curriculum in Kenyan universities should undergo reform to reflect indigenous values and address the socio-economic needs of the nation. Curriculum should also promote pedagogy of freedom aimed at nurturing well-rounded individuals across various spheres of life. This view resonates with Nyerere's mountain allegory in Sanga (2017), where those who

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climb the mountain of knowledge to the peak and returning to the valley of challenges become the source of liberation and empowerment to the illiterate society members in political, social, economic, and cultural realms.

The fourth implication of Nyerere's educational philosophy is that, university students should perform community service to benefit society, and university curricula in Kenya should be designed with this in mind. Keerberg, Kiisla, and Mmeltsemees (2013) also agree the finding that the functions of university education should encompass teaching, research, and community service. The study of Keerberg, Kiisla, and Mmeltsemees (2013) emphasized on how to incorporate community service into university learning programs to shape students into responsible, patriotic citizens who care about others in society. The idea of involvement in community service fortifies the social dimension of university education.

The fifth lesson is that a university education should prepare students for employment in both white-collar and blue-collar vocations as a means of improving societal socio-economic welfare. A study by Samoei and Makau (2022) came to the opposite conclusion, stating that the purpose of universities in Kenya is to create a pool of competent professionals with particular skills that meet the demand of the white collar labour market. In can be inferred from Samoei and Makau (2022) that university education in Kenya places greater emphasis on creating human capital for white-collar occupations rather than training for blue-collar jobs which could tackle the current challenge of unemployment facing graduates in Kenya.

The sixth implication is that problem-solving skills relevant to the twenty-first century should be inculcated in university education. Universities ought to offer in their pedagogy, specialized instruction in methods and techniques that involve the practical problem-solving exercises. The finding is expounded in Venkateshwar International School (2023), which pointed out that students with problem-solving skills are more likely to think critically, adapt to changing situations, perform well in educational settings and in their future careers, and ultimately lead successful lives. The ability to solve problems requires individuals to use their imagination, look into potential solutions, compare various approaches, and apply reason.

Recommendations

The study recommends incorporating Nyerere's educational theory and ideological principles into broader educational discussions to enhance the socio-economic paradigm in university education in Kenya.

In that regard, the following ideas will help to actualise this at the university level:

- University curricula should incorporate community service. This means that before graduating, students should complete community service projects to assist them cultivate fitting character traits for the transformation of Kenyan society and to shape themselves into responsible, patriotic individuals. It is therefore suggested that Kenyan universities establish directorates that coordinate institutional community service initiatives.
- University education should provide skills for both white-collar and blue-collar jobs. Some selected Kenyan universities should concentrate on offering degree programs in

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vocational education and training. This would prepare students for careers in blue-collar fields, addressing the issue of unemployment that most university graduates experience. Universities should engage in farming and entrepreneurial activities to generate revenue and make them financially autonomous. This action could alleviate the persistent issue of insufficient funding in higher education institutions.

- University curricula should also emphasize and highlight problem-solving abilities applicable to the twenty-first century. Exams that promote rote learning should be reduced in favour of assessment procedures that encourage practical learning, reasoning and an open mind as critical components of problem-solving education. Improving digital literacy, technology integration, and the globalisation of university education would result in graduates who possess the necessary information, skills, and problem-solving abilities.
- •To realize Nyerere's vision of community-mindedness, work-oriented learning, and problem-solving education, it is essential for lecturers to engage in continuous professional development. A strong framework for continuing professional development by universities would provide teaching staff with workshops, opportunities for continuous professional development and training on best practices in socioeconomically centred education.
- Kenya will greatly benefit from benchmarking and collaborating with other countries that have successfully integrated community service and vocational education into their curricula. Through benchmarking and collaboration, Kenya can gain valuable insights into best practices, potential challenges, and strategies tailored to the Kenyan context. South Africa and other progressive countries, for example, can provide suggestions on how to implement community service programs in higher education. Switzerland's example can give insight towards the realisation of work-oriented education and successful implementation of vocational training at universities.

Limitations of Nyerere's educational philosophy

Despite the overwhelming contextual, theoretical, and practical significance of Nyerere's philosophy of education for self-reliance in Tanzania, it gradually lost favour in education circles after economic and political changes in the mid-1980s because policymakers did not support it. Additionally, Nyerere's educational philosophy seemed not to have kept pace with the rapid advancements in science and technology, further limiting its realisation. Despite the shortcomings in the implementation of Nyerere's educational theory, it continues to have a significant socio-economic impact in African educational systems. Nyerere's vision for learning institutions directed by African values and education which is practical, work-centred, problem-solving and society-focused continues to inspire education scholars.

Conclusions

The study's findings suggested that economic motives often overshadow the advancement of social development in Kenyan universities. By embracing Nyerere's educational philosophy of self-reliance, notably in terms of curriculum development, educators' roles, and the general purpose of education, university education in Kenya can play a more socio-economic role. The philosophy has the potential to foster community engagement, a sense of social responsibility, problem-solving abilities, a strong work ethic, and the development of problem-solving skills

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applicable to the twenty-first century in university education. Integrating self-reliance education into university curricula could potentially tackle challenges encountered by universities, including inadequate government funding, elevated rates of graduate unemployment, and limited student involvement in community activities.

Suggestion for Future Research

The study's findings indicated that, even though Nyerere's educational concept of self-reliance was implemented in Tanzania, its full potential in terms of socio-economic positioning within university education had not yet been realised. Therefore, it is recommended that more focus be placed on developing both philosophical and empirical studies regarding the relevance of Nyerere's educational philosophy to the socio-economic facet in higher education beyond Kenya to in other African nations.

Conflict of Interest

"None".

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