STANCE OF APPROBATION AND GENEROSITY MAXIMS: A CASE STUDY OF A RURAL-BASED COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

The politeness maxims have been sustaining peace and harmony among rural communities from times immemorial by minimising the expression of praise of self and maximising the expression of dispraise of self. Nevertheless, the current philosophies of life surreptitiously devalue their social practice. This study investigated approbation and generosity maxims as the behavioural and cultural perspectives that build holistic narrative descriptions among the rural community. Grounded by Leech's politeness principle and Wenger's communities of practice, the study adopted the ethnographic qualitative approach. The study population comprised seven purposively selected rural community members and three traditional Vhangona leaders. Data were collected using formal and informal semi-structured interviews for over a year. Two informants participated in the investigation to ensure accurate data collection. A thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns, create codes, and arrange thematically. The preliminary investigation on five rural community members and one traditional chief found that some community members despised approbation and generosity maxims. Nonetheless, after applying a 'foot-in-the-door' technique, most community members cherished these maxims exceptionally.' The implication of this study promotes observation of approbation and generosity maxims. The study argues for incessant resoluteness and resilience in this regard.

Keywords: Approbation; generosity; rural-based communities, traditional chiefs

INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have consistently been conducted to establish how rural communities uphold verbal and non-verbal approbation and generosity maxims as pillars of cultural development among nations. However, little convincing evidence has been found regarding the sustenance of approbation and generosity maxims. Approbation maxim entails an agreement, approval or piece of land given by a leader of a clan, tribe and nation to a foreigner by the aboriginal people (Claytor & Heiderscheit, 2023). The

approbation maxim "occurs when the speaker minimises the dispraise of self and maximises the praise of other" (Septiani et al., 2024) without hurting, annoying, mocking, insulting, or humiliating the other person (Tampubolon et al., 2021). Nonetheless, praising the hearers makes them feel respected and maintains their relationship (Nuraini et al., 2024; Septiani et al., 2024) rather than causing disagreement among the people. Approbation shows solidarity, as in 'I heard your voice at the party', which sounds like the listener was 'over the moon' regarding happiness and pleasure (Pina, 2024).

Conversely, the generosity maxim requires participants to minimise benefit to self and maximise cost to self (Septiani et al., 2024). Specifically, the speaker is expected to avoid disadvantaging the hearer but give the listener the advantage rather than the self (Tampubolon, 2021). Forming and sustaining reputable social relationships among community members is essential (Van de Groep, 2022). However, **withholding from charity brings poverty** (Pina, 2024), even though generosity brings prosperity. The **community members who live to bless others have blessings heaped upon them, and those 'who pour out their lives to pour out blessings' can be saturated with favour** (van de Groep, 2022)**. Thus,** the generosity maxim is a cornerstone of community development.

Ordinarily, every nation or tribe, *de facto,* has its beliefs, cultures, customs, norms, and values. Nonetheless, it isn't easy to cherish traditional practices due to the power difference, social distance and the speaker's weight (Nephawe & Lambani, 2022). With the unprecedented growth of educational set-ups among various communities, some members despise their cultural practices in favour of academic professionalism (Fisher, 2024). Nevertheless, total rejection phobia lured them to abide by the demands of their cultures.

Despite many societies encouraging their community members to resist changes that do not reflect their values (Cennamo et al., 2024), they unswervingly distance themselves from their traditional values. Gradually, the Vhavenda/Vhangona culture is being eroded (Ghaly, 2024) because the more literate some rural communities become, the more ignorance of their cultures and language occurs. For example, some Vhavenda communities slowly shun their traditional behaviour in favour of the West. Hence, this study investigated the stance of approbation and generosity maxims among the rural-based community.

In Venda, the country located in the far Northern part of Limpopo Province, South Africa (Pikirayi & Magoma, 2021), the emergence of non-Vhangona tribes, including

Pedis, Zulus, Mozambicans, Shonas, and Caucasians, exacerbated the marginalisation of approbation and generosity maxims. Most foreigners immersed themselves in the Tshivenda/Tshingona culture and language. To make it easier, these foreigners married or had children with the Vhangona women for recognition purposes. Additionally, some Vhangona communities residing in the deep traditional villages welcomed these foreigners (Neluvhalani, 2018) as a symbol of approbation and generosity maxims. However, they were not resilient enough to resist the changes that gradually eroded their culture.

The arrival of Congolese or Senzis (Singos) from Central Africa (Hanish, 1994) as "refugees fleeing from the wars of the great Changamire" (Beach, 1980: 212 cited in Nephawe & Lambani, 2022). The Singos did not establish the Vhavenda nation, as Huffman (2022) suggests. Vhangona are the real Vhavenda, and they have lived there since creation. They have been here in Venda since immemorial and have been ruled by their chiefs and a king. Ordinarily, Haffman (2022) is only a settler and cannot understand the history of the Vhangona people better than the Vhangona themselves since they are the owners of the Tshingona culture and tradition. Also, Vhangona lived at Mapungubwe before Jan van Riebeeck arrived at the Cape, South Africa, in 1962. The Balozis from the Great Lakes region of East Africa around 1700, the Ndalamos from Ethiopia (Munyai, 2016), and the Lembas from Israel. The Singos, Balozis and Vhandalamos usurped some Vhangona chieftainships.

The Mphaphulis – the grandchildren of the Matabele chief Musi (Forgotten Books, 2016) arrived here in Venda and usurped the chieftainship of Nembilwi, Nemakanga, Nemavhola, Nevhufumba, and Netshiluvhi. The Ndebeles and Ndzundzas enforced their praise of *Mthombeni* or *Zulu Mthombeni* to some of the Vhangona (Neluvhalani, 2018). However, these praises disgrace most Vhangona by relating to Ndebeles and Zulus from ha *Malindi* (Zululand) and ha *Lutanga* (Swaziland). The *Ndzundza* group (Windham, 1905) or *Balauti* of Nelwamondo cunningly usurped the Tshivhale dynasty through intermarriage.

The Vhangona welcomed these foreigners due to inborn respect for approbation and generosity (Susanti *et al.,* 2020). The foreigners could not rename some countries, including *Maheni* (*matomboni*/place of stones) and *Mahematshena* (*matombo matshena*/white stones and Mapungubwe: King Shiriyadenga – *tshinoni tsha makoleni*'s royal kraal (Mudau et al., 2024). They did not rename rivers, including Mutale, Luvuvhu, and Tavha, as well as holy shrines like *Mutongolwe* in Tshivhale and *Tshelenzhe* at

Phawe. Also, the names *Mukula* of Nemukula, *Khubvi* of Nekhubvi, *Ngovhela* of Nengovhela*, Phiphidi* Nephiphidi*, Tswime* of Netswime*, Tsianda* of Netsianda remained the same.

The Tsongas and Shangaans from the former Maputo (Mozambique) – the Tshingona word *Maputu,* where the East African traders from Maphungubwe used to stay for some time before boarding the ships to Asian countries – came to settle in the Vhangona lands after the latter were forcefully removed by the South African apartheid regime (Forgotten Books, 2016). Among the Tsongas and Shangans, ha *Maneta* (Mhinga) of Chief Maneta and Dzamba (Mavhambe) under Nedzamba were renamed. Even if Mount *Miyohe* was successfully renamed Shikundu, Mount Madzivhanombe in Giyani remained the same as Malamulele – a fountain that protected people from a severe drought.

The Singos, Balozis, Vhandalamos, and Vhalembas arrived in Venda without their women (Neluvhalani, 2018). This supports the saying, '*Ro da na misi fhedzi, mituli ri sina',* 'We have arrived with pistols but without mortars'. The 'pistols' refer to manhoods, while mortars were women. The foreigners married the Vhangona women (Neluvhalani, 2017). Consequently, they assimilated the Tshingona culture and language (Ralushai, 1982). However, it was taboo for the Lembas to engage in intermarriage with the Vhangona for fear of bringing bad omen to their tribe (Ralushai, 1982).

The Vhalaudzis tried to merge their totem with Vhangonas' forming a non-existent Kwinda-Mulaudzi, which does not exist among the totems: *ndou, mukwevho, mudau, munyai, munzhelele, mutwanamba, mufamadi, mbedzi, mulovhedzi, kwinda, mulea, mudzanani, khomola, mugwena, muluvhu* and *munarini* (Nephawe & Lambani, 2022). The totem Kwinda – 'foot of an elephant'/a messenger for the Ndou – belongs to the Vhangona. The *Ndou* totem belongs to Tshidziwelele Nephawe 1 – the son of King Shiriyadenda Nemapungubwe (Mafela et al., 1994), unrelated to Mugagadeli, the pseudo-claimant of Venda kingship.

Vhangona portrayed approbation and generosity maxims by intuitively assimilating Caucasian languages, including English and Afrikaans (Capstick, 2020). When some Vhavenda migratory labourers came back to their rural communities after being in contact with Caucasians, they pronounced some English and Afrikaans words that resemble Tshivenda's pronunciation (Fitzmaurice, 2019). They would pronounce English words: *marakalas* for miracles, *langwane* for 'long one' and *zwidzhangudzhangu* for junk foods. For the Afrikaans, they would say *tshikokiyana* for *skokejaan* – an illegal self-made

alcoholic and home-beverage brewed over one day and containing ingredients such as maize meal, water, and yeast to speed up the fermentation process; and *birimane* for *buurman* – a neighbour.

To date, foreingers are deeply immersed in the Vhangona cultural dances including *malende, tshigombela, tshikona,* and *tshifase.* The *tshikona* dance is performed mainly by males, though females dance to it. In this activity, boys and men would blow horns or pipes from the *musununu* plant – a magical tree believed to have germinated from the foot of the Mungona Chief Dewasi Netshaulu after it burst open (Neluvhalani, 2018). The *musununu* plant is only found at Tshaulu. The chiefs usually sent messengers to collect the horns from Chief Netshaulu before the emergence of Chief Bohwana, who resides next to paramount Chief Netshitumbe. *Tshikona* dance symbolises approbation and generosity among the Vhangona tribes. It could be kept by the chiefs (Marole, 1966) and used in activities including ceremonial visits to other chiefs, installation of chiefs, burial ceremonies, and competitions.

Traditionally, *tshikona* was played outside the rebel's house or if the chief wanted to remove any citizen forcefully. These maxims are practised in the Vhavenda initiation schools like *murundu* (circumcision), *musevhetho* and *vhusha* for women (Neluvhalani, 2018). However, it remains taboo to know precisely what happens in the girls' initiation schools than the boys'. *Domba* (python dance) traditionally lasts 9-12 months and is performed in the public court (Huffman, 2022), mainly by girls, even if boys can participate. Boys usually attend *murundu before dombra*. *Musevhetho*, *vhusha* and *tshikanda* (for girls), and *vhutambo* for both boys and girls.

The Notion of Vhangona

The Vhangona were the first inhabitants of the Venda, usually paying homage to Thovhele Shiriyadenga – *tshinoni tsha makoleni* – to show approbation and generosity maxims (Joseph, 2016). They were the ancient nation that lived in Maphungubwe and the present-day Venda earlier than the Khoisani (Van Jaarsveld, 1975) and did not originate from Central Africa, as there is no trace of them having descended from the Great Lakes region (Hanish, 1994). Vhangona were the autochthonic people of the Venda of yore that had stretched from Harare (*Alilali*) further down South to the Lumbelule River, known as *Madi maswa* (Neluvhalani, 2017). They departed from Mapungubwe around 1300 after the collapse of the Mapungubwe kingdom (Nephawe & Lambani, 2022) and before the arrival of foreigners in Venda around 1700. The foreigners revered the Vhangona holy

shrines and old dwellings as they believed that *'shubini la mungona a hudzulwi, u sina tshidongo',* meaning that the wrecked dwellings of Vhangona could not be settled without a broken piece of calabash clay.

However, the preceding discussion contradicts the 2023 *International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs* (IWGIA), which claims that the only indigenous people in South Africa are the Khoi-San. The *IWGIA* is not well-versed in the issues surrounding Vhangona. Vhangona are the ones who named countries, seas, oceans, grasses, trees, insects, birds, animals, mountains, and rivers (Neluvhalani, 2017), to name a few. Assembly (2007) adds that Vhangona have *historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies and the right towards preserving their* approbation and generosity maxims.

These maxims were continually observed even after 1913, when the Vhangona relocated to countries, including Phawe, with its royal kraal closer to Ndevhe mountain in the now-called *Zoutpansberg* area, where the foreigners chopped Tshidziwelele's head out (Mafela et al., 1994) at Mutudi to usurp kingship position. Vhangona relocated to areas including Nzhelele under chief Nenzhelele, Tshisaulu of Netshisaulu, Tswinga of Netswinga, Tshivhulana of Netshivhulana and Tshimbupfe of Netshimbupfe but not of the Vhalaudzi clan. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, resolution 61/178 of 20 December 2006, Article 9 indicates that Indigenous peoples have the right to be respected and to belong to a community (Assembly (2007). Article 11 states that they practise their cultural traditions and customs by maintaining, protecting, and developing their cultures' past, present, and future manifestations. Thus, Vhangona can continue practising approbation and generosity maxims in their communities.

The archaeologists excavated the skeletal remains of Vhangona communities and took them to the University of Pretoria in 1933 (Neluvhalani, 2018). However, after several requests by the Vhangona cultural movement, the skeletal remains of about 27 Kings and wives were decently reburied on 20 November 2007 in Mapungubwe hilltop after the South African Government granted permission. Nevertheless, some precious artefacts, including calabashes, golden rhinos and beads, remained with Pretoria University (Neluvhalani, 2017). Surprisingly, neither the Khoisan, Singos, Vhalaudzis, nor Vhandalamos attended that reburial ceremony since they knew they had no contact with the aboriginal Vhavenda. Even though the Lembas attended the reburial ceremony, they had no right to participate because they arrived with the Singos, Vhalaudzis and Vhandalamos, claimed that they were from Israel, and had a direct lineage with the

Israelites (Ralushai, 1982).

Previous studies were conducted on the approbation and generosity maxims worldwide. However, researchers have found little evidence regarding sustaining these maxims in the community. This research investigated approbation and generosity maxims as the behavioural and cultural perspectives that build holistic narrative descriptions among rural communities. Haryanto et al. (2012) argue that a study conducted on the relationship between politeness and culture was conducted by Kiyama et al. (2012) in Japan to assess the practice of approbation and generosity between Westerners and Japanese found that interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions positively affected individual members' behaviour among their rural communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on studies regarding the beliefs, cultures, customs, norms and values among the Africans have been conducted. However, limited information was obtained regarding approbation and generosity maxims among the rural communities in South Africa. This study investigated the gap and persuaded the Vhangona rural communities to observe these maxims. Thus, approbation and generosity maxims entail the "identification, description, and explanation" (Kololo & Kari, 2021: 221) to observe behavioural patterns and socio-cultural etiquette within rural communities.

Watts (2003) introduces emic and etic approaches essential for interpreting approbation and generosity maxims as sociocultural concepts. The emic approach involves evaluating polite or impolite behaviour based on cultural and historical backgrounds and social norms shared by members of a rural-based community of practice (CofP) approach. The etic approach concerns discussions of data around these maxims. These approaches are non-theoretical constructs but have reasonable implications for analysing and understanding a rural-based community's behaviour and interactions (Watts et al., 2005). Therefore, the complete realisation of polite behaviour guarantees social behavioural assessments by community members, while social norms ensure explicit usage and behavioural patterns (Wenger, 1998) within a CofP.

The CofP approach entails agreeing on mutual engagement, including ways of talking, beliefs, cultures and power relations (Kololo & Kari, 2021) by several rural-based community members. It explores collaboration among them using observable actions affected by variables, including socio-cultural behaviour, gender and age. CofP comprises "mutual engagement, a joint negotiated enterprise" (Kololo & Kari, 2021: 223) to sustain

respect for traditional values, while 'shared repertoire' entails standard historical practices gathered over time.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was underpinned by Geoffrey Leech's (1983) theory of politeness, as it is more relevant to approbation and generosity maxims. This theory holds that approbation and generosity can prevent conflict among community members (Nephawe & Lambani, 2022) and nations by being polite towards one another. Leech (1983) advises that rural-based community members minimise their desires in favour of the foreigners' excitement. In other words, the depreciation of dispraise and any hurtful action towards other human beings is rejected instead of benefitting others (Krishnan et al., 2021), irrespective of multicultural backgrounds. In this regard, being kind and generous to one's friends or neighbours, preparedness and open-mindedness in giving away possessions such as pieces of land and chieftainships through intermarriages, and accepting and loving all other people were commonalities (Nene, 2017).

Maluleke (2012) posits that Vhaongna's traditional cultural practices reflect the values and beliefs held by members of the age and are traceable by examining Leech's (1983) six maxims of politeness: the agreement, approbation, generosity, modesty, sympathy, and tact (Lustyantie, 2019). However, this study was narrowed down to approbation and generosity maxims due to their relevance to Vhavenda's cultural traditions.

Approbation maxim

The approbation maxim entails agreement, commendation, and praise for a formal or official act of approving a particular situation (Leech, 1983). In this maxim, the speaker minimises dispraise and any hurtful action that hurts other human beings for the benefit of other people regardless of the difference in cultural backgrounds. Approbation maxim is preferred to praise others and, when this is difficult to maintain, speakers or writers circumvent the issue, give minimal responses using euphemisms or remain silent. Lustyantie (2019) argues that all actions can be equal if speakers minimise feelings of impoliteness and maximise a sense of politeness. As a complement to Grice's cooperative principle, Leech's politeness principle helps realise the intended social goal of maintaining relationships and feelings with the partner or neighbour.

Generosity maxim

The generosity maxim involves the quality of being kind and generous to one's friends or neighbours, preparedness, and open-mindedness in giving away one's possessions in any way, including accepting and loving all other people and foreigners inclusively and supporting and caring for those who may be in dire need and different in any way. It requires speakers to maximise losses for themselves and minimise benefits for themselves to provide freedom from pettiness in character and mind. The generosity maxim is gradually losing value due to the emergence of foreigners. However, Svidronova et al. (2024) claim that South Africa is ranked high in reflecting the culture of generosity or *Ubuntu*. This traditional philosophy emphasises the interconnectedness of all people through sharing and helping others.

This behaviour originated from the belief that a person is only a person through other people and that everyone must contribute to the community's well-being (Adedire, 2023) using family values, religious beliefs, respect for elders, and communal celebrations. However, the approbation and generosity status quo is minimalised in deep traditional villages in Limpopo Province, South Africa. For example, producing and sharing *Amarula* beer is practised minimally. However, in the olden days, it was practised maximally as rural-based community members often gathered in groups or the chief's kraal to share and drink together as a token of love and to pay allegiance to chiefs.

The generosity maxim is celebrated as 'Giving Tuesday' on the 30th of November of each year for people everywhere to come together (Adedire, 2023) using acts of kindness. However, an approbation maxim requires speakers to minimise disrespect for others, maximise praise for others, and minimise disrespect or criticism for others (Lustyantie, 2019). Lustyantie argues that generosity has been an icon of African culture for centuries, from communal living and sharing to traditional forms of giving. As the politeness theory is relevant to this study, the focus was on Vhavenda's approbation and generosity maxims.

Claytor and Heiderscheit (2023) suggest the following strategies for enhancing approbation and generosity maxims include being generous to other people by making a simple 'thank you', giving donations and charity work, offering genuine compliments regularly, performing multiple kindnesses, volunteering to the community, sharing personal experience and knowledge to others, and praising someone's efforts in promoting approbation and generosity maxims. Adedire (2023) asserts that the 'ubuntu' philosophy can emphasise the interconnectedness of community members to enhance

approbation and generosity maxims.

Based on Leech's politeness principle, this study aimed to investigate the behavioural and cultural perspectives of a rural-based community regarding the intensive and systematic use of approbation and generosity maxims and encourage appropriate use of those maxims by the rural-based community. Moreover, it attempted to answer the research questions: 1) What are the behavioural and cultural perspectives of a rural-based community regarding the use of approbation and generosity maxims? and 2) How can a rural-based community appropriately utilise approbation and generosity maxims?

METHODS

The study employed the qualitative approach to technically search, collect, classify, and analyse data. Every time a more complete, unique, and interesting fact was found, it assisted in drawing an advanced conclusion. Ethnographic research was further employed among the seven rural-based community members and two Vhangona traditional chiefs, Thavhayamipfa Nevuu and Tikaninne Netshivhale; and their single Paramount Chief Thavhadziawa Nephawe. The choice of the technique was appropriate to this study because the data source had a connection with the behavioural and cultural perspectives that could build holistic narrative descriptions regarding the observation (Caulfield, 2020) of approbation and generosity maxims in a rural-based community's social interactions and behaviours to provide rich, holistic insights, and actions of the location they inhabit (Nephawe & Lambani, 2022).

Data were collected over a year using formal and informal semi-structured face-to-face interviews and 'focus group' strategies (Adedire, 2023) after the relevant research protocols were observed. Additionally, video recordings, a pen, and notebooks were utilised to collect participant data. Field notes, oral descriptions, and transcripts enhanced the formation of narrative descriptions (Konono, 2021) from the identified themes. The preliminary investigation conducted on five rural-based community members at Dzwerani village – an area under the auspices of the Tshivhale dynasty and one Mungona traditional chief Netshivhazwaulu other than the target group found that the respondents had low resilience concerning approbation and generosity maxims. The primary data were collected using discussions from the rural community at Dzwerani village.

During data collection, two informants assisted the researcher in collecting data in case one of them was absent as the study's duration was prolonged. An 'expert sampling' technique was employed to obtain the consent of seven Vhangona experts at Dzwerani

village and their traditional leaders who provided the perceptions of their definite cultures in Limpopo Province, South Africa. A blend of historical, intensive actions, language and cultural practices, and observational and personal experience (Caulfield, 2020) assisted the researcher in obtaining the findings from the South African rural-based community.

The 'emic' and etic techniques were applied to discuss data obtained from the respondents. An open-ended and adjustable questionnaire provoked the participant's interest in the fieldwork. In contrast, 'live and work', active observation, and open setting approaches never intimidated the participants in revealing the true nature of their cultural behaviour. Thematic analysis is a method for analysing qualitative data that involves reading through a data set or transcripts, looking for themes (Dovetail Editorial Team, 2023), identifying patterns and arranging codes thematically socially, culturally, politically and historically. The researcher applied multiple interpretations of the stories from the participants' testimonials and interviews (Caulfield, 2020) to write the narrative.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After conducting an ethnographic study on approbation and generosity maxims among seven Vhavenda rural-based community members and three traditional chiefs in Limpopo Province, South Africa, for over a year, it was found that the participants were willing to observe their beliefs, cultures, customs, norms and values. Although the preliminary ethnographic investigation conducted on five rural-based community members at Dzwerani village and one Mungona traditional chief, Netshivhazwaulu, established that some community members had low morale in observing these maxims; they cherished sustaining them. The finding supports Svidronova et al. (2024), who indicate that South Africa is ranked high in reflecting a solid culture of generosity or 'ubuntu', which emphasises sharing and helping others.

Findings from seven rural-based Vhangona community members

The 'foot-in-the-door technique' assisted in establishing that the seven rural-based community members at Dzwerani village kept their stance for observing approbation and generosity maxims. Also, the Vhangona traditional chiefs agree to encourage their citizens to sustain approbation and generosity maxims using ubuntu philosophy rather than destroy their beliefs, cultures, customs, norms, and values. The finding is congruent with Lustyantie's (2019) and Adedire's (2023) assertion that the 'ubuntu' philosophy can emphasise the interconnectedness of community members, communal living and sharing

to traditional forms of giving to people in need to sustain approbation and generosity.

Findings from three rural-based Vhangona traditional chiefs

The rural-based Vhangona traditional chiefs found that their subjects were willing to observe approbation and generosity maxims in their areas of jurisdiction. The Vhangona traditional chiefs, namely, Thavhayamipfa Nevuu and Tikaninne Netshivhale, and one Paramount Chief Thavhadziawa Nephawe, played a tremendous role in persuading their subjects to uphold approbation and generosity maxims among their rural-based communities. Therefore, these Vhangona traditional chiefs agree that sustaining these maxims enhances the resilience and welfare of rural communities. The finding supports Kololo and Kari's (2021) and Claytor and Heiderscheit's (2023) suggestion that approbation and generosity maxims can be improved by giving donations and charity work, sharing experiences and possessions and volunteering to the community hospitalities to sustain approbation and generosity maxims.

CONCLUSION

As this study aimed to investigate approbation and generosity maxims in a rural-based community, it was done to establish the perceptions of seven selected community members of Dzwerani village and three Vhangona traditional leaders in different areas of their jurisdiction to find and compare their perspectives. After using 'foot-in-the-door', 'emic' and etic techniques, the researcher found that the rural-based community members were willing to sustain approbation and generosity maxims. This suggests that these maxims are the cornerstones of the survival of beliefs, cultures, customs, norms and values of rural-based communities. The results show that approbation and generosity maxims are indispensable in maintaining resilience in members' beliefs. These findings contribute to the body of knowledge regarding sustaining cultural beliefs among rural communities.

The research question 'How can a rural-based community appropriately utilise approbation and generosity maxims?' was answered as follows: 1) creating cultural sensitivity as different cultures have different values, norms, and practices that shape attitudes toward giving; 2) using tailored messaging that resonates with local values and priorities to make them more effective in giving; 3) building trust to promote giving and philanthropy by the rural community; 4) identifying barriers using economic and cultural strategies and 5) sustaining impact that designs giving programs tailored towards rural

community's local needs and priorities.

The implication of this study is that approbation and generosity maxims are a beacon of hope for the survival of a particular community's traditional beliefs. The primary limitation to the generality of these results is the time factor for consulting all participants for over one year to harvest credible, reliable, and valid outcomes. Manipulating purposive sampling was difficult since most community members expected to be selected for the study. The participants benefitted tremendously as they promised to constantly uphold approbation and generosity maxims. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies on these maxims. Hence, this study recommends permanently sustaining approbation and generosity maxims among non-traditional and traditional rural communities worldwide.

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