Walking the theories we talk: Utilizing African social work theories in African research

Alemayehu GEBRU and Wario WAKO

ABSTRACT

The study employed a predominantly indigenous research framework of African-centered or Afrocentric research to explore how African social work researchers are using African social work theories as theoretical framework to guide their studies. This is important because African researchers are highly dependent on Western theories and research methodologies while investigating African issues. However, Western theories have not been suitable to comprehend the situations in Africa; therefore, it needs indigenous lenses to observe, analyze, and explain the social phenomena. The study participants were ten academician researchers at Jimma University who were identified through a purposive sampling technique. Also, eight articles were reviewed to learn whether the researchers used African theories as theoretical framework for their studies or not. The study employed thematic analysis to analyze the data. Finally, as ethical considerations, ethics don't exist on forms; it is human creatures that ought to be ethical. So, we used oral consent of the participants and conducted the interview with their language. To secure the trustworthiness of the study, the data were triangulated from interviewees and document reviews. The study showed that the reasons for why African social workers are relying on Western theories are to get acceptance, urban biased social work curriculum, lack of information about indigenous theories, the perplexity of developing theories and devaluing indigenous knowledge. Also, the study revealed that inducing researchers to use indigenous theories in their study and changing the orientation of our education are some solutions to minimize our dependence on Western theories while dealing with African issues. Therefore, we suggested that African scholars should see inward to better prognoses African matters and walk the theories we talk to be practical.

Author/s details:
Alemayehu Gebru, Lecturer, Jimma University, School of Social Work, Email: gebrualemayehu@gmail.com
Wario Wako, Lecturer, Jimma University, School of Social Work, Email: wariowako2464@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

As we read articles of social work in our country Ethiopia, we learned that social work scholars mainly dependent on Western's theory in conducting research and ignored the African theories. Even most of them didn't strive to develop a theory from their research analysis of the data they obtained from the participants. Rather, they use top-to-bottom approach by applying the existing theories that may perhaps not relevant to our cases. Thus, the purpose of this study was to indicate the gaps created in employing Western theoretical frameworks that were not considered the contextual values and knowledge of African countries. Furthermore, the decolonization and indigenization of social work education, practice and research efforts will be accelerated if we care more about contextualization as we do now.

BACKGROUND

The attitude of the world about theories should be developed and useful when they are from the Western perspectives is a legend in today's realm. African people have a long history of developing theories and they have been doing the same today. African has deep-rooted as well as beneficial theories that African descendants developed. Those they are the longstanding of ancient societies of African, most of them are not written; rather they are oral literature (orature). Theories become useful on how much practitioners, researchers and academicians applied it in their activities; though African theories are used less. Thus, just when Africans use their theories, they become vital. We can follow the influence of *Ubuntu* in the current world (African Social Work Network, 2021).

The African-centered agent is devoted to advancing inquire about that advances the voice of its members. It begins from the notion that people's encounters are one of a kind which their stories matter to the information era. Thus, inquire about is conducted that regards and respects the person and community (Davis, Williams, & Akinyela, 2010; Reviere, 2001; Zentella, 2015 as cited in Tricia, Colita & Iris, 2017). The researcher sees herself or himself as inter-reliant with the community. The thought of conducting inquire about that's not community-associated, educated, and authorized defies African-centered to inquire about. Additionally, the researcher contains an obligation to the community that keeps going well past the inquiry about concludes. In this manner, to include and esteem the points of view of the community, African researchers ought to utilize the worldviews of African individuals.

As the calling proceeds its tirelessness of social equity and human rights, the African-centered theory is doable to not as it understood the populaces of individuals planning, but with others inside the embroidered artwork of history and culture. Highlighting the encounters and commitments of assorted communities, African-centered social work has a permanent part to play within the profession's headway (Tricia, Colita & Iris, 2017). Whereas there's more work required to reveal what it offers the calling and communities over the globe, the opportunity is displayed to develop African-centered investigate undertakings and coordinated hone viewpoints as a way to address modern and future challenges.

There are studies about that concern almost the ethnocentric nature of show standards inside sciences that build up the premise for social work theory and hone with black families and children. Appropriately, Mekada (1999) examined the African-centered worldview and created a worldview for social work. The finding highlights the theoretical shortfalls inside existing social work models that don't consider the worldviews of different communities and society. The author questions the pertinence of the worldview of Western situated theories to African settings. Subsequently, the author contends for an alternative worldview that's grounded within the social verifiable reality of the black encounter.

Mazama asserted that Afrocentric paradigm is important to fairly understand the worldviews of African people. And the author said that Afrocentricity fights that our primary issue as African individuals is our as a rule oblivious appropriation of the Western worldview and point of view and their orderly conceptual systems. The list of those thoughts and theories that have attacked our lives as typical, normal, or indeed more awful, perfect is unbounded (2001, p. 387).

The notion of the author shows that the invasion of Western theories both studies and practices of African scholars restrict us from comprehending our problems and providing complete resolutions contextually. The author believes that Africa has immense theories to be applied both in studies and practices except the ignorance of them totally. Thus, the author said that there exists an assortment of Afrocentric hypotheses connected to a wide extent of themes. Usually not astounding since, as examined prior, African considers is committed to all angles of our lives. We might survey, as an outline, hypotheses created around African women and men's connections and social issues within the African community (Mazama A., 2001, p. 400).

When the author scrutinizes the existing literature of a broad base of information and discussion of the African-centered worldview and development of African-centered viewpoints in social work, it is not well studied yet. Even social work profession is challenged to embrace an alternative worldviews and paradigms as legitimate bases for social work theory and practice, when we observe the African-centered perspectives social work. And the

profession talks about its core principles of equality, social justice and self-determination without the African-centered worldview which shows its inadequacy. And the author convinced that the African-centered perspective is now well articulated its philosophical assumptions and knowledge base providing social work designs. Therefore, this support and nurture the cultural, philosophical, historical and collective development of African people throughout the world (Mekada, 1999). On the other hand, Ibrahimi and Mattaini argued that for social work to be valuable in Africa, reorientation of its strategies toward encouraging all-encompassing and innate mediation is obligatory. Pushing that decolonization of social work requires challenging prevailing models of hone and investigate whereas joining conventional values and hones that have withstood centuries of abuse into socially consonant shapes of benefit and request (2017, p. 1).

One of the authors elaborates that the great levels of absolute poverty, malnutrition and illiteracy throughout the sub-Saharan region need African social workers to cultivate novel methods of intervention which differ from those used in Western countries. Identifying, supplementing and improving the strengths of underprivileged people remain at the core of all social work practice. The author shows the range of survival strategies used by African households which should be considered by social workers when they deal with indigenous clients. And the author concludes that these require strengthening through unconventional approaches to orthodox social work methods (Siobhan, 2008).

Owusu-Ansah and Mji contended that to be significant and engaging, African-based inquiries have to consolidate African ideas from graduation to the conclusion of the application of policies exuding from the investigation. The creators accepted that typically invaluable work to engaging and important for context-specific enduring effect. Their work looked to extend mindfulness with respect to the need to grasp innate information within the arranging and application of investigation in Africa. They moreover confirmed the supportability of the Afrocentric worldview in African inquire about and contended the significance of an emancipatory and participatory kind of ponder that values and grasps innate information and individuals. The overwhelmingly Western-oriented scholastic circles and requests either thrust to the outskirts or curbed the African voice since innate information and approaches are routinely ignored or not taken genuinely (2013).

The aforesaid literature depicted that there is a need to conduct a study on how African social work researchers have been utilizing African social work theories. Thus, this study aimed at exploring how African social work researchers are using African social work theories as theoretical framework to guide their studies. To comprehend that, the following research questions were posed and addressed:

1.   Why do we depend on Western theories?
2.   What shall we do to reorient our approach towards African worldview?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ubuntu can direct research objectives, ethics and methodology, and decolonize research program and methodology (African Social Work Network, 2021). The researchers preferred to use *Ubuntu* as theoretical framework for this study. Since *Ubuntu* stands for all African communities who are highly interdependent and promote collective lives, it is the right framework to apprehend the African social work scholars. The theory of *Ubuntu* in social work helps to scrutinize the values and assets of the community while studying and practicing with them. Thus, we applied this indigenous theory to learn the understanding of social work scholars in Jimma University concerning African theories for African research. As long as *Ubuntu* is devised by the relational theory of 'I am what I am because of you', it revealed how Jimma University social work scholars give attention to the indigenous theories, perspectives and models. This *Ubuntu* theoretical framework offered an opportunity for the researchers to witness the experiences of individual scholars in their social environment and how they consider the worldviews of the community through applying indigenous theories, perspectives and models.

Root of Ubuntu

About 60,000 a long time prior, Black individuals moved out of Africa and a few settled within the Pacific locale. Relatives of the people who settled within the Pacific locale have values comparable to *Ubuntu* nowadays. These Black inborn individuals are found in Australia, Tonga, Fiji, Papua Modern Guinea. It cannot be marked down that *Ubuntu* begun some time recently the extraordinary movement out of Africa (African Social Work Network, 2021). About 4,000 a long time prior, verbal, archeological and etymological inquire about has appeared that most Black individuals were concentrated in West-Central and Northern parts of Africa. They at that point spread all through the landmass basically since of attack, desertification, moved forward innovation and populace development. Whereas they spread, they spread with their common societies and logic. This reasoning was *Ubuntu* (African Social Work Network, 2021). Though African theories have been developing long ago, theories and

approaches from outside that may be useful have been utilized in African research and practices. For instance, system theory and social learning theory with African examples and explanations are best examples. However, they can't replace *Ubuntu* or never seen as equal as *Ubuntu*. This is why we have interest in *Ubuntu*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories, models and frameworks used in Africa

As the philosophy of African, *Ubuntu* expresses the trustworthiness of the people of Africa and their communities secured by their collective values and practices. Though the hints of these values and practices vary across diverse ethnic groups, they all signpost to one thing – an authentic individual human being is part of a bigger and other momentous relational, communal, societal, environmental and spiritual world. The word *Ubuntu* is articulated in a different way in several African communities and languages but all stating to the similar thing (African Social Work Network, 2021). Hence, we can say that *Ubuntu* is an umbrella philosophy of Africans.

According to African Social Work Network, social work theories in Africa can be classified into four major parts, such as the green group, the light green group, the amber group and the red group theories. The green group of theories embraces of theories that we consider safe and useful. Most of them were developed inside Africa. The light green group theories are new and emerging theories cultivated in Africa, they are worthwhile. The amber group of theories involves theories developed outside but that may be beneficial. And, the red group theories, as the color indicates, are unsafe or risky theories, or those with some degree of relevance (2021).

Under the green group of theories, there are about twenty six theories though the number exceeds. The website listed a few, such as Afrocentrism, collectivism, African family theory (*Ukama*), individual-in-family theory, Ubuntu theories, indigenisation theory, *Ukuru* theory, decolonization theory, African social development model (Kaseke, 2001), one-Africa theory, independence theory, Pan-Africanism, African assets theory, African strengths theory, Ujamaa theory, diaspora theory, Paulo Freire theory of learning/pedagogy, Tanoa Ni Veiqaravi (serving bowl of serving others) (pacific islands theory), Maori people's models of wellbeing, illness and health, bottom-up approach, case management framework (Zimbabwe), six-tier system of child care, welfare and development, Jairos Jiri disability and rehabilitation model, Jairosi Jiri charity model, Nkrumaism, and orature theory (Zirimu's orature theory). The light green group of theories that are safe and emerging theories and approaches holds four African social work theories: theory of grandparents, friendship bench, dead aid theory and Kalinganire's social work practice model. And the amber group of theories which are from outside that may be useful in our context includes systems Theory (the west's *Ubuntu*-like ideas, should not replace *Ubuntu* or be seen as equal) and social learning theory with African examples and explanations (African Social Work Network, 2021). Now, at least African social work scholars can get one more material to be familiar with African social work theories. It will motivate them to read more about the African social work theories.

RESEARCH METHODS

A predominantly indigenous research framework of African-centered or Afrocentric research design was employed to identify the experiences of social work researchers in Jimma University. African-centered or Afrocentric inquiry tries to ascertain the essence of both individual and group experience of phenomena (as *Ubuntu* expresses 'I am what I am because of you'). Participants were selected purposely based on their relevance to the study at hand. Ten key informants from Jimma University, School of social work were involved and eight articles were reviewed to learn whether the researchers used African theories as theoretical framework for their studies or not. In-depth key informant interview and document review were applied to collect the data. The researchers reviewed literatures that were available online. The authors used the database of the African Journals Online (AJOL), the Africa Social Work Network (ASWNet), and the Ethiopian journal of social sciences and language studies. The thematically analyzed data generated the major themes. Data were triangulated from interviewees and document reviews to enhance the credibility of the findings. The oral consent of the participants to involve in the study, using codes instead of their name, and reporting the findings in aggregate manner were the strategies to consider the research ethics.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings are under two themes: reasons why Africans depend on Western theories and possible solutions to reorient our approach towards African worldview.

Reasons why Africans depend on Western theories

Direct replica of social work education curriculums from America

The document review from African Social Work Network aggregates information and a resource to facilitate social work on the African continent is revealed:

> *When professional social work was introduced to Africa, as was the case in most developing countries of the Caribbean, Asia, the Pacific and South America, the foreigners who brought social work wrongly assumed that social work was new to these regions, and therefore chose to sideline, ignore and replace existing systems with theirs. In replacing existing systems, the foreign people depended on theories from outside. The local theories did not die, but thrived where Western influence was not there, or alongside them. With time, most local theories found their way back into African social work.*

The finding from key informant interviewee (*KI-7*) showed that the Ethiopian social work curriculum which is directly fetched from the Westerns or American's curriculum has been influenced the professionals to depend on it instead of looking inside. Moreover, the participant asserted that the ease accessibility of the Western social work theories made the professionals sluggish and made them to take and go. Though there are some countries and communities of Africa remain strong in using indigenous theories, perspectives and models, the application of indigenous theories in Jimma University School of social work researchers is meager.

To get acceptance

The finding showed that African social work scholars are trapped with Western oriented education, research and theories to get acceptance from them. *KI-4* said that students, instructors and researchers are clinging to Western theories to get acceptance from their supervisors, journal editors, reviewers and examiners. Besides, *KI-3* asserted that thesis, dissertations and articles may not get approval, if they didn't include Western theoretical frameworks as a guiding tool. Likewise, *KI-5* confirmed that all concerned bodies, such as students, instructors, researchers, supervisors, examiners and journal editors as well as reviewers intrinsically believed as the Western theories are the paramount and the standard of quality. Therefore, African social work researchers will prefer to employ the Western theoretical frameworks to obtain the gateway to join the international scientific community.

Urban biased social work curriculum

Literatures showed that though little efforts have been made to indigenize social work education, international and local information indicated that the profession is urban biased. Similarly, literatures of social work education, practice and research in Ethiopia revealed that scholars and students were give due emphasis to urban problems and look for resolutions there. Therefore, focusing on the urban issues has neglected the rural community where contextualizing is highly feasible and finding indigenous knowledge, theories, perspectives as well as models are vividly experiential.

This gap uncovered that conducting all-embracing studies to understand the context and developing new theories based on the data from indigenous people is very compulsory. Besides, crafting strong social work curriculum which considers the culminated knowledge of the continent is additional opportunities to better harness the solutions to the local difficulties.

Western oriented education curriculum: the finding revealed that early socialization of our education system has tremendous impacts on the attitude of today's scholars to incline towards the Western knowledge, skills and values. *KI-2* mentioned, "*We grow up with Western's perspectives and inculcated that the Western community has better knowledge than us*". He also said that we have developed inferiority complex by considering the Westerns as superior in introducing and advancing the modern knowledge in the world. Similarly, *KI-9* stated that many African countries are following their education by Western language, particularly English language. Most of the time, knowledge and skills are defined in terms of Western language. So, poor adoption of curriculum design through using African languages pushes African scholars including social work researchers to take their case to the Western world. Hence, the educational orientation, the distorted attitude we have about Western, and our socialization are played great role in hindering us from knowing and using our resources properly.

Lack of information about indigenous theories

The indigenous theories, perspectives and models which are in practice in African continent are not accessible to the scholars to the expected level. African scholars are weak in disseminating and publicizing what they have done concerning indigenous theories, perspectives and models that can help researchers and practitioners with the knowledge of the context. *KI-4* stated, "*first of all, I want to ask that; do we have African social work theory? If we have, where they are?*" And the information from African Social Work Network confirmed that there is lack of information regarding orature theories in Africa and the problem of inaccessibility of orature theories slowed down their application in African social work research. The finding asserted that African scholars have been hesitating to utilize information from the oral literature because they are cynical about the credibility and dependability of data from oral literature. Unless they begin to reconsider their sarcastic perspective regarding the unwritten theories, the home-based knowledge will remain as untapped resources of the continent. Hence, the finding from the participants affirmed that African scholars should work towards decolonizing social work education from Western dominated theories for practice and research.

The perplexity of developing theories

It's debatable and perplexing the application of theoretical framework to qualitative research. Because to develop either theoretical or conceptual framework, we need to conduct extensive literature review or generate from rich data of the participants. These two tiresome procedures of utilizing theories, perspectives or models in research have been hindering researchers to undertake studies either without theories or with Western worldview theories. For instance, Wario and Alemayehu have studied on children's socialization during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. However, they failed to use African social work theoretical framework to guide their investigation. And they synthesis their finding with Western experiences rather than context oriented conditions (2020). Though the pandemic has a global trend in touching all human kinds, the preparedness, responses and feedbacks of every region might be different. Therefore, having context specific theoretical lens for social work research is very crucial. Furthermore, they conducted a study on the lived experiences of female university students during the lockdown time. But they ignored the Western and local theories, perspectives or models to understand the worldviews of the local people. Even though they involved female university students from diverse groups in terms of their ethnics, age, and socio-economic status and so on, they failed to concern about their viewpoints (2021).

Alemayehu Gebru is conducted a study on psychosocial impacts of covid-19 lockdown and coping strategies of the community of Jimma University, southwest Ethiopia and found that the participants handled the challenges through changing their lifestyle, compliance to instructions, concerning for others as well as they engaged in resource mobilization, gave time to their family and worked on self-update. And the author at least tried to utilize African social work theory: *Ubuntu* which is very relevant to social work practice and research (2020). As we learned from this study, it focuses on the experiences of the community of Jimma University and used the African-centered social work theory and it helped to observe the worldview of the local people. Even this researcher picked up the readymade of African-centered theory like spoon-feed rather than developing novel theory by using grounded theory method or conducting extensive literature review.

Devaluing indigenous knowledge

The finding showed that African scholars didn't considered the African theories as valuable as the Western's one. *KI-3* said, "*I think African scholars have doubt about the usefulness of African theories*". Similarly, *KI-10* stated, "*Why we are struggling to develop new theories or perspectives? What can we add on the Western's efforts? Nothing new that we can bring to the table: all worldviews are already studied.*" During our document review, we have learned that almost all researchers are ignored African theoretical frameworks in their study that indicated the devaluing stance they have towards African indigenous knowledge. Moreover, *KI-8* affirmed that most African social work researchers sent their findings to Western for publication considering their journals as perfect and suitable for academic promotion. So, African scholars including social work researchers send their research to the Western for publication where Western theories are highly welcomed.

Identity confusion

The finding indicated that African scholars those who attended their academic careers with western theories and in their physical and social environment were influenced by their worldviews. For instance, *KI-9* said:

Due to the social problems like poverty in Africa, there are issues of brain drain, emigrants and many African students are following their education outside their continent mostly Europe and America. After completing their education and work, they return to Africa and start to show the interest of Western in Africa. Western has supporters from Africa who follow and run their agendas in Africa as they socialized and trained by them. So, these all influence African scholars including social work researchers to fail to use African theories while doing their research in the local context.

Possible solutions to reorient our approach towards African worldview

Thematizing studies, brainstorming seminars, crafting strong social work curriculums

Conducting research with the intention of developing social work theories from the context by having the indigenous knowledge in mind will be vital to decolonize the Western theories. The participants also believed that contextualizing Western theories of social work which fit the indigenous communities need is advisable. For example, different participants suggested different strategies to contextualize Western theories of social work in Ethiopia. For instance, *KI-1* stated, "*We take theories that can be a response to our country's problem and leave the competencies designed for Westerns problem, e.g. theories related with suicide*". On the other hand, *KI-3* said, "*Currently we have included 'Indigenous Social Work Course' to our curriculum and in the future thematizing thesis works, preparing brainstorming seminars; crafting strong curriculums are helpful for contextualizing purposes*". Hence, he stressed that indigenizing the profession and fitting it to our context is an assignment for each and every institution offering the social work program. Thus, the participants asserted that African scholars should give primacy to indigenous social work knowledge and theories to better understand the cases of the community and provide context sensitive solutions. And the finding revealed that the assignment calls for African social work scholars to utilize indigenous social work theories in their studies and practice, undertake studies to develop social work theories, craft strong indigenized social work curriculum and establishing strong social work professional associations in African context. Then, these indigenous social work curriculum and strong social work associations will craft context oriented standards and competencies to handle the problems of Africans by Africans.

According to the key informant (*KI-4*), conducting extensive research to develop indigenous knowledge of social work for African social work professionals is a way out to decolonize the profession from the Western oriented theory. By undertaking widespread investigation in the continent, scholars can comprehend and uncover the profound indigenous social work knowledge, skills and values and the upcoming professionals will be liberated from the total dependency of the Western theories. Therefore, thematizing local studies will contribute for the cultivation of indigenous knowledge and designing strong indigenous social work curriculum.

Inducing researchers to use indigenous theories in their study

The finding indicated that providing incentive to African researchers to use indigenous social work theories in their studies will improve the current gaps of depending on the Western's worldview. *KI-5* confirmed that giving due emphasis to African-centered theories and rewarding those scholars who have been employing indigenous theories for their research and practice will enhance its utilization in the future endeavors. And *KI-4* affirmed that African social work journals in particular and African journals in general should give priority to accept and publish the work of scholars with indigenous theories, perspectives and models. Moreover, *KI-1* stated that African journals in general and African social work journals in particular have to speed up the open access opportunities of papers published with indigenous worldviews.

Changing the orientation of our education

The finding revealed that African social work education curriculum should change its orientation towards inside-out approach. *KI-9* affirmed that the African social work education curriculum is a copy-paste of those Western educational worldviews; therefore, unless African alters this orientation, they remain under the worldviews of the outsiders. And, *KI-8* said that socializing African children with indigenous theories, perspectives and models, is the only way out from the predominant influences of Western's worldviews which is tailored with their size. Furthermore, KI-7 asserted, "*from our childhood to this day, our attitude is twisted with the alleged of whites are well-educated and have advanced solutions for every problem in the world*". Thus, the finding gives a clue to alter the orientation of our education to reconsider its primacy to Western theories, perspectives and models.

African for African should be practical

The result from document reviews showed that most of African social work studies suggest the African problems should be addressed by African methods. And context-specific solutions are well-fitted the situations as scholars recommended. However, the application of such powerful technique is not as expected to this end. Therefore, *KI-6* asserted, "*we have to walk the theories we talk; otherwise, other centuries to pass as we talk*".

DISCUSSION

There are a number of similarities among the themes of this study finding and others scholarly contributions. Nevertheless, there are some themes peculiar to this particular study. For instance, the African Social Work Network aggregates information and resources to facilitate social work on the African continent affirmed that there are countries with social work theories and remain strong against the Western's worldviews (2021). The other study showed that there are several theories and models to be applied both to studies and practices except the ignorance of African scholars (Ama Mazama, 2001). Nonetheless, in this study, we have identified that social work scholars in Jimma University School of social work are querying about the existence of African social work theories. Forget regarding the classifications of African social work theories based on their relevance to the context of Africa, the participants were uncertain its existence at all.

This study asserted that reorienting the educational curriculum from Western dominated worldviews to context-specific perspectives. Besides, Ibrahimi and Mattaini claimed that to make social work fruitful in Africa, reorientation of its approaches and challenging prominent models of practice and research (2017).

Thanks to African Social Work and other scholars for their unreserved efforts to develop and nurture African-centered philosophy and theoretical perspectives to be used for education, practice, and research. Novice scholars will be held responsible to change into practice those identified African social work theories and continue striving to develop novel context-specific indigenous worldviews. To do so, African social work scholars can use fieldwork and research as hand to implement what has been learned into the classroom. Then, we can say, we are walking what we are talking and the African philosophy and theoretical framework '*Ubuntu*' becomes eloquent.

The finding uncovered that African social work authors are challenged to utilize African-centered theories in their studies due to many fold factors. The reasons include: to get acceptance by Western scholars and institutions through using their theories, the direct copy of social work education curriculum from Western, the urban biased social work curriculum, lack of information about indigenous theories, the perplexity of developing novel theories, devaluing indigenous knowledge.

The finding showed that inducing researchers to use indigenous theories in their study, thematizing studies, brainstorming seminars, crafting strong social work curriculums, changing the orientation of social work education and making the African for African rhetoric practical are the mitigating mechanisms for aforesaid challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the essence of the finding, we can suggest the following way outs.

1. African social work professionals should provide a leading opportunity to African-centered theories in their studies and practices.
2. African social work journals should give due emphasis in making African theories, perspectives and models accessible to the world.
3. African social work instructors and students should look for indigenous worldview to better illustrate and understand the local experiences in their day to day academic endeavors.
4. African social work researchers should conduct wide-ranging studies to cultivate African theories and consolidate the already identified.
5. African social work journals should encourage local authors those using African social work theories by giving prime in publishing and disseminating the articles worldwide.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, though there are some African scholars who use African theories for African studies, still it needs further consideration to get the contextual perspectives. The dependency of African researchers on the Western framework will be declined and the decolonization process becomes easy if they try to see the situation of Africa with an African lens. Otherwise, the concept of from the 'west to the rest' remains the governing framework and the African problems will be diagnosed by non-Africans without the knowledge of the physical and social environment. It is obvious that there are so many reasons behind ignoring the African-centered theories in using for studying African problems by local scholars. However, it is the responsibility of African social work scholars to develop, apply and integrate African theories, perspectives, and models as a theoretical framework for their studies. Taking prime responsibilities in promoting the indigenous knowledge, theoretical framework, and

contextualizing the Western theories rather than applying as it is, is the mandate of social work professionals in Africa due to their professional values indebted them to do so.

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