

Understanding the Inclusion Capacity of the Norwegian Friluftsliv Model in Upholding the Quality of Life Through the Ubuntu Perspective – An Integrative Review

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the applicability of the Friluftsliv Model in improving quality of life from an Ubuntu perspective. Purposive sampling was utilised to select the Ubuntu theory, which shares similar values of inclusiveness with the Friluftsliv Model in fostering collective community welfare. This theory has demonstrated relevance in understanding how indigenous communities engage in ecological therapeutic practices, with implications that enhance physical and mental health, thereby improving the well-being of vulnerable groups such as individuals with disabilities, elders, pregnant women, orphans, distressed persons, and those with mental health issues. The Model emphasises increased interaction with nature during spring, autumn, winter, and summer through various outdoor activities, as engagement with nature consistently provides a calming and restorative environment conducive to reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. The Model gained greater international recognition during the COVID-19 pandemic, as reports indicated that friluftsliv became especially vital in Europe as a means to prepare for and cope with social restrictions, lockdowns, and other challenges. Norwegian government support for the implementation of the Friluftsliv Model reflects the country's commitment to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Healthy City guidelines, as evidenced by statistics showing that 83% of Norwegians are engaged in nature activities, 77% spend time in nature weekly, and 25% do so most days. Furthermore, 25% stay outdoors overnight, and it has been reported that Norwegians spend more time in nature than indoors. Many nurseries observe that toddlers spend approximately 80% of their time outdoors. A 2020 survey found that 90% of Norwegians reported feeling less stressed and experiencing a better mood when spending time outdoors. In Norway, the right to access nature is both fundamental and universal, positioning the country among the World's top ten happiest nations. This status is attributed to laws and policies, such as the 1957 Outdoor Recreation Act, which enshrined Norwegians' longstanding right to enjoy nature and thereby supports and promotes the Friluftsliv Model. Although many key Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators emphasise ecological and indigenous methods, referencing the Ubuntu philosophical framework offers new insights into how integrating models like the Friluftsliv Model into national and global agendas can accelerate improvements in overall quality of life. Accordingly, global policymakers should consider revisiting cost-effective indigenous models, such as Friluftsliv, as a means of attaining a collective quality of life that emphasises prevention over costly curative measures.

Keywords: Collective welfare, Community welfare, Eco-therapy, Friluftsliv, Inclusion, Human-nature, Ubuntu

INTRODUCTION

"Nature is not something exotic, expensive, and exhausting. It is free, near, and common for all." (Norrøna, 2025) The renowned Norwegian motto above has laid the foundation for this qualitative study, which examines accessible secondary data alongside the author's personal experiences in Norwegian outdoor pursuits. The primary aim of this study is to assess how well Friluftsliv can enhance quality of life from an Ubuntu perspective. According to humanistic psychology, there are moments in human consciousness that are especially significant in the existential view of self-actualisation, meaning, identity, belonging, social connection, and spirituality (Maslow, 1976; Lovoll, 2016). Experiences in nature may encompass an existential aspect of holistic well-being,

and in understanding these notable experiences (Lovoll, 2016; Lovoll et al., 2016), a comprehensive theoretical framework, such as Ubuntu, was found to be an appropriate approach for study.

As argued by Torraco (2005), the study employed an integrative review that focused on synthesising empirical findings to facilitate a critical analysis of the theoretical framework and emerging perspectives. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select Ubuntu theory, relevant to understanding how indigenous communities engage in ecological therapeutic practices and their implications for including various vulnerable populations within the community (Lembuka et al., 2025). The study aims to assess the implications of ecology in improving the quality of life by revisiting the capacity of the Friluftsliv Model to include all individuals and groups in the community. This justification reflects the sense of community found in African Ubuntu, which considers the holistic welfare of all community members (Lembuka, 2024a)

Every word holds significance and originality within the context of the Friluftsliv Model. The term “Friluftsliv” is derived from three Norwegian words: “Fri,” meaning free; “luft,” meaning air; and “liv,” meaning life. It signifies a lifestyle characterised by living in the fresh air, or in English, 'an outdoorsy life. However, the term is inherently challenging to translate, perhaps even impossible, because its practical application extends beyond merely being outdoors. It pertains to reconnecting with nature and embracing an outdoor lifestyle, which remains a vital aspect of the Norwegian identity despite their modern way of living (Afroginthefjord, 2020). The Friluftsliv Model has been an integral part of Norwegian society for many years; however, the concept was first introduced by Henrik Ibsen, the renowned playwright, in a poem titled "På vidderne" in 1859 (Afroginthefjord, 2020).

Over time, the model was incorporated into the legal framework through a corresponding law called in English “the Outdoor Recreation Act,” which includes the *allemannsrett*, or in English, the freedom to roam (Afroginthefjord, 2020). The inclusiveness of Friluftsliv ensured that all groups are treated equally, including children, youths, the elderly, people with illnesses, the poor, orphans, homeless individuals, and those with disabilities (Lovoll, 2016). It also allows anyone, regardless of their socio-economic status, to enjoy nature for recreational activities, including foreigners, who can pick mushrooms and berries, sleep in nature, and, in some cases, even on private property, among other things. In Norway, fences in nature create unhappy neighbours (Afroginthefjord, 2020).

The Norwegian Model of Friluftsliv gained international recognition during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, when it was described as the new Scandinavian Model, attracting global attention alongside the concepts of Danish Hygge and Swedish Lagom (Lovoll, 2016). It was reported that during the peak of the COVID-19 crisis, friluftsliv became even more essential for people worldwide, especially in Europe, as a means to prepare for the harsh winter ahead and cope with social restrictions, lockdowns, and other challenges (Afroginthefjord, 2020). In Africa, the post-COVID-19 era has seen various disciplines and interventions emphasising the importance of Ubuntu values and principles in applying an ecological approach to collective socio-economic, welfare, and health development (Lembuka, 2023a).

Ubuntu is Africa’s continental philosophical framework, dating back to pre-colonial times, encompassing all aspects of life on the continent under the vision of humanism through collective goals. Ubuntu recognises the crucial role of community in protecting and preserving the ecology through nature-based interventions, aiming to improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities (Mugumbate, 2013; Lembuka, 2023b). Similar to the Friluftsliv Model, Ubuntu recognises the interconnectedness between individuals and their environments, considering and emphasising the significance of the ecological perspective in understanding how the environment impacts individuals and how individuals, in turn, can impact their environment and vice versa (Lembuka, 2024b).

Supported by its ecological strength and inclusive approach, the Ubuntu philosophy is considered more relevant in linking the Friluftsliv Model and the inclusion agenda to uphold quality of life. The Ubuntu philosophy, which originated in Africa, is rooted in the collective and holistic community capacity to address community issues guided by various accepted values, including ecology, Ujamaa, cooperation, solidarity, equality, shared resources, inclusion, care, compassion, and communality (Lembuka et al., 2025). The philosophy emphasises the interconnectedness of humanity and the notion that individuals flourish in a community that supports and cares

for them, where the use of nature as part of therapy to enhance the welfare and health of community members is highly valued (Lembuka, 2025a).

Table 1.1 The relevance of Ubuntu and Friluftsliv Model on the Inclusion

SN	Ubuntu	Friluftsliv	Implications
1	Ecology	Natural environment	Eco-therapy
2	Nature as healing space	Respect the Natural World	Green
3	Environment-Human interconnection	Community and social connection	Environmental justice
4	Cultural reconnection	Connection to nature	Cultural competence
5	Community gardens	Outdoor activities	Nature-based intervention
6	Community green spaces	Sustainability and environmental stewardship	Environmental responsibility
7	Spirituality	Connection with nature and spiritual well-being	Psychosocial care and support
8	Shared natural resources	Connection with nature for physical well-being	Environmental Physical Rehabilitation

Source: Lembuka (2025)

Based on Table 1.1, which illustrates the relevance of Ubuntu and the Friluftsliv Model in relation to ecology, the highlighted pillars emphasise the importance of the study for community inclusion agendas. The mentioned pillars demonstrate the applicability of equal shared ecology and nature-based interventions in enhancing the quality of life for everyone. At the same time, the Green Agenda (re)appears consistently across the pillars. Nonetheless, in each aspect, it highlights and prioritises environmental justice, eco-therapy, sustainability, and the well-being of both humans and the natural World (Lembuka, 2024c). All the pillars share a common theme of the interconnectedness between humans and nature, reflecting a reciprocal relationship that is vital for rehabilitation and related therapeutic interventions. Additionally, they emphasise the crucial importance of environmental protection through an understanding of current global environmental concerns, including climate change, pollution, and access to green spaces (Lovoll, 2016; Lovoll et al., 2016).

The application of the Friluftsliv Model to improve physical and mental health has enhanced the well-being of vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, elders, pregnant women, orphans, distressed individuals, and those with mental health issues. The experience of engaging with nature as a healing space has consistently offered a calming and restorative environment for reducing stress, anxiety, and depression (Lovoll, 2016; Lovoll et al., 2016). For decades, Norwegians have utilised the model as part of community-based therapy, and it has expanded to other parts of Europe, where it continues to be adopted within communities. Furthermore, the Friluftsliv Model incorporates nature into therapy sessions, enabling individuals to connect with the natural World and promote relaxation and emotional well-being (Lovoll, 2016).

According to Mugumbate (2019) and Lembuka (2025a), the Ubuntu philosophy emphasises the influence of ecology on collective and holistic welfare, similar to how the Friluftsliv Model has demonstrated the importance of the ecological approach to quality of life. Nature-based therapeutic activities, such as eco-therapy, horticultural therapy, or outdoor mindfulness, have been shown to support individuals, families, and groups in building resilience, improving mood, and enhancing overall well-being within their natural surroundings. While Ubuntu values the interconnectedness of individuals with nature for holistic welfare within the community, the Friluftsliv Model also recognises the essential need to understand how individuals behave in their natural environment and how this interaction can support the healing process (Metz, 2014; Lovoll et al., 2016).

Experience has shown that individuals behave differently when placed in various environments, whether for leisure or rehabilitation purposes. These activities can foster a sense of interconnectedness with nature and the community (Lovell, 2016). Both the Friluftsliv Model and Ubuntu emphasise the application of ecology in addressing individual, family, and group needs, among others. To complement the ideal, the review drew on ecological theory to highlight the relevance of socially inclusive outdoor activities that occur in a normative

space, as described by Flemsæter, Setten & Brown (2015), which is imbued with unwritten rules and regulations. Friluftsliv embodies other indigenous models that support the inclusion of all community members in experiencing nature through outdoor recreation, which is essential for the realisation of quality of life (Anderson et al, 2023).

In accordance with the Friluftsliv Model, the Ubuntu ecological perspective highlights the essential role of the environment in fostering a culture of communal benefits, such as community gardens or green spaces within neighbourhoods, which are vital for providing opportunities for individuals, families, and peer groups to connect with nature and participate in physical activity (Lembuka, 2023a). This leads to an inclusive culture that prioritises and nurtures a sense of belonging and community support. An inclusive volunteering culture fosters solidarity and cooperation, and working together in these spaces can strengthen social bonds, enhance overall health and well-being, and improve the collective quality of life. In the context of the right to quality of life, these spaces are regarded as ecological strengths that incorporate eco-therapy interventions (Anderrson et al, 2023).

The implications of indigenous models in holistic quality of life services are substantial, and revisiting the Friluftsliv Model to support quality is justified considering global agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals. Most of the primary Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focus on improving the quality of life, exemplified by SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. However, other goals also play a vital role in enhancing overall quality of life by addressing fundamental needs, such as Goal 1: No Poverty, Goal 2: Zero Hunger, and Goal 4: Quality Education. Additionally, Goals 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, and Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, which notably call for creating inclusive, safe, and sustainable urban environments, further contribute to improving the quality of life for city residents (UN, 2015).

The connection between ecology and local communities is a vital example of inclusive efforts aimed at improving the quality of life, aligning with the central vision of the SDGs by 2030. Evidence from the Friluftsliv Model demonstrates a cost-effective approach to inclusiveness, grounded in ecological strengths that are expected to be sustained beyond 2030. While most key SDG indicators highlight the importance of ecology and indigenous methods, referencing the Ubuntu philosophical framework offers new insights into how integrating models like the Friluftsliv Model into national and global agendas can accelerate improvements in the quality of life for everyone.

METHODOLOGY

The article employed an integrative review to support the study's primary aim, critiquing and synthesising the literature on available secondary sources to gain new insights into the Friluftsliv Model's capacity for inclusion. The engagement of the Ubuntu theoretical framework, aligned with ecological perspectives, underpins the inclusion approach and research design (Torraco, 2005). Although uncommon, examples of this type of review can be found in the social work literature (e.g., Covington, 2000; Gross, 1998; Mazumdar, Raj, & Sinha, 2005). The reason for employing an integrative literature review in the study is its ability to address both mature topics and emerging ones, such as the Friluftsliv Model.

The secondary data were collected from electronic databases, including AJOL, Google Scholar, Elsevier, PubMed, and PsycINFO (American Psychological Association). The search covered the period from January 2000 to August 2025, using predefined keywords to identify relevant data that best represent the Ubuntu and Friluftsliv models in terms of inclusion capacity and quality of life. Additionally, reference lists from selected studies and previous systematic reviews on green spaces, ecotherapy, and health were compiled for this purpose. The use of the integrative review method evaluated the overall connection between the Friluftsliv Model and the inclusion of various groups, especially vulnerable populations, within the community.

The engagement in an integrative review facilitated a comprehensive overview of the knowledge base, enabling a critical evaluation and potential re-conceptualisation, as well as an expansion of the practical foundation for integrating the Friluftsliv Model into the Ubuntu capacity. As part of this integrative review, data were analysed in accordance with specific objectives rather than adhering to a particular standard. According to Whittemore

and Knafl (2005), data analysis constitutes a component of an integrative or critical review, but it is not exhaustively developed in accordance with a specific standard. Nonetheless, given the absence of a strict standard in integrative techniques, the study conducted a critical analysis and examination of the literature based on predetermined secondary data in relation to the study's objectives.

Moreover, the integrative review methodology requires researchers to possess advanced competencies, such as superior conceptual thinking (MacInnis, 2011), while ensuring transparency and meticulous documentation of the analysis process. The author leveraged the Ubuntu research experience during the review process and presented the findings to enhance understanding, experience, and the theoretical framework relevant to the study objectives. To date, no study has established a linkage between the Friluftsliv Model and the Ubuntu theoretical framework. Nevertheless, this review offers new insights into inclusion, drawing upon this context. Although an integrative review allows for various methodological approaches, the author elected to adhere to established research techniques for data analysis and reporting (Torraco, 2005), including the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria, transparency in literature selection, and the integration of concepts.

While the methodology for systematic reviews is straightforward and adheres to rigorous rules and standards (Liberati et al., 2009), the process of conducting an integrative review necessitates further development and customisation to the specific project (Wong et al., 2013). The author established tailored standards and a comprehensive plan to ensure the precise inclusion of relevant literature in addressing the study's objectives and questions (Torraco, 2005). This suggests that an integrative review approach is more suitable as a review method when the researcher possesses substantial expertise in the subject area, in comparison to other review methodologies, such as systematic reviews. According to MacInnis (2011), successfully executing a truly integrative review and contributing a novel conceptual model or theory can yield considerable academic and practical benefits (MacInnis, 2011).

Ubuntu Theoretical Framework

Ubuntu theory is an African philosophy that emphasises humanity, interconnectedness, and community, summarised by the phrase "*I am because we are*" (Mugumbate 2013 & 2019). It centres on the idea that an individual's identity and well-being are intrinsically tied to their relationships with others and their collective community, advocating for values such as compassion, respect, and shared responsibility to foster a more humane society (Metz, 2016; Lembuka, 2024a). Ubuntu, an African philosophy emphasising community, interconnectedness, and shared humanity, can be applied to quality of life research by shifting the focus from individual outcomes to collective well-being and social harmony (Odero et al., 2024).

The study integrated Ubuntu values like justice, beneficence, solidarity, and compassion to develop culturally relevant research paradigms, promote ethical practices in areas like health, socio-economic, and theoretical development to foster resilience and collective responsibility within communities, ultimately enriching ethical thinking and contributing to more equitable research practices and sustainable intervention Worldwide (Odero et al, 2024). The fact that Ubuntu provides a framework for indigenous research, moving away from individualistic perspectives towards culturally responsive practices rooted in community settings and indigenous knowledge systems, promotes collective welfare through the integration of ecology (Mpofu et al., 2024). It shifts the emphasis from individual success to the well-being of the entire community, recognising that an individual's quality of life is intricately linked to their community's prosperity.

Ubuntu principles have a relevant capacity to uphold understanding of the theoretical and indigenous model through integrating its core principles, which reflect transparency, explainability, and the overall welfare of communities over individual outcomes. The cultural inclusiveness of the Ubuntu theoretical framework aligns with the Friluftsliv Model in emphasising shared resources, eco-therapy, nature, and collective responsibilities, thereby fostering more meaningful results relevant to upholding the collective quality of life (Ewuoso, 2019 & 2021). Moreover, the justification of the study is supported by Ewuoso (2021), Mpofu et al (2024), and Mugumbate et al (2019), which sustains the capacity of Ubuntu theory to integrate indigenous knowledge and practice into research.

Therefore, the inclusiveness of Ubuntu theoretical framework has to revisit and validate the inclusive capacity of Friluftsliv Model toward the quality of life and therefore 1) It supports to understand how the Friluftsliv Model

render equal opportunities, equity, and inclusion directly supports the principle of social justice and ecology, 2) It leads to research that advocates for the rights and special needs of vulnerable populations (elders, senior citizens, poor, people with terminal illness and those with disabilities) 3) It contributes in understanding how the model is more inclusive society, fostering resilience, promoting solidarity, mutual support, reducing social division, and empowering collective rights action community based interventions in connection to ecology, 4) It supports the integration and validation of this cultural based pedagogy and model into research through recognizing its valuable insights into the quality of life.

FINDINGS

The Norwegian concept of Friluftsliv is a philosophy of outdoor life, and its applicability involves a modest approach to life in connection with nature without polluting it. The philosophy evolved into a model of harmonious relationships between human society and ecology, guiding human interactions with nature for centuries by envisioning the central principle of interdependence. According to Afroginthejord (2020), the Friluftsliv Model render a harmonious relationship between man and nature without destroying or disturbing, either for leisure or therapy mission, the ideal of Friluftsliv considers a sustainable connection with nature which goes beyond expensive outdoor gear or taking selfies on the top of a mountain for social media purposes (Afroginthejord, 2020).

The originality and applicability of the Friluftsliv Model is based in Norway and legitimately is defined as 'residency and physical activity in open air during leisure time to provide a change of scenery and nature experiences' (Norwegian Ministry of the Environment 2015: 10). Despite of late documentation, the model reflects the historical linkage with evolution of Norwegian society, and to date it is captured as a dogma, a pedagogy, a philosophy and a way of life for many experts that represents Norway (Faarlund, 2015). The concept of Friluftsliv gained momentum during the Norwegian Renaissance in the 18th and 19th centuries, becoming a key part of Norway's national agenda for positioning the country on the international stage.

The model has remained a traditional practice in the 21st century, with a strong national identity in Norwegian outdoor activities, and has been adopted by other Scandinavian countries for the same (Ween & Abram, 2012). The model is holistic and collective in nature, providing not only equal access to ecology as a form of free therapy but also accommodating all crucial components that make up a community, including home pets, children, elders, and individuals with special needs. According to Baklien et al. (2016), they have produced a Friluftsliv culture that is not merely based on taking pleasure from the outdoors, but a duty that community members have an obligation to fulfil.

Like other culture-based models, the Friluftsliv Model is not static, but rather a living tradition that evolves; its vision and mission, however, remain the same. In the 21st century, the transformation of the Friluftsliv Model into a legal framework has led to increased inclusion of people with special needs, including those with disabilities, compared to two centuries ago. The model encompasses more than just the act of engaging in outdoor recreation, which puts pressure on how people should perform in the outdoors, but also targets those from different cultural backgrounds (Flemsæter et al., 2015) in support of the argument Anderson et al, (2023) highlighted the inclusion of Friluftsliv Model as the outdoor activities that moved beyond supporting Norwegians to a fundamental contrivance for the social inclusion of immigrants in Norway (Anderson et al, 2023).

Among the advantages of the Friluftsliv model is its open culture, which allows anyone from a different cultural background to join while still maintaining their own cultural identity. The values and principles of the model are built in an open culture rather than a closed culture. The model has continued to attract immigrants and promote inclusion of general social diversity in society through an outdoor eco-therapy approach, encompassing physical exercise in general and outdoor activities in particular (Taff & Aure, 2021). Under the Friluftsliv Model, the government has emphasised the need for more participation by immigrants in outdoor activities to maintain their health status, particularly mental and physical (Norwegian Ministry of the Environment, 2015).

The support of Norwegian government on the implementation of the Friluftsliv Model reflects the country's commitment on the World Health Organization (WHO) Healthy City guidelines as it defines a healthy city as "one that continually creates and improves its physical and social environments and expands the community

resources that enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and developing to their maximum potential” (World Health Organisation, 2016a). However, while other cities in the World are experiencing the challenge of attaining a healthy city due to rapid urbanisation and modern lifestyles that limit human contact with nature (Twohig-Bennett et al., 2018). In Norway, the Friluftsliv Model proves positivity to the WHO’s Healthy City Guidelines, as 83% of Norwegians are committed to nature addiction.

“Norwegians are out in nature more than they are.”

In urban or town settings, the inclusion of enjoying the benefits of ecology is unlimited through the embracement of the Friluftsliv Model, which has linked both dwellers to contact with nature. It has been reported that a high percentage of Norwegians spend time outdoors with nature. According to a survey conducted by the market research company Kantar TNS in June 2023, 83% of respondents expressed interest in Friluftsliv, 77% spend time in nature at least once a week, and 25% do so most days (Dixon, 2023). In its latest living conditions survey from 2021, the country’s official statistics office, Statistics Norway, found that 25% of Norwegians had stayed outside overnight in the past year. It has been reported that Norwegians spend more time in nature than they do indoors (Dixon, 2023).

“Even small children in kindergarten sleep outdoors in their prams in winter”

Like other Scandinavian countries, the connection with nature in Norway is nurtured from childhood, and a love for ecology becomes an integral part of Norwegian culture. According to Dixon (2023), who quoted that *“Even small children in kindergarten sleep outdoors in their prams in winter,”* as the fact that *“Norwegian parents expect this. We believe in fresh air.”* At many nurseries, toddlers spend 80% of their time outside. At school, there are special days throughout the year when children go out into nature and build campfires, including children with disabilities. Most importantly, even Norwegian students with multiple disabilities are taking advantage of the Friluftsliv Model to enjoy the right to ecology.

“About 40% of Norway is covered in forest”

It has been reported that the number of people in Norway participating in outdoor activities increased sharply in 2020, according to the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA). Also, Dixon (2023) reported on the rapid increase of Norwegian citizens and other immigrants during and in the post-COVID-19 era *“We have noticed a big increase in applicants. A renewed interest in nature during COVID-19 is perhaps one of the reasons”*. Access to nature in Norway is among the factors influencing this response to nature following the pandemic and the rise of an outdoor culture. The fact that most Norwegians live close to green space taking the reference of following the cultural of preserving nature for centuries *“About 40% of Norway is covered in forest,”* and more attracting ecology even in big cities *“In Norwegian 15 biggest towns and cities are surrounded by nature.”* This attracts people to access nature regardless of the weather, comes rain or comes sun it does not stop Nordic going to outdoor activities with the nature.

“Be connected”, “be active”, “take notice”, “keep learning” and “give”

The quality of life depends on holistic health practices, as referenced in the Friluftsliv Model, which suggests that engaging in outdoor activities contributes to mental and physical well-being. The model is beneficial to physical health because it often involves exercise, but the mental benefits are just as important. Studies show that being in green spaces helps reduce anxiety and improve cognition (Afroginthefjord, 2020). According to a 2020 survey, 90% of respondents reported that Norwegians feel less stressed and are in a better mood when they spend time in nature. According to Professor Helga Synnevåg Løvoll at Volda University College, who argued on the five documented ways to the quality of life can be achieved through the Friluftsliv model as it ensures inclusiveness of people to be “connect”, “be active”, “take notice”, “keep learning” and “give”. (Afroginthefjord, 2020).

“We have the right to quality of life”

The right to access nature is both inherited and universal; thus, there are numerous benefits when people have a stronger connection to nature. Similar to the Friluftsliv Model, whether you engage in it alone or with others, the

connection with nature is more promising for improving the quality of life. It was reported that spending time in nature, whether it is a walk in the woods or several days of simple camping, gives Norwegians some distance from daily life and seems to improve their ability to adjust to a more positive outlook (Lovoll, 2016; Lovoll et al., 2016). According to the UN World Happiness Report of 2023, Bergen and Oslo have been ranked among the 10 happiest cities in the World. Applicability of the Friluftsliv Model could be among the factors influencing Norway to be the 07th happiest country in the World (UN, 2023).

“We have the right to roam, the right to pick flowers and mushrooms, the right to stay overnight”

Norway's position among the top happiest countries is attributed to its long-standing support of a legal framework that envisions the right to access nature for decades. Norwegian laws and policies protect and promote the Friluftsliv Model with reference to the 1957 Outdoor Recreation Act, which enshrined Norwegians' longstanding right to be in nature, regardless of who owns the land (Lovoll, 2016; Lovoll et al., 2016). The Norwegians are entitled to the right to roam, the right to pick flowers and mushrooms, and the right to stay overnight. With these rights come responsibilities to protect nature at all costs. Outdoors enthusiasts, guided by the Norwegian Mountain Code, which emphasises personal responsibility for all, should plan their trips based on their capabilities and fitness (Anderson et al, 2023).

“Friluftsliv Model is Annual based Cultural Practice”

The practice of Friluftsliv Model has become an annual agenda national wide and people are more committed as a year-round obligation from January to December regardless of the weather, it has been reported of various activities from winter to summer through cross-country skiing; mountain biking on snow; ice-skating and ice-fishing on frozen lakes, or even ice-bathing; dog sledding; sitting by a campfire where fires are allowed between mid-September and mid-April (Lovoll, 2016; Lovoll et al., 2016). In recent surveys, one of the main motives behind Norwegians seeking peace of mind and quietness is to unlock the benefits of snow and ice. According to Kari Leibowitz (2023), the further north people lived, the more they positively viewed ‘winter is wonderful’ for economic and holistic outdoor activities that ultimately contribute toward psychological well-being and general quality of life for all.

Table 3.1 Outdoor Activities

SN	Season	Adult activities	Children activities
1	Summer	Hike, bike, and paddle, go skiing, and fishing	Wildlife safaris to see whales or musk oxen, water sports like rafting and kayaking, and riding the Fløibanen funicular. Exploring climbing parks and discovering nature in parks Gentle nature walks to adventurous options like glacier walks and via ferratas
2	Winter	Seeing the Northern Lights, dog sledding, skiing (both alpine and cross-country), snowshoeing, and fatbiking. Winter kayaking, ice fishing, whale watching, and exploring fjords. Fjord cruising and relaxing in an outdoor sauna.	Dog sledding, snowshoeing, skiing (both downhill and cross-country) Sledding on toboggan runs and ice skating on frozen lakes. Families can also participate in less physically demanding activities like wildlife safaris to see whales or other creatures, or even a northern lights tour in the north. Family-oriented ski resorts and activities, such as the funicular and troll forest
3	Autumn	Hiking, fishing for cod and salmon, cycling through mountain scenery, and kayaking on fjords.	Hiking amidst colourful heather in the mountains, experiencing unique funicular rides for scenic views, exploring nature with wildlife safaris,

		Whale watching in the north, relax in a fjord-side sauna, or take a scenic drive or gondola ride to admire the changing landscape.	Visiting farms to learn about local produce, or engaging in active pursuits like kayaking or climbing in various adventure parks. Guided trips on glaciers, visiting science centres and trampoline parks for a break from the outdoors
4	Spring	Cruising in the Fjord with full bloom and kayaking, exploring waterfalls, hiking in the scenic countryside, wildlife watching and even late-season skiing and snowboarding in the mountains. Mountain biking, whitewater rafting, fjord saunas, watching the birds at their liveliest, visiting farmers' markets and food festivals.	Visit BodøIn Norway, hiking, cycling, viewing melting snow and emerging greenery, wildlife safaris (including whale watching), and exploring the country's nature parks and farms. Visit climbing parks, treetop adventure, ride funiculars, and explore coastal cities like Bergen with its famous Mount Fløyen playground.

Source: Lembuka (2025)

With reference to Table 3.1 above, the inclusion capacity of the Friluftsliv Model is based on the plentiful opportunities for outdoor activities that provide the right for anyone to access nature. From traditional practice to a legal obligation, the Norwegian Government has continued to improve the required infrastructure to support outdoor activities for all, including people with disabilities, as national health and social welfare depend on the health of citizens (Anderson et al, 2023). It has been reported that public health policies have, for nearly two decades, encouraged new groups of people, including immigrants, to regularly participate in outdoor recreation, as this is considered beneficial for their quality of life (Norwegian Ministry of the Environment, 2015). Therefore, other governments worldwide should learn from Norway's cost-effective approach to proper inclusion, which promotes the right to a quality of life for all.

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Ubuntu's philosophical framework takes into consideration valuing the interconnection of people and ecology for the holistic physical and psychological community welfare, similar to the experience of the Nordic outdoor Friluftsliv Model, which goes beyond simply being outdoors and seeking the inclusion of people with nature (Henderson et al, 2007; Lovoll, 2016; Lembuka, 2023). Both discourses are complex to realise, as they demand being away from modern civilisation and being in the presence of natural environments, which are sometimes scarce in gigantic cities. However, the compromised quality of life in modern civilisation necessitates their revitalisation. The experience has shown that stabilised psychological components ultimately trigger positive reactions to other components of the human body. According to Lovoll (2016), the realisation of quality of life should include a particular state of being mindful of the presence of nature.

While various governments worldwide have invested in curative approaches, especially those from developing countries, including Africa, the Norwegian government has continued to support the cost-free preventive strategy through the Friluftsliv Model, which promotes the holistic welfare of its citizens and immigrants, necessary for upholding the country's quality of life. The model engages in outdoor activities that promote public health by improving both physical and mental well-being (Twohig-Bennett et al., 2018). The basic science proved that physically, activities like walking, hiking, and playing increase physical activity, which strengthens the heart, builds strong bones and muscles, helps with weight management, boosts the immune system, and increases Vitamin D. Mentally, nature reduces stress, anxiety, and depression, enhances mood, improves cognitive functions like attention and creativity, and restores the mind. Access to green spaces and nature also encourages social interaction, improves sleep quality, and leads to better health outcomes during pregnancy (Twohig-Bennett, 2018).

Civilisation in modern society, which has become increasingly detached from the encroachment of technology, has become a barrier to modern societies' realisation of the "Great Outdoors" and has placed more emphasis on technology, such as television, computers, and gaming (Hartig et al., 2014; Chawla, 2015). Mounting evidence suggests that people, by pushing away from nature, have distanced themselves from major environmental issues

(e.g., extreme weather events, water quality, air quality) and, in the end, have begun to lose contact with a necessary tool for their mental health that is available to all at little or no cost. By denying interactions with natural ecosystems, people jeopardise the rejection of a fundamental part of our being, a principle that is ironically more evident due to advances in medical technology (van den Berg et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 2012).

While traditional healers from Africa have continue to engage nature as part of Ubuntu eco-therapy for holistic health intervention, other parts of the World have successful succeeded to use nature in various medical systems, from Ayurvedic medicine (Chopra & Doiphode, 2002) to traditional Chinese medicine (Kayne & Booker, 2010) to many Western pediatric perspectives (Little and Wyver, 2008; Prince et al., 2013), have long advocated the importance of nature to well-being. However, the concept that flowers and trees can influence well-being psychologically was largely untested until the late 1970s, when R.S. Ulrich examined the psychological influence of scenes of nature on the stress experienced by students (Ulrich, 1979, 1981, 1983, 1986) and medical recovery rates (Ulrich, 1984).

Eco-therapy is crucial for providing culturally relevant and practical support, addressing historical trauma and systemic injustices, fostering community-led solutions, and recognising the inherent strengths and resilience within indigenous communities through an inclusive approach (Shanshan, 2024). Various researchers have recommended a multi-disciplinary intervention that considers and prioritises indigenous models, knowledge, values, and sovereignty to achieve more just and effective outcomes (Shanshan, 2024), which calls for further revisiting and integrating Friluftsliv into various disciplines, including social work, education, psychology, medicine, community health, etc., in the aspect of eco-therapy. In recent years, eco-therapy has become a more valuable and inclusive tool for enhancing the quality of life, with a greater focus on vulnerable populations.

Therefore, the Ubuntu theoretical Framework has an open door for further assessment of the Friluftsliv Model and other indigenous Models in other parts of the World that envision a reciprocal relationship between nature and people through community values. The contemporary global frameworks and agenda require indigenous Models with nature-based strategies for encompassing specific outdoor activities and a philosophy of quality of life that is rooted in nature. The need for indigenous models has a more inclusive nature, with interventions that are crucial in realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global agendas at the community level, which is relevant to the inclusive quality of life considering the Ubuntu and Friluftsliv approaches, which emphasise interconnectedness and community, often extending to a deep respect and understanding of nature as part of the communal fabric.

CONCLUSIONS

The contemporary global frameworks and digital societies require indigenous Models with nature-based strategies for promoting more outdoor activities as leisure or eco-therapy, thereby upholding the quality of life as never before. While the Friluftsliv Model continues to uphold the quality of life in Norway, other parts of the World are challenged with an undefined quality of life due to less interaction with nature, influenced by the digitalisation of modern societies. The open fact is that modern civilisation has replaced human interaction with nature or human interaction with electronic devices, which impacts holistic health achievement and the quality of life worldwide. This calls for the urgent need to revisit indigenous models with the required inclusive capacity to integrate community and nature toward collective community welfare. The fact that most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global agendas at the community level are relevant to the inclusive quality of life.

Nevertheless, sustainable interventions demand sustainable solutions that are embedded in community activities to support not only universal human rights but also the inclusion of vulnerable populations in the collective quality of life. Considering the Ubuntu and Friluftsliv approaches, which emphasise the interconnectedness of nature and holistic community welfare, often extending to a deep respect and understanding of nature as part of culturally relevant activities that support physical and psychological development. While humans and nature are inseparable in achieving a holistic quality of life, the connection to nature is a cost-effective approach to achieving a holistic quality of life compared to the digital connection, including social media.

Connection to the ecology, including land, water bodies, and green spaces, has been an integral part of the historical evolution of human societies, regardless of an individual's social, health, and economic status. Tracing back to Asia, Europe, Australia, and Africa, the continents' linkage to nature has influenced holistic human development. There is a philosophical, cultural, spiritual and practical connection to the land, its resources, and the natural environment, which influences the daily community activities and the quality of life. The linkage between daily community activities and traditional pedagogy has been profound in outdoor routines. Ubuntu reflects how traditional African societies have lived in close harmony with their natural surroundings, developing practices and philosophies focused on outdoor living and resourcefulness that are akin to the spirit of the Friluftsliv Model, but with different cultural expressions.

The inclusion capacity of Ubuntu philosophy and the Friluftsliv Model has proven the relevance of integrating the significant roles of ecology in upholding the quality of life through its dual aspects, either as leisure or eco-therapy. Since traditional practices have influenced most ecological models, and therefore their integration into training and practice has been established, they deserve to be part of the systems. The argument is supported by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which emphasises the inclusion capacity of the ecological approach, shifting from individual influence to micro, exo-system, and macro systems. He further argued that the crucial natural interaction between humans and ecology, operating through multiple layers, influences the holistic quality of life of an individual within a community. While Norway takes extra steps to integrate the Friluftsliv Ecological Model, the appreciation of ecology in the rest of the World is not as attractive as its significant contributions to the quality of life. For a sustainable quality of life, revisiting indigenous models that emphasise the interconnection of humans and nature is inevitable in the contemporary World.

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