



Women as Custodians of Early Childhood Socialization in African Philosophy: Perspectives from Traditional Songs

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Abstract

This article examines African philosophical perspectives on the role of women as caregivers by referring to traditional songs of the Nyakyusa community in Tanzania. Ethnographic data were collected in the villages of Isale, Ikubo and Ipuguso in Luteba ward, Rungwe District, Mbeya Region. The main objective was to identify how traditional songs reflect, perpetuate and legitimate philosophical views that position women as central agents in the moral upbringing of children. Methods included in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation and textual quotations of traditional songs obtained from cultural groups in the study ward. Collected data were analyzed thematically, taking into account the social, cultural and philosophical foundations evident in song texts. The study was guided by sociological theory that treats literature as a mirror of society, reflecting social structures, division of roles and power relations. Results show that Nyakyusa traditional songs portray women as the primary caregivers, moral instructors, custodians of social upbringing and links between past and future generations. The songs depict upbringing as a social duty aimed at shaping children around values of personhood, respect, responsibility and family solidarity. However, the research also identified changes caused by education, religion and economic transformations that affect how this role is understood by the current generation. The study concludes that Nyakyusa traditional songs are an important repository of African philosophy that recognizes and values the role of women in childrearing while offering opportunities to rethink the division of responsibilities in a changing social context.

Keywords: African philosophy, Women, Custodian, Childhood, Traditional Songs and Sociological theory.

1.0 Introduction

This article explores African philosophical perspectives on the role of women as child caregivers through an analysis of traditional songs among the Nyakyusa. African philosophy is a system of thought grounded in the experiences, customs, traditions and beliefs of African communities in understanding life, personhood and human relations. Within this framework, women are regarded

as central to life, continuity of lineage and the construction of moral values that sustain the community (Iyoha, 2002). In the Swahili philosophical context formed by language, culture and history the role of women as caregivers receives particular emphasis. Childrearing is not merely a private family duty but a social responsibility that affects the future of the entire community. This article investigates in depth how African philosophy, especially within a Swahili frame, regards women as shapers of personhood, morals and children's identities. Through this perspective we can understand how upbringing connects to concepts of personhood, respect, solidarity and responsibility. The analysis shows that the role of women is not confined to private biological functions but is part of a broader social structure aimed at producing morally and culturally grounded generations.

In Swahili philosophy the concept of personhood (utu) is central to explaining human value in society. Utu encompasses respect, decorum, compassion and responsibility to others; these qualities are instilled from childhood through upbringing. Women, as mothers or primary caregivers, are recognized as the first teachers of utu. Through language, proverbs, stories and traditional songs, women instruct children on how to live according to norms of respect and morality. In Swahili communities, sayings such as "good upbringing begins at home" imply that the family, under women's supervision, is the primary site of social instruction (Hoppers, 2002). This philosophy holds that without solid maternal upbringing, society risks losing its moral direction. Thus, women's roles are understood not only in terms of biological reproduction but also in their capacity to cultivate personhood and good behavior in children. This article highlights how the concept of utu in Swahili philosophy directly relates to women's contribution to childrearing.

African philosophy emphasizes solidarity and communalism as the basis of social life. In Swahili societies, a child is considered the concern of the whole community, but women bear the daily responsibility of ensuring the child is raised according to acceptable morals. Through their caregiving, children learn their duties toward family, lineage and the larger community. Women introduce children to lineage history, customs and traditions, thereby building children's social identity. This contribution extends beyond the household into the construction of a resilient community. Swahili philosophy views childrearing as a social investment in which the woman is the chief custodian of the process (Kabila, 1993). Thus, the woman's role as caregiver is central to the continuity of cultural and moral values. This article analyzes how communalist ideas support the view of women as child-builders in Swahili philosophy.

Historically, Swahili women have also been preservers of language and culture. Through everyday conversation, poetry, proverbs and riddles, they transmit cultural heritage to younger generations. African philosophy recognizes language as a vehicle for carrying social ideas and values; thus, when a woman teaches a child the mother tongue, she transmits the community's philosophy (Kamwangamalu, 2003). This upbringing includes social manners, modes of interacting with elders and respect norms characteristic of Swahili culture. In this way the woman becomes a caregiver in physical, intellectual and cultural terms. This article discusses how the preservation of language and culture through maternal upbringing supports sustaining Swahili philosophy in times of social and cultural change brought by globalization and technological development.

Debate about the role of women as caregivers in Swahili philosophy does not lack contemporary challenges. Social, economic and technological changes have altered the division of roles within the family. Many women now participate in economic activities outside the home, changing the picture of traditional caregiving (Asante, 1990). Despite these changes, African philosophy still stresses the importance of upbringing grounded in personhood and moral values. Therefore, the pressing question is how society can preserve women's moral significance in childrearing while accommodating modern change. This article contributes to that debate by showing that the woman's role in upbringing is not merely historical but a living concept that needs rethinking to sustain Swahili philosophy for future generations. Accordingly, this article addresses African philosophical perspectives on women's role as caregivers in Swahili literature.

2.0 Research Methods

This qualitative ethnographic study investigated African philosophical perspectives on the woman's role as caregiver in traditional songs of the Nyakyusa community. Various methods were used to gather rich primary data from Rungwe district, Mbeya region. Primary data in qualitative research are direct information collected from participants or original sources, such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, focus group discussions and direct quotations of data to reflect community understanding, attitudes, values and experiences without secondary interpretation. The specific methods used included: analysis of traditional songs focusing on lyrics and their relation to childrearing and social morals; in-depth interviews with elders, women who have caregiving roles and community members to obtain their perspectives; focus group discussions to capture communal interpretations and shared meanings of songs; and participant observation at cultural ceremonies and child-related events to observe how songs are used in practice. Textual analysis

was used to identify images of women as caregivers, moral teachers and cultural custodians. These methods were connected with sociological theory, which views literature as a mirror of society reflecting its structure, social attitudes and division of labor and illuminated how African philosophy values the woman's role in childrearing.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

Sociological theory provides a scholarly perspective that examines society as a system influencing attitudes, actions and values of social actors. The origins of this theory can be traced to nineteenth-century European social transformations, notably in France and England when economists, historians and social investigators sought to explain rapid social change linked to industrialization. The theory was formally introduced by Auguste Comte in 1838, arguing that society can be analyzed scientifically by focusing on structure, processes and customs (Giddens, Duneier, Appelbaum, & Carr, 2018). In this study sociological theory was used to understand how Nyakyusa traditional songs reflect African philosophical views on the role of women as child caregivers. Songs were analyzed to see how they reflect social attitudes, gendered division of labor and cultural morals. From this perspective, women's place in upbringing is the outcome of social concepts and attitudes validated by history, customs and traditional songs that reinforce their role in childrearing and community welfare.

Applying sociological theory, the analysis showed that Nyakyusa traditional songs represent women not only as child caregivers but also as guardians of morals and social identity. The theory emphasizes that social actions, including childrearing, are products of social structures related to cultural values, attitudes and procedures (Collins, 2019). Songs were examined through thematic and social content analysis to determine how society positions women as first moral teachers, embodiments of personhood and links between generations. Through this theoretical lens, the study demonstrated how songs enable social and moral upbringing, portraying cooperation between individuals and the community. Sociological theory also allowed analysis of gendered division of labor among the Nyakyusa as reflected in traditional songs. The analysis examined how songs place women in caregiving roles while men are associated with protection and public roles. The theory explains that social views are built on everyday practices and transmitted across generations through oral literature and cultural narratives (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Macionis & Plummer, 2017). Thus, traditional songs are not merely entertainment but essential means for maintaining social attitudes and African philosophical beliefs about women's roles in childrearing.

Using sociological theory enabled understanding of how traditional songs relate to social and cultural childrearing among the Nyakyusa. Songs teach children values of respect, personhood and family solidarity while affirming women's responsibilities as primary caregivers and generational links. The theory also confirms that communities use literature to maintain social attitudes and childrearing practices while adapting these views to social and economic changes (Durkheim, 2014). Therefore, songs function as a social system that transmits African philosophy about childrearing and women's roles. Sociological theory facilitated analysis of how social changes—education, religion and economic shifts—affect the woman's role as caregiver as depicted in traditional songs. The analysis showed how these factors can broaden or modify traditional childrearing attitudes. Nevertheless, songs remain a crucial cultural repository that balances African values of personhood, caregiving and social solidarity. The theory contributes to explaining songs as part of a social system that governs relationships, morals and upbringing, reaffirming the woman's role as caregiver and guardian of cultural childrearing. Hence, this study explored African philosophy concerning women's caregiving role through Nyakyusa traditional songs.

4.0 African Philosophy and the Woman as Caregiver in Traditional Songs

African philosophy values social solidarity, personhood and family responsibility, viewing women as primary caregivers. In Nyakyusa traditional songs, women are depicted as moral teachers, cultural custodians and generational links. These songs teach values of respect, solidarity and personhood, affirming women's roles in childrearing and community welfare. They serve as entertainment while maintaining social attitudes and African philosophical values. The following sections present philosophical themes from the songs that reflect women's caregiving role.

4.1 Source of Life and Social Continuity

Within African philosophical contexts, women are seen as pillars of life, upbringing and social continuity. This view is grounded in communalism and solidarity that emphasize "a person is a person through others." As mothers, caregivers and first moral teachers, women are sources of traditional knowledge—customs and practices that are passed down through generations (Mezu, 2003). Through their reproductive role they are a spring of life, but beyond that they preserve the community's cultural and spiritual identity. Many Swahili proverbs such as "*Mama ni nguzo ya nyumba*" ("A mother is the pillar of the home") suggest that without women the foundation of family and society weakens. In many African communities' women participate in production, conflict resolution and nurturing morally grounded generations. Thus, African

philosophy recognizes women not only as biological parents but as pillars of morals, solidarity and sustainable development.

Women are regarded as the basis for social life not merely as biological bearers but as custodians of upbringing, morals and social solidarity. Women ensure continuity of new generations and preserve societal values (Makumba, 2008). In Nyakyusa traditional songs this idea is made explicit. For example, the song “*Mama ni Taa ya Nyumba*” (Mother is the Home’s Lamp) describes the mother as the home’s lamp, teacher of children, ever present day and night. The mother is the lamp because she brings love, wisdom and calm to the household. She rears children with good morals, strengthens solidarity and is a pillar of hope, patience and household development. The lyrics underscore the mother as the first caregiver and moral teacher, ensuring that children grow up respecting elders, solidarity, kinship and social values. The song affirms women as sources of social life, supervising sustainable upbringing and ensuring new generations possess appropriate morals and behaviors.

Women are also portrayed as guardians of culture and community history, a role reflected in songs used at social ceremonies such as weddings, harvest celebrations and naming rights. The song “*Mama Hutunza Mila*” (Mother Guards Customs) affirms that women preserve customs by sowing and tending seeds of personhood in children’s hearts and minds as they mature physically and spiritually. Women sustain customs and traditions by transmitting them to the next generation, ensuring continuity. Through childrearing, organizing cultural events and disseminating stories and traditional songs, women safeguard societal culture (Momoh, 1998). This role strengthens family solidarity, preserves morals and forms coherent communities that respect their past and cultural heritage.

Traditional songs contribute to the image of women as guardians of the lineage and primary participants in social upbringing. The song “*Usiache Mkono wa Mama*” (Do Not Leave Your Mother’s Hand) emphasizes not leaving a mother’s hand because she is a model and guide for children. It confirms the woman’s role in ensuring that new generations acquire morals, social skills and respect. The lyrics describe the mother’s hand as support, comfort and refuge in times of joy or adversity. Supporting the mother preserves family solidarity, morals and customs. This relationship fosters respect, solidarity and household development across generations, illustrating how traditional songs teach children solidarity, personhood and cooperation while reaffirming African philosophy that women are the basis of upbringing and social life.

Women are valued in traditional songs as sources of social life because they bridge generations, transmit morals and maintain family and social solidarity. The song “*Mama ni Shina la Maisha*” (Mother is the Root of Life) states that without the mother the tree yields no fruit and family unity fails. The lyrics mean that the mother is a root of life because she is the family and society’s foundation, a caregiver who embodies love, compassion and patience. Through upbringing children receive good morals, respect and practical life knowledge. Women reinforce family solidarity, contribute to household development and preserve cultural customs (Mutungi, 2011). The mother is depicted as the home’s lamp offering comfort and shelter in hardship. Thus, the song supports African philosophical claims that women are biological progenitors and essential custodians of social life. These songs confirm the woman’s position as caregiver, teacher and guardian of social solidarity and upbringing.

4.2 Bridge between Family and Community

In African philosophy women are viewed as vital links between the family and society because they sustain relationships, morals and social interactions. Within the household a woman serves as caregiver, advisor and reconciler ensuring cohesion and understanding. Through her reproductive and nurturing role, she teaches children customs, traditions and respect for the wider community (Mbele, 2005). By doing so she links the family to the community because the values cultivated at home manifest in children’s behavior as they engage in communal activities. In many African settings women take part in community events like ceremonies, funerals, production groups and reconciliation processes. Such participation strengthens social networks across lineages and groups. Thus, women are pillars and bridges connecting family and society, ensuring that solidarity, morals and social identity are transmitted across generations.

Women are seen as links between family and community because they oversee early childrearing and ensure family values are nurtured within the community. They are central connectors who unite household members with love and wisdom. Women coordinate relationships, calm conflicts and build understanding within the home. Through rearing and advice, they strengthen solidarity and make the family a center of peace, safety and sustainable development (Nzewi, 2007). Nyakyusa traditional songs corroborate this view; for example, the song “*Dira*” (Direction) says the woman is the family’s and community’s guide, providing moral, loving and wise instruction. Through upbringing and guidance, she shows the proper way of living with respect and responsibility. Women help children and family members distinguish right from wrong and encourage adherence to personhood principles. With wisdom and patience women direct generations toward success and stable life (Amadiume,

1987). These depictions show how women act as links between family and society by being the first caregivers who teach respect, family solidarity and behaviors required in the wider community.

Through moral training and custom transmission, women link family and society. The traditional song “*Mpanzi wa Jadi*” (The Traditional Farmer) explains that women plant seeds of personhood in children by teaching morals, respect and responsibility. Through close caregiving, guidance and practical examples, mothers show the difference between right and wrong and help children form good habits. The woman’s primary duty is to perpetuate social customs, ensuring new generations develop solid personhood. With love and patience, she offers moral light to guide children to be respectful, compassionate and make proper choices (Parreñas, 2015). Thus, she is both guardian and cultivator of the next generation’s personhood. These narratives demonstrate women’s roles in teaching children social customs and ethics, ensuring the family’s social solidarity within the broader community.

Women are considered permanent links between family and community because they lead social and cultural upbringing. The song “*Mpanzi wa Jadi*” also portrays the woman as the model of life for children. Through childbirth and upbringing women directly contribute to social continuity and human preservation. Women are caregivers who nurture, care for and teach customs and values. They exemplify patience, love and wisdom contributing to peace and social cohesion (Nnaemeka, 1997). Thus, women are models of life and foundations of family and community welfare. These songs demonstrate that women provide the basis for early upbringing, ensuring new generations grow with behaviors, morals and skills necessary to sustain social cohesion.

Women are valued in traditional songs as bridges connecting family and community because they maintain family cohesion and social upbringing. Building and maintaining family solidity are essential for social development. The family is the center of upbringing and repository of social values where solidarity begins with love, respect and spiritual bonds among community members. Women as caregivers and exemplars of life contribute decisively to maintaining this solidarity by teaching morals, preserving customs and encouraging social cohesion. Family thriving depends on communal cooperation and solidarity, which promote social harmony, peace and cultural solidarity (Oyewumi, 2016). By strengthening this solidarity society attains stability and sustainable development where everyone feels valued. Therefore, women confirm the African philosophical view that families and communities cannot remain whole without their contribution to upbringing, culture and morals.

4.3 Custodian and Guardian of Culture

From African philosophical premises, women are recognized as custodians and guardians of cultural heritage. Their household and social positions enable them to manage customs, practices and values transmitted from generation to generation. Through childrearing women teach the mother tongue, respect, manners and social foundations that define the community. In this way they become pillars for preserving cultural identity. Women also actively participate in social events such as cultural ceremonies, traditional worship, weddings and rituals where ancestral knowledge is practiced (Ojaide, 1996). In many African contexts women are storytellers, singers and proverbs carriers that convey the community's philosophy. Thus, women are caregivers and repositories of traditional knowledge and ensure culture remains vibrant even amid social change and globalization.

Women are honored as cultural custodians who ensure that social values, customs and traditions endure across generations. Nyakyusa traditional songs illustrate this role. For example, the song "*Mila Zetu Utu Wetu*" (Our Customs, Our Personhood) says the mother tends customs by sowing seeds of personhood in children's hearts. These lyrics show how women preserve culture by teaching children respect for elders, family solidarity and the morals that maintain social cohesion. Through these songs communities reflect African philosophy that the woman is the foundation of social and cultural upbringing. This supports the claim that without women new generations would lack essential moral guidance. Within African philosophical frameworks of *utu/Ubuntu*—where a person exists through others—women occupy the role of linking past to future by teaching children history, beliefs and social procedures (Hutchison & Aidoo, 2011). Through songs, proverbs and rituals women ensure cultural inheritance is not lost but sustained for the whole community's benefit.

Women are also seen as cultural developers who ensure customs and traditions are promoted and adapted as society changes. The song "*Mama ni Mwongozo wa Vizazi*" (Mother is the Guide of Generations) states that mothers are guides and teachers who convey stories of previous generations, forming a complete educational tradition through customary methods. Here women teach stories, proverbs and songs that contribute to the community's cultural life. Through early upbringing they emphasize social knowledge, solidarity and moral values that maintain culture. This song shows women not only conserve culture but also cultivate it, ensuring that new generations continue to value and participate in their cultural heritage. In African philosophy women are regarded as children's first guides because they are primary caregivers and initial teachers. Through the concept of personhood that emphasizes social solidarity and responsibility, children grow learning morals, respect and social duties.

Women direct children toward good conduct, work and cooperation (Eze, 2001). Through storytelling, proverbs and daily teachings they form children into responsible citizens. Consequently, women are moral and developmental guides for future generations.

Women are appreciated in traditional songs as guardians of culture because they maintain family solidarity, early upbringing and transmission of cultural heritage. The uniqueness of women's caregiving appears in the close emotional bond they establish with children from early life stages. Typically, mothers provide the first essential care involving love, comfort and close protection. They notice children's needs even before they are expressed, helping children develop security and self-confidence (Ntarangwi, 2009). Women also emphasize morals, compassion and open communication within the family. In contrast to men—often directed more toward discipline and preparing for external challenges—women focus on nurturing emotions and behaviors. However, the contributions of both complement and strengthen child development.

4.4 School of Personhood, Morals and Discipline

Another dimension of African philosophy views women as the primary school of personhood, morality and discipline because they are the earliest caregivers and teachers in human life. Within the family women teach children respect, patience, responsibility and care for others. These early lessons form the basis for a child's behavior and conduct in the wider society (Oluwole, 2014). Therefore, women shape personhood that African philosophy values emphasizing solidarity, compassion and living with regard for others. Additionally, women reinforce discipline through everyday guidance, ensuring children and family members adhere to customs, traditions and social norms. Through advice and personal example, they foster morals that sustain peace and social stability. In this sense, women are living institutions of moral education contributing to the formation of a society grounded in strong ethical foundations.

Women are schools of personhood, morals and discipline in the community. Through close upbringing they teach children respect, integrity and care for others. Within the family they are the first teachers of good behavior, guiding through words and actions that form character. Through counsel, admonition and lived examples children learn discipline, patience and responsibility (Oyewumi, 2005). Women also strengthen solidarity and love, ensuring that each child is raised in an environment of peace and understanding. Hence, through daily contribution they shape a morally robust generation with stable human values. In African philosophy the person's moral life begins with the woman, who instructs core ethics before the child engages with the broader

society. Nyakyusa songs reflect this notion for instance the song “*Mama ni Taa ya Nyumba*” reiterates that the mother is the home’s lamp and the teacher of children, present day and night. These lyrics confirm that women teach children the values of respect, solidarity and social responsibility, showing that women are primary schools of personhood, ensuring new generations embody social values.

Women are considered schools of discipline because they teach children to behave and adhere to social rules. The traditional song “*Usiache Mkono wa Mama*” says, “Do not leave your mother’s hand; she is a model of life and guide for social children.” This quote demonstrates how women ensure children understand personal discipline, family participation and adherence to social morals. Through these songs society confirms that women are schools of discipline, ensuring new generations develop respect, solidarity and social responsibility. This confirms the African philosophical idea that early discipline is instilled by women, who are first guides in social and cultural upbringing. Women thus serve as institutions for personhood, morals and discipline because they oversee early upbringing and ensure children grow with the behaviors, values and social understanding necessary to maintain family and community solidarity (Bassey, 2001). These songs attest to women’s role as caregivers, moral teachers and guardians of discipline, ensuring society continues across generations with established values and customs.

4.5 First Teacher of Early Upbringing

Women are identified as the first teachers of early upbringing because they take primary responsibility for raising and nurturing children from birth. In the earliest life stages, a child depends heavily on the mother for food, protection, love and guidance (Nzugwu, 2011). Through close relationships the child begins to learn language, communication cues, good behavior and ways of interacting with others. So, women lay the foundation for the child's intellectual and social development. Given African philosophical emphasis on solidarity and personhood, women teach children morals such as respect for elders, cooperation, patience and responsibility. These lessons are conveyed through traditional stories, lullabies, proverbs and wise admonitions. By personal example and discipline, women show children how to live according to societal norms. In this way mothers are sources of good upbringing that build a solid foundation for the child's future in society.

In African philosophy the woman is regarded as the first teacher of children, beginning early upbringing before formal schooling or community involvement. Women teach essential morals, respect for elders and family solidarity. Nyakyusa traditional lullabies and songs confirm this. For example, the song

“*Mama ni Mwalimu*” (Mother is Teacher) states that the woman is the first teacher of early upbringing because she welcomes the child to the world and begins caring from the earliest days. Through close interaction mothers teach language, good behavior, respect and social morality. This song shows that women are not only biological caregivers but also the first moral educators who form children emotionally, ethically and socially, supporting the African philosophical view that early upbringing occurs within the family under maternal care. In African social contexts communities are built on personhood and relationships; mothers become the core of that system within the household. Their upbringing fosters love, discipline and responsibility, preparing the child to be a good citizen and positive contributor to society (Lindfors, 2009). Mothers are teachers of children day and night, supervising early upbringing and ensuring children acquire essential moral lessons and an understanding of their roles in family and community.

Women are regarded as first teachers because they ensure continuous social and cultural upbringing through songs used in various ceremonies. The song “*Shina*” (Root) states that the mother is the root of life, without whom families would not hold together. This view reinforces African philosophy that women are the first teachers of upbringing, ensuring children receive morals, solidarity and understanding necessary for family and community welfare. Women are community pillars according to African philosophy that emphasizes personhood, solidarity and social relationships. In this system, women hold responsibility for nurturing, teaching morals and transmitting customs. Like a tree trunk that supports roots and branches, the woman unites past, present and future generations. African philosophy views her as a repository of wisdom, a pillar of peace and the foundation for societal wellbeing.

4.6 Custodian of Knowledge, Health and Wellbeing

In African philosophy women are regarded as managers of knowledge, health and overall wellbeing for the family and community. Within households they are the primary caregivers responsible for ensuring children receive adequate nutrition, hygiene and proper upbringing. Traditional knowledge about herbal medicine, nutrition, childbirth and child care is often preserved and transmitted by women (Oyewumi, 1997). Through experience and elders’ teachings, women become repositories of wisdom that ensure the wellbeing of the growing generation. Women also help manage social wellbeing by promoting caring values, mutual assistance and cooperation. In many African contexts they serve as counselors and spiritual caregivers who provide guidance during difficult times. By caring for family health and perpetuating traditional knowledge, women contribute to the community’s resilience. Thus, African philosophy sees

women not only as physical caregivers but as pillars of knowledge, health and sustainable wellbeing.

Women are considered custodians of knowledge because they guide early childrearing and ensure understanding of values, history and culture is taught to new generations. In the educational domain they educate and lead the new generation, ensuring children acquire knowledge, morals and social understanding. Regarding health, women ensure proper nutrition, hygiene and appropriate child care, contributing to a healthy community. Women advance social wellbeing by nurturing solidarity, peace and cultural cohesion. Through such responsibilities women contribute to community development and demonstrate that their role is vital for sustaining life and wellbeing. Nyakyusa traditional songs clearly reflect this role. For example, the song “*Ustawi Wetu*” (Our Wellbeing) states that community wellbeing depends on women’s contributions to upbringing, education and social solidarity. Women provide moral guidance, educate the next generation and ensure everyone is respected. Through their caregiving and family leadership, women strengthen social cohesion, peace and cultural solidarity. Women contribute to community development through education, health and family wellbeing (Vansina, 1985; Blum, 1998). Therefore, social balance is achieved when women are respected and their roles appreciated because they are central to development, solidarity and community wellbeing.

The song “*Ustawi Wetu*” also portrays women as managers of health because they lead practical care to ensure children grow in physical and mental health. It shows women teaching healthy practices and social morals, ensuring children’s comprehensive wellbeing. Women ensure that new generations grow healthily while maintaining social and moral norms that promote family health. Women oversee community health by ensuring early upbringing produces conditions favorable for social and material development. Health is the foundation for sustainable generational continuity because it ensures strength, wellbeing and life for future generations. Good human health encompasses proper nutrition, clean water, hygiene and accessible medical services. Maternal and child health is critical for maintaining the population since it reduces child mortality and improves child development. Mental health also contributes to social and economic growth. From an African philosophical perspective, disease prevention, health education and access to vaccination help foster a resilient generation (Gyekye, 1996). Consequently, investing in health is investing in sustainable generational wellbeing.

Women are seen as managers of family and community wellbeing because they promote solidarity, respect and sustainable upbringing. The song “*Umoja ni*

Maisha” (Unity is Life) states that community unity is life because it builds strength, solidarity and peace. When people cooperate, problems are reduced and development increases. Unity strengthens families, schools, villages and the nation by enabling social and economic collaboration. It also creates safe environments for children’s healthy growth and communal effort toward development. According to African philosophy, without unity human powers become fragmented and development fails. Therefore, unity is not only a social value but also the basis for successful life, wellbeing and sustained peace for present and future generations (Sarr, 2019). The song implies that solidarity and cooperation are central to life and wellbeing. Women thus take on the role of fostering unity, solidarity and holistic wellbeing social, cultural and material within their families and communities.

4.7 Emotional and Psychological Caregiver

In African philosophy women are recognized as emotional and psychological caregivers within the family and community. Because they are closest to children during early life stages, women create environments of love, security and comfort that enable emotional development. Through conversations, stories, songs and wise counsel, women help children understand and regulate emotions such as joy, sadness and anger. They thus lay the foundation for children’s mental health and personhood. Women act as mediators and counselors in family disputes, bringing calm and reconciliation (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994). In many African societies they provide solace in times of grief and hardship, encouraging family members to remain hopeful. Then, women are not only physical caregivers but pillars of emotional and psychological wellbeing, contributing to peaceful, cohesive communities with good mental health.

African philosophy regards women as emotional caregivers who ensure children receive love, support and comfort in early upbringing. Nyakyusa songs reaffirm this role—for instance “*Mama ni Taa ya Nyumba*” states that women provide emotional care enabling children to build self-worth and cope with early life challenges. An emotional and psychological caregiver ensures that children and youth receive appropriate emotional and cognitive upbringing. Women provide love, security and emotional support, helping children develop confidence and emotional regulation. They assist in cognitive development, learning and psychological wellbeing through guidance, psychological conversations and coping strategies (Nzegwu, 2006; Tembo, 2017). Through this form of upbringing children learn cooperation, form better relationships and handle stress. Henceforth, emotional and psychological caregiving is crucial for children’s social and cognitive growth. Women are not only biological caregivers but also protectors of emotional health, ensuring love, respect and solidarity persist from the family to the wider community. African philosophy asserts that

early upbringing grounded in emotional care is central to forming resilient, socially competent generations.

Women are seen as physical caregivers who ensure children receive nutrition, health and essential bodily care for proper growth. They are also psychological caregivers who provide cognitive upbringing, moral instruction and social solidarity that support psychological development. According to African philosophy women are given crucial roles in sustainable upbringing by integrating emotional, physical, spiritual and practical care (Eze, 1997). Psychologically, women provide love, compassion and emotional support that helps children and youth build confidence, regulate emotions and promote mental wellbeing. Physically, they ensure proper nutrition, hygiene and health care so children develop physically. On the cognitive level, women educate children about customs, traditions, morals and community life, preparing them to be good citizens. Practically, their contributions foster discipline, courage and social responsibility, helping children make sound decisions and face life's challenges. Subsequently, women are the foundation of effective and sustainable upbringing. Through songs communities express that women are essential links that affirm African philosophical claims that early upbringing should integrate emotional, physical and psychological care for holistic child development.

5.0 Conclusion

African philosophy demonstrates that women are central to childrearing, contributing directly to children's psychological, physical and social development. Through traditional songs communities teach children morals, customs and practices, confirming that women are not only life-givers but meaningful caregivers in social and cultural life. Women provide love, emotional support, moral guidance and physical care that help children build confidence, understand society and grow healthily. These traditional songs demonstrate that women's contribution forms the basis for sustainable upbringing, social wellbeing and the preservation of cultural identity in future generations. In light of this importance, society should promote caregiving that uplifts women by encouraging women's education in caregiving, providing social and financial support to families and preserving traditional songs as moral and cultural tools. Communities should recognize women as pillars of social education and upbringing, sustaining morals, love and solidarity for children. Doing so will strengthen sustainable upbringing, ensure new generations have good morals and foster social cohesion and shared wellbeing.

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