



**BOOK of
ABSTRACTS**

HUMANITIES

International Spring School

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Humanities Horizons:
Navigating Modernity and Innovation



Title of Presentation: Does going digital matter in communicating corporate social responsibility?
A systematic review approach.

Surname & Initials: Adalawo E.F. & Chaka M.

Abstract:

Corporate websites, social media accounts, and other interactive platforms are just a few of the ways that businesses are embracing the new digital technologies and communicating their policies and responsible initiatives. Web 2.0 is also thought of as a means of promoting good practices through marketing communications. To comprehend the justification for utilizing digital media to communicate corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, the methodology incorporates metrics from technological innovation and CSR. The results from a systematic review have indicated that stakeholder engagement and the perceived usability and ease of use of online media (for CSR disclosures) are significantly correlated. This study concludes by suggesting that CSR communication is more effective when it is easily accessible online. It implies that companies have a chance to improve their image and reputation when they interact with various stakeholders through digital media.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, communication, digital media, corporate business, organisational image

Title of presentation: What are the roles of Religious Leaders in Religious Competition between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria?: A literature Study.

Surname & Initials: Akintola D.O., Ntombana L. & Sait S.

Abstract:

Background

Nigeria has been in serious chaos since the 80s as a result of religious competition between Christians and Muslims. Till today, religious competition keeps looming and destabilising the peaceful coexistence among the Nigerian people who are from Christian and Islamic faiths. The religious competition is caused by the religious leaders due to their hate speech against other religious faiths because of 'social issues, theological differences, political leadership position contests, and other religious motives'.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the roles of religious leaders in religious competition between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. The research seeks to discuss the nature of the religious competition, the roles played by the religious leaders in religious competition, and their roles in resolving the religious competition.

Methodology

The research employs a qualitative research method which is based on the review of the existing literature. The study will contribute to the scholarly voices in the field of religious studies, peace, and religious conflict resolution/management.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The research study examines the roles of religious leaders in religious competition between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. This research is divided into five sections. The first section briefly discusses the background/rationale for religious competition in Nigeria. The second section describes the nature of religious competition. The third section discusses the roles of religious leaders in religious competition in Nigeria. The fourth section describes the roles of religious leaders in resolving religious competition between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. The fifth section is a concluding part of the study. The recommendations are made for the religious leaders based on the research findings from the literature. The research mobilises the religious leaders to be socially conscious of the peaceful cohabitation of Nigerian society, being a religiously pluralistic society.

Keywords: Religious leaders, religious competition, Christians, Muslims and Nigeria.

Title of presentation: Promoting Educators' Psychological Well-Being Following Learner

Victimisation in Mopani District of Limpopo Province, South Africa: Guidelines and Strategies.

Surname & Initials: Badimo T.P.

Abstract:

In recent years, violence against educators in public schools has reached alarming proportions, leading to increased attention as educators resign due to these incidents. This highlights the urgent need to address this phenomenon. As a resident of a township within the Mopani West District, I have noticed a disparity in the reporting of school violence incidents. This district has been chosen for the study due to a recent spike in violent occurrences towards educators, which appears to be more significant compared to other regions of the country. While discussions regarding such occurrences are prevalent within the community, they are noticeably absent from mainstream news outlets and online sources. This observation has sparked my concern and led me to undertake an investigation, revealing a pattern wherein many of these incidents remain unreported.

The primary aim of this study is to explore educators' psychological well-being post-victimisation by learners in Mopani District, providing new insights from the educators' perspectives. The research will concentrate on various forms of violence, including physical assaults, verbal abuse, and psychological harassment. Grounded in an interpretive research paradigm, this study will adopt a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design.

A sample will be drawn from educators who have experienced any form of victimisation by learners. Due to the nature and sensitivity of the phenomena to be explored, a combination of purposive and snowball sampling will be used to select participants who meet the inclusion criteria. Fifteen participants will be included in this study, reflecting the idiographic nature (case-by-case analysis) of phenomenological studies. Data will be collected through individual, semi-structured interviews and analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Data verification will be upheld through triangulation, field notes, member checking, methodological coherence, and the maintenance of a reflexive journal. The researcher will conclude and make recommendations based on the findings in conjunction with existing research literature.

Keywords: educator victimisation, learner-to-educator violence, psychological well-being, well-being, victimisation.

Title of Presentation: The African Online Narrative: Media Coverage in South Africa of the Israel-Hamas War.

Surname and Initials: Banda C., Siphuma M. & Mr Segalwe P.

Abstract:

The Fourth Estate, the media, has been known to be the conveyors of information in global democracies and contexts since the beginning of print media. It has also been at the forefront of disseminating news, particularly during critical periods of crises crisis and even now in the post-Covid era. Since 7 October 2023, the Israel-Hamas War, media coverage has become the key narrative in determining what is truth and what is misinformation – especially in the mainstream media and, to an extent, social media. Against this background, this paper delves into the general online media coverage in South Africa about the war, with a special focus on two of the main online newspapers, Mail & Guardian Live and City Press Live. This paper also discusses South African online public sentiment, as depicted among the general South African online media, but especially in the two online papers presented on X (previously known as Twitter). Media coverage is never done in a completely disinterested manner, but from a particular perspective, with political ideology often coming into play. This paper, therefore, discusses not only the way the above-named online papers cover the war but also the possible reasons why they report in the way(s) they do. Through the positivistic approach, this paper is informed by the Agenda-Setting Theory and how the above-mentioned media houses reflect the reality (and/or non-reality) of the war by shaping the latest news about the war and filtering through to the South African public. Following the qualitative approach, the paper makes use of content analysis as a means of inquiry to analyse the presence of certain words, themes and concepts concerning the war in Israel, presented by the abovementioned media outlets. The paper found that the majority of South Africans lean towards sympathy for the Palestine cause and are against what the Israelis are purporting to achieve.

Keywords: Misinformation, Israel, Hamas, Agenda-setting, Ideology, Mainstream Media

Title of Presentation: Language policy development through multilingual short story-writing competitions at the University of the Free State.

Surname & Initials: Busane M.

Abstract:

The University of the Free State (UFS) has made it clear that its dedication to advancing its language policy through multilingualism is sustainable. Besides the call from the Department of Higher Education (2002) that all universities must produce language policies that speak to the issues of bilingualism and multilingualism, the UFS has always been a multilingual university mainly because of its geographical locations and diverse backgrounds of the university community at large. Since universities in South Africa have been obligated to be either bilingual or multilingual, creative writing initiatives are taking centre stage at the UFS with the aim of capacitating students with knowledge of prose writing. For instance, one project that has captured the attention of this study is the writing of short stories in different languages which was introduced by the UFS's programme known as 'Initiative for Creative African Narratives – (iCAN)'. The iCAN has made it a norm to accommodate students in different languages when they submit their short stories for short story-writing competitions. This can be seen in students' published works, which the researcher intends to introduce as tangible evidence when arguing that multilingualism at UFS is guaranteed to advance its multilingual language policy. Through the guidance of language management theory, this study will qualitatively look at the administration of the competitions and the works that have been produced by students themselves.

Keywords: UFS multilingual language policy, Creative writing, Short-story-writing competitions, iCAN, Language management.

Title of Presentation: Unlikely Bedfellows: The Role of Philosophy in Modernising and Innovating Conservation in South Africa.

Surname & Initials: Coetzer Y.M.

Abstract:

When considering conservation, it is unlikely that one considers the discipline of philosophy as a key role player, and one would be right. Conservation in South Africa is dominated by the natural sciences, and this means that decisions about conservation are dominated by scientific values through specific conservation metrics, such as wildlife distribution, population trends, ecosystem functionality, and percentage of protected land. However, upon closer inspection, it is clear that many philosophical questions underpin conservation. Questions about values abound – how do we decide against competing animal interests? Why do we cull some animals, like buffalo and impala in our national parks, but we do not cull elephants, despite the damage they cause to the landscape? How do we govern our protected areas? How do we navigate the human-wildlife conflict surrounding protected areas? Should we concern ourselves with community poverty to curb conservation challenges like poaching? All of these, and many more questions, cannot be answered using only the natural sciences – indeed, I hold, that a discipline such as philosophy can be useful to navigate these types of conservation challenges. In this presentation, I consider the status quo of conservation in South Africa. I then consider the absence of the humanities, and philosophy specifically, in the status quo. Thereafter, I argue for the necessary adoption of philosophy and philosophical thinking in conservation spaces, and posit that this could aid in addressing many of our conservation challenges in South Africa.

Keywords: conservation, philosophy, conservation challenges, ethics

Title of presentation: Round Table: Climate and the Capitalocene as a Crisis of Modernity.

Surname and Initials: Coetser Y.M., Holdridge C., Goodrich A. & Ntsoeng K.

Abstract:

It is without a doubt that one of the biggest crises facing humanity today is the impending climate one. Often, attention is turned towards the hard sciences to provide guidance as we navigate the climate crisis. However, the humanities, and specifically, the environmental humanities, have also engaged with the climate crisis. This roundtable then proposes to examine how the environmental humanities, or EH, can engage with the climate crisis from the global south, necessitating a decolonial approach to the climate crisis. A cue will be taken from the work of scholars like Dipesh Chakrabarty, an Indian historian, who rephrased the 'global' question of climate change rather as a 'planetary' one, thereby decentring the human, but nevertheless addressing inequality. Furthermore, and as part of the decolonial line of inquiry, this roundtable will also consider the role of the capitalocene. The capitalocene situates capitalism within the web of life, and as "a situated and multispecies world-ecology of capital, power and re/production" (Moore, 2017).

This round table will be guided by questions such as

- 1) How does the environmental humanities contribute to climate change discourse?
- 2) What role does the capitalocene play in shaping environmental policies and practices?
- 3) How does a decolonial approach enhance our understanding of the climate crisis?

Keywords: Climate crisis; Environmental humanities; Capitalocene; Decoloniality

Title of presentation: Student's perceptions of social media beauty standards at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus.

Surname and Initials: Coetzee C.

Abstract:

The objective of this study was to investigate the North-West University, Potchefstroom campus undergraduate students' perceptions towards social media beauty standards. Five social factors that served as the independent variables (IVs) (students' self-identified sex/gender; students' race; students' levels of Active Social Media Engagement (ASME); whether students ascribe importance to social media influencers and students' levels of self-confidence when presenting themselves on social media). These were tested in relation the dependent variable (DV), i.e., students' perception toward social media beauty standards on the Potchefstroom campus of the North-West University (NWU). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to conduct the two factor analyses, the three Independent Samples T-test, the one-way ANOVA, and the Spearman Correlation Coefficient. Hypothesis 1 was tested using the Independent Samples T-test. Findings from this test showed that female students have a more positive perception toward social medias beauty standards. Regarding hypothesis 2, the IV (i.e., students' race) and the DV showed that there was no statistically significant difference. Hypothesis 3 which tested students' levels of Active Social Media Engagement (ASME) and the DV by using a One-way ANOVA showed that the groups do not have significantly different means. Hypothesis 4 was done using an Independent Samples T-test by testing each item against the DV. Only the one item was significant: viewing the content of specific influencers on social media. There was no statistically significant difference for the other 5 items that were compared to the DV using Independent Samples T-tests. Lastly, hypothesis 5, i.e., whether students ascribe importance to social media influencers and the DV made use of a Spearman rank correlation and had a linear association (small effect).

Keywords: beauty, social media, North-West University

Title of presentation: Issues which render the existing South African laws and procedures designed to interdict suspect wealth and in particular criminal property less effective.

Surname and Initials: Croucamp P.A.

Abstract:

This paper investigates the economic risks and impact on South Africa following its inclusion on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) 'grey list' of jurisdictions under increased monitoring. FATF is a prominent international entity overseeing financial crime and is a global standard-setter for Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation (AML/CFT/CPF). The research question of this paper presents a qualitative examination of South Africa's legislative framework designed to impede suspect wealth, with a particular focus on its efficacy in addressing criminal property, in reference to the requirements of FATF. A country is typically grey-listed when serious deficiencies are identified through the mutual evaluation exercise, but the listed country still works actively with the FATF towards compliance. It should be stressed that grey-listing is not intended as a punitive measure but is a process of providing additional support for cooperative countries to develop and maintain a prudent AML/CFT system. The theoretical underpinning of this research centers on the institutional foundation from which the legislative framework originates, and the impact of the liberationist policy prescription on the integrity of said framework. The findings of the study explain the weaknesses in the legislative regime but also reflect on the concepts of integrity and institutional capacity.

Keywords: Financial Action Task Force (FATF); Money Laundering; Grey-list; Counter Financing of Terrorism

Title of presentation: Coding Empathy in AI: Understanding the Human Experience.

Surname & Initials: Croucamp S.J.

Abstract:

AI (Artificial Intelligence) can become the absolute arbitrator of its respective field of work, whether in academia, medicine, economics, accounting, or law. With its algorithmic potential, it has already been proven to surpass the efficacy of variables within their respective fields and show greater efficiency than humans, especially in the medical field. The technological phenomenon of empathy, however, is a more complex matter, as empathy is partially restricted to human experience and the ability to relate to those experiences. The question that lies within this potential for algorithmic understanding of human experience is: How would a complex skill such as empathy be coded into AI to evaluate and enhance effective output in clinical contexts? Theoretically, empathy is generally a skill that can be developed, and the variability in its effectiveness often comes down to how well the skill is developed in social circumstances. However, it is not exclusive in its application, predicated upon the idea of a genetic disposition. As far as the results of the research is concerned, empathy is simply a piece of code that is already written and well-adapted in the human brain, but it is a different phenomenon to rewrite that code into a non-sentient entity, such as AI. Similarly to how humans develop the skill, machine learning can act as the learning mechanism for AI to reflect, evaluate, adapt, and apply empathetic skills in their output.

Keywords: Machine learning, algorithmic potential, efficacy of variables, coding, clinical contexts

Title of presentation: Our Apollonian Dilemma: Appreciating the Power of the Imagination in the 21st Century Through Two of Keats' Odes.

Surname & Initials: Crowther W.J. & Meihuizen N.C.T.

Abstract:

Iain McGilchrist (2009:344) notes that contemporary culture has reached a point where 'the balance has swung too far – perhaps irretrievably far – towards the Apollonian left hemisphere, which now appears to believe that it can do anything, make anything, on its own'. In this modernised world steeped in materiality and consumerism, one might question the pertinence of reading Keats' poetry, steeped, as it is, in the finer aspects of natural existence. However, McGilchrist's use of 'Apollonian' raises the intriguing possibility of reviving the Nietzschean distinction between Apollonian and Dionysian artistic impulses in the light of a present-day imperative—one clearly anticipated by Keats. By using this distinction as a theoretical framework for appreciating the dichotomy between reality and imagination in Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', we find that he has something intrinsically unique and valuable to add to our present existence. That is, while navigating modernity and innovation in a time of heightened Apollonian left hemispheric AI prominence and reliance, it becomes even more essential to train and develop our Dionysian imaginative faculties. By returning to Keats' two aforementioned odes, I believe we can perceive the transformative power of the imagination which allows us to reach beyond our self-imposed limits and access a more animate Dionysian world of possibility. McGilchrist (2024) is, in my view, accurate when he considers the imagination as an integral part of the future in our present state of the 'machine apocalypse': 'What matters for the future of humanity is imagination'. By reading Keats' two odes through a Nietzschean lens, I believe we can, once again, comprehend the dynamic role which the imagination plays in preserving the humanity in the humanities and keeping us from falling into a state of spiritual bankruptcy in a time of reductive materialism.

Keywords: Apollonian; Dionysian; Keats; McGilchrist; Nietzsche

Title of presentation: Religious Fandom or Fanaticism? Analysing Select Comment Sections in Prophet Bushiri's YouTube Channel.

Surname & Initials: Dada A.K. & Vermaak-Griessel J.

Abstract:

In this era of the digital revolution, social media and video-sharing platforms, such as YouTube have arguably assumed spaces for fandom and religious expression. The comment Sections of these platforms have become avenues for participation. This study interrogates the dynamics of religious fandom and fanaticism in the comment sections of select videos of Prophet Shepherd Bushiri. Bushiri, a controversial figure in the contemporary Pentecostal movement, attracts a huge following and his online presence offers a valuable site for analysis.

This research explores the nature and extent of religious devotion and/or extremism among Bushiri's online followers. The study will involve archival/online research, employing content analysis and thematic methodology. It will utilise exportscomment.com, an online tool, to export 100 comments from two selected videos, focusing on identifying expressions of fandom or fanaticism. Additionally, sentiment analysis is applied to uncover underlying emotions in the interactions.

The initial findings from this study are significant. They indicate that while most comments display admiration and support, there is also a notable presence of passionate and, at times, extreme expressions of loyalty. These findings raise crucial questions about the role of social media in amplifying religious fervour and its potential implications for online and offline religious communities, underscoring the need for further research in this area.

This presentation is underpinned by the fan theory, which will aid the dissection of the intersection of religion and digital communication. This research contributes significantly to understanding how faith and fervour are expressed and experienced in the contemporary digital landscape and how such development impacts media studies.

Keywords: Religious Fandom, Fanaticism, YouTube, Prophet Shepherd Bushiri, Comment section.

Title of presentation: Economic growth, decent work and misery nexus in BRICS countries.

Surname and Initials: Damiyano D.D. & Mago S.M.

Abstract:

This study empirically examines the impact of economic growth and decent work on the misery index in BRICS economies between 2000 and 2022. The data used in this study is extracted from the World Bank Indicators (WBI). ADF unit root test is used to test for stationarity of the variables; the variables were cointegrated of the different orders, $I(0)$ and $I(1)$. As a result of this, ARDL adopted an approach to meet the study's objectives. The results indicated that economic growth and decent work in BRICS countries have a negative relationship with the misery index in both the short and long run. For example, the study found that a 1% increase in GDP in the short run would cause the misery index to fall by 4.8% and by 14.6% in the short and long run respectively. In addition, if decent work increases by 1% in the short run, the misery level falls by 6.7% and 48% in the short and long run respectively. Other control variables that were included in this study show that the exchange rate, corruption perception index, and poverty index have a positive relationship with the misery index in the BRICS. Therefore, the study recommended that BRICS governments improve the status of decent work and increase economic growth, which will help reduce misery. They also need to focus on maintaining governance issues, which will reduce corruption, institutional quality, and government effectiveness. This will also help their countries minimize the level of misery.

Keywords: economic growth, decent work, misery index.

Title of presentation: The effects of institutional factors on crop production for BRICS.

Surname & Initials: Damiyano L.D., Netswera F.N. & Dorasamy N.D.

Abstract:

This study examined the effect of institutional factors on crop production for BRICS countries. To meet the primary objective of this study, systematic literature review was conducted, while using bibliometric analysis. To get rid of irrelevant information, the study used inclusion and exclusion criteria, where the study has only been confined to publications from 2007-2023 and documents published in English language. Furthermore, the findings from this paper indicated that, from 2007 to 2023, about 158 publications and 99 654 citations of documents related to the subject area were published, a notable increase in the number of documents by affiliation, document by country and the funding. Furthermore, the Vos viewer software indicated an increase in collaboration by countries, authors, citation, co-occurrence, authors keywords and co-citations. The study concluded that, for the past 16 years where this study has been confined to, the study on crop production and institutional factors has received special attention in BRICS countries. Therefore, the study recommended that BRICS engage with each other towards improving agricultural production and output. More so, policy makers should design policies that will improve institutional factors to ensure sustainable agriculture development. To improve crop production in BRICS, there is for financial inclusion, countries to have inclusive institutions, decentralization of decision-making process, importation of agricultural technology among others.

Keywords: Institutional, crop production, BRICS

Title of presentation: A Comparative Analysis of Princess Mkabayi's and Queen Nandi's Depiction in the IsiZulu Praise-poems: With Special Reference to Women Empowerment and Social Leadership

Surname and Initials: Dlamini W.M.

Abstract:

This research paper delves into the portrayal of Princess Mkabayi and Queen Nandi in isiZulu praise-poems, shedding light on their roles in promoting women empowerment and leadership in Zulu society. By analysing the verses and linguistic mechanisms used in these praise-poems, the study aims to showcase how these prominent heroines have shaped the AmaZulu monarchy and challenged the perception of Zulu society as patriarchal. Through a qualitative analytical approach, the research examines the natural meanings and experiences embedded in the praise-poems collected by Cope (1968), emphasising the significance of these texts in understanding social phenomena. The study highlights the importance of recognising and celebrating the contributions of women like Princess Mkabayi and Queen Nandi, who were respected and revered for their hard work and dedication. It challenges traditional gender norms by showcasing how these women were given positions of power and influence through praises that acknowledged their leadership qualities. By focusing on specific verses that promote women empowerment, the research aims to provide a nuanced interpretation of the praise-poems, emphasising the role of language and style in conveying messages of female leadership. The study employs feminist theory to examine power dynamics, gender roles, and societal structures in the portrayal of Princess Mkabayi and Queen Nandi in IsiZulu praise-poems, exploring their role in challenging patriarchal norms and advancing women's empowerment and leadership. Potential outcomes may include the defiance of conventional gender stereotypes, the recognition of female autonomy and strength, and the historical importance of these figures as pioneers for gender parity within Zulu culture. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural and historical significance of these praise-poems. Ultimately, the research seeks to inspire young women to embrace the legacy of these heroines and challenge societal norms that limit their potential based on gender.

Keywords: IsiZulu praise-poems, Princess Mkabayi, Queen Nandi, women empowerment, social leadership

Title of presentation: Beyond the normative descriptions in university education: Engaging the discourses of professional academic development for advancement of human flourishing.

Surname & Initials: Dwayi V.M.

Abstract:

The year 2024 in South Africa is famously categorised as the 3rd decade of constitutional democracy. The implication of such a claim varies per social context of which the matters of knowledge, innovation and modernity ought to receive a special focus for the advancement of human flourishing. With the latter observation as constituting the context in systemic ways, this paper seeks to problematise the case of a monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) function, with a focus on professional academic development as the dialectics of power and equality. In South Africa, MER was introduced in the higher education and training sector in 2014. Therefore, 2024 calls for whether adequate progress about university education transformation would be evidenced by new trajectories in ways that the developed insights thereof could make enough claims about the value of navigating modernity and innovation for human flourishing? Conversely, while significant, and beyond refute, would be the role of humanities in higher education and training, the concerns claims and issues about modernity and innovation, as evidenced in literature reviews, call for whether the character of the academic project can allow for transcendence into new trajectories for the set espoused outcomes? To deconstruct the main issues which tried to answer the latter questions, the paper will report on the implementation of professional academic development programs and services in one case of university education as the case of academic citizenry. By academic citizenry, the claims will refer to the role of human agency in the idea of university education as the public and the common good. For this paper, data sources involved use of organizational records in general and the critical discourse analysis of data about the university capacity development program in particular over two funding cycles of 2018-2020 and 2021-2023. In this way, the theory of morphogenesis as a methodology became useful for the study. Thus far, the emerging insights from the analysis seem to point to what remains the contradictions, inconsistencies, tensions and lacks in the social systems and thus a question of the need to advance the cultural capital about knowledge, innovation and modernity in academic spaces. As such, the paper will argue that the promotion for human flourishing, where university education ought to be relevant and responsive in more context-specific and actor-driven ways, will have been achieved if the current capacity building efforts are designed along both the intellectual and programmatic means, and if more impactful and sustainable ways thereof are to be finally attained. The potential point of leverage and upscaling ought to be the pursuit of humanity as more of the transformative mechanisms about the idea of university education as the public good than currently the ameliorative, and worse, still, the reproductive forms.

Keywords: Human flourishing, professional academic development, social justice and equity, public good, transformation

Title of presentation: Education, Health, Social Services: A comparative analysis of South African Township schools and former Model C schools reveals how intersectoral collaboration might improve learner performance through psychosocial assistance.

Surname & Initials: Khanya M.P. & Mailula K.

Abstract:

Educational inequality in South African has been and continues to be a challenge dating back to the apartheid era. The education system is divided between the 'have, and the have not' and this has had great impact on learners who go through the system to better their lives. Although the Department of Basic Education has come up with policies and programmes to enhance psychosocial support for learner and teacher well-being, in translation this has not yielded the needed results in township schools.

The purpose of this paper is to explore through comparison the value of psychosocial support in improving student achievement of South African township schools with former model C schools. There are varying psychosocial stressors which impact a learner's emotional and social well-being, which intern impacts their overall performance and development. These stressors include family, surrounding environment as well as personal factors.

This paper uses a qualitative literary analysis approach, within a systems theory paradigm to understand the interconnectedness as well as the dynamic relationships involved in enhancing learner performance. It is anticipated that research in psychosocial support to enhance learner performance is set to assist public administrators in improving their offering of government services to township schools in an intersectoral manner through education, health and social services.

Covid-19 made the already existing disparity between township schools and old model C schools where disruptions to teaching and learning were less severe than in township schools even more pronounced.

Keywords: psychosocial support; education; inequality; educational inequality; learner support; Covid-19; South Africa.

Title of presentation: Crime and the post-colonial condition of young men in Sifiso Mzobe's novel *Young Blood*

Surname and Initials: Khumalo M. & Nyambi O.

Abstract:

The widespread violence and criminality in post-apartheid South Africa brings light to contradictions inhabiting politically unified notions of post-colonial progress. From a President whose game business hides American dollars in a couch to billion-rand private business corruption in the Steinhoff saga, staggering murder and rape counts, every facet of post-colonial life in South Africa is affected by crime. Besides burgeoning investigative journalist narratives such as Don Pinnock's *Gang Town* (2015), Pieter-Louis Myburgh's *The Republic of Gupta* (2017), Pieter du Toit's *The Stellenbosch Mafia* (2019) etc, fiction is at the forefront of discoursing and reflecting on crime in South Africa. The question is how uniquely does fiction create this discourse of crime and its post-coloniality and what does it matter that crime is 'seen' and 'known' through fictional characters, places, events and time? This paper examines the intersection between crime, youth and post-coloniality in Sifiso Mzobe's *Young Blood* (2010). It deploys Sarah Nuttall's (2009) concept of "entanglement" to read what is cause and effect in depicted crimes perpetrated by the ironically named young thug Siphon – the main character in the novel. The ultimate aim is to see how crime potentially opens epistemological windows to re-knowing Siphon's post-colonial condition as a South African youth.

Keywords: Crime; post-coloniality; youth; entanglement; *Young Blood*

Title of presentation: Contextualising Alliances in Sustainable Urban Renewal Projects: A Literature Review Application of the Five Categories of Questions in Global and Local Case Studies.

Surname & Initials: Lekaba I.

Abstract:

This paper examines contextual experiences, practices, motivations etc of alliances in urban renewal projects using the five categories of questions. The literature review begins with the who question, interrogating the urban planning practice and practitioners; what outlines the varying definitions for alliances and partnerships in broader terms of sustainable development; the reasons organisations and individuals engage in alliances for sustainable urban renewal projects are explored through the why question; and lastly, how allows a window of analysis into the methods for alliance building and partnering in sustainable urban renewal projects. Given that the wider research that is supported by this literature review adopts practice theories as decolonising methodologies, the where & when questions situate the locus of enunciation of the reporting researcher while also orienting the case as either 'global' or 'local'. Adopting this literature analytical position, it is revealed that practitioners of urban renewal are multidisciplinary, yet urban renewal is a practice of urban planning and so, the partnering processes here are informed by PPP-a cornerstone in participatory development and planning discourse. In addressing the what question, literature reveals that definitions of these concepts are wide and varied to reflect the parties involved and their reasons for partnering. These definitions are often presented as typologies and frameworks because 'partnerships' and 'alliances' are capacious. From an instrumental perspective, partnerships and alliances are the most efficient ways that public and private organisations tackle wicked problems in development, however, as highlighted in the why question, reasons for partnering play with the tension between instrumentalist and integrative approaches at sectoral, organisation and individual (interpersonal) levels. Indeed, these tensions are also seen in literature on methods for alliance building in sustainable urban renewal. In countries of the global south, tendencies towards integrative and intrinsic partnerships for development emerged in the 2010s while for the global north, participatory rhetoric was in place from the 1990s with policies like Local Agenda 21 and equitable partnerships became in vogue in the mid-2000s.

Keywords: Alliances and partnerships, urban renewal, sustainable development

Title of presentation: A qualitative study on Incorporating Western and African ideologies to cater for all diversity and understanding of Mental illness specifically on Black people at Father Smangaliso centre, Soshanguve.

Surname & Initials: Lephondo M.E.

Abstract:

Western psychology has in its current position and definition laid claim to the psychology landscape, despite being the construction of one epistemology. This imposition allows western psychology to dominate and control the psychology landscape, to the detriment of other equally valid and “scientific” psychologies such as the African psychologies, Redefinition of western psychology is dependent on psychologist’s and researchers’ appreciation of the relativity of epistemological frameworks and ability to challenge their own subjectivities. This in turn requires epistemological curiosity (Vermeulen, 2011). The statement above leads to our research problem in the study which is exploring the attitudes of mental illness in the black communities, to proper understand how the western and African psychology can be used together to cater for every diversity, Hence the research question is “how can we incorporate western and African psychology in understanding attitude on mental illness in black communities?”, The epistemologies are further explained with theories such as culture-bound syndrome and the three cosmic orders in the African perspective, The study will use qualitative research design with the Interpretive paradigm to explore, the study will use random sampling in the centre to accommodate every individual, and after choosing the population, interviews will be conducted to collect data, specifically zsemi- structures interviews so that the questions can have more depth in explaining and exploring, the study will take place at Soshanguve in a centre for children where mental illness is dominant and interviews will be conducted with the staff, thus the study might be able to be useful to more understand the views of black people and in turn improve the stance of the psychology landscape.

Keywords: Indigenous psychology, Western perspective, Epistemology, culture-bound syndrome, cosmos, Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, Soshanguve, Black communities, Qualitative research design and Interpretive Paradigm.

Title of presentation: The impact of virginity on a marriage institution. A case study of young married women in Mandava high-density area of Zvishavane district in Zimbabwe.

Surname and Initials: Madzima-Ngoribo D.

Abstract:

Marriage institutions have been faced with several problems with women on the receiving end especially found not a virgin on the wedding night. The study sought to ascertain the impact of virginity on marriage focusing on Mandava's high-density area, Zvishavane District of Zimbabwe. The researcher strongly argues that the moral fabric that has been holding society together has been eroded by the young generation who have embraced the Western culture, and this has fueled gender-based violence in marriage institutions. The research uses the qualitative methodology, based on Ritzer's integration theory in analyzing people's views on virginity in the marriage institution and societal norms and values. This research is based on the findings of twenty-five elderly and ten young adults using unstructured interviews to explore the impact of virginity on marriage, reasons why men abuse their wives, and the effects of being non-virgin on women. Respondents concluded that engaging in early sexual activities and being a non-virgin are the causal factors influencing gender-based, extramarital affairs which will pose a risk to spouses contracting HIV/Aids disease and also mistrust in the marriage union. In light of this, the researcher recommends the need for responsible authorities to undertake public awareness campaigns to educate the public about the benefits associated with maintaining one's virginity.

Keywords: Early Marriage, virginity, gender-based violence, Mandava high-density area.

Title of presentation: Situating the Training and Practice of Research Psychologists.

Surname & Initials: Mailula K.M.

Abstract:

Issues of the relevance of psychology in South Africa have been an ongoing debate by scholars for some time. The relevance debate was particularly important during the apartheid era, when transformation began. Issues of relevance include aspects such as psychology's inability to solve social issues and the discipline's Eurocentric approach. Specific to the professional training and practice of research psychology, limited research has been conducted in South Africa in relation to its relevance. For instance, studies on the training of research psychologists have been of interest to a few scholars, with specific attention focused on the career path of research psychologists, as well as their perspectives on the training received, training sites, and the internship training facilitators (Fynn & van der Walt, 2019; Laher, 2005; Nkadimeng et al., 2015; Rascher, 2016).

Against this backdrop, this research aims to unpack research psychology's relevance, situatedness, and purpose in the South African context. This will be done using a qualitative literary analysis of previously conducted research, training documents, and other secondary texts—specifically, documents that govern training, i.e., the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) documents. In addition, the research aims to provide a comparative lens of the practice of research psychologists in South Africa and what is referred to as academic psychologists in first-world countries such as the United States of America (USA). The outcomes will aim to understand the training and practice of research psychology in South Africa.

Keywords: Training, Psychology Relevance, Situatedness, Research Psychology

Title of presentation: The “New Religious Movement”: The Positive and Negative Experiences of Selected South African Women.

Surname and Initials: Maphosho N.R.

Abstract:

A New Religious Movement (NRM) is defined by its excessive devotion to a charismatic leader, along with distinct relationships, beliefs, values, and practices. This often involves creating a psychological dependency among members and exploiting them to further the leader’s goals. These traits are increasingly observed in some charismatic Pentecostal churches in South Africa. In these congregations, practices and values have led members to donate large sums of money, consume substances like bleach and petrol for healing, and even engage in sexual activities with the pastor to receive blessings.

The study aims to: conceptualize NRMs within the Pentecostal charismatic church context; understand the positive aspects that attract individuals to these NRMs; highlight the negative aspects impacting human security; and establish interventions to protect individuals without infringing on religious freedom. The central research question is, “What experiences do South African women face in New Religious Movements?”

Snowball sampling was used to find study participants, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Six women participated: two current members, two former members, and two who only visited the NRM. This diversity aimed to capture various perspectives on NRM experiences.

Key findings indicated that NRMs offer positives such as a sense of belonging, protection, and the ability to cope with personal and socioeconomic challenges. However, negatives included constant financial demands, pressure to conform to avoid judgment, and a sense that the practices were no longer godly.

In conclusion, this study aims to raise awareness about NRMs and their impact on people’s lives. It also seeks to promote interventions that address human security while respecting the right to freedom of religion.

Keywords: New Religious Movements, Cults, Religion, Supernatural, Attraction

Title of presentation: The stories musicians tell about their music-making experiences in chamber ensembles.

Surname and Initials: Marais A.

Abstract:

Musical chamber ensembles consist of the inner workings of relationships and communication to foster a space for stories and growth. Fostering this space occurs while the group is musicking and performing to various audiences. This narrative inquiry explores the stories musicians tell about their music-making experiences in chamber ensembles to understand how they function together. These stories revolve around relationships between musicians that relate to social interactions, leadership, communication, societies, background and belonging. This research is valuable to musicians who want to engage in music-making and conductors to understand the functioning of ensembles better. The value of the stories can also contribute to music education in schools and tertiary institutions. The stories of music-making of chamber ensembles in South Africa are not freely available in the literature. Musicians' stories in ensembles can highlight the benefits of chamber ensembles and the relationships between members. Literature on the topic focuses on listening, empathy, cognitive thinking, and coordination. Furthermore, the literature about ensembles is primarily quantitative studies focusing on communication, social interaction and individual development as personal growth. My study can contribute to this gap by combining the music-making experiences of ensembles with narrative inquiry in a qualitative study to explore how they function together. Qualitative research procedures will be executed to explore the chamber musicians' stories. Through narrative inquiry, I will order events and voice individual narratives. Group and individual interviews were conducted and analysed to write a comprehensive story. Participants in this research are three trios and one quartet based in South Africa. The themes derived from the data include the origin and future of the ensemble, communication, relationships, learning from one another, growth, and repertoire. This study is innovative because it can contribute to musical communities for relationship-building that have well-being and belonging at the core.

Keywords: (Chamber ensembles, music, relationship, friendship, communication)

Title of presentation: Exploring how the Christian beliefs of gay male students inform their experiences of homophobia on a South African university campus.

Surname & Initials: Matemana A.S.

Abstract:

This study explores how Christian beliefs among gay male students influence their experiences of homophobia on a South African university campus. While universities strive to be inclusive, they often mirror societal norms, leading to environments where heterosexism and homophobia persist. This duality creates challenges for openly visible LGBTIQ+ students, who may feel marginalized and forced to conceal their sexual orientation to avoid discrimination. Conversely, Christian students who hold conservative views on homosexuality may also feel restricted in expressing their religious beliefs. This research examines the intersectionality of religion and sexual identity, focusing on how Christian gay male students navigate their campus life.

The study highlights the complexities these students face, who often struggle with acceptance within their religious and academic communities. Prior research indicates that negative attitudes towards homosexuality, fueled by religious doctrines, contribute to a hostile environment for LGBTIQ+ individuals. This environment can lead to psychological distress, academic difficulties, and social isolation among gay students. Despite these challenges, there is a growing trend toward more inclusive attitudes, particularly among younger students prioritizing personal spirituality over institutionalized religious norms.

This research is crucial in understanding the nuanced experiences of gay male students in higher education and the role of religion in shaping their campus interactions. It seeks to contribute and inform policies that promote a more inclusive and supportive university environment for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or religious beliefs.

By employing a qualitative methodology, this study aims to provide a deeper insight into the lived experiences of these students, offering recommendations for creating safer and more accepting campus spaces. The findings underscore the need for ongoing dialogue and education to bridge the gap between religious beliefs and the rights of LGBTIQ+ students, ultimately fostering a more equitable and inclusive academic setting.

Keywords: Gay men; homophobia; homosexuality; inclusive masculinities; religion.

Title of presentation: Unpacking the lived experiences of unemployed young black male graduates at a selected Ekurhuleni township.

Surname & Initials: Mathebula T.T.

Abstract:

Youth unemployment is a global concern, affecting various layers of society, as it has been linked to other socioeconomic issues such as mental illness, crime, and substance abuse, which are exacerbated in males. In the South African context, socio-political and economic imperatives have affected/marginalised largely black youth from participating in the country's economic activities. Unemployment is concentrated in townships, and the reason for the high levels of unemployment in the townships is the unequal distribution of resources. We cannot look at the issue of unemployment without being conscious of the aspect of inequality, which is a great contributor to this problem. This study explored the lived experiences of unemployed young black males at a selected Ekurhuleni township, considering the context within which they are produced. The study employed a qualitative research approach, drawing from the Critical Race Theory, Institutional/Systemic Racism Theory and Gardener's Tale Allegory. The study employed a Phenomenological research design. Purposive sampling and snowballing were used to select 6 black males aged 21-35 from Kathorus township in Ekurhuleni to participate in the study. The participants were unemployed graduates seeking employment. The method of data collection used was semi-structured interviews. Initially, a pilot study involving three participants was conducted to evaluate whether the questions will address the research question. The data was analysed by means of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. The analysis not only revealed various themes which were unique to participants personal experiences, but also common experiences, related to how systems, resources, access and skills perpetuate the issue of unemployment among black youth. Common themes were feelings of helplessness, exclusion, pressure and feeling like a burden to their loved ones. This study will present unemployment in the Kathorus township context, and recommendations for interventions that can improve the experiences of black youth.

Keywords: Black Youth, Unemployed graduates, Ekurhuleni Township

Title of presentation: Wounded Childhoods: The representation of childsoldiers in Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone* (2007).

Surname & Initials: Matlolane Z.B. & Motahane N.

Abstract:

Across the world, the recruitment of children by combats to partake in the armed forces has been an interesting phenomenon. In the African continent alone, the number of child soldiers is estimated at over an alarming 40%. Wars such as the 1991 Sierra Leone civil war, the Sudan civil war of 2023, and on-going wars have contributed to this child soldier pandemic. This reflects on a number of childhoods that are possibly negatively affected by the traumatic exposures to combat, especially taking arms in war. There are numerous push factors for these children who are victims of this circumstance. The practice of coercing children into combat has an increasing trend on social media, with images of young children, especially boys, carrying different forms of ammunition in war-torn countries. Although it is rare, young girls are also victims of this growing global pandemic. Literature has long represented these 'child soldiers' in different capacities, as willing 'patriotic' participants, and as forced by the state and military. This paper focuses on Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone* (2007), in representing the experiences of a 'child soldier'. In the text, we are taken on a journey of a thirteen-year-old boy who was forced to actively fight as a soldier in Sierra Leone in the 1991 Civil War. Beah draws from his own experiences and deploys a semi-autobiographical mode of re-telling this traumatic experience. The protagonist, much like Beah lost his immediate family in war he had little option but to join the combat. This paper will look into how former child soldiers negotiate the construction of new identities. To understand the evocations of traumatic retelling, I will deploy Cathy Caruth's theory of Trauma as it will aid my reading of the effects of traumatic experiences on child soldiers' survivors.

Keywords: Soldier, Conflict, Identities, Trauma, Memoir.

Title of presentation: Using Linear mixed effect model to predict processing of subtitles.

Surname and Initials: Matthew G.D.

Abstract:

Research on subtitle reading is limited in comparison to static text reading, despite subtitles being dynamically changing and varying in cognitive complexity. However, various studies have provided inconclusive and contradictory evidence on the benefits or drawbacks of subtitles in educational settings. While some suggest reduced cognitive load leading to improved learning outcomes, others argue that factors like language proficiency, prior knowledge, and participant pool size can also affect performance. Additionally, individual differences like working memory capacity, cognitive flexibility, and attention play a crucial role in determining the impact of subtitles on learning. Subtitles also play a crucial role in providing access to academic information for non-native speakers, especially in online platforms where content is predominantly in English. This study explores factors influencing subtitle processing, such as language proficiency, prior knowledge, and subtitle presentation. Eye-tracking data on mean fixation duration was utilized to develop a probability density model predicting the successful processing of subtitles. Mean fixation duration reflects processing difficulty and cognitive load, essential in determining learning efficiency. The probability density model accounts for factors like presentation mode (automatic or verbatim subtitles), presence of redundant visual elements (e.g., graphs or PowerPoint slides), participant characteristics (e.g., prior knowledge of content), and number of subtitles per video. Understanding these factors can aid in creating subtitles that enhance information transfer while minimizing cognitive load. This research contributes to improving the design of subtitles to facilitate efficient learning and comprehension for diverse audiences.

Keywords: Audiovisual translation, subtitling, second-language learning, processing, accessibility.

Title of presentation: Coloniality of power, Africanisation and radical economic transformation in NoViolet Bulawayo's *Glory* (2022).

Surname and Initials: Moopi P.

Abstract:

Since the demise of colonialism Zimbabwe adopted and espoused a conciliatory and inclusive decolonial initiative and later took a radical and exclusive approach. Like many other decolonial initiatives in former colonised territories around the world, Zimbabwe's decolonial project remains entangled within global imperial designs which some decolonial theorists have described as global coloniality (to worldwide colonial matrices of power in the areas of knowledge, power and being that continue to plague former colonised nations). This paper will use Quijano's (2007) notion of the coloniality of power and Escobar's (2007) idea of the coloniality of knowledge to analyse the depictions on Africanisation and radical economic transformation in Bulawayo's novel *Glory* (2022). It will also explore Bulawayo's portrayal of the epistemic and economic colonialities in relation to the imposition and maintenance of colonial violence, authoritarianism, corruption and androcentrism. The paper will argue that *Glory* exploits the affective and artistic dimensions of creative art to represent the issues on Africanisation and radical economic transformation, which shed light on matters around Zimbabwe's nation building agenda and decolonisation project. Bulawayo uses the futurist allegory to underscore paradoxes evident in the Zimbabwean Afro-radical decolonisation project.

Key words: Global coloniality, radical decolonisation, Africanisation, decolonial paradoxes, Zimbabwe

Title of presentation: Metaphors of exclusion and the struggle for belonging in Fawzia Zouari's *I Die by This Country* (2018) and Faiza Guène's *Some Dreams for Fools* (2009).

Surname & Name: Moyo R.

Abstract:

This article examines Fawzia Zouari's *I Die by This Country* (2018) and Faiza Guène's *Some Dreams for Fools* (2009), fictional narratives that delve into the complexities of being a North African-Arab/Muslim immigrant in the Western metropolis. These texts are part of a canon that poignantly portrays the Arab/Muslim immigrant experiences of alienation, discrimination and disillusionment in the Western metropolis. Employing the metaphor of the suffering/disabled body, also known as "narrative prosthetics," both novels illuminate the experiences of alienation, othering, and exploitation among these immigrant communities. While some critics argue that the persistent use of disabled bodies to foreground the immigrant experience can lead to ableist prejudices, this article argues that both novels borrow "narrative prosthetics" to unravel their characters' traumatic experiences of racism and othering. As I demonstrate in this paper, both authors strategically use suffering bodies to confront and expose the West's indifference towards its "others". The metaphor of the disabled body also functions as a narrative diversion device, challenging conventional narratives of successful immigrant integration. Through close reading and a postcolonial lens of "othering," I argue that North African immigrants navigate Western spaces as embodiments of alterity. Thus, both novels unambiguously capture the limitations of being Arab, Muslim, and an immigrant in a Western space that continues to define the "other" through quasi-colonial lenses.

Keywords: immigrants, disabled, narrative prosthetics, othering

Title of presentation: Language Maintenance and Preservation through the use of Indigenous Forms of Address: A study of Tshivenda from Vhembe District Municipality, Limpopo province.

Surname and Initials: Mudau P.P.

Abstract:

This study explored the significance of language maintenance and preservation using indigenous forms of address by Vhavenda speech community at the Collins Chabane Municipality (CCM) from Limpopo province. Indigenous forms of address can be a term, or a name of a title used to refer to a certain individual. The indigenous forms of address are important as they form part of language and culture of any society. Therefore, disregarding these forms of address might act as a precursor for a language shift or even death of a particular language. This study adopted the qualitative approach whereby face-to-face semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data. The theoretical framework used was the Ethnopragmatics theory. The findings revealed that the use of forms of address is pivotal in the maintenance and preservation of the Tshivenda language because Vhavenda identify each other, respect each other, praise, showing social ranks through them, to mention a few. It is recommended that the importance of Tshivenda indigenous forms of address must be included in the school syllabuses, they must be taught at the traditional schools such as boys' and girls' initiation schools. Traditional schools must be maintained because they are used as transmitters of these forms of address. Television and radio programmes must produce news that is aimed at maintaining these elements of language and culture. In so doing Tshivenda language and culture can be maintained and preserved from shifting or dying, as their disappearance may have dire consequences on Tshivenda's development as a language.

Keywords: culture, indigenous forms of address, Tshivenda

Title of presentation: Digital dissent in Academia: Evaluating the role of TikTok in caricaturing university lecturers amid Online Student Protests.

Surname and Initials: Mushaathoni M.

Abstract:

This study examines the emerging trend of using TikTok as a platform for student expression and protest in university settings, focusing specifically on the caricaturing of lecturers. Amid growing concerns about digital platforms' influence on academic environments, this research explores how TikTok serves both as a medium for airing legitimate student grievances and as a potential tool for harassment. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines content analysis of relevant TikTok videos with surveys and interviews from university students and lecturers in Pretoria. The findings should reveal a clear landscape where digital caricatures often straddle the line between humorous commentary and abusive portrayal, highlighting significant implications for university policy and campus culture. The paper discusses these findings in light of digital activism theories and debates around freedom of expression versus respect for educational authorities in this online culture that has become part of university education after the Covid-19 reset. Recommendations shall be provided for educational institutions to navigate the challenges of digital platforms while fostering an environment of respect and constructive dialogue. This study is expected to contribute to the broader discourse on the role of social media in shaping contemporary academic and social dynamics.

Keywords: Digital dissent, caricaturing, online student protest, lecturer harassment online

Title of presentation: Gender Relations Committee: Transformative Learning Experiences Student Program.

Surname & Initials: Nkani K.M., Mazibuko N. & Shabangu N.

Abstract:

We, the Gender Relations Committee at the North-West University (NWU) Vanderbijlpark Campus (not officially established yet) are interested in pioneering a student program where we explore alternative learning methods about gender related issues through the development of a Transformative Learning Experiences Student program. Our initiative aims to cultivate a space of inclusivity through employing alternative teaching and learning approaches aimed at creating a culture of social cohesion, respectability, and compassion. Our short-term goal is to equip students with comprehensive knowledge and understanding on gender related issues/topics. In the long term we aspire to form a gender equity polity for NWU. Key components of our approach to teaching and learning include discussions about gender roles, societal gender expectations and 'norms', gender-based violence by keeping on track with current affairs, though engaging with social media platforms such as relevant podcasts and hashtags on trending topics, as well as film screening followed by reflective discussions. In addition, our prospective is to visit historically and contemporarily significant spaces such as Constitution Hill to prompt discussions about gender dynamics, and gender inequalities within the South African context. In creating the student program, we plan to collaborate with students in curating content for learning, thus, providing experiential learning opportunities that are both impactful and educational for students. Our pilot program targets members of student societies; through which we will source invaluable of data to inform and develop a comprehensive gender equity policy for NWU. Ultimately, our goal is to create a transformative and enduring impact on gender relations within our institution and community.

Keywords: Gender, transformative learning experiences

Title of presentation: Experiences of migrant Students on Social Integration at South African university campuses.

Surname and Initials: Nkomo A. & Machabe N.C.

Abstract:

This paper aims to understand the social integration experiences of migrant students at South African University campuses. The study acknowledges the increasing significance of international students in higher education due to globalisation and highlights the challenges that the international students face, including academic and financial difficulties, language barriers, racial discrimination, and lack of social support (Mori, 2000; Nokwedi & Khanare, 2020). These challenges can lead to psychological distress and negatively impact their overall well-being and academic performance (Kroesen, 2020:5).

The paper identifies a significant gap in understanding the social integration of international students at South African universities, emphasizing the need for comprehensive research to inform effective strategies and interventions. The study will employ a qualitative research design within an interpretative social constructivism paradigm to explore and describe the lived experiences of these students. Data will be collected through in-depth interviews, focusing on how international students perceive, describe, and make sense of their social integration, discrimination, and university policies.

The theoretical framework is rooted in the concept of social integration, drawing on Blau's theory of social attraction and interaction. This framework helps to analyse the processes through which international students strive to form meaningful connections and relationships within the university community. The research aims to identify the factors that facilitate or hinder social integration and evaluate the effectiveness of existing support services and resources.

Through purposive and snowball sampling techniques, the study will select a diverse sample of international students to capture a wide range of experiences. The ultimate goal is to provide valuable insights that can enhance social inclusion and foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment for international students at North-West University and other South African universities.

Keywords: Social Integration, Migrant Students, Discrimination, Higher Education

Title of presentation: Leveraging the Maternal: Re-imagining gender transformation through feminist praxis.

Surname & Initials: Noveve Q.

Abstract:

Higher education has undergone major changes at an accelerated and unpredictable pace owing to the growing infiltration of the market technocratic logic in academic governance. These changes question the role and purpose of higher education especially in settler colonial contexts where the material conditions are dire, and the visceral effects of historical legacies of inequality are palpable. Self responsabilization, individualism and narcissistic selfishness are the order of the day, where accomplishment and individual self-presentation take centre stage, creating several manifestations of neurosis. Tacit governance predicated on discourses of the ideal academic, which controls motivation and desire, re-enforce feelings of lack and absence and often conceal the systematic and structural mechanisms that perpetuate exclusion therefore making them the object for feminist critique. This paper argues for alternative ways of being as a decolonial feminist praxis, by leveraging the maternal, as a way to achieve gender transformation in the academy. Experiences of black women are often ignored in higher education contexts. Using in-betweenness as a heuristic device, this work illuminates the impossibilities of serving two masters, as universities are in existential flux battling the continuous present due to competing seemingly incompatible values.

By surfacing different truths, the maternal, care, mothering, are innovative tools that give birth to culturally sensitive approaches to teaching, that allow us to reclaim humanity. The value of this work lies in offering a unique vision for re-imagining the democratic mission of 'service to society' especially for underserved and historically disadvantaged student populations.

Keywords: (neoliberalism, care, mothering, black women, teaching)

Title of presentation: An assessment of the impact of Trias Politica Doctrine on South Africa's foreign policy between 2018 and 2023.

Surname and Initials: Ntlailane T.A.

Abstract:

The separation of powers or Trias Politica doctrine refers to the division and allocation of functions and responsibilities of government among the three branches of the state. The three branches or arms of the state are the legislative, executive and the judicial. South Africa as a democratic state practices the principle of Trias Politica in the state processes be it in the domestic or foreign affairs. The foreign policy formulation and execution in South Africa have over the years involved the use of the Trias Politica Doctrine where all the arms of the government have been involved in the processes. Since the inception of democracy of South Africa in 1994, there has been five administrations where the arms of government employed the practice of Trias Politica Doctrine to effect foreign policy. As a result, the main argument of the study is that there has been inconsistency and lack of cooperation between the three arms of the state with regards to the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy. Moreover, the BRICS summit 2023 is a case that reflect the practice of separation of powers. The study will employ the qualitative research method and further make use of secondary data collection method as well as document analysis technique for purposes of sourcing data. The significance of the study is that the finding can be utilized by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), as well as the legislature and judiciary. In addition, once the study is completed there will the presentation of actual findings in summary in this part of abstract.

Keywords: Trias Politica Doctrine, Separation of Powers, Foreign Policy, National Interest, Government.

Title of presentation: The impact of nyaope use among the youth in Mahikeng local municipality: South Africa

Surname & Initials: Phake K.G.

Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to explore the impact of nyaope use among the youth of Mahikeng local municipality in the North West Province. The study used a qualitative approach and adopted an exploratory research design. The population of the study were young people from the surrounding villages of Mahikeng who are usually found around the long-distance taxi rank in the Mahikeng town. The study furthermore used both males and females aged 18-34 years of age who were involved in the use of the nyaope drug. The study used a non-probability sampling approach, this was advocated by the fact that participants who used nyaope are hard to locate. The total number of participants was (10). The study used structured interview guides as a method of data collection. To ensure trustworthiness, piloting of the instrument was conducted to identify any potential problems and credibility. Thematic data analysis was used since the researcher was more involved in the collection and interpretation of data. Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to capture the complex meaning. The findings of the study draws attention to the drug's highly addictive qualities, accessibility, and unfavorable societal climate, all of which encourage beginning usage and makes quitting difficult., the study findings showed that the effects of the nyaope drug on usage had psychotic effects as most of the participants stated that they are not themselves since they began using. Users of Nyaope generally state that they want to discover and use assistance to get out of their current situation.

Keywords: Mahikeng, nyaope, qualitative research, substance abuse, young people

Title of presentation: A Corporate Reputation Management Framework for the Higher Education Sector in South Africa.

Surname & Initials: Pieterse A.G. & Holtzhausen L.

Abstract:

The Higher Education Sector (HES) in South Africa has faced numerous challenges in recent years, including government mandates, competition between institutions, graduate employability, student protests, and societal expectations (Mlambo, et al., 2023:252). These issues arise as Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) manage relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders such as staff, students, collaborators, funders, regulatory bodies, and government entities (Amey & Eddy, 2023:1987). The strategic management of these stakeholder relations is crucial for the success of institutions. This raises the question of how HEIs can maintain stakeholder satisfaction amid adversity. Literature suggests that corporate communication strategies can help organisations in the corporate sector overcome challenges and ensure operational and financial stability (Cornelissen, 2020:2; Heath, 2020; Coombs & Holladay, 2012:409). This study proposes to investigate whether such strategies, specifically corporate reputation management, could be similarly efficient in South Africa's (SA) HES.

Utilizing a concurrent multi-method approach to determine how corporate reputation management does and should take place within SA's HEIs, the study aims to develop a corporate reputation management framework for these institutions. The qualitative approach includes a literature study to determine the theoretical foundations of corporate reputation management within SA's HES and a contextual study on SA's HES. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews will describe and analyse the current corporate reputation management strategies employed by SA's HEIs. The quantitative approach investigates the possibility of combining the RQ© and RepTrak™ instruments to develop and implement a pilot measurement of corporate reputation for SA's HES. If feasible, implementation will take the form of an online survey to describe and assess how stakeholders of HEIs in SA perceive the corporate reputations of their respective institutions. The study's results will be utilized to determine what a corporate reputation management framework, applied to the HES in SA, should entail, producing a framework for implementation by the sector's comprising institutions.

Keywords: Corporate Reputation Management; Corporate Reputation Measurement; Higher Education Sector; Higher Education Institutions; South Africa.

Title of presentation: A Will and (Dis)Grace: Investigating the social factors that

inform the attitudes of students regarding acceptable displays of public affection between gay men and heterosexual women.

Surname and Initials: Potgieter S.M.

Abstract:

The closeknit friendships between gay men and heterosexual women has been studied for decades. Initially, studies focused on the reasons associated with the coining of the term “fag hag” in the 1980s, critique regarding its use and more recently, the growing popularity of mainstream media (e.g., films and television series) representations of said relationships. Will & Grace (1998), a popular American situation comedy, is credited as the first mainstream depiction of the gay-best-friend (GBF) relationship. The series aired from 1998-2006 and was rebooted for an additional three seasons between 2017-2019. The series centred on the enduring friendship between a gay lawyer (Will Truman) and his best friend, a heterosexual interior designer, Grace Adler. The series contributed towards and represented changing societal attitudes towards the mainstream depiction of gay men, in general, and the trials and tribulations of GBF relationships. Studies show that young heterosexual women, for example, started to actively seek out similar friendships. On the other hand, critics of the GBF relationship, posited that such friendships sometimes transgressed sexual, physical, emotional, and financial boundaries that resulted in tension between gay men and their heterosexual female counterparts. To this point, the present study sought to investigate the attitudes of registered undergraduate students at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North- West University towards the acceptable displays of public affection between gay men and heterosexual women. The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the student’s sex/gender and them having a gay male friend or acquaintance and their attitudes towards acceptable public displays of affection between heterosexual women and gay men. However, the students’ levels of religiosity, attitudes towards homosexuality and their perceptions of television depictions of GBF friendships, recorded statistically significant relationships with their attitudes towards acceptable public displays of affection between heterosexual women and gay men.

Keywords: Dependant Variable, fag-hagm, Gay Best Friend, Gender-Based Violence, Independent Variable

Title of presentation: Exploring the experiences and challenges faced by fathers navigating the maintenance court system, in the case of North West, South Africa.

Surname and Initials: Sethole K.

Abstract:

Fathers in South Africa often face challenges in maintaining relationships with their children, particularly within the context of the maintenance court system. Despite the evolving discourse on fatherhood, research on fathers' experiences within this system, especially in regions like the Ngaka Modiri Molema District of the North West province, remains limited. This presentation seeks to fill this gap by investigating the challenges faced by fathers navigating the maintenance court system in South Africa. Using a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, this presentation seeks to understand the complexities of fathers' experiences. The research will explore how socio-economic factors influence these experiences, identify factors within the maintenance court system that impact father-child relationships, and examine the role of social support networks in mitigating challenges. The significance of this presentation lies in its potential to provide a comprehensive understanding of the maintenance court system's impact on fathers and their families. By highlighting the challenges faced by fathers, the presentation aims to inform policy and practice, leading to more equitable outcomes for fathers and their children. This research contributes to the broader discourse on family dynamics and fatherhood, emphasizing the importance of supporting fathers in their roles beyond financial provision. Overall, this presentation seeks to give voice to fathers within the maintenance court system, ultimately aiming to promote positive father-child relationships and enhance family well-being in South Africa.

Keywords: Fatherhood, Maintenance Court System, Socio-economic Factors, Social Support Networks, Family Well-being.

Title of presentation: Examining the determinants of intimate partner violence among ever-married women in selected Sub-Saharan African countries.

Surname & Initials: Setshogoe B.P. & Ngake B.K.M.

Abstract:

Violence against women is a widespread violation of fundamental human rights, with intimate partner violence emerging as the predominant manifestation of such abuse. It is a widespread issue, with varying prevalence and rates across different countries. Sub-Saharan African countries have the highest prevalence of violence against women, with IPV at 36%, above the global average of 30%. Intimate partner violence has a negative impact on women, leading to miscarriage and sexually transmitted infections. The study aims to examine the determinants of intimate partner violence among ever-married women in selected Sub-Saharan African countries. The study used secondary data obtained from the Demographic Health Survey in the five selected SSA countries. Data analysis for the study was done using STATA version 14 and all three levels of analysis namely, univariate, bivariate, and logistic regression were employed. The findings of logistic regression revealed that socio-economic factors such as age, marital status, educational level, afraid of husband, partner drinking behaviours, ever tested for HIV, ever terminated pregnancy, wealth index, and place of residence were significant predictors of intimate partner violence. Only two variables (media exposure and educational differences,) did not show any significant relationship. These findings are important as they will make a significant contribution to the field of population studies and will contribute to policy improvements by shedding light on various factors that contribute to the increasing prevalence of Intimate partner violence.

Keywords: Intimate partner violence, ever-married, Sub-Saharan Africa, violence.

Title of presentation: South African immigration patterns and implications for southern African development community's development.

Surname and Initials: Sikhwivhilu A.P. & Netswera F.

Abstract:

The movement of people across boundaries is as old as humanity itself. Africa, as the second largest continent after Asia has a rich migration history that has been under theorized and under appreciated by the global community. African migration is a hot and equally emotive topic considering the unilateral European establishment of African states and borders at the Berlin Conference in 1884 that had no considerations for the histories of Africans. The contemporary challenges of huge migration patterns and poor migration management are influenced by the slow growth of African economies, among many other factors. South Africa has a long history of intra-regional movement of people dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. Such cross-border movement for employment in Southern African Development Community (SADC) dates back at more than 150 years. Any major migratory patterns result in socio, political and economic changes affecting the country of origin or the receiving country.

The main objective of this paper is to assess South African immigration patterns, its factors, challenges and opportunities and implications on the development of the SADC. The paper adopts systematic literature review of data sources comprise the review of relevant journals and articles published between 2020 and 2024. The selection of relevant publications relied on words and concepts as migration (cross border movement) in SADC, movement of people across borders into South Africa and the economic development of SADC.

Of all the data sources amassed, only 35 were the most relevant articles that revealed notable challenges in SADC Member States. The findings reveal, among others SADC states aggravated by the lack of enforcing or compliance with the signed Facilitation of Movement of Persons Protocol of 2005 and the SADC Protocol on Trade signed in 1996 (as amended in 2000, 2007 and 2008). The two protocols are constantly referred to in the paper since their aim is harmonisations of laws and regulations in the SADC region to facilitate movement and trade. There is as well a notable stifling of economic growth as a results of stringent border control measures in different Member States.

Key words: SADC, immigration, cross border movement, Sustainable Development Goals, economic development.

Title of presentation: Youth empowerment through community radio in rural areas: An exploratory study of Musina FM, South Africa.

Surname & Name: Siphuma M.

Abstract:

In South Africa where over one-third of the populace is under the age of 35, youth empowerment is a significant concern. As a result, Community radio, if used correctly, may play an important role as a medium that foster and promote horizontal communication and spreading information that may aid youth empowerment, especially in rural areas. However, even though community radio is recognised for this potential, there are insufficient scholars who focus on how community radio programmes can be utilised to empower young people in rural communities. In South Africa, most studies focused on the role of community radio on economic development while fewer have specifically focused on the impact of community radio on youth empowerment in semi-urban areas. Therefore, this study aims to explore how community radio programmes can be utilised to achieve youth empowerment in rural areas. The researcher used a multifaceted approach for data collection including Semi-structured interview and focus group discussions to extract qualitative data from a total of 33 participants whom the researcher purposeful selected due to their in-depth knowledge and experiences concerning the utilisation of community radio programmes for youth empowerment in rural Musina. The study used the Participatory Communication theory to establish a framework for the study. The preliminary finding of this study is that Musina FM programmes are designed and developed by the community. Therefore, they address issues that are related to youth empowerment. However, some listeners are of a view that, Musina FM programmes do not afford them enough opportunity to air their challenges. This study recommend that Musina FM should adopt radio convergence to simultaneously use the radio and social media platforms to reach a greater number of listeners in Musina rural. This system will allow the listeners to share their challenges which the management will later address over the period of episodes.

Keywords: Community Radio programs, participatory communication, rural youth empowerment, social change, South Africa.

Title of presentation: Exploring the meaning selected members of River Groove Collective

ascribe to music-making through a CoMP lens.

Surname and Initials: Stodart T. & Van Vreden M.

Abstract:

Recognising enjoyment in musicking during live events is straightforward, yet understanding the deeper personal and communal meanings participants ascribe to these experiences poses a significant challenge. I will address this gap by exploring the deeper meanings selected members of the River Groove Collective ascribe to their lived experiences of monthly music-making events through the lens of community music practices. The River Groove Collective is an informal music group in the Northern suburbs of the Western Cape known for fostering community through music-making.

Using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), this research delves into how band members make sense of their participation, creativity, and sense of belonging within the group. I will conduct semi-structured, in-depth interviews to gather rich, detailed data from participants. Five members of the River Groove Collective will be invited to participate. The interviews will be conversational, allowing for real-time dialogue and the emergence of original ideas. Additionally, focus groups will be used to collect data, offering the opportunity to hear multiple perspectives simultaneously. The aim is to explore the deeper meanings these members ascribe to their experiences of music-making events. Participants will be purposefully selected based on their involvement in the collective and their expertise in the phenomenon being studied.

The study draws on the concept of “sense of community,” emphasising feelings of belonging, influence, integration of needs, and shared emotional connections among members. Community music practices refer to musical activities that prioritise participation, inclusivity, and social engagement within a community setting. These practices often focus on collective music-making experiences that bring people together, fostering a sense of belonging, cultural expression, and social cohesion. Key elements include accessibility, diversity, and the empowerment of participants regardless of their musical background or skill level. I will explore how these events help build a sense of belonging and artistic citizenship among the members, who are involved in this communal musicking experience that includes not just music but also food, dancing, and socialising.

While existing literature often focuses on formal music ensembles, this study contributes unique insights by documenting the experiences of a transient and co-creative musical collective. By examining how these informal gatherings promote artistic citizenship and community cohesion, the research aims to enrich our understanding of inclusive and diverse music-making practices. The findings will provide valuable insights for music educators, community musicians, and policymakers seeking to foster genuine connections and inclusive environments through music. Ultimately, this study highlights the significance of communal musicking in contemporary society and offers practical recommendations for nurturing community through artistic expression.

Keywords: artistic citizenship, sustainability, belonging, community of musical practice, music-making events

Title of presentation: An investigation of students' perception on social cohesion at the North-West University Potchefstroom.

Surname & Initials: Thibela T.T.C.

Abstract:

This study investigation of students' perception on social cohesion at the North-West University Potchefstroom, is aiming to understand how these perceptions influence and reflect broader societal dynamics. Social cohesion, defined as the strength of relationships and the sense of solidarity among members of a community, is crucial for fostering inclusive, resilient, and stable societies.

The quantitative approach involved a close ended questionnaire distributed to 217 students from diverse backgrounds and disciplines, measuring their perceptions of social cohesion. Five social factors (students' sex/gender; race; transformation; sports engagement; and the importance of use of different languages) served as the independent variables (IVs). These were tested in relation to the dependent variable (DV), i.e., students' understanding of social cohesion on campus. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), the researcher conducted factor analyses, two Independent Samples T-test and three correlation tests (using the Spearman rank correlation coefficient) to test the five hypotheses, respectively. The findings reveal that students perceive social cohesion as a multifaceted construct influenced by factors such as campus diversity, inclusivity practices, and institutional support. Results indicate that high levels of perceived social cohesion are associated with increased trust in peers and faculty, greater participation in campus activities (sports), and a stronger sense of belonging. Conversely, perceptions of low social cohesion correlate with feelings of isolation, mistrust, and disengagement.

Conducting a research such as social cohesion can influence government policies pertaining to social cohesion, diversity, and education as well as practices and policies in higher education. Internationalization effects on social dynamics and the interactions between students from different nations may also be taken into account in studies on social cohesiveness. Researchers, legislators, and educators may learn a great deal about fostering inclusion, unity, and understanding inside South African universities and, consequently, in the larger community by examining social cohesiveness in this setting. In addition to addressing historical divides, this study can support South Africa continuing efforts at nation-building and reconciliation.

Keywords: Social cohesion, NWU, Transformation, Race, Gender, Language, Inclusivity, Diversity.

Title of presentation: Exploring the meaning music students ascribe to developing pedagogical practices through AI-generated learning experiences in the Groovy Glockenspiels project.

Surname and Initials: Van Vreden M.

Abstract:

Combining traditional methods with modern technology provides opportunities for creative teaching in music education. This integration enriches learning and fosters innovative pedagogy. The goal is not to replace traditional methods but to enhance them with technology. This research addresses the issue of students using AI-generated learning experiences to plan musical activities for preschoolers without considering fundamental early childhood music education principles. To nurture their pedagogical practices in a preschool classroom teaching large groups, music students must acquire the tools to critically evaluate AI-generated learning experiences.

In this research, I explore the meaning music students ascribe to developing pedagogical practices through teaching and learning in the Groovy Glockenspiels project. This project consists of four phases:

1. Music students compare AI-generated learning experiences with five foundational principles of music teaching (Raiber, 2019) for instructing preschoolers on the glockenspiel: a) sound before sight, b) experience before theory, c) progressing from the known to the unknown, d) sequential instruction, and e) using child development concepts over subject-logic concepts. They adapt the AI experiences through peer discussions and lecturer feedback to integrate traditional and modern methods creatively.
2. Students facilitate glockenspiel instruction based on the adapted experiences.
3. Students reflect on their teaching experiences with preschoolers.
4. Students revise the learning experiences based on their reflections.

I will conduct this study using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), an experiential methodology that rigorously examines personal meaning and lived experience. IPA explores how participants construct meaning from their personal and social contexts. The primary focus of IPA is understanding the meanings that experiences, events, and states hold for participants.

The research findings impact the development of creative educational experiences in preschool settings by critically evaluating and reflecting on large-group teaching and learning interactions in the Groovy Glockenspiels project.

Keywords: music student, preschool context, glockenspiel teaching, AI-generated learning experience, pedagogical practices

Title of presentation: Instructional communication in (South) African communication research: a thematic analysis of fifty years of the South African Communication Association conference 1974-2024.

Surname and Initials: Zethi T. & Lubombo M.

Abstract:

Forty-four years ago, John Daly and John Korinek highlighted a significant gap in communication research with their paper “Instructional communication theory and research: An overview of classroom interaction” (1980). Despite this early observation, the neglect of communication research within classroom environments still remains in the (South) African context. This paper is a thematic analysis of 50 years of the annual South African Communications Association (SACOMM) conference whose inaugural conference in 1977 focused on teaching of different elements of communication as a university subject. The analysis reveals that despite the inaugural theme and the fact that the majority of SACOMM members are academics, the conference themes have consistently focused on communication practices as they occur in other spheres of activity other than the classroom environment where instructional communication occurs. As reflective communication academics, we argue that it is important to apply communication theory to interrogate the space we inhabit and practice: the classroom. Our aim therefore is to challenge (South) African communication researchers to contribute to current debates in higher education by interrogating, for example, the role communication should play towards student success and transformation in higher education, and how communication should be adapted in classes with diverse student populations. The key contribution of the article is to draw scholarly attention to an arguably critical but seemingly neglected area of communication research: instructional communication. We argue that communication researchers and academics are key agents with an ethical obligation to shape the discourse around some of the above questions on the role of instructional communication in achieving some of the national higher education imperatives such as transformation and student success.

Keywords: instructional communication, SACOMM, higher education, transformation, communication research