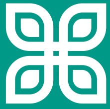

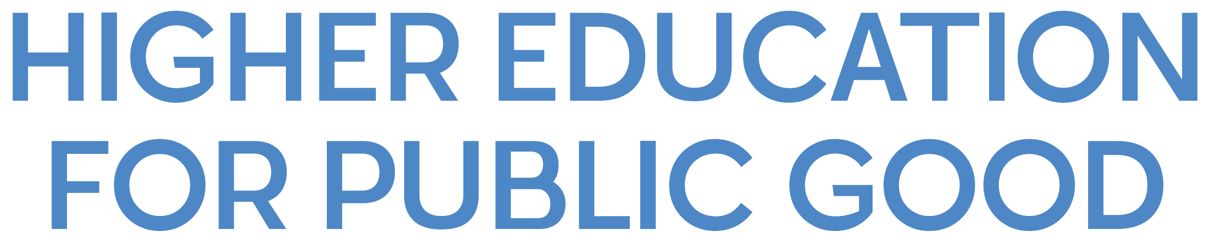

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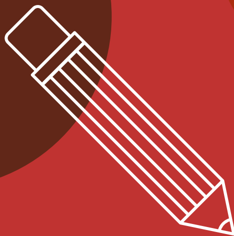

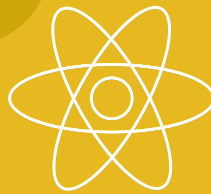

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Perspectives on the new academic landscape in South Africa

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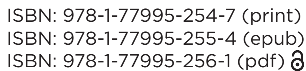

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HIGHER EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC GOOD

Perspectives on the new academic landscape in South Africa

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The publisher (AOSIS) endorses the South African 'National Scholarly Book Publishers Forum Best Practice for Peer-Review of Scholarly Books'. The manuscript underwent an evaluation to compare the level of originality with other published works and was subjected to rigorous two-step peer-review before publication, with the identities of the reviewers not revealed to the editor(s) or author(s). The reviewers were independent of the publisher, editor(s) and author(s). The publisher shared feedback on the similarity report and the reviewers' inputs with the manuscript's editor(s) or author(s) to improve the manuscript. Where the reviewers recommended revision and improvements the editor(s) or author(s) responded adequately to such recommendations. The reviewers commented positively on the scholarly merits of the manuscript and recommended that the book be published.

Research justification

This book evaluates the extent to which higher education (HE) in South Africa can achieve the public good. While there is paucity in the empirical research on the examination of the meaning(s) attributed to 'public good' as it concerns HE, in this book, the authors explore the perspectives of the South African academic landscape as a unit of analysis in order to reflect on the discourse and meaning of public good as aligned to improving the quality of lives. Diverse scholars from different disciplines reflect on the role of HE in advancing the discourse of public good to improve the quality of life. In the context of this book, the academic landscape is referred to as encompassing institutions of higher learning, stakeholders in HE, legal policies, rules, and the infrastructure arrangement that complements the systematic nature of HE. This book is aligned with the multi-dimensional conceptualisation of public good that focuses on the social dimension of public good, which aims at improving the citizens' quality of life. The authors who contributed to this book find it sensible to focus on aspects of the systematic nature of HE, transformation, institutional types, and the reconfiguration of HE after the implementation of the government's national plan of HE decolonisation, research and collaborations, conflict management, monitoring HE, and the new social contract for the public good. The contributors share genuine scholarly dispositions on the theme and address gaps in the application of 'social responsiveness' by focusing on the scholarship of teaching and learning, research, and community engagement. The authors adopted both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms to collect and analyse primary and secondary data. The chapters are based on case studies, while others reported on original research. There is no part of the book that has been previously published or considered for review or publication elsewhere. This collected work provides a unique understanding of the 'public good' that is not an ideal discourse. Arguably, a new social contract for HE is proposed to address some concerns emerging from the academic landscape. It demonstrates that the current economic and political system influences the environment of the South African academic landscape. The book argues that all stakeholders, including the government, have a huge responsibility to spend more funds on public institutions of higher learning and focus on improving the quality of citizens' lives. The target audience of this scholarly book consists of specialists in the field of HE. The book constitutes original research that has not been published elsewhere and is aligned with various policies adopted by the Council of Higher Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training and the other stakeholders' commissioned scientific research reports.

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Abbreviations and acronyms, figures and tables appearing in the text and notes

List of abbreviations and acronyms and abbreviations in the text

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
5IR	Fifth Industrial Revolution
6IR	Sixth Industrial Revolution
AI	artificial intelligence
AMESA	Association of Mathematics Educators in South Africa
ANC	African National Congress
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APOS	Action–Process–Object–Schema
ASSAf	Academy of Science South Africa
AU	African Union
AZASCO	Azanian Student Organisation
BA	Bachelor of Arts; bachelor's degree
BAC	Black Academic Caucus
BRICS	Britain, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CANRAD	Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy
CE	community engagement
CEA	Centre for Evaluation and Assessment
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
CTP	Committee of Technikon Principals
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DVC	deputy vice-chancellor
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
EU	European Union
FET	Further Education and Training
FRIHDC	Faculty Chair of the Research and Innovation Higher Degree Committee

GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GATT	General Agreement on Tax and Tariffs
GBATA	Global Business and Technology Association
GEAR	Growth Employment and Accelerated Distribution
GNU	Government of National Unity
HDI	historically disadvantaged institutions
HE	higher education
HEI	higher education institution
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HES	higher education system
HIL	higher institutions for learning
HUDI	historically underdeveloped institutions
IASIA	International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration
ICTs	information and communication technologies
IF	institutional forum
IHL	institutions of higher learning
IIAS	International Institute of Administrative Sciences
INFE	International Network on Financial Education
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IoT	Internet of Things
JOLRI	*Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation*
JOPA	*Journal of Public Administration*
KPI	key performance indicators
LMS	learning management system
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MCQ	multiple-choice questions
NCHE	National Commission for Higher Education
NECC	National Education Coordinating Committee
NEP	National Education Policy
NMU	Nelson Mandela University
NOP	National Organic Programme
NPHE	National Plan in Higher Education
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NRF	National Research Foundation

NRF C1	National Research Foundation of South Africa, category C, sub-category 1 establishing researcher [MM, QC alignment]
NRF C2	National Research Foundation of South Africa, category C, sub-category 2 more established researcher [MM, QC alignment]
NRF C3	National Research Foundation, category C, sub-category 3 most established researcher [MM, QC alignment]
NRF Y2	National Research Foundation, category Y, sub-category 2 young researcher
NSB	National Standard Bodies
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NWG	National Working Group
OA	online assignment
OD	organisational dynamics
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
OFA	online formative assessment
OQSF	occupational qualifications sub-framework
OT	online tests
PASO	Pan-African Student Organisation
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy; doctoral degree
PQM	programme qualification mix
QA	quality assurance
RADLA	Research and Doctoral Leadership Academy
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSL	resource-scarce languages
SAAPAM	South African Association in Public Administration
SAARMSTE	Southern Africa Association of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAERA	South African Education Research Association
SAIM	Southern Africa Institute of Management
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARIMA	Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association
SASCO	South African Student Congress Organisation
SDG	sustainable development goal
SDGs	sustainable development goals
SGBs	standards generating bodies
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SRIHDC	Senate Research and Innovation and Higher Degrees Committee

StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TAU	teaching advancement at universities
TU	traditional universities
TVET	technical vocational education and training
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDUSA	Union of Democratic University Staff Associations
UK	United Kingdom
UL	University of Limpopo
UN	United Nations
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Unisa	University of South Africa
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UoKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UoT	universities of technology
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WSU	Walter Sisulu University
WTO	World Trade Organization

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This collection of chapters provides a holistic reflection on how higher education responds to the call to conduct its core business for public good. These chapters provide a unique reflection on the systematic nature of higher education and provide reflective thought on whether higher education institutions are compatible with the responsiveness towards 'public good' or it is an ideal discourse. It is a great opportunity to sincerely thank all the authors for contributing to sharing their genuine scholarly engagements on the theme, using different cases. This book would not have been published without the financial support of the Walter Sisulu Research Directorate. Warmest gratitude is extended to Walter Sisulu University and all the authors for their scholarly contributions.

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Preface

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Scholars alluded to diverse challenges and threats in producing public goods. The natural way of knowledge production for public good is relevant to society, while the consumption of knowledge provides contesting signals because of its use that can lead to competing ideas. The production of knowledge and leading innovations worldwide benefits society no matter what contrasting ideas exist about interpretations of such knowledge later. This book is aligned with the social dimension of public good that focuses on all those efforts that are non-profit-making and are improving the quality of lives. In analysing the problem of public good, Levin (2014) asserts that the problem of public good poses similar signals to diverse disciplines by challenging its interpretation. In the context of this book, universities must be more responsive to society and do more than provide social responsibility by producing public goods. Higher education is compelled to consider their role and responsibility in society, whether it directly or indirectly benefits the public. The South African government introduced changes, along with the transformation of higher education (HE), through several policy initiatives. The problem is that policy directives from the government do not consider the problem of the public good.

Along with transformation to redress the society, the government is committed to supporting HE to advance its responsibility to develop a capable developmental state that can improve the quality of life (Sharma 2015). Among the strategies to transform HE, the government's national plan for higher education (NPHE) was endorsed to transform the academic landscape in post-apartheid South Africa. This book reflects on diverse insights that came from original research and literature review chapters written by diverse scholars with experience and interest in a public good discourse through the lenses of HE multi-, trans-, and interdisciplinary studies such as Management Studies, Development Studies and Public Affairs, Law, Health Sciences, and Higher Education.

Therefore, this book encourages the universities to consider redirecting their outcomes to fit the 'public good'. The issues discussed by the authors support the theme of this book, which seeks to propose the re-emergence of

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the notion of how HE can contribute to public good that improves the quality of lives. This influence on the public is recognised as a variable across various countries, depending on their socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-cultural environments (Reiss 2021). The social science and humanities disciplines are considered to support high education outputs and programmes to produce both private and public goods. With the current development in the administration of public services, both private and public agencies jointly produce public services; hence, there is an overlap of social dimension practice between the two (public and private), and there is also a thin line demarcating the private and public interests.

'Public good' as a concept has received international attention, with less praxis. Marginson (2018) demonstrated the under-usage of the philosophy of 'public good' in HE as a value and as a belief that must be implemented to develop a just society. In a society with poverty and inequality, like South Africa, outcomes of public universities should be geared towards 'public good'. Badaat (2014) asserts that the government's policies in the current decade have been shaped by the aspirations of the liberation movement and the ruling party. The rationale for the gap in practising the concept publicly might emanate from its conceptualisation, the mission of development of universities, or their branding within the HE landscapes.

Based on the problem of the under-usage and praxis of 'public good', this book examines the interests and the praxis of public good in HE to encourage its re-engineering in the Institutions of Higher Learning in South Africa. The economic conceptualisation of 'public good' has dominated the debates about its relevance in economic terms and less in social and educational dimensions. Therefore, the measurement of public good inherited its logical path from the economic debates on private benefits that focused on private graduates and their contribution to society. It should be noted that the central debates on 'policy issues' of HE, persuaded by the government, are to promote HE that can produce graduates who can contribute to the broader society and induce efficiency (NPHE 2001). Therefore, chapters in this book will question the university's roles in search of strategies to enhance the praxis of public good in HE.

This book is multidisciplinary, and it examines the relevance of 'public good' as applied through diverse constructs and discourses from various disciplines that reside within the knowledge areas of governance, public affairs, development, economics, education, public administration, and political studies. Authors conducted applied research and merged it with their experiences when teaching in higher education institutions (HEIs); hence, they have applied their knowledge to HE scholarly writing and literature review. According to Williams (2015), the introduction of neo-liberal policies in HE eroded the value of 'public good' that universities stood for. Therefore, today's benefit of HE is not purely 'publicly good' as all stakeholders would have expected.

This book provides a critical appraisal of HE, focusing on its determinants to foster the culture of 'public good' in a restructured academic landscape. Even though South African policies in HE are not backed by pure market economic philosophy, stakeholders considered their theoretical, ideological, and philosophical aspirations when setting the agenda for HEIs' policy proposals. When critically interrogating the philosophical determinants of HE in fulfilling the mandate of 'public good' values in South African society, scholars alluded to the contrast of the production of knowledge for public good associated with a free-market system and the global political economy that is powerful and setting the trends for African universities.

University roles are value-based and most are aligned with the production of knowledge for highly-skilled graduates that are required to meet the university's targets. Sharma (2015) advocates for the role the university plays in building society as a development agent that must be responsive to societal needs. The university's responsiveness could advance its role to build new institutions of civil society that focus on social responsibility, development, and training of personnel to be ready for any field of work, as well as developing new cultures that break stereotypes on racism, inequality, and injustices in our society and focus on bringing new social order.

■ Section 1: The context of the higher education landscape

The first section of the book focuses on the background of the academic landscape and the policy demands that shape HE in South Africa. This section dwells more on the policy directives of HE, the critical overview of the HE, and the systematic overview of the factors affecting HE, the institutional culture of institutional types in HE. In the first and second chapters, the author offers some insights into the systematic nature of HE. Chapter 3 provides an analysis of the strategic role of the TVET education sector and its relations with society.

■ Section 2: Towards a social responsive scholarship of teaching and research in higher education

This section expands the debates and aligns the scholarship of teaching and learning with the university social responsibility construct. It critiques the theoretical accounts of ideologies and theories and their application in focusing on international and national cases. Chapter 4 analyses the discourse on the application of inclusive online learning through online formative assessment. Chapter 5 also evaluates the responsiveness of HEIs towards the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). It is interesting to note that

TVET can align its strategic planning to improve skills development. The TVET colleges are mentioned to have articulation problems but are focusing strongly on preparing their graduates to meet the demands of society and of their stakeholders. Most TVET colleges are offering certificates which are at the lower level of the degrees and diplomas offered by the universities. Its existence is important to universities of technology (UoTs); hence they have partnered with them to articulate their students through recognition of prior learning. Significance in skills development is important. Chapter 6 conceptualises a unique alternative to decolonising legal education. In consideration of the Africanisation of HE, Chapter 7 alludes to the power dynamics in the decolonisation of student affairs in the selected universities in South Africa.

■ Section 3: Monitoring higher education core business

The third section reflects on the monitoring and evaluation of the core business of HE. The authors touch base on the strategies for monitoring teaching and learning, research, and community engagement. Staying in the focus of monitoring HE. Chapter 8 offers some insights into managing conflict at HEIs. To further monitor HE, Chapter 9 provides a narrative of monitoring university business using quality management in as far as teaching and learning, community engagement and research in South African HE are concerned. The author analyses diverse mechanisms of assessing whether the planned goals can be achieved at the institutional level. These last chapters offer insights and recommendations on HEIs' monitoring systems for capacity-building, quality management, training, and academic support projects. Therefore, the monitoring and management of HE is linked to various external and internal factors that require constant monitoring and control systems to reduce risks associated with these factors. The last chapter of the book also concludes on the important aspects of the book and proposes the infusion of a new re-emerged discourse of public good that focuses on improving the quality of lives of the citizens in HE.

Chapter 1

The context of the higher education landscape

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Abstract

This chapter conceptualises public good and the academic landscape as an introduction to the book's scope and focus. Diverse scholars in various disciplines alluded to the role of higher education (HE) in advancing the discourse of public good using 'social responsibility discourse' Diverse scholars in various disciplines alluded to the role of higher education (HE) in advancing the discourse of public good using. Chapters in this book are engaging the notion of public good practicality in the South African academic landscape conceived in the post-apartheid era. In the context of this book, the academic landscape includes the higher education institutions (HEIs), stakeholders in HE, policies and legally binding rules, and the infrastructure arrangement that complements the systematic nature of HE. The transformation agenda in South Africa impacts the arrangement of most of the actors and components of the HE system. Hence, the HEIs are visible and are continuously scrutinised as institutions that are in need of intensive care, with leadership and governance structures that are in crossroads. Because of continuous

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amendments and adjustments of HE-imposed policies to govern it, the core business is continuously shifting and reconfiguring. Based on this backdrop, public HE must respond to the environmental factors and provide more than responsiveness and aim at improving the quality of lives in South Africa. This chapter reflects on the early and current policy developments of the academic landscape and how these developments have been impacted by changes that implicate their core business.

Introduction

The transformation of HE did not come as a surprise in 1994. It is significant to allude to some of the important policies and legislations that have paved the way and driven the process of transformation in the South African HE system. It was obvious that the government and the HE community had to address the aspirations and demands of the broader society. The African National Congress (ANC) and allied mass movement and the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) embarked on the initiative of transforming the education system by developing policy proposals. This resulted in the establishment of the National Education Policy (NEP) investigations from 1990 to 1992. There was also the publication of a framework and post-secondary education report.

As the country was steering further the NEC initiatives of transforming HE, university unions like the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (UDUSA) and the Education Policy Unit at some universities, student organisations including the South African Student Congress (SASCO), Azanian Student Organisation (AZASCO), Pan-African Student Organisation (PASO), as well as staff associations were at the forefront bargaining for the development of proposals that led to the ANC's Policy Statement on Higher Education in 1994 (Matsiliza 2007). The collapse of apartheid a decade ago left the HE landscape fragmented, with underfunded and badly administered institutions that left black students scattered in various locations (Badat 2014). Some of them decided to abandon black institutions when it was legal for them to do so. Some traditional universities (TUs) and technikons were left battling for a sufficient number of students (Matsiliza 2007). Reduction in enrolments resulted in a decrease in subsidy and under-utilisation of staff with fewer resources to run their business.

From 1994 up to now, South Africa has entered a new political dispensation with new policies aiming at eradicating the legacy challenges of apartheid and Bantu education. Issues of responsiveness and social responsibility in the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) are strained with a new perspective of governance embraced with democracy and transformation. However, the government must enhance HE funding as a public good to realise the goal of widening access and participation in all HEIs in South Africa. This will also provide the opportunity for HE to relate better with the national,

regional, and international communities as it is excoriated by a lame-duck approach, especially in the institutions that were previously disadvantaged. The focus on the binary divide shifted from self-supportive perspectives to collaboration and cooperation among HEIs. As education sectors are governed and regulated by one government, there is hope for the focus of HE to be re-directed to the purpose of public good.

In the study conducted by Adelzadeh & Padayachee (1994), it is confirmed that in recent decades universities, internationally and locally, formed consortiums, partnerships, collaborations and network governance to ensure accountability and responsiveness to society. Several activities frame the HE landscape and implicate that HE can be provided as a public good. The landscape includes the physical structure of the organisations essential and crucial to HE – TUs, universities of technology (UoTs), and Further Education and Training (FET) – which were destined to be transformed and reconfigured. These institutions are regulated and managed through policy developments that form the voice of the government and the interest groups' aspirations that emanate from the liberation struggle that fought for equal education, social justice, transformation, and development in South Africa. This book analyses the academic landscape as systematic. This means that the academic landscape is responsive to diverse environmental factors that frame its core business.

The various interest groups that emerged supported transformation in HE that aligned their focus to various ideological constructs, aiming to redress the imbalances of the past through teaching and learning, community engagement and research. The current debates on the ongoing transformation are echoed in a direction that favours a 'social dimension of the academic landscape', with recognition of the emerging construct of youth activism leading the debates about the decolonisation of the colonial tendencies and apartheid legacy that created an uneven and poorly structured HE. Previous HEIs also ignored the African heritage and culture and planted colonial hegemony that destroyed African values. The current HE sector is compelled to adjust to the new construct that can augment the value system of HEIs by infusing the African heritage while transforming HE by fighting inequalities and racism that continue to destroy the nation.

The focus on the new construct of social responsibility in the HE landscape should be spearheaded towards the continuation of transformation, which is an unfinished project (Matsiliza 2019). There is a testimony of events based on the experiences of the 'liberation movement', deliberations, and proposals on change management in HE and training (Badaat 2014). These events led to policies aimed at transforming the HE landscape. These were envisioned by various stakeholders reflecting on nation-building through a political will like in the 'Freedom Charter Manifesto' that was endorsed by the ANC and proclaimed that 'the doors of learning shall be open' by promoting education

and culture (Alliance 1955). Another account surfaced in 1993 in the publication of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was a 'perestroika' in the Government of National Unity (GNU), by aspiring to promote the development of human resources through education and training (Adelzadeh & Padayachee 1994). The ruling party further issued several HE policies that shaped the academic landscape in South Africa, which the author will elaborate on in the following section.

The policy directives and the transformation agenda

Policy directives in the post-apartheid era paved the way on which public good can be based by infusing democratic principles within the HE policies. Along with the principles of democracy, the GNU saw it fit to transform the academic landscape by tasking the National Council on Higher Education (NCHE) with investigating the strategies and mechanisms that could transform HE and produce recommendations on the size and shape of the HE of 1994, that endorsed the planning and coordination of a unified HE sector. Furthermore, the report issued by the NCHE was the start of a long road to an unequal and democratic HE transformation that was marked by a lot of contestations because of its lack of inclusivity of all stakeholders. Several policy documents were also adopted to provide a direction on the transformation agenda and to guide universities to operationalise the objectives of the GNU and apply new governance prescripts concerning equity, access, and success rates.

The *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation of 1997* (DHET 1997) formalised the ongoing debates and transformation of HE with clear major goals specified in the agenda and provided a cocreate policy on the governance of HEIs. The *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997* endorsed and formalised roles and functions of governance structures in HE, which were later amended in South Africa.

The South African National Plan for Higher Education (DHET 2001) supported the endorsement of the academic landscape that emerged from a transformed and unified HE. Most of these policies steer the development and support for equity and efficiency for a harmonised and unified HE backing the national agenda for transformation in the 21st century. Along the journey of democratising HE, the government hijacked the value of public good to a treasury-driven argument of 'using resources sparingly' as they are limited. As a result, private and public benefit values are recognised in public HE, and most of the time they are treated equally without harming each other when financial resources are used – such as grants and subsidies – to fund university operations and student fees. Student movements, known as '#FeesMustFall' in South Africa, demonstrated that South African HEIs have not fully embraced the notion of public good, while significant contributions are made by student

bodies in South Africa. Shai (2019) lauded the student movement in framing the debates on Afrocentrism and decolonisation in an era where universities are plagued with corruption and politics, and this affects the core business of the universities. There is a limitation in the use of public good when academics display unethical behaviour by enriching their personal interest instead of improving the quality of HE.

The current experiences of the student body are daunting as they are involved in fees agreements through National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), and they have access to student loans by banks and non-governmental organisations and income-contingent loans provided to employed mature students by financial lenders with interest. Hence, this chapter calls for HE tuition fees (ZAR) to be funded as 'public good'.

The policy directives on HE do not affect the nature of HEIs' contribution to society without exclusions. Not all aspiring people meet the criteria to be admitted into various HEIs. The benefits of HE are skewed and not always direct; hence, it does not spread evenly throughout all universities. The newcomers and continuing students can benefit from the university funding support through a merit criterion because of limited resources. University resources are limited to what the university can source from donors, student fees, and government grants. Government grants are sourced with conditions when universities submit their research and creative outputs. There are also expectations from the national DHET to provide grants and subsidies to universities based on their performance and competencies.

The dimensions of the HE landscape can be viewed through diverse lenses – such as the economic, political, and social – that can be associated with the 'public good' (Carpentier & Courtois 2022). These factors can imply mixed feelings and can be aligned with overarching contrasting philosophical approaches. The economic dimension is aligned with the market-oriented and economic performance of the country, which affects HE (Marginson 2018). The political context deals with political belief, policy and ideological arrangements that influence the governance of HE. Governance is political as some of the stakeholders involved are politically deployed and are part of government structures' involvement and policy directives from the government. The economic context primarily deals with the nature of the economic system that constantly affects HE through its nature, arrangement and market behaviour. For instance, a neoclassical economic assumption on 'public goods' referred to the public good as non-exclusionary. Education, by nature, is rivalry in the sense that once you attain it you reach a higher level of thinking in society compared to those with no knowledge at all. This positions 'HE' at a higher level of knowledge production that cannot be confined to profit-making, even though HE still practices efficiency to manage resources sparingly differently from the economic markets. The economic approach to 'private good' cannot have a good future because it promotes competitive

advantage based on the bottom-down approach and will ultimately produce commercial university research, teaching, and student funding. Based on this perspective, the 'public benefit' of HE can be coined with university core business, even though there can be conditions on programmes that fund HE. Stakeholders might have contrasting interests and can compete to make sure that their interests are considered through their financing arrangements and sometimes are hidden within the policy goals and values of HE.

The social dimension of the academic landscape can be aligned with the public good in consideration of the African context that should include values such as *ubuntu* to foster a participatory approach in HE governance and other core businesses. This *ubuntu* approach is an African philosophical value that demonstrates the inclusiveness of all stakeholders in fostering HE businesses as it is linked to connotations such as 'humanity to others' and between people within a community (Ngubane & Makua 2021). It is summarised in the isiXhosa phrase, '*Ubuntu ngumntu ngabantu*', which translates to 'a person is a person through other people'. The concept of *ubuntu* originates from African cultures to denote that stakeholders must work together to succeed and achieve their objectives. According to Shanyanana and Waghid (2016), HE must deal with incongruences in the praxis of *ubuntu* approaches to levelling the playing field by equating gender disparities and racist imbalances of the past apartheid legacy and restoring peace in HE. Therefore, HE can practice the *ubuntu* philosophy to advance their responsiveness in changing the quality of the lives of the citizens.

The transformation agenda

In the last decade, partners to HE assisted HE in transforming their agenda to transform by operationalising the South African National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) (DHET 2001) and translating its goals to fit their strategic plans. The other key directive for the transformation agenda has been on the focus for these institutions to improve their performance on efficiency and delivery outputs through graduates, research, and community engagement with the aim to transform society. Hence, HE has a double agenda that is cooperative and is also a pure public good. The growing need to transform education systems emanates from a view of serving not only global interests but also local realities.

The South African CHE (2017) alluded to the relationship between the production of knowledge and the economy and suggested that it is compromising the mission of universities in Africa. Governments have focused more on regulating universities in their mission to transmit knowledge and further the goals of transformation by creating a unified and consolidated HE system in South Africa (Reiss 2021). As part of the global agenda and local realities in the last decade, the South African government system compromised

the interest of the HEIs when it considered apartheid policies to supersede the missions of universities and UoTs. As a result, some HEIs have questioned the role of the state in transforming HE (Chankseliani, Qoraboyev & Gimranova 2020). In the post-apartheid era, the government paved the way to develop HE policies that advocate for a transformed academic landscape, with some considerations of the needs of society. Commenting on the above-mentioned facts, one can argue that there is a major shift in HE policy reforms, which are influenced by global and local politics, markets, and social needs. Also, the public sector in national governments is expected to steer the processes of improving governance and adopting new policies, incentives and modes of service delivery. Shanyanana and Yusef (2018) assert that global trends have lately led to contestation concerning the role of HE both in South Africa and around the world. Sharma and Sharma (2015) attest that there are major concerns around the paradigm shift in student access and participation, democracy and social justice, funding, accountability, research and governance. HEIs are at the crossroads of global expectations and the demands of academia. South Africa, as a member of the international community, is expected to formulate policies that will consider both global and national imperatives to pursue transformation and developmental goals.

Conclusion

This chapter introduces the theme of the landscape of HE in post-apartheid South Africa. It reflects on the path traversed by HEIs that experienced diverse challenges and opportunities that affect the core business of HEIs. The policy reports on HE transformation serve as a basis for HE in South Africa to be treated as a public good. The implementation of the South African ruling party's NPHE of 2001 led to new modalities that created gaps in the restructured HEIs. The proposed academic structures in various HEIs elicit systematic challenges that are global, economic, social, political and physical and that affect the nature of the academic landscape. Some of the components within HE are interdependent on diverse environmental factors that ultimately impact HE core business functions. Because of gaps in the institutional mergers and incorporations, stakeholders echoed sentiments, together with the DHET, to revisit the implementation outcomes and make some adjustments to the current landscape. Hence, some universities were mandated to review and reconfigure their operations of a multi-campus system and establish a divisional model.

Chapter 2

The systematic nature of the higher education landscape in South Africa

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■ Abstract

This chapter notes environmental factors impacting the new academic landscape and diverse strategies adopted by the government and other stakeholders to adapt to transformation in the South African higher education (HE) landscape. Because of its systematic nature, HE, in the past and current decades, has been under the spotlight because of its responsiveness in its interaction with stakeholders. It is worth noting that in this book there is no single voice that framed the roles and responsibilities of the academic landscape with reference to HE. A culmination of representatives from liberation movements from South Africa and abroad, government, HE leaders, African and global scholars, and supporters provided a frame for the role of HE in a democratic society. The HE operations are influenced by government policies, its core business, leadership and governance structure, while intentions are to impact local communities, regions and continents.

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■ Introduction

Universities in the aftermath of the implementation of the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) (South African Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET] 2001) were subjected to the total evaluation of institutional fitness and purpose exercised by the Council on Higher Education (CHE), with less concern on the impact of HE towards local and regional communities. This book calls for the re-evaluation of the concept of 'public good' and considers both the direct and indirect attainment of the public good. The consideration of 'public good' gained momentum in South African higher education institutions (HEIs) during the inception of the new democracy, with a greater focus on the expectation of stakeholders regarding the role of African universities in serving their communities.

The broad goals of HE require the restructuring of institutions and reconfiguring academic programmes, which imply a change in the participation rate of learners and in the restructured HEIs and reconfiguration of programmes, addressing the imbalances through equity and diversity and creating new organisational forms through institutional mergers and incorporations. Scholars in the field of education and policy studies, such as Badaat et al. (2014), critically analysed the trajectory of the transformation of HEIs with reservations about their successes and progress in implementing the NPHE. According to the CHE (2017), the NPHE achieved less than expected with regard to its goal to implement the goals of transformation. Table 2.1 presents the institutional landscape of South Africa.

The current HE landscape has been portrayed in Table 2.1 and is framed by various factors that emerged from the implementation of the South African government's NPHE. While using the case of universities and universities of technology (UoTs) in South Africa, this chapter would like to respond to the hypothetical question of whether the systematic response of HE benefits the public good. While the NPHE and policy directives in HE were implemented at various universities, their effects have lasting implications on governance and academic programmes that support public good in most of the universities in South Africa (Mzangwa 2019). The semantics of 'public good' in HE can be viewed in three dimensions.

The national dimension focuses on the new academic landscape benefits to the broader society, such as the nations or provinces and cities or towns. The other dimension is to focus on the secondary benefit indirectly linked to the body of knowledge about public goods in HE, and the last dimension provides a systematic operation of the HEIs core business to benefit public good in a national system and defines their outcomes in national political terms.

The mergers and consolidation of HEIs in South Africa, especially those that were previously disadvantaged, resulted in complex reconfigured structures. As a result of complications, there was a need for some universities to get

TABLE 2.1: Higher education institutions in South Africa.

Local rating	International rating 2023	International rating 2022	Traditional universities	Universities of Technology
1	160	240–245	University of Cape Town	-
2	251–300	251–300	Stellenbosch University	-
3	251–300	251–300	University of the Witwatersrand	-
4	401–500	251–400	University of KwaZulu-Natal	-
5	501–600	400–500	–	Durban University of Technology
6	601–800	501–800	North-West University	-
7	601–800	601–800	University of Johannesburg	-
8	801–1000	601–800	University of Pretoria	-
9	601–800	601–800	University of the Western Cape	-
10	1001–1200	800–1 000	University of South Africa	-
11	801–1 000	927	Rhodes University	-
12	1201–1500	1001–1200	–	Tshwane University of Technology
13	–	1565	Nelson Mandela University	-
14	–	2131	University of Limpopo	-
15	–	2132	Cape Peninsula University	-
16	1201–1500	–	University of Fort Hare	-
17	1201–1500	–	University of Venda	-
18	–	–	Sefako Makgatho Health Science University	-
19	–	–	University of Zululand	-
20	–	–	–	Vaal University of Technology
21	–	–	Walter Sisulu University	-
22	–	–	Mangosuthu University	-

Source: Times Higher Education and Elsevier (2023), The world university rankings: available at: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/.

re-branded and reformed in the post-merger phase. These universities had to re-brand and formulate a vision and mission that was in line with the transformation targets and goals of the NPHE. In achieving their fitness and purpose, universities were required to re-brand and consider new and reformed governance structures while implementing government initiatives of new institutional plans and academic programmes to fit their programme qualification mix (PQM) goals and the priorities set by the government's NPHE.

Given the documented trajectory of HE in South Africa, it is important to understand the experience and contribution of new HEIs towards transformation by revealing the challenges and benefits that influence the current delivery and procurement with regard to efficiency, effectiveness, cost, responsiveness and sustainability. The following section critically analyses the factors affecting HE post-mergers and post-implementation of the government NPHE. The current core business of universities includes teaching, learning, research and community engagement.

The HE landscape is pressured by a bleak prospect of today's economic and political instability, derailed financial markets, a wave of the COVID-19

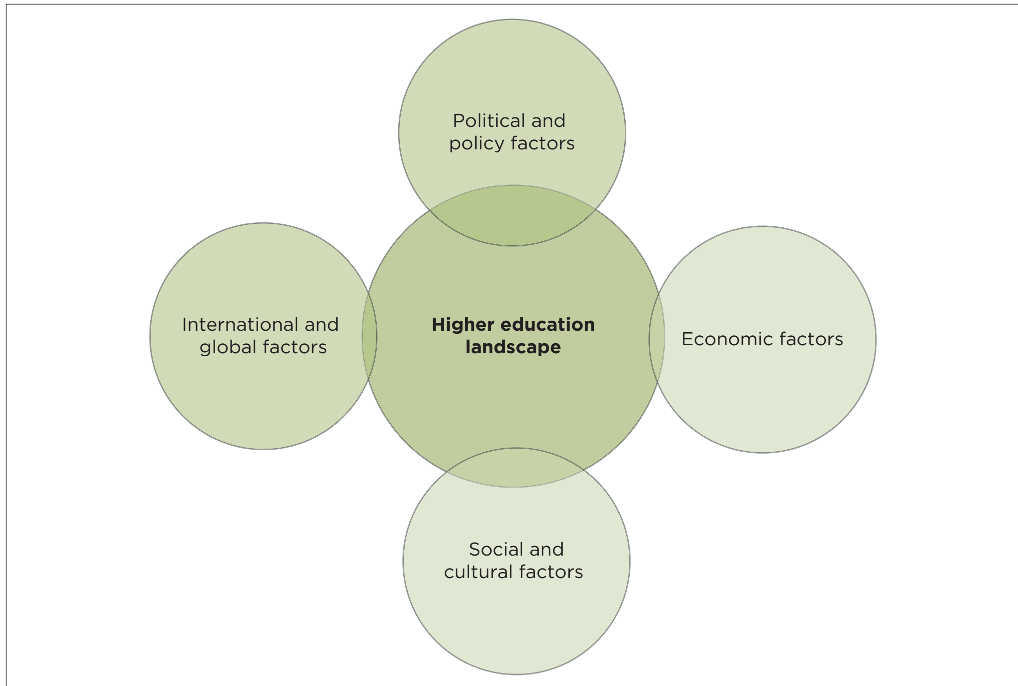
pandemic that affected social movement, rising costs of education, demands from financial and technological innovation and tested policy proposals to respond to the new challenges. The global and local governments saw a need to redefine and restructure systems of HE to suit the present demands by compelling HEIs to respond and re-adjust their institutional operations and core business to enable transformation and change (Alrasheedi, Capretz & Raza 2016). Along the same lines, Gegenfurtner & Ebner 2019) are of the view that the decisions regarding the structure of HE institutions impact faculties and academics in the advancement of knowledge and skills aiming at developing teaching approaches and instructional programmes.

Factors drawing on the South African higher education landscape

Economic and financial factors

Pondering on the systematic nature of HE in South Africa, Gegenfurtner and Ebner (2019) assert that HE is compelled to respond to transformation and restructuring agenda that is supported fully by the government. The government spearheaded the transformation using policy demands to influence HE to acknowledge public benefits; there are challenges experienced by HEIs while responding through various programmes linked to their core business. The economic environment impacts the business of HE; as a result, universities have developed enablers to respond and stabilise during conditions of increasing inflation by increasing costs of education and student fees. The other strategy used to respond to the economic crisis to strengthen financial securities involves creating student financial aids like the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), which is a big provider of student financial support for needy students who meet the merit requirements.

Lozano and Barreiro-Gen (2019) are of the view that stakeholders in HE assume that governments apply efficient systems to manage financial securities by borrowing and collecting tax from taxpayers, yet the government is stabilising price hikes by subsidising public goods like staple food and public education in South Africa to respond to economic factors pushing the ailing economy. Figure 2.1 illustrates factors affecting the HE landscape which compel the HEIs to be vulnerable to environmental changes and adapt to changes in different ways that also compromise their activities. Public universities that depend mostly on government handouts are compelled to respond to these factors by increasing fees and their operational expenditures. The government also responds by increasing spending because of government support to various social development programmes like HE and child support to alleviate poverty while also



Source: Siemens and Matheos 2010.
FIGURE 2.1: The factors that draw on the South African higher education landscape.

addressing inequalities. In HE, there is a new regulatory challenge in the shift of government responsibility to joint responsibility with HEIs; hence there is an increased appropriation of funds towards HE. Universities claim their existence as a response to government financial regulations that compel the HE community and communities of knowledge to be monitored and accountable. A joint responsibility of funding public HE implies programmability and transaction efficiency, while there are uncertainties and irregular spillovers to universities which might also introduce further regulatory challenges and uncertainties. A suitable model to respond to the economic push is for HE to be funded as a public good by repelling financial exclusions and blockages.

The agenda for transformation aimed at eradicating poverty, inequality and racism in HE has not fully merged the fundamentals of pure 'public good'. The democratic principles include preaching public good while markets focus on private ownership and profits. The fundamental question is whether the South African dual economy legacies can promote HE to fully benefit the public good. It seems like the value of HE is hijacked by private markets to serve their profit-driven services with limited support on public financing that focuses on supporting HEIs. There are observed assumptions that HE is a double-edged sword since it has the characteristics of producing private gains

when individuals have acquired education, and it can also be of public benefit when it produces public goods (Goastell & Piccard 2014). These two kinds of benefits can be acquired concurrently without spoiling each other.

Various HE policy developments, like the government NPHE (2001), were intended to re-arrange the academic landscape of HE; hence stakes are now high in HE because of systematic demands (DOE 2001). The HE landscape has turned into a political battle because of the involvement of various stakeholders, such as the government and interest, and the government influenced the trajectory of economic and social development in the transformation of HEIs. For starters, the apartheid government created a bizarre geo-landscape in South Africa where institutions were located close to one another with duplicated academic programmes, while there was high inequality and segregation of universities. This duplication led to a high level of competition among them and skewed development of some universities with regard to their products and services. Currently, some universities are in the lowest band of global rankings because of the nature of their academic operations, which is not internationally recognised.

The assertions on the new academic landscape shaped transformation that is skewed and staggering because of the dominant forces that influence HE in the current decade. While the primary goal of HE is to address the imbalances of the past, the apartheid geographical landscape was incorrectly designed and did not suit all the needs of HE. Hence, there is a major responsibility for the current planners to advance a uniform goal to foster a core business that aims at improving the quality of life. Higher education institutions have been reconfigured to suit transformation in the context of restructuring the landscapes. The CHEs report on 'size and shape' provided a direction on the goals of the NPHE, mainly on equity and redress, strategies for restructuring and incorporation of campus to closer institutions. The end results of the reconfiguration are not pleasing to society, hence some comprehensive universities are being reconfigured again. Therefore, it is important for the landscape to be re-examined concerning the government's strategic plan, mission and needs and demands of HE and other stakeholders. It must now consider public good in the context of HE in South Africa.

Global and regional factors

The systematic nature of HE requires constant evolution of knowledge to meet global challenges in a fashion that suits their originality and nature of delivery. Global factors impact the agenda for transformation. The new demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) pose demands for HE to translate their teaching and learning policies to accommodate technology and innovation tools to be included in teaching styles and operations. The current COVID-19 pandemic compelled universities to adapt to change and

use online teaching to comply with COVID-19 restrictions of social distancing. The COVID-19 pandemic clearly indicated that countries are connected, and they can plan and take action to stop the spreading of the virus by partnering and collaborating their research with other scientific researchers in other countries. Governments and communities of knowledge communicated with each other, including scientists and researchers representing various universities. The COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened the interconnectedness of research institutes and universities' stakeholders to collaborate on research conduct to benefit the public good (Du Plessis et al. 2022).

Since South Africa is serving on various international memberships and forums, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), it is compelled to forge solidarity with these institutions and forums when deciding on various academic matters. Being part of such an influential association places South African tertiary institutions on the map, nationally and globally. Hence, there is massive work remaining to be done in the mission to produce public goods. South African HE also needs to keep the same pace with other member states in fostering good governance for HE nationally, regionally, and globally. In support of the internationalisation of HE through linkages, the UNESCO Report (2009) attests that while countries' economies can be integrated, in the case of HE, tertiary institutions in the same regions and blocks have similar resemblances that must stand as strong and unique features of their educational needs. To respond to such demands, global responsiveness must add value to HE by providing pointers and indicators on how global and regional economies can be strengthened through healthy partnerships such as Britain, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) forum, African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Scholars across the globe have echoed their voices on the significance of South Africa as a member of the BRICS forum in benefiting from sharing resources and information with member states. Besides economic activities, there are other benefits to values, such as culture, language and education. These values can be shared through BRICS institutions and SADC, where students and instructors can use opportunities such as mobility and information sharing through those values and centralised standards. There is a case for HE responsiveness to global challenges, especially now that the shrinking funding pressurises governments in HE.

The involvement of the university through partnerships with private sectors and other government and non-governmental organisations stimulates debates on mixed teaching methods and the public-private governance models. These hybrid models, which are neo-liberal and incremental, influence HE's policy development; as a result, universities adopt business-like practices to reach a developmental state. The South African government influences traditional public universities by forcing them to comply with policy directives and to fulfil the mandate of the student-and-research subsidy.

A growing expectation of stakeholders in the HE sectors emanates from community needs. Some of these needs are influenced by market forces, natural factors and basic human needs. The most relevant needs are education and the skills needed to compete in the international arena. Some of the international actors are bound by the goal of fostering the public good. In liberal and market societies, there is limited state involvement and goals for education are influenced majorly by markets and interest groups. In African states where the government has limited involvement, universities relate with the state, industry and community. These role players offer diverse responsibilities and accounts that shape the governance of resources to HE in a rapidly globalised landscape that benefits from the strength of global and national social and economic developments. Higher education can be affected by socio-economic instability and stabilities within their regions. Historical trajectories of some countries' democracies in African countries impacted the procurement of HE and left universities affected as first-class casualties of regional instabilities.

Education can be attained as a public good and its later use can create mixed reactions when educated people are seen as rivals when they create their own identities (Van Lankveld et al. 2017). In the social context of development, HE is also influenced by global culture. The same global culture and policies can have a profound influence on people's movements and cross-regional interactions living in a wired and innovative society that is heavily connected by information and communication technologies. The global village also dictates to HEIs how to structure their programmes to be relevant and competitive when producing knowledge. In the evolution of language and communication, the formation of people's attitudes and sensibilities is required by the global markets. Changes in the natural environment, such as climate change and global warming, forced global actors and HE to focus on sustainability. This sustainability movement supports the call to preserve natural resources and nature by not compromising on the use of resources (Lozano & Barreiro-Gen 2019). The transmission of knowledge in HE requires resources and skills to keep pace with the global trends that are set by global forums like UNESCO and the European Union (EU).

Another challenge is how markets and businesses impact the lifestyles of societies. In emerging societies, universities respond to their demands for convenient skills needed in their economies. For instance, universities respond by designing programmes and qualifications for skills, artisans and professionals in global business organisations and by responding to trends and behaviours of the global markets (Naidoo & Williams 2015). The recent global challenge of the coronavirus pandemic exacerbated the disintegration of HE sectors, where the youth are victims of these global changes since they are expected to adopt a profession and acquire skills needed in the industry that is increasingly witnessing the loss of jobs.

Global forces are prominent in influencing the agenda of their operations in the HE sector through government decisions. Public universities are expected to comply with HEs policies and adjust in their academic and operational matters. However, such effects of the global world order are powerful in setting the decision-making in government (Badat 2014). In addition, global effects can also constrain the powers of government and their institutions of governance in certain ways. Globalisation does not intend to create a uniform political and economic order, but it changes the conditions and the environment in which governments operate and promotes the ideas of competitive market culture; as a result, it is difficult to observe and judge the values associated with 'public good'.

Some public universities formed international linkages, partnerships and values to merge the standards of competent overseas universities in teaching and learning, research and community engagement. Developed countries like North America, EU countries, the United Kingdom and African states offer scholarships and cross-country bursaries for students to study abroad and learn new skills and knowledge that can impact their local and regional development. Other programmes include exchange students' and instructors' programmes through partnerships and collaborations that can impart knowledge between countries. Other universities offer academic programmes and qualifications that merge cheap local standards. The desperation to meet international standards, with low resources, resulted in some universities failing to supply quality-based recognised qualifications. While other universities focus on advanced quality technical education delivery and innovative teaching, some fail to acquire human capacity that merges international standards (Kwon 2009). The South African education sector is focusing on academic programmes that are pragmatic, industry-focused and practice-based.

The rapid development of technology and innovations in the 4IR requires universities to train graduates to acquire diverse skills that can help them advance in technology and become capable of solving complex societal challenges. Such demands require universities to integrate and blend their modes of teaching by using advanced technology that can train graduates to be more competent with technology. These constant changes require skills and knowledge that can provide students with lifelong learning careers which can sustain education. Higher education is expected to provide continuous improvement and development of skills and qualifications that can keep updating the skills of the workforce in a rapidly changing world.

Large complex institutions like universities are compelled to adapt to the global culture when seeking knowledge and funding to improve the quality of lives of the communities through partnerships and networking. This connectivity of universities with the rest of the global universities allows them to learn from African and global experiences in teaching, research and

community engagement. The current world university ratings are an example of how universities in South Africa confirm to the rest of the world by being both locally and internationally relevant. Experiences in the culture of learning and research can be transferred to other universities during the transfer of knowledge. However, HE in South Africa later developed a mode of producing knowledge, such as the approaches and models used by other foreign universities. Similar methods and strategies for teaching and learning that were used imposed a risk of overlooking the national priorities while HE was transforming.

Modern states have responded to global challenges according to their capacity to govern and searched for new forms of governance. These forms of governance have provoked debates that have resulted in the provision of economic and social public policies. Unlike the approaches of a welfare state, where the government is required to play a dominant role in providing welfare, the global challenges are urging national governments to initiate new forms of service delivery that will benefit most stakeholders in a more responsible way regarding their financial resources. In the models for provision, there are clashes between the state and the HEIs when responses from the global forces have emerged through policy provisions. In the South African context, the role of the state has surfaced as supervisory, unlike its role before 1994.

Social factors

Chavali, Mavuri and Durrah (2022) contested the new academic landscape and argue that it is politically influenced by transformation and government policies focusing on social change. The socio-economic developments in sub-Saharan Africa paved the development of HE while alerting HE of the need to change its core business and transform the academic landscape. African economies have been trending in skewed development, with a high dependency on developed countries. Hence their rapid economic growth influences the demand for social change and HE skills and qualifications needed by the economy to advance social needs in the broader society. Universities are complex and commit to the social involvement of their stakeholders and the society at large irrespective of the material resources. They are committed to access and success of their students, provision of financial support to students for tuition fees together with the national student financial aid for poor students.

Early policy development on the programme for HE transformation demanded HE to increase success rates and access. However, it has been easy to achieve access by admitting more students to HE and allowing a specific quota of foreign students. Post-NPHE implementation, the national Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) required universities

that exceeded their required admission quota of students to cap the number. Some students were turned away from public institutions and some were injured while seeking admission. As a result, the government introduced a central application that prevented students from walking in and personally applying to university admission offices. The improvement in matriculation pass rates since the 1990s results in both public and private schools, resulting in a high demand for HE. According to DHET (2016), the demand for social and humanities was less than the demand for science and mathematics qualifications in South African universities. Private universities and long-distance education became an alternative since admission is a problem in public universities.

It is imperative to reflect on the social challenges prevalent in the HE system and the rationale for the development of a new academic landscape in South Africa. The education system in South Africa has its roots in apartheid governance and is inadequate to meet the socio-economic needs that can sustain development in the country (Mzangwa 2019). Hence, there is still a dual society comprising those who have and those who do not. The models used in transforming HE in South Africa are driven by political and moral imperatives and social needs to address the imbalances of the past. The need to upskill the workforce in South Africa is still imperative, especially by enhancing science and technological skills to support the economy and develop the broader society (Matsiliza 2019).

In the last few years, student enrolment numbers have been diminishing at universities and increasing at UoTs. Regardless of this factor, the education at UoTs has been regarded as inferior compared to that of universities in South Africa. The similarity between the universities and the UoTs was the Council and Senate-governed universities with greater autonomy and academic freedom (DHET 1997). Even though the Senate handles academic affairs, the Council has the mandate to decide on academic and institutional operations. It can be noted that their lack of intellectual capacity in some instances has put them under stringent scrutiny by their counterparts. With the new forms of institutional governance emerging, both universities and UoTs are guided by the same policies and legislations.

However, there is a need for the extension and revision of the restructuring of HE in South Africa. Higher Education has been criticised for lacking coordination, corporation, synergy, direction and vision. The major concerns for transformation originate from the influence of global forces and local challenges, which are social, political and economic (Mzangwa 2019). Since 1994, the South African government, with the Ministry of Education, has further planned for transformation in HE, with a view of putting in place new institutional forms of governance. However, there is a need for vibrant and visionary change management and leadership in HE. Special attention towards

change management is critical for the restructuring and reconfiguration of the HE system in South Africa.

The need for a more equitable dispensation was not the only pressure on the education system to transform. The large numbers of similar institutions in certain provinces and the rural areas established, as a result of social barriers during the apartheid era, were but one aspect of the inefficiency of the whole system. The duplication of programmes in neighbouring institutions and the low student enrolment in some institutions in the same region meant that the system displayed high levels of redundancy and was therefore expensive (CHE 2016).

Duplication of academic programmes offered in HE led to competition between these universities for the same students (Van Lankveld et al. 2017). Some of these problems are reflected in the low graduation rates in some institutions, with few graduates from the fields of science and technology. Statistics also showed that student retention was low at some stage, while the enrolment of new first-year students was increasing (DHET 2019). However, given the pressure on the government to address enormous social problems, as well as problems at other levels of the education system, the costs related to the inefficiency of the system still remain a challenge that must not be tolerated.

■ The 'new' academic landscape

Policy documents and legislation, such as the National Working Group Report (NWGR 2000) on the size and shape of HE, the White Paper 3 (DHET 1997), the *Higher Education Act* (1997) and the governmental NPHE (DHET 2001) shape the new academic landscape. The National Working Group (NWG) task team, which was established by the South African parliament in 2000, advanced concrete proposals on the reconfiguration of the HE system and institutions to create a new landscape (NWG Report 2000). It further recommended further investigation of certain issues because it believes that the problems and weaknesses of the HE system are complex and the institutions cannot overcome them on their own. This required the reconfiguration of the present system and its replacement with a new HE landscape (NWG Report 2000) (Department of Education 2004).

The National Working Group Report (NWGR 2000) entails extensive, integrated, iterative national planning as well as multiple co-coordinated interventions and initiatives with a strong political will at the institutional level. According to the CHE Report (2000): 'At the heart of this system would be a diverse array of instructional academic programmes distributed across the institutions comprising the system'. The major challenge identified by the NWG was differentiation and diversity in the educational provision for HE systems in both developed and developing economies.

The student unions of HE seek, according to the Department of Education (2004):

> to widen the participation of an increasingly diverse student body (in terms of gender, race, and age profiles), meet the heightened demands of the labour market, and offer programmes that reflect the massive expansion of knowledge domains brought about, in part, by the revolution in information and communications technologies. (n.p.)

The prevailing circumstances on participation can also be threatened by socio-economic factors and structural factors (organisational arrangement).

The other challenge of diversity is the fact that the different forms of system organisations depend on historical circumstances that characterise the division of HE in the form of a binary system. The National Commission for Higher Education (1996) report concluded that while the planning, funding and quality assurance systems were being put in place, the current sectoral division should be maintained, but it also foresaw that:

> [*g*]lobal and South African conditions are likely to push the single coordinated system towards a more responsive, dynamic, and 'fuzzy' relationship between institutions and programmes [...]. (p. 165)

Since then (CHE Report 2000):

> [*S*]ignificant advances have been made, particularly in establishing coordinated planning mechanisms through which institutions steer towards an appropriate programme mix those fits agreed-upon institutional missions in response to regional and national needs. (n.p.)

In conjunction with the restructuring, the Ministry of Education required the HEIs to translate their academic programmes to suit the needs and demands of their clients and society. The CHE and the Education Ministry have emphasised the idea of offering diverse programmes and have also identified the need to strengthen the science and technology programmes. Institutions close to one another are required to avoid competition and duplication of programmes.

A new funding mechanism adopted by the CHE, while recognising equity and social justice in HE, rewards HEIs by recognising student access, throughput and graduation rates. This has a bearing interest on South African history, where most people in the society were unable to participate in HE because of a lack of financial support and unmet entry requirements. The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) has been entrusted with the duty of ensuring that HEIs can meet quality standards of performance. Some of the responsibilities of the HEQC were based on accreditation and coordination, audit and evaluation and quality promotion and capacity development. The importance of the exercise in quality assurance is to make sure that the current academic policy for the entire system of HE will not be based on institutional typology but on a differentiated set of HE programmes and qualifications that are relevant nationally and globally.

In this context of policy implementation, the NWG, set in motion by the NPHE 2001, deliberated on the restructuring of the HE landscape and the creation of new institutional and organisational forms (Department of Education 2001, p. 87). The NWGs restructuring proposals were designed, along with other policy instruments, to rid HE of the drawbacks of the apartheid era and to strengthen the existing policies supporting the restructuring of the HE since the transition to democracy in 1994. Mergers and incorporations play a major role in the restructuring and creation of the new academic landscape in the South African HE system.

The government, through the NPHE, has provided the guidelines for incorporating institutions of HE through mergers and incorporations (DHET 2001). However, the National Plan has outlined specific outcomes – as agreed-upon performance targets and agreements – for the national system and individual institutions related to equity, quality, effectiveness and efficiency challenges. The NPHE aims to implement the transformation targets set up by Education White Paper 3 (DHET 1997). The NPHE establishes indicative targets for the size and shape of the HE system, including the overall growth and participation rates and the institutional and programme mixes. The NPHE also provides a framework and outlines the processes and mechanisms for the restructuring of HE.

The South African HE restructuring process is focused on institutional mergers and incorporations and programme-level restructuring (CHE 2017). The institutional mergers and incorporations are cohesive and are enforced by the state as part of the agenda for transformation, equity and efficiency in the sector. The whole process of restructuring is aimed at dismantling the apartheid landscape of HE and replacing it with a new landscape that will allow HE to achieve goals set by the national policy (CHE 2017). The restructuring, at the programme level, has already been indicated in the report on the Programmes Approved for Universities and Technikons from 1995 to 2005. However, the PQM exercise indicates future adjustments, streamlining and rationalisation of academic programmes in the new academic institutions from 2006 to 2010.

■ Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated the systematic nature of HE. The South African national plan to restructure the HE system resulted in more changes in HE. It was discovered that the systematic factors affecting HE are global, economic, political and social. Policy directives and the transformation were part of the national agenda to form a unified and coordinated HE system. The plan could have led to an efficient education system with new structures of

management procedures in place. Instead, there are further challenges that emerged from the restructuring and these challenges can also affect the agenda for HE to be treated as public good. There are developments that can be lauded, such as the increase in participation and access to HE, including the previously white universities. Some proponents of HE transformation are sceptical of the existence of some institutions like comprehensive universities because of the distinction that exists between the universities and the UoTs.

Chapter 3

The responsiveness of technical colleges through strategy implementation

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Abstract

Strategic planning in the technical vocational education and training (TVET) colleges sector is known as an effective management instrument. Technical vocational education and training college's strategic management intends to guide these institutions to respond to the notion of the public good. Technical vocational education and training colleges play a significant role in building society by developing human capital in both developed and emerging countries. The need for strategic planning is to engage the stakeholders in a reciprocal core business that emanates from the cumulative demand for advanced education, altering student demographics and the need to embrace the evolving models of higher education (HE) while keeping the essence of its existence. This chapter focuses on the analysis and evaluation of strategic planning and its implementation, which is intended to be responsive to the needs of society. Using a mixed method, this chapter

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reports on the findings of the empirical study conducted to assess the implementation of the strategic planning of a sample of three TVET colleges in the Eastern Cape province, South Africa. This chapter also provides recommendations to the TVET sector to make use of strategic planning to improve the performance of the sector and for the realisation of competitive advantages within the sector in totality.

Introduction

Strategic planning in the TVET college sector is known as an effective management instrument in the 1980s and it is specifically in the late 1980s that strategic planning first appeared in academic institutions. By 1987 more than 500 schools in the United States of America were adopting and implementing strategic plans (Kaufman & Herman 1991). The TVET colleges are of strategic importance in socio-economic development as they help in building the human capital base, especially in countries such as South Africa. The fundamental government plans, strategies, accords and the Education White Paper 3 (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET] 1997) for post-school education and training all stress the importance of the responsiveness of the TVET colleges. Thus, the DHET in South Africa places a lot of emphasis on the strengthening and expansion of TVET colleges so that they become institutions of choice for school-leavers and benefit the communities within their proximity. According to Kaufman and Herman (1991), strategic planning is a process rather than a once-off task. It is therefore envisaged to encompass the identification of the anticipated outcomes, the assessment of what is needed to initiate new processes, the developing and implementing of action plans and the evaluation of the success of strategic plans. Thus, conflicts are most likely to erupt in the implementation of strategic planning in academic institutions because of the involvement of various stakeholders and players; for example, the principal, deputy principal and departmental heads. The relationship between these entities affects the core business and the running of activities. The DHET, therefore, hopes that strategic planning and implementation, among other interventions within the TVET colleges, can therefore turn into effective functioning institutions that are more responsive to the labour market and the society.

Problem statement

The massive enrolments in TVET colleges created challenges in the administration of the TVET colleges' plans and governance of operations in these colleges. It is estimated that 50% of students were enrolled in the Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape provinces of South Africa, and later a steady decrease in the intake in 2022 exposed challenges in the development of TVET colleges (Ncobela 2022). Hence, there is skewed

progress in their role in terms of nation-building and capacity development in both developed and less-developed countries. Academic institutions, like TVET colleges are expected to respond to their demands for cumulative advanced education, meanwhile; there is a gap between strategy planning and implementation. The massive enrolments require TVET colleges to alter student demographics and embrace the evolving models of HE while keeping the essence of their existence as traditional comprehensive universities (DHET 2017). Despite the effort of the government and other stakeholders in ensuring that TVET colleges successfully adopt and implement strategic planning, several TVET colleges are attributed to staggering throughput rates. However, strategic planning has taken place around the administrative table and has resulted in planning documents that contain lofty platitudes that are shelved rather than being a guide that effectively directs the work at the functional level of the organisation.

Literature review

Description of technical vocational education and training

The TVET in South Africa has been designed to further vocational studies and training that can expose learners to the world of work (Needham 2018). One of the main foci of the TVET colleges is to structure their academic programmes according to the needs of the stakeholders and make sure that these institutions have received full accreditation by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The designated TVET colleges in all the SA provinces are destined to contribute to the national economy by implementing the objectives of the *Skills Development Act 97 of 1998*, which aims at addressing the imbalances of the past by enhancing the technical skills of graduates who can be absorbed by the economy and promoting skills development. When students complete their theoretical training, they go and join the industry to acquire formal training to get exposure to workplace training and in-service training that will prepare them to work. The TVET colleges are also lauded for contributing to their neighbouring industry and which can impact society and stimulate competitiveness and entrepreneurship in various industry groups in the public and private sectors (Masson & Fretwell 2009). Technical vocational education and training plays an important role in providing trainees with skills that are a prerequisite for getting jobs and contributing towards the industry's productivity, acquiring income that can improve the quality of lives, advance economic competitiveness and expand opportunities for the trainees and workers to advance their careers (Madondo 2021).

In addition, formal education and work experience acquired by trainees assist them in the formal business sectors and enables employers and business

owners to improve methods of production, enhance product quality, convey quality information to the users, identify markets and manage human and other resources, all of which offer students a competitive edge (Sonobe, Akoten & Otsuka 2011). Technical vocational education and training encompasses on-the-job training, apprenticeships, vocational secondary schools, sector-specific TVET institutions and vocational pathways within comprehensive schools (Rodgers & Boyer 2006). It offers aspects that can serve as practical and effective ways of skills upgrading.

Moreover, it has been established that TVET graduates with job-specific skills have a greater potential to be hired as they spend six months in in-service training. They can be more productive and more equipped to execute tasks for which they have been trained (Rodgers & Boyer 2006). For instance, countries such as South Korea, Taiwan and Japan invest greatly in vocational school systems to address challenges brought about by a scarcity of skilled workers (Tilak 2003). These countries have introduced stringent quotas and entrance examinations to limit university enrolment figures and encourage enrolment in the TVET system. As a result, they have had accelerated industrial and economic growth because of a vibrant, skilled middle-level workforce. The TVET needs to respond to numerous challenges, such as a rapidly increasing population, growing youth unemployment, the high cost of education against stagnating resources, rural-urban migration, rising social and economic insecurity, reduction in jobs because of economic liberalisation and new technologies, as well as the people's clamour for accountability (Barasa & Kaabwe 2001). In addition, the impact of HIV and AIDS in Africa has necessitated an emphasis on skills development to replace those lost across different occupations, as the virus results in the loss of scarce and productive human resources (Nyerere 2009). These challenges affect the quality, relevance and accessibility of skills and the TVET programme cannot respond to them promptly.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training courses are vocational or occupational by nature, meaning that the student receives education and training with a view towards a specific range of jobs, employment, or entrepreneurial possibilities (Duncan 2017, p. 45). Under certain conditions, some students may qualify for admission to a university of technology to continue their studies at a higher-level institution in the same field of study as they were studying at the TVET college. Public TVET colleges are established and operated under the authority of the *Continuing Education and Training Act 16 of 2006* and fall under the DHET. Public TVET colleges are subsidised by the state with approximately ZAR8bn per year. Each region has a DHET regional office that provides specialised professional support to the public TVET colleges in provinces. The DHET regional offices should not be confused with district offices in provinces. District offices oversee school education for the Department of Basic Education.

South Africa can learn from other international TVET colleges like those in Norway and Spain, where a hybrid form of TVET colleges exists to offer academic programmes that are serving diverse needs of the students and the industry (Souto-Otero & Ure 2012). In the Czech Republic, the nature of TVET is dictated by the government and the support of the stakeholders. Hence, they offer academic programmes many opportunities to transition from TVET to HE (Kanõáková et al. 2016). Sometimes, these colleges provide opportunities for the different social partners to collaborate with them in designing and developing their curricula by considering their needs and that of stakeholders within the relevant scope of training strategies. Scholars cited the examples of dual-sector universities in Australia as an effective integration between technical and further education while considering the university-level programmes while the partnership is still active. Field and Guez (2018) lauded these collaborations as relevant and significant as they allow geographical closeness and a joint pull of expertise to be used by the universities and the vocational education providers, with all stakeholders benefiting to the core.

The research methodology

This section reports on the empirical research conducted to assess the responsiveness of the TVET colleges in the Eastern Cape province in South Africa with the intention to provide lessons for improving the implementation of strategic planning towards responsiveness. Using a mixed method, this study considered using instruments from qualitative and quantitative approaches to triangulate data in a cost-effective way. Maree (2021) is of the view that a mixed research approach is suitable for collecting and analysing rich, diverse data. The study population comprised all employees in the selected TVET college. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to investigate the effectiveness of strategic planning on the responsiveness of these colleges. This technique was appropriate for this study because not everyone working at the institution was knowledgeable regarding strategic management implementation; hence the research participants were selected based on their knowledgeability. This made the research study fast, inexpensive and easy to undertake (Neuman 2006; Hair, Wolfinbarger, Ortinau & Bush 2008; Gravetter & Forzano 2012). The researcher also used random sampling to choose participants for the quantitative approach. The measuring instrument was tested among ten employees within the neighbouring TVET college. The preliminary test showed that the questionnaire was suitable for conducting research and the interview questions were suitable for the selected study.

Secondary data were obtained from various databases and international and national data searches focused on journal articles, scholarly books and internet search from various websites of TVET colleges. Primary data were

TABLE 3.1: Instrument reliability.

Scale item	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Strategic planning and implementation	16	0.74
Experiences of stakeholders	17	0.89
Monitoring and intervention	13	0.75
Inhibitors and enablers	5	0.86

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collected using survey methods and in-depth interviews. The study utilised semi-structured qualitative interviews with the administrators, lecturers and other staff at Lovedale TVET College. The study made use of internal consistency reliability, which stresses that for a measurement scale to be qualified as reliable, it must have a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or more (Nunnally 1978; De Vos et al. 2011). To show the reliability of each measurement scale used in this study, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used (Landau & Everett 2003). Table 3.1 shows the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the measure used in the study after data analysis.

As evident in the Table 3.1, all four measurement scales achieved Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.70. This tends to confirm the measurement scale's reliability.

Discussion of the empirical and interview results

Results from the Pearson correlation tests

Statistical inference refers to a process of inferring properties of an underlying distribution by analysing collected data (Cox 2006). Pearson correlation analysis and ANOVA were used to establish the relationship existing between the dependable and independent variables. To examine the strategic planning implementation and other aspects that affect it, a Pearson correlation test was performed. The Pearson correlation coefficient is a parametric test used to determine whether a significant correlation occurs between two variables and the direction of the correlation (Pallant 2006). This test is important because it helps the researcher to establish the true relationship, which will culminate in determining the nature of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The correlation coefficient may take values ranging from +1.00 through 0.00 to −1.00 + 1.00, indicating that the relationship is perfectly positive, 0.00 means there is no relationship at all, while −1.00 means there is a perfect negative relationship. *p*-values were also considered in this test. *p*-values refer to the probability of obtaining the observed results if the null hypothesis were true (Abramowitz & Weinberg 2010). These values are vital because they confirm if a relationship is statistically significant. A result is declared significant

if the *p*-value is less than or equal to 0.05 (Pallant 2006). The next section will analyse data through themes that are created to interpret the responsiveness of the TVET colleges in the Eastern Cape province, South Africa.

The responsiveness of technical vocational education and training colleges

This section assesses the responsiveness of the strategic planning of the selected TVET colleges in the Eastern Cape province. The views of respondents were probed and the following themes were found to be valuable to respond to the aim of this study.

Understanding the strategic planning

As part of assessing whether the respondents understood and had knowledge about the concept of strategic planning, which is a central aspect of this study, most of the respondents associated 'strategic planning' with thinking and acting. The responses largely point to respondents having had reasonable knowledge of the concept of strategic planning.

Some of the more specific responses from one of the unknown, unidentified managers said:

> 'Strategic planning is an organisation's process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. It may also extend to control mechanisms for guiding the implementation of the strategy. It has to do with doing the right thing at the right time, strategic thinking and acting in the right manner.' (Unknown, unidentified manager, 2018)

Also, the school administrator alluded to what strategic planning must be:

> 'Strategic planning in an institution is what a map is to a road rally driver. It is a tool that defines the routes that when taken will lead to the most likely probability of getting from where the business is to where the owners or stakeholders want it to go and satisfy the communities. And like a road rally, strategic plans meet detours and obstacles that call for adapting and adjusting as the plan is implemented.' (Unknown, unidentified school administrator, 2018)

One of the academic staff members also commented:

> 'Strategic planning is a process that brings to life the mission and vision of the institution. A strategic plan, well-crafted and of value, is driven from the top down; considers the internal and external environment around the institution; is the work of the management; and is communicated to all the stakeholders, both inside and outside of the institution.' (Unknown, unidentified school administrator, 2018)

An unknown, unidentified lecturer mentioned that:

> 'It is the way of doing things strategically to achieve the college's goals or objectives by knowing what and who is needed, when and how it is supposed to be done. I guess I can say have to act strategically.' (Unknown, unidentified lecturer, 2018)

A vice-principal only stated that '[*w*]e as management need to be able to think strategically' (Unknown, unidentified vice-principal, 2018).

In as far as the above statements, the respondents understand the concept of strategic planning and its intention to contribute to society. Kaufman and Herman (1991) argue that strategic planning involves the identification of the anticipated outcomes, the assessment of what is needed to initiate new processes, the development and implementation of action plans and the evaluation of the success of the strategic plan. This implies that there is a need to develop a clear strategic plan that is known by the employees and the stakeholders and must be driven by the experienced personnel who are involved. The process of strategic planning implementation also encompasses the core function of personnel within the institution and furthers the desires of the stakeholders in line with the strategic plans so that the various units and departments can implement the strategic plan and directions. This is consistent with the organisational training and development model that emphasises the need for effective training, thus contributing to the development of an organisation which very often encompasses the implementation of strategic planning to ensure such development. However, there is a need to plan with a collective when planning to produce a public good. In the classic article of Lindahl (1971), planning for the public good requires neutrality so that the managers or board can negotiate on how they can meet the expectations of the consumers without any influence. In the context of South Africa, higher education institutions (HEIs) and the government regulate the procurement of HE; hence, governors and managers must comply with policies on how to provide education that is consumed as both private and public good.

Stakeholders' engagement in the implementation of the strategic plan

The main concern for TVET colleges is the responsiveness to the needs of the stakeholders. They can only do that when they adopt a systematic inclusive approach in their decision-making when they plan, implement and evaluate their plans in the long and short term. In a strategic plan, the Training and Development Need Assessment phase provides direction and purpose for the training effort by seeking to determine what is needed, by whom, when and where. The current strategies used by various institutions to engage stakeholders include meetings, *imbizos* with communities, public announcements and broadcasting through media and their bulletins. The vice-chancellor, the chancellors, the council, the management and staff and the student body are responsible for driving the process of engaging the stakeholders in crafting, implementing and evaluating the strategic plans.

In the selected case of TVET colleges in the Eastern Cape province, South Africa, respondents were requested to identify phases for a collective

engagement with stakeholders and the respondents claimed that implementation requires adequate planning, execution of the training activities and an effective evaluation process. Stakeholders must be consulted and engaged in all the stages of the development of the strategic plan. The governance structures and managers must lead to the objective formulation of the plan; in the identification of key performance indicators (KPIs), planning for activities of all units, identification of strengths and weaknesses, consultation for approval, operational phase with identified methods and learning principles selected and used; and the evaluation phase measures how well the activity met identified objectives (Cekada 2010; Stone 2010). One respondent, an academic staff member, commented:

> 'I think from my experience from other organisations if you want to implement a strategic plan you to engage the personnel, get them to participate in training so that they cannot only understand the strategic plan but also be part of the transformation and development.' (Unknown, unidentified academic, 2018)

Earl (2009) pointed out that the most daunting challenge confronting colleges and other further academic institutions as far as strategic planning is concerned is that they are deficient in respect of capacity when it comes to strategic management. Central to this study is the aspect of training aspects that is acquired by the personnel, which is necessary to ensure that they can implement strategic planning. The deficiency in human capacity can only be dealt with by training personnel in line with the strategic plans of the organisation or institution. This finding confirms that strategic planning and implementation require both strategic thinking and acting. According to Malusi (2014), the challenges facing TVET colleges are daunting and they affect the performance of these institutions. Umalusi (2014, p. 68) underscored most lecturers teaching at TVET colleges; by describing some as underqualified with less performance as compared to universities and universities of technology. The poor performance affects the throughput rates. The attributes of graduates from these colleges are not met when the staff is unable to train the student well.

Leadership and management strategic responsibilities in managing technical vocational education and training colleges

The participants were probed to score TVET colleges on their responsiveness to their leadership and organisational knowledge. Generally, the effectiveness of a strategic plan does require good leadership as well as institutional memory and understanding. This implies that the process of strategic planning and implementation requires an action plan that is based on an understanding of the college or institution. In most cases, the planning process always involves the top management in the formulation process of the strategies. Keller

(2004) asserts that leadership from the top and a carefully selected planning group has been identified as one of the key success factors in a strategic planning process.

One of the respondents affirmed this viewpoint:

> "'Strategic planning process should be undertaken by senior management within an organization for it to be effective, but the process of implementation involves every member of the organization."' (Unknown, unidentified clerk, n.d.)

Even though the top and middle management are expected to be involved in all stages of the strategic planning, participants raised mixed feelings about the involvement of their managers. The strategy must also be driven by the leaders through their actions. They should monitor the direction and review the process and may intervene where the view for the objective is lost or where resources may need reallocation.

Teamwork and stakeholders' experiences

Like any other organisation, colleges can use teamwork to further their goals. Bryson (2010) commented on the importance of teamwork in strategic planning as important as it can produce desirable and positive results. Workers originate from diverse backgrounds; hence they bring different perceptions, experiences and skills, which adds to the richness and depth of knowledge that can be used for organisational development. In this study, it was proved that teamwork allows employees to put aside their differences and focus on how they can use their pool of expertise to advance the college's objectives. One of the respondents uttered on the lecturer's observation and said: 'There is a positive contribution to strategic planning and implementation process by all involved parties involved' (Unidentified, unknown lecturer, n.d.):

> 'Another lecturer stated that "[they] have noticed that strategic planning is about teamwork [...] the only way the college can be better than other colleges is when we implement our goals as a team [...] Whatever plan we decide to take as a college; we need to work together."' (Unidentified, unknown lecturer, n.d.)

> 'Other observations by the clerk made, included "from my analysis of the contribution of the stakeholders all of them are contributing positively to the strategic planning and implementation process."' (Unidentified, unknown clerk, n.d.)

> 'The administrator pointed out that "there is increased morale, flexibility and innovation in the process of strategic planning and implementation process, this is because of the positive contribution of all stakeholders involved."' (Unidentified, unknown administrator, n.d.)

It is clear from the interviews that a high participation rate and contribution by all members and stakeholders in the strategic planning process will contribute to enhancing the decisions of mutual interest to be reached so that it ultimately benefits the institution.

Strategic planning and the provision of public good

The issue of responsiveness is a serious one in South African HE. The fundamental issue is for the TVET colleges to seek collective support for their plans to be strategically aligned to accommodate the provision of the public good. The stakeholders involved in the provision of public education at these colleges can have different interests, but they have the common one to produce competent graduates who can be responsive to service the public good. The competing interests among stakeholders result in tension among them, while the vision of the TVET colleges sector is to be responsive to societal needs. The mission of TVET colleges is to provide standardisation, curriculum responsiveness, community engagement, transferability and quality assurance measures that result in the codification and centralisation of curriculum processes.

In the context of this study, the strategic plan can be used to direct TVET colleges to improve the quality of life. There is a diverse context of public good raised by scholars and all point to a positive direction of serving the interest of stakeholders and society by improving the quality of lives. This chapter demonstrated that TVET colleges could advance the quality of citizens. While they provide skill training, they also train their graduates to become centres of knowledge creation who can augment public good by improving the quality of citizens' lives through discoveries and technical skills.

There are a few barriers that hinder the provision of public goods in these institutions. Some employer studies noted that the implementation of curricula as well as the lack of soft skill provisioning may explain the poor employment outcomes associated with a TVET qualification. FETI (2012) found that while employers proposed changes to the curriculum, which entailed more work exposure, more updated or job-specific knowledge and career guidance, they generally appeared to regard these suggestions as curriculum enhancements rather than fundamental flaws to be addressed. In several studies, employers alluded to the gap in the attainment of non-cognitive, non-technical skills such as motivation, reliability and hard work in addition to what is provided by the TVET college sector (FETI 2012; Handel 2003).

These essentials are critical and cannot be dismissed as students need to know that their qualifications must be credible and widely recognised, transferable between TVET colleges and industry sectors and quality-assured. In South Africa, some diverse stakeholders are competing to produce graduates, which makes education act as a double-edged sword. This means that while education is regarded as a public good, it is also private and can also result in complexity as a system with multiple role players having a direct role in curriculum processes.

As far as the programme qualification mix of vocational and occupational programmes, the competing role players include employers at the local firm level and at the national and multinational levels through professional associations. Sometimes the stakeholders that are involved in the production of outputs in TVET colleges include the professional or occupational bodies, like quality assurance councils, primarily Umalusi and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations – QCTO – but in some instances, the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), the curriculum and examination sections of the DHET, as well as the regional offices, vocational teachers or lecturers and textbook authors and publishers. These actors have strong relations with one another and can also frame the production of knowledge and produce competent graduates and incompetent ones. The nature of the multiple-stakeholder system can also disempower the managers and academics in producing public good because of the conflicting interests of the stakeholders. For instance, lecturers have the power to manage the design and implementation of curricula and academic programmes. They manage and facilitate the curriculum workshops and lecturers and can also feel that they are constrained by the competing imperatives and thus unable to respond to the needs of students and employers.

Conclusion

This study assessed the responsiveness of vocational studies using the implementation of strategic planning in TVET colleges in South Africa. While the investigation and the findings pointed to ineffective strategic planning and implementation at Lovedale TVET College, valuable lessons may be learnt on how to avoid the pitfalls when undertaking a strategic planning exercise. The building of strong teams remains critical when undertaking such an exercise. Further, where an action plan is fragmented and unclear, greater effort must be placed into knowledge sharing and setting up monitoring and evaluation structures.

The study assessed and evaluated strategic planning and implementation at TVET colleges, as the findings of this study lay a platform for further research. An interesting further study would be on how facilitation may be used to increase the participation of external communities in the development of its strategic plan.

Now, public TVET colleges are concerned with producing outputs to add public value and there is a need for TVET colleges to prepare their strategies through a new social contract with stakeholders and produce outputs for the public good.

Taking into consideration the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made with regard to strategic planning and

implementation, which may be useful to TVET colleges. Before a strategic planning exercise is embarked upon, it may be useful to provide a general education bulletin to the various stakeholders. A training programme on strategic planning and its benefits should precede in the case of low knowledge and skill levels.

To ensure that the action plan of strategic planning and implementation can be executed, it is useful to establish clear objectives and a roadmap for achieving those objectives by engaging a collective of stakeholders. The action plan should be a plan that is known by all employees rather than simply those in the senior management or who are the implementers of the plan. This will help the stakeholders to be well-informed about what must be done (tasks) and what they should do (responsibilities). Premised on the study's findings, the execution of the training activities must add to the quality of citizens' lives.

Chapter 4

Fostering participatory and independent learning through online formative assessment

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Abstract

Full online learning teaching and learning can isolate students when most classes operate remotely and that can exclude students from possible engagements with peers and lecturers. As students shift from extended social support to isolated study, plans to promote learning needs must be instituted. Oftentimes, online classes alone are not interactive and participatory to help students learn independently. This study intends to assess the use of online learning, which was in response to the urgent call to develop interactive learning and teaching tools to help foster independent student learning and participation of students in fully online learning during the the coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) global pandemic. The research goal was to determine the extent to which pre-tests support independent learning during remote learning. The researcher followed the qualitative methodological approach to collect and analyse data. A sample of 23 participants was drawn and this study reports on

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the undergraduate Mathematics students' experiences in formative assessment at a South African university. The participants were undergraduate students who were registered for Faculty of Educational Sciences Mathematics 1 and 2 courses in 2021. Findings from this study reveal interesting experiences in the rich descriptions of students' experiences in the formative assessment that reflect on their understanding of the subject matter.

Introduction

> Teaching and learning in higher education in South Africa focus on developing an individual student into an independent learner. To achieve that, teaching and learning are in a constant transformation as new players, pedagogies and paradigms constantly redefine higher education. (Tatira & Kariyana 2022, p. 24; cf. Oliver 2018)

These have 'been stimulated by the exponential growth of digital technologies, [*increasing globalisation*], [...] the COVID-19 pandemic [...] and calls to bring about social justice [...]' (Tatira & Kariyana 2022, pp. 24–25). The idea of higher education (HE) for the public good is strongly linked to transformation. Public good alludes to the role of HE in creating opportunities for meaningful and purposeful lives and a just society for people and their communities (Wangenge-Ouma & Kupe 2020). The HE system makes important contributions to the public good through the graduates it produces (Leibowitz 2012). To develop graduate attributes for the public good, one requires a curriculum and mode of learning that teaches democracy and relevance to societal needs. To make teaching useful for the public good, HE must create opportunities for active engagement with learning materials, leading to participatory learning.

In a world increasingly transformed by technology, universities have been quick to adapt to changes in teaching, learning and assessment modes and practices (Timmis et al. 2016). Online assessment seemingly is best suited for formative assessment (Boitshwarelo, Reedy & Billany 2017). According to Fageeh (2015), online formative assessment (OFA) can provide students with opportunities to practice, self-test, self-evaluate and receive prompt feedback. Formative assessment is one facet to promote a student-centred educational model, which makes students the central focus of the teaching and learning process. Thus, assessment becomes a key component of effective learning. According to Timmis et al. (2016), the way institutions create and use assessment encapsulates their conceptualisation of teaching and learning. Assessment of student learning is not new to academia but has been gaining and losing popularity for well over 150 years (Buzzetto-More & Alade 2006). However, assessment is mostly focused on reporting achievement and qualification instead of supporting learning too. However (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation 2004):

> [*A*]ssessment may also serve a formative function. In classrooms, formative assessment refers to frequent, interactive assessments of student progress and

> understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately. Teachers using formative assessment approaches and techniques are better prepared to meet diverse students' needs. (p. 1)

Non-graded pre-tests enhance students' confidence in taking online tests (OTs). The interactive nature of OFA and the immediate feedback promotes better avenues for students' autonomy in learning. Appropriate online assessment practices reinforce learning and potentially promote students' self-discipline, independence and responsibility. Through their expertise in creating OTs and assignments on the learning management system (LMS), instructors should be able to provide students with the opportunity to organise their learning through performance-based tools, which render prompt feedback (Senel & Senel 2021).

This study sought to assess the application of OFA to help foster independent learning during online learning in response to calls for teaching for the public good. Teaching is key to developing HE for the public good (Badat 2009). This was made possible by creating and deploying pre-tests before each formal assessment task so that students could familiarise themselves and learn from their mistakes independently and interactively. By so doing, the course instructor becomes a facilitator of students' learning. Students are a major stakeholder in planning e-assessment; hence, their experiences, perceptions and alertness are major determiners for the sustenance of e-assessment (Kundu & Bej 2021).

Literature review

Formative assessment

Online assessment tasks have been widely used for formative assessment as part of learning. Students can work alone or in groups on activities which are part and parcel of learning. The use of online assessment in summative assessment is uncommon due to the high stakes placed in these. Quality issues do not feature much in formative assessment because the goal is to promote learning. Sometimes OFA takes the form of self-assessment activities; these are highly interactive and have the advantage of promoting autonomous learning. Such was a study by Sosibo (2019), who used self-assessment to engage students with content and promote autonomous learning. Though Sosibo (2019) did not use online assessment, which is the main theme of this study and the effect was the same. Students partaking in self-assessment activities managed to overcome anxieties that go with formal assessment as they engaged in self-assessment. In the online platform, self-assessment is accompanied by immediate feedback and students can take them multiple times. After each round of practice, students oftentimes improve their performance and the students' interest in sitting OFA is heightened by the use of digital technologies. OFA gained more popularity during the COVID-19 era

when learning was individualistic and remote. Students managed to learn on their own during the lockdowns in a student-centred learning environment. Kundu and Bej (2021) reveal that the acceptance and usage of online assessments were high among undergraduate students. Moreover, COVID-19 was instrumental in enhancing students' interest in online assessment.

Instructor-made OFAs are ideal since the goal of OFA is to enhance learning content in a particular course. For most institutions, the LMS has an assessment section where course instructors can create and deploy online assessments. Baleni (2015) sought to uncover how OFA facilitates teaching and learning and revealed the significance of instructor-made online assessment activities that are tailored to the needs of the course and students. Integrating locally created online assessments creates positive attitudes towards self-assessment (Prieto et al. 2012). The assessment by Prieto et al. (2012) comprised multiple-choice questions (MCQs) for a Mathematics course. However, MCQs in Mathematics are regarded by some as inappropriate since the intention in solving mathematical problems is not the final answer. The steps leading to the final answer are highly regarded and are credited. At least students should be accorded opportunities to show the steps leading to the answer. For other content courses, this may not be an issue. For example, the study by Einig (2013) encourages the use of MCQs in courses like Accounting and Business Studies. According to Einig (2013), MCQs encourage different styles of learning and students perceive MCQs as useful and regular usage of MCQs in formative assessment is correlated to higher performance in examinations. For Mathematics, some regard timed online assessment as appropriate as they accord students the opportunity to show working, but their use are not common.

Student-centred teaching approach

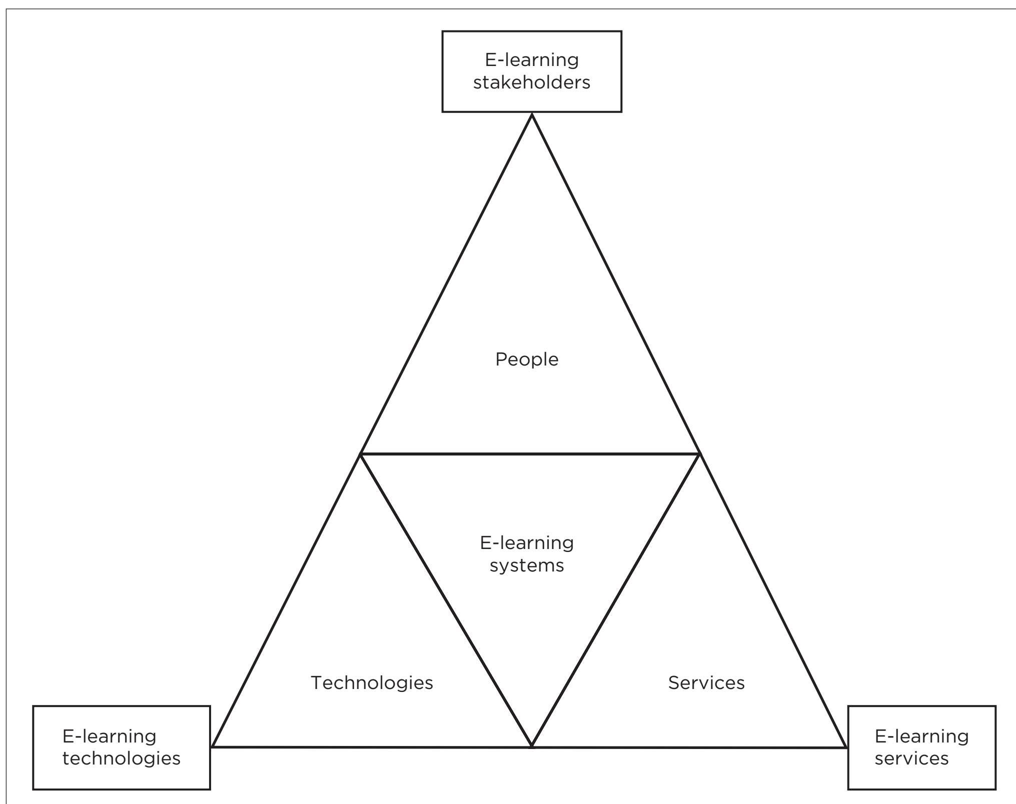
Student-centred learning is defined as 'a process by which students are given greater autonomy and control over the choice of subject matter, the pace of learning and the learning methods used' (Barraket 2005, p. 65). The student-centred approach exists as a result of the changing understanding of the nature of learning advocated by the constructivism learning theory. It describes a scenario whereby students are the central focus of the teaching and learning process, about the organisation of learning strategies, time of teaching and assessment strategies (Fontanillas, Carbonell & Catasús 2016). Formative assessment is one good strategy to promote student-centred learning approaches. Similarly, in a study by Chen, Jiao and Hu (2021), students had positive perceptions towards OFA and they were actively engaged in all the online activities, which led to an improvement in the scores gained in such activities. Studies by Boitshwarelo et al. (2017) and Buzzetto-More and Alade (2006) highlight the significance of OFA to forward-propel and assess

students' learning to prepare them for 21st-century learning. It can be deduced that individual OTs are best suited for formative purposes, thereby making technology play a significant role in delivering and evaluating learning outcomes.

The theoretical framework

This study was structured on the theoretical e-learning framework proposed by Apricio, Bação and Oliveira (2016). The goal of the e-learning systems theoretical framework is to determine the participants, the technology used and the services offered related to e-learning (see Figure 4.1). More details about this theory can be found in the study by Tatira and Kariyana (2022).

The Blackboard LMS was adopted as the e-learning technology of choice for this chapter. The e-learning services by the course instructors to students were the formative assessment tasks used in the learning of undergraduate Mathematics. This theory was used in data analysis whereby the three components of this theory were explicit and their roles explained.



Source: Modified from Apricio et al. (2016).

FIGURE 4.1: The e-learning systems theoretical framework.

Methodology

The qualitative methodology was used to characterise the undergraduate students' experiences in taking pre-tests as part of the preparation for formal assessment tasks at a South African university. The narrative inquiry research design defined this study. The narrative inquiry was first used by Connelly and Clandinin to describe the personal stories of teachers (Wang & Geale 2015). Narrative researchers look for ways to understand and then present real-life experiences through the stories of the research participants.

This study was conducted at a public university in South Africa in 2021, when all instruction and assessment was fully online. The researcher was the instructor for the two-undergraduate year-long Mathematics courses considered in this study. The participants were 180 Level 3 and 35 Level 2 students who were registered for Mathematics 2 and Mathematics 1 courses in 2021, respectively. Thirteen students opted to respond to an online questionnaire, which sought their experiences in online assessment. Thereafter, telephonic semi-structured interviews were conducted for ten students and consisted of open-ended questions that delved into students' experiences in formative e-assessment. Both the questionnaire and interviews posed questions that were designed to help the researcher interpret and experience the world of the participants instead of attempting to explain or predict students' lived experiences in formative e-assessment.

A pivotal role of lecturers is ensuring that students learn content and designing how best to ensure that this learning is important for students' success. Self-regulated learning is a crucial factor in remote full online courses since students take more responsibility for their learning. To expose my students to formative e-assessment, this study conjectured to conduct individual pre-tests before each formal task. Each course required four formal tasks, which also meant that four pre-tests were administered. Pre-tests were shortened replicas of main tests and administered in the same way a few days prior. The researcher created pre-tests of the same level of difficulty but with reduced duration compared to real tests. The researcher created a huge test pool on the LMS and randomly selected questions for the pre-tests and main tests from the pool. The students wrote pre-tests a few days before the main formal tasks. Based on the available tools under Assessment on Blackboard LMS, the pre-tests were either an OT or online assignment (OA). Online tests were objective with pre-determined solutions and automatically scored by the computer. They consisted of multiple-choice, true/false and fill-in-the-blank question types, as illustrated in Figure 4.2, Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4, respectively. Figure 4.5 is an example of fill-in-multiple-blanks. Online tests could be written multiple times and feedback to the student was instant. Fill-in-multiple-blank questions also bore partial crediting so that each space could be scored independently. Only three OTs were administered to both groups.

Question 15

Find the general solution of y″-4y′ + 8y = 0

A. $y = e^{2x}[A\cos(2x) + B\sin(2x)]$

B. $y = Ae^{2x} + BXe^{2x}$

C. $y = Ae^{-4x} + Be^{8t}$

D. $y = e^{-2x} + [A\cos(4x) + B\sin(4x)]$

E. $y = Ae^{-6x} + Be^{2x}$

Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 4.2: Sample multiple-choice questions in the online test pre-test.

Question 2

Does every square matrix have an inverse?

True

False

Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 4.3: Sample 'true/false' question in the online test pre-test.

Question 6

The order of matrix (3 -2 9) is

Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 4.4: Sample fill-in question for the online test.

Question 8

Given the system: $2x + 4y + 6z = 22$, $3x + 8y + 5z = 27$, $-x + y + 2z = 2$

Reduce the system to enchelon from (Gaussian) and enter the reduced matrix below

Source: Author's own work.

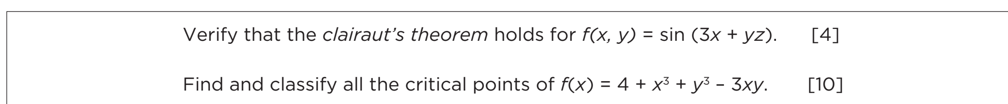
FIGURE 4.5: Sample fill-in-multiple-blank question for the online test.

In contrast, OAs were subjective, which necessitates grading by a human. Responses may be typed or uploaded for OAs. Because of the nature of mathematical solutions with many special symbols and calculations, responses were written on paper, scanned and uploaded onto the LMS. However, these were completed during the same time as OTs, except for the extra time that was allocated for scanning and uploading. Five OAs were written, which were graded in-line on the LMS by the lecturer. Feedback was not immediate but trickled in as each script was graded, starting on the day of the test.

Pre-tests in the OA format had the same traditional long questions as in the pen-and-paper question paper formats (see Figure 4.6). The only difference was that the question paper was available upon clicking a button on the LMS.

The timing of the pre-tests was managed by the LMS so that the submitting link would disappear after the lapse of the allotted time. This feature bars students from resorting to unfair practices by taking longer to complete the tests.

Data were analysed qualitatively by ascribing meaning to participants' narratives. The demographics of the participants are illustrated in Table 4.1. As the students told their stories, I was able to construct their meaning. Narratives are seemingly the best way to make sense of students' experiences in OFA (Merriam 2009). Using narratives to present and analyse findings enabled the researcher to access the rich layers of information that provide better understanding of the effectiveness of pre-tests in promoting autonomous learning in Mathematics through the participants' stories (Wang & Geale 2015).


Verify that the *clairaut's theorem* holds for $f(x, y) = \sin(3x + yz)$. [4]

Find and classify all the critical points of $f(x) = 4 + x^3 + y^3 - 3xy$. [10]

FIGURE 4.6: Sample online assignment question.

TABLE 4.1: Biographical details of the participants.

Variable	Type	Frequency
Gender	Male	19
	Female	4
Age	18–21	12
	22–28	8
	29–35	3
Race	African	23
	Other	0
Level of study	2	8
	3	15

The authors present the summaries of students' stories; that is, they first listen to the voices within each narrative (Guerin, Kerr & Green 2015). Thus, the interviews were transcribed and the transcriptions, together with questionnaire responses, were read repeatedly to establish possible themes in the results (Guerin et al. 2015).

Results and analysis

The findings from both instruments revealed the following results.

Students' preference on the nature of formative assessment

One of the key issues in both the interviews and questionnaires was to probe the students' preference for the nature of formative e-assessment tasks by choosing between OT and OA. By the time of data-collection, students had been exposed to both types in formal assessment tasks. Each pre-test simply took the format of the formal task it precedes. Because of the nature of the courses, one student (S04) in the study was in favour of OT and stated the significance of instant feedback, as shown in the interview response:

> 'But since assignment takes that short time and the marking will take long, I prefer a test so that I can get my marks quick. Also, a computer will be ok so that after writing I get a score. Immediately I can see my mistakes and get back to you Sir that in the next task I will be having more marks.' (S04, student, n.d.)

Some students were explicit in that they were not in support of OTs; the nature and characteristics of OTs having dissuaded them and indicated the following responses:

> 'Online Assignment because it gives us lot of time to do it online tests gives us problems when we face network problems[*sic*] and they submit while you not finished writing and end up failing. Also, there are tests or signs that are not there in the computer when we write online they need to be written down.' (S11, student, n.d.)
>
> 'There must be at least a part where we can show our working.' (S11, student, n.d.)

Online tests require a sturdy internet connection throughout the test duration, which leads to S11's response in the questionnaire. An obvious option in test-design is to tell the system to auto-submit should there be a break in the internet connection. S11 also complained about the lack of specialised mathematical symbols to easily enter answers in the case of fill-in questions. S12 observed that OTs only focus on the final answer without the possibility of showing steps in the solution process. In one of the tasks, I tried to mitigate this by awarding marks for fill-in solutions for intermediate stages, but still, this does not come closer to showing all the stages.

Concerning OAs, not a single student was against them. It was the closest thing they could have to the real feel of Mathematics in the era of fully online learning and e-assessment. In OA, scoring was done by a human marker using in-line grading of the hand-written scripts. Consequently, feedback was not instant. With in-line grading, as soon as a score is submitted, feedback becomes available to students immediately. Ten students explicitly mentioned that assessment in the form of OA was ideal, for example, S13 said, 'in Mathematics, not only the answer is important but also the method. Showing how you arrived at the final answer'. S07 further stated, '[*i*]t's easy for us to write on the paper. Some of us are slow to type and click'. To some students, the choice of OA was about getting a human marker to grade their work. S07 commented ('R' is the researcher):

R: 'Could it be that you don't trust a computer?'

S07: 'It has to do with issues like 0.5 and $\frac{1}{2}$ as you were saying. The computer may mark it wrong.'

Indeed, a computer can safely mark using pre-determined options, which obviously excludes writing proofs and other multi-step solutions common in calculus. S06 supported this by saying, 'So it's not easy to write those proofs when you are writing those tests. That's why, personally, I prefer assignments'. Students openly displayed mistrust in computer-automated marking, preferring a human marker instead, as shown in the dialogue below:

S08: 'Not that I don't trust a computer, but the human marker can understand the errors that we make. But the computer marks according to what it is fed. But the advantage of a computer marker is that it brings back feedback immediately.'

R: 'But a human marker gets tired and takes a long to complete. You don't worry about that.'

S08: 'No, a human gets tired, rests and then continues.'

Because of such an open acceptance, the final three-hour examinations for both courses were in the OA format. This idea was borne out of the series of pre-tests and formal tests that were experienced.

After a couple of pre-tests in OT format, students had two challenges with the types of questions and the type of responses. In Mathematics, it is not only the final answer that matters but also the method and steps leading to the answer. In that regard, objective tests with pre-determined answers may not be the best for Mathematics. A mix of free-responses and objective questions is needed to bring a balance to e-assessment of students' understanding of concepts in Mathematics. However, it is not appealing in some LMSs to combine objective (machine-scored) and subjective questions (human-scored); a choice was to be made between tests and assignments. Thus, students in this study unanimously preferred OAs to OTs.

Types of objective questions in online test

In the pre-tests students did on OTs, MCQs were the favoured type. In these, students must first do the calculations and then select the answer from the given options later. S20 and S04 openly supported MCQs:

S20: 'It does because I don't just choose I do calculate first. It really makes a difference because if I am wrong I can see and start again or rectify my mistake. Don't change that please.'

S04: 'I don't have problems Sir. I do the calculation before I chose the answer.'

S05: 'I'd prefer multiple-choice questions because you see exactly where you a going; you exactly know what you calculated unlike true/false. For multiple-choice questions, I calculate and choose which one from what I calculated.'

Students who were not in favour of MCQs disliked the fact that marks were allocated for the answer only. All the intermediate steps in multi-step solutions common in Mathematics received no credits:

S21: 'Mathematics requires some steps to get the final answer, so using multiple-choice does not show case all those steps.'

S10: 'When solving an equation, you may make a mistake and end up getting the wrong answer, but your steps are correct. And you go to multiple-choice questions and select the answer. The whole five marks are gone!'

Concerning weaknesses of objective questions in most mathematical topics, some students preferred hand-written solutions that are to be scored by a human. S14 said that 'some of the courses, like Mathematics, are not for online testing because they deal with proofs and calculations. They should be manually [*sic*].'

'Calculus, it's not easy to do calculations in a computer', said S19. For differentiation and integration, S22 commented, 'There are calculations to be done before arriving at the final answer and part marks aren't allocated work workings'. The third-year course also covered Real Analysis, whose proofs are not practically doable in MCQ or any other objective question format. True/false was least favoured as there was a high chance of random guessing (with a 50% chance of getting a correct answer). It is random guessing because the answer options have no connection to the calculations that would have taken place to arrive at the purported correct answer. S03 also plainly said, 'True/false, No-no! I can guess. Multiple-choice questions, at least you can't guess'.

Furthermore, fill-in questions were unpopular with students because of possible mismatches between what students write and what the computer has been coded to accept. S10 corroborated that the 'problem with OT is answering the questions. You must draft it on separate paper and then you

type the answer that you get'. S10 further elaborated on the challenges of getting the expected responses to objective tests below:

> 'Maybe you (the lecturer) only put one answer on the system or one option on the system. There was a question that I wrote $x = 3$ and when I checked the answer; it was 3. So I got it wrong because I put $x = 3$ while I was supposed to put 3. But what I wrote on the paper was worthy all the full marks. So I suggest that you put two options because some students will not put the exact answer. I don't know if I should put only the answer or the whole thing. Not sure.' (S10, student, exact date unspecified)

Some questions had multiple fill-ins with partial credits, but these still could not award all the possible part marks. However, designing an OT with multiple fill-ins with partial crediting requires substantial soft skills on the part of the lecturer. The dialogue with S07 highlights the need for test-design skills:

S07: 'Blackboard sometimes marks us wrongly.'

R: 'How so? A computer does not think. It follows instructions.'

S07: 'It happens. There was a test that we wrote online. There were errors there. I confirmed with you on WhatsApp and I sent my rough work. Then you said it was correct then you will add the marks. So, Blackboard sometimes marks wrongly.'

R: 'I get you. It has to do with the person who designed the task.'

That means students may be short-changed if the lecturer's skills are not forthcoming. It is for that reason that many lecturers shun OT, even though the scoring stakes are good. For the researcher, pre-tests were a mock of good test-design. Consequently, some students mentioned that they would rather have a human marker than automated scoring. Moreover, they were amused when I shifted to OAs.

E-assessment not taken seriously

Students take e-assessment as less challenging hence they do not take pains to thoroughly prepare for them. Even their class attendance is pathetic, as students know they will manage to achieve good passes. They know that even during assessment, they can google what they do not know. Effective learning takes place in contact classes, according to students; they still remember what they learnt in 2019 but hardly remember what they were taught in online classes recently. S03 had this to say about the matter:

R: 'Do you think pre-tests really help?'

S03: 'They make sense if we only take them seriously because we face challenges in the main tests when we don't take pre-tests seriously.'

R: 'The fault is with the students, Neh.'

S03: 'Yes, the fault is with us. We don't take pre-tests seriously. But pre-tests are there for us to practice and familiarise ourselves with online learning.'

R: 'Ok. So, you are expecting a pre-exam sometime in December.'

S03: 'Exactly'

Most importantly, pre-tests are a barometer of students' understanding of concepts prior to the main assessment task by improving on what they already know. It is an opportunity to develop computer skills for rural students who populate the institution where the study was conducted. These skills are needed even in the COVID-19 era and beyond. Moreover, e-assessment boasts of the power of immediate feedback that, in turn, fosters assessment for learning. For OTs, feedback is instant, but for OAs, students receive feedback as soon as the script is marked using an in-line grading feature on Blackboard. In each pre-test, feedback was made available before the main formal task that it preceded. On the issue of immediate feedback and the benefit of pre-tests to learning, S06 replied in the interview, 'yes, it is. If I get a question wrong, I quickly go back and check where I went wrong, unlike if it's done some other time.' Moreover, S17 noted that

> '[*it*] is the better thing other than waiting for a lecture to mark and return scripts. Sometimes they are returned at a later stage, so I prefer immediate feedback to prepare me to work hard.' (S17, student, exact date unspecified)

Promptness in feedback nevertheless has a traumatic effect on some students. S22 commented that 'the time to see the results, when clicking 'OK', is very traumatising and the feedback is 100% fair for every student'. It is a good thing that pre-tests help to calm students' nerves. Pre-tests are self-assessed and non-graded, which helps to de-traumatise formal e-assessment. S05 acknowledged that pre-tests were very useful and went on to suggest that they should be given two pre-tests instead of one. In the questionnaire responses, S11 corroborated the idea of more pre-tests as a way of preparing for the real test by saying, 'the lecturer has to provide us with more pre-tests before writing the actual tests.

On the relevance of pre-tests from the questionnaire responses, all the students concurred that they serve to bring an awareness and preparedness to the demands of the main test beforehand. S20 remarked that '[it] is very generous indeed to be given the pre-test to adapt to being assessed online and the style of setting'. S20 is indeed correct because many students were sitting for online assessments for the very first time; hence, any kind of assistance from lecturers is valuable. The moment I introduced pre-tests to my Mathematics students, they benefitted a lot. According to S16, one of the advantages of online learning is the opportunity to sit for pre-tests.

Students perceived writing pre-tests as extra work that prepares them for a main test. This, in turn, prepares them for the examination, which was also online. S01 confirms this premise below:

R: 'What is the benefit of writing a pre-test?'

S01: 'It makes me prepare and ready to write the original because I work hard on the pre-test.'

E-assessment integrity and cheating

Students admitted that they seek help when sitting for an e-assessment and that always leads to them achieving a comfortable pass. As a result, some of them did not even bother to attend online lectures. One student said he is running a business and is only present to sit for assessments. Most students still regard remote e-assessments as easy to pass, as is the case with S11, who said that 'you have advantages of searching on the question you don't know. Also, it is favourable to pass because you have chances to search aside what you don't know'.

This worked very well with the idea of pre-tests, where the goal is to improve the conceptualisation of mathematical ideas. However, unfair assessment practices are a source of worry in formal tests and examinations than pre-tests. Naturally, students were not supposed to consult other sources when writing pre-tests, but if it would make them understand better, that is permissible. When the researcher brought S07 to the idea of open-book tests, he posited that they are not passports to an easy pass if approached without preparation:

R: '[...] And you know many people fail open-book tests?'

S07: 'I know, Sir; if you are not prepared.'

In contrast, S07 stated that those who are not smart do pass by congregating with students who understand better on the day of assessment.

To get more opportunities to cheat, some students requested more time allocation to write OTs. On being asked what should be done to improve the administration of e-assessment, S15 said, '[it] maximises the time and [number of] attempts allocated for each test'. For OTs, I had no problem increasing the number of attempts. As can be noted from Figure 4.7, the student showed improved performance after the third attempt.

However, the request for more time allocation for both OTs and OAs was declined. To counter possible student cheating, allocating less time to assessments seems the best. Randomising questions and answer options applies to OTs but not OAs.

Current grade:

56.00 out of 60 points

Grade based on Last Graded Attempt
Due: None
Calculated Grade 56.00

View Attempts

Attempts	Manual Override	Column Details	Grade History

Date Created	Date Submitted (or Saved)	Value
Jun 3, 2021 2:23:19 AM	Jun 3, 2021 2:50:10 AM (Completed)	56.00
Jun 3, 2021 1:55:43 AM	Jun 3, 2021 2:15:54 AM (Completed)	34.00
Jun 2, 2021 10:41:20 PM	Jun 2, 2021 11:53:23 PM (Completed)	39.33333

Source: Screenshot taken by Benjamin Tatira, published with suitable permission by Benjamin Tatira.
FIGURE 4.7: Effect of multiple attempts on S17's performance from the learning management system grade centre.

Writing pre-tests

All students unanimously accepted the administration of pre-tests as a barometer of students' understanding of calculus prior to the main formal assessment task. Pre-tests served as a bedding-ground to familiarise with the mode of assessment, to prepare for the summative assessment that was due at the end of the year and to improve performance by allowing students to learn from their mistakes. It was also a platform to self-regulate, self-evaluate and learn independently. All 23 students attested that pre-test writing was a noble experience. The major point raised by five students was the need to familiarise themselves with e-assessment, which they were experiencing for the very first time. That was also the whole idea behind pre-tests; to freely acquaint students with e-assessment in a non-graded environment. Some students had this to say:

S16: 'Yes, so that the students will get familiar with the system before they write the real test.'

S10: 'It gives us a clue on the kind of questions that we expect. Sometimes we study and we are not sure in which format the question will be.'

S06: 'It does. It gives us the structure; what kind of questions and how they are going to be asked. Sometimes you may know the content but it's how the question is asked that gives the problem. If I am familiar with the questions, there is not going to be a problem.'

S06, indeed, was right because it matters to know how the question is going to be structured and the expected format of answers. This applies mainly to OTs, where objective questions with pre-determined answers are common.

To mitigate this, I resolved to set most assessment tasks in Mathematics as LMS assignments that enable hand-written free-responses by students. This works better for Mathematics, whereby the focus is not only on the final answer, but all steps carry credits.

S09 elaborated on the idea of familiarising from pre-tests to the extent that he did not support a pre-examination (as shown in the following dialogue):

R: 'It is better to provide more pre-tests before writing the real online assessment?'

S09: 'Yes, the pre-test is fine, so that we are familiar before the real test. So that we know what to do. It's a good idea.'

R: 'You also want a pre-exam?'

S09: 'No. I don't see any need for pre-exam. We will be ready to write because of these pre-tests and main tests.'

That means the pre-tests and the subsequent tests served their purpose. A further seven students posited that pre-tests are a way to prepare and be ready for formal tasks. This was confirmed by S15 and S13:

S15: 'Yes, that helps us prepare for the real test and to have a clue of what the test may look like.'

S13: 'So everyone can be ready for the actual test and understand what is expected of them.'

In the questionnaire, S23 responded by saying pre-tests prepare students for any eventuality in the real test: 'yes, because pre-tests prepare us better for whatever might be a challenge when we are writing the real tests'.

Students appreciated the opportunities for practice provided by pre-tests, as S11 supported this notion by saying, 'Yes, so that we can practice accessing the test and how to submit'. Pre-tests represent extra work for students to practice as part of the learning process. S06 alluded to this in the following dialogue:

R: 'What is your lecturer doing best to help you learn during the COVID-19 times?'

S06: 'You give us a lot of work. Those pre-tests, Sir.'

S05 found pre-tests so useful and said, 'I would like even two of them'. Pre-tests were intended to improve students' academic performance, being a part of formative assessment. S10 echoed the same after undertaking the pre-tests:

> 'It also helps us to know how much we know and how much we don't know. If you get a low mark, then you know you are not ready. Have to study more. If there is no pre-test, you study and think that you are ready when in fact you are not. I also need to see my mistakes so that on the day of the test I don't have to repeat those mistakes. And one student got a zero in the pre-test and he was desperate to get the correct answers in the WhatsApp group.' (S10, student, exact date unspecified)

S04 proposed marked improvements in conceptualisation by learning from his mistakes:

> 'I see my mistakes during the practice and practice repeatedly. If I see some question that I never met before I revise and feedback from other students until I understand.' (S04, student, exact date unspecified)

Similarly, S23 mentioned being able to eradicate mistakes that he made. S17 stated that pre-tests help to improve students' marks in the real test. The students' experiences with pre-tests testify to the potential to learn and improve as they worked on pre-tests.

Trade-off between independent and cooperative learning

Remote e-learning and e-assignments brought power dynamics in teaching and learning. Independent learning is supported at the expense of cooperative learning. Instructors can safely create self-assessment non-graded assessment tasks on the LMS, which students repeatedly take in the learning process. Since most students are learning from home, they most probably study alone; hence, they need a boost in independent learning. Students work in silos in e-learning and e-assessment since there is limited student-student interaction. Students lamented separation from classmates; hence, they could not benefit from working together. One student said he does not know his classmates at all:

> **R:** 'What are the disadvantages of online learning?'
>
> **S03:** 'At least for contact learning you get used to your classmates then you study as a group, but then with online another classmate is studying in his house. Even now, there are some of my classmates whom I don't even know. I don't my classmates if I need help I have to try it all alone. May use WhatsApp by they may not respond?'

As a lecturer, I devised OTs to assist students who find themselves studying alone during this pandemic. Students argue that they cannot benefit from peers. Pre-tests are diagnostic tools to help students discover their weaknesses and strengths as they work towards formal assessment. At one time, all the students for Mathematics 1 unilaterally requested the postponement of a test

after they had seen that they were not ready for it, based on their experience during the pre-test. They had written the pre-test three days prior to the test, but they still felt they needed more time to practice. All these students then went into overdrive to practice repeatedly after they had seen their weaknesses in the pre-test. Thus, the pre-test helped to avert a possible mass failure in the postponed test.

■ Discussion

The course instructor, through rudimentary computer skills, managed to develop pre-tests on the LMS. According to Prieto et al. (2012), the problem lies in lecturers' lack of experience which inhibits the use of new and appropriate assessment tools to facilitate learning. However, all LMSs are full of simplified authoring and test-builder tools, which allow assessments to be developed by lecturers themselves (Timmis et al. 2016).

Initially, it was the OTs that were quite complex to design but entailed no manual marking. These were highly interactive, whereby individual students sat for tests at their own convenient times during the display period. Online tests are popular for large class sizes and different types of objective questions were administered. Of these, MCQs were most frequently used (Boitshwarelo et al. 2017) and most preferred by students. However, by scoring only the final answer, OTs were not popular in Mathematics, where sometimes proofs must be dealt with. It was time to switch to OAs.

Online assignments were easy to create but laborious to mark using in-line grading. After OAs, students were satisfied to the extent that even the final examination took the same format. Thus, students took an active role in decision-making after actively engaging in both types of assessment. Moreover, students preferred a human marker as compared to automated marking by the system. Indeed, some students were at times short-changed because of limited lecturer expertise in preparing the system to recognise all possible types of solutions that exist for a particular question. In good hands, digital assessment measures can auto-score with good reliability and no subjectivity (Buzzetto-More & Alade 2006), but lecturers consider it time-consuming (Rudman 2021). Lecturers also have the dichotomy of easy auto-scoring and manual scoring of students' work, but the interests of students overrode.

Online assessments are, by nature, susceptible to cheating, even in the presence of proctoring. However, for pre-tests, cheating was not an issue since pre-tests are part of learning and serve to prepare students for future formal assessments. For most students from less privileged institutions, online assessment was novel. Students were free to consult other sources in a bid to understand the concept at hand.

Consequently, the distribution of marks in formative and summative assessment for the same courses approximated the normal distribution. Thus, pre-tests were a barometer of students' understanding of mathematical concepts under consideration. Again, no student proposed a pre-examination task because the pre-tests and subsequent formal tests served their purpose well.

Pre-tests, being non-graded and self-assessed, served to relieve the trauma in assessment. Taking pre-tests builds confidence in taking formal OTs and subsequent examinations (Boitshwarelo et al. 2017). Being diagnostic, students were able to discover their weaknesses and strengths and had time early enough to attend to them in a relaxed way. According to Boitshwarelo et al. (2017), a formative online assessment can be used for diagnostic purposes and assists lecturers in identifying areas where they should focus their efforts. This resonates with the dual purpose of formative assessment, which is to improve students' learning and identify their strengths and weaknesses (Buzzetto-More & Alade 2006).

The idea of pre-tests is like question banks in contact teaching, especially if they are offered solutions. Similarly, students work through question banks repeatedly as they prepare for formal assessment. Both pre-tests and question banks shift the role of lecturers from expert transmitters of knowledge to that of a facilitator so that students can actively engage with content. This also creates opportunities for students to self-monitor while learning. Hence, when online remote learning finally ends, instructors can switch to manual question banks to promote autonomous learning.

According to Nielsen (2012), online learning makes it possible for students' autonomy beyond the classroom by engaging in self-assessment. However, fostering independent learning through interaction with pre-tests was done at the expense of collaborative learning. Students argued that they could not benefit from peers and online classes are not as participatory and interactive as contact classes (Toufique 2021). Even the theoretical framework eliminated the component of collaboration in the service rendered through the LMS. However, this study was a response to the prevailing situation of remote learning triggered by the lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sitting at home entails an increased sense of isolation among students where they cannot engage with peers and lecturers (Rudman 2021). If remote learning persists, interaction in OFA remains individualistic. Future studies can investigate fostering collaborative learning in OFA.

■ Conclusion

Assessment is central to educational practice and essential to promoting a student-centred educational model (Buzzetto-More & Alade 2006; Wuisan & Wibawa 2019), which can be used to determine whether or not the aims and

objectives of the course have been met (Ali & Al Dmour 2021). This study was relevant since LMS-based assessment was new, despite the long existence of e-learning in HE (Buzzetto & Alade 2006). The COVID-19 period saw students moving from large social support networks to isolated studies. Isolation, lack of motivation and lack of active engagement meant that students grappled with studying, with some students disengaging from their work (Hill & Fitgerald 2020). With e-learning having been commonly accepted in HE, pre-tests as a form of OFA were a perfect sequel to e-learning. In addition, pre-tests were evidence of an endeavour to make e-learning participatory and autonomous (Toufique 2021). Autonomy plays a crucial role in the learning process (Alrabai 2017). According to Ashwin and Case (2018), the public good benefits resulting from undergraduate education were the participatory and interactive nature of learning. Online assessment was a fruitful way to reach out to undergraduate students in under-resourced universities located in marginalised areas in South Africa (Queiros & De Villiers 2016). Some obstacles, like a lack of appropriate digital devices among students, were encountered but were overcome. Many students without access to laptops or desktops resorted to using smartphones to sit successfully for assessment tasks.

Assessing students beforehand and giving them feedback motivates them to study and learn more as they strive to perform better in the upcoming assessment (Koneru 2017). With the necessary technical know-how, lecturers can create self-assessment and non-graded assessment tools on the LMS that students take individually as they learn Mathematics. In future, instead of just designing pre-tests prior to main assessment tasks, lecturers can expand to include short self-assessment online activities after each concept taught during the learning process.

With pre-tests, students experienced both objective and subjective questions and students decided on the latter as a cue for best e-assessment practices in Mathematics. This study revealed that MCQs and their variants are not entirely appropriate for the Mathematics discipline (Wuisan & Waban 2019). In this study, both lecturers and students ought to be made aware of the crucial role that independent learning plays in an e-learning environment as part of teaching for the public good. The first step in enhancing awareness of independent learning is training lecturers to enable them to create online tools that can create learning by blending e-learning and e-assessment. Secondly, finding activities and methods to foster independent learning for different courses during online learning are issues that future research should investigate.

Chapter 5

Fourth Industrial Revolution as a driver for the public good through higher education institutions

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Abstract

Higher education institutions (HEIs) play an important role in improving society in many ways, such as social education. As communities embrace and get ready for an economy driven by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), the role of HEIs is in the spotlight. In many instances, HEIs target the teaching and learning

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of the enrolled students. Those enrolled at these institutions tend to be the primary beneficiaries and focus of many HEIs. Unfortunately, all South African HEIs in rural areas are surrounded by poor communities who wish to benefit from the institutions. There seems to be a mismatch between the HEIs operational activities and the community needs. Since the HEIs are well equipped with professors, doctors and senior researchers who conduct research in surrounding communities, there is a need to rethink how 4IR could enable rural development. This requires HEIs to work together with communities and other key stakeholders. This study focuses on evaluating the role of selected HEIs in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa in 4IR awareness within the surrounding communities. The study is based on a qualitative approach within a case study. Two HEIs and four surrounding communities are engaged. Purposive or target sampling is considered to select the participants from both the HEI and the chosen communities. Furthermore, thematic analysis was used to analyse the findings. Results show that HEIs somehow operate in silos and do not engage surrounding communities. With the benefits of 4IR expected to benefit rural communities, this study outlines the role that the HEIs could play in achieving the needed digital transformation.

Introduction

Higher education institutions are vital for societal, economic and rural development. The benefits of HEIs are mainly a result of different stakeholders involved and the roles that all these play (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah 2013). As such, many communities have witnessed the benefits of having HEIs, such as colleges and universities. These institutions' benefits span the surrounding communities, which generally transform into the public good (Tannock 2006). Recently, there have been huge debates on how the gains from HEIs are translated to the public good. Within South Africa, the history of the education systems has always sparked debates on the sustainability of HEIs. Some institutions rely heavily on government support which has affected economic and societal development, especially in cases where the government cannot provide the needed resources and support (Omodan 2020). The over-reliance of most South African higher institutions on government support has affected the quality of education, leading to mass demonstrations that affect surrounding communities. As a result of such unrest, some scholars have started debating whether HEIs in South Africa positively contribute to a positive good.

Thus, there are many opinions as to whether higher education (HE) encompasses only universities or whether it includes other kinds of tertiary-level education. Similarly, there are different views on whether HE should be about widening access or be restricted to elite specialist training. How one defines and understands HE has implications for how we think of its relationship with the public good. One recent initiative driven by HEIs in South Africa is community development through the 4IR (Masinde & Roux 2020).

The 4IR is driven by the rapid development and advancement of technology. According to Schwab (2015) 4IR is characterised by a fusion of technologies blurring the lines between biological, physical and digital spheres. The 4IR does not mean that humans have all equally experienced the previous industrial revolution (Waghid, Waghid &Waghid 2019). For example, even though most academics and HEIs now have Internet access, it is still surprising that some researchers and academics prefer submitting hard copies of their articles for publication rather than digital copies via the Internet.

With all the advancements that 4IR brings along, there is evidence that it would influence society, particularly HEIs, including their policies, visions, planning and implementation of strategies (Masinde & Roux 2020). Like other socio-economic sectors, South African HEIs will not be left out in the aftermath of the 4IR (Aruleba & Jere 2022a; Sackey & Bester 2016). Some of the significant challenges faced by HEIs in South Africa, especially historically disadvantaged HEIs and most other African countries, include a lack of basic infrastructure, high levels of technological illiteracy and high cost of data to engage with 4IR technologies (Abebe et al. 2021; Aruleba, Jere & Matarirano 2022). This leads to a range of unskilled academics and makes it difficult to adequately embrace digitisation and respond to the potential disruption associated with 4IR in a manner that could improve teaching and learning. This would also reduce the capability of HEIs to produce skill sets, innovations, or graduates who support and understand the current technology changes. Hence, the role of HEIs in enabling 4IR for the public good and community development has also come under scrutiny. This book chapter argues that HEIs could significantly influence societal transformation when implementing 4IR projects. This is expected to bring positive benefits that translate to the public good. However, the digital challenges affecting citizens, even those surrounding the HEIs, have sparked some debate on HEIs and 4IR for the public good. This chapter evaluates the role of selected HEIs within Africa in enabling 4IR for the public good. The critical question in this chapter is: *What is the role of HEIs in implementing 4IR initiatives towards community development and does this translate to the public good?*

This chapter is organised into different sections which explain the current state of HEIs community experiences and views, public good, the HEIs' 4IR initiatives and common challenges affecting HEIs.

■ Higher education for public good

The definition and understanding of public good are quite complex. The complexity is more when you bring together emerging technologies impact, HEIs and the communities. Undoubtedly, HE is a fundamental good that almost all countries should endeavour to provide. However, it is not solely or even predominantly an essential element good. As a result, there is a need to

increase HE participation, which will not kick-start social development (Higgs, Higgs & Venter 2003). Learning is a key development goal, but if university education does become difficult to afford in the lack of economic progress, broader social development goals are put at risk. Good education about universities' public good role necessitates a shift from an idealist focus toward the greater good to address excellence in universities' commitment to the larger society (Tannock 2006.). This same fair opportunity for all women and men to affordable, high-quality HE empowers a meaning that disallows this socially situated perception of access to institutional gains (Allais et al. 2020).

Walker (2018) itemised that presently, institutional authority can be grasped apart from the international economic networks' promotion of neoliberalism, the interaction of future prosperity and knowledge advancement concepts with situation popular democratic discursive practices rooted in social justice. Its influences can be seen in strategic planning, evidenced by commodification, corporatisation and free markets of knowledge, which are no longer regarded as a public good. This trend has reshaped academic meanings, altered understanding notions and practices and reshaped university society connections. Such interactions have stemmed from unforeseen synchronises and strategic partnerships between HEIs projects and the agenda of neoliberalism, which prioritises economic instead of social responsiveness, trying to profit over the public good (Vally 2007). So, under the doctrine of 'expertise' and anxieties about becoming world-class universities, several more universities are increasingly focusing on international rankings and evaluations, which frequently redirect their attention away from local attentiveness and more towards international standing. This has somehow affected the involvement of surrounding communities, resulting in citizens pondering whether HEIs are still for the public good.

As stated by Walker (2012), South African universities, like those elsewhere in Africa, have a normative duty to produce and apply knowledge for the public good, implying a strong bond between the university, knowledge and society. However, this statement is being criticised as there are debates on the contribution of universities to the communities. Reddy (2004) specified that the concern for HE intellectuals is to find ways to reconcile the conflict between two contending knowledge initiatives under neoliberalism's dominant position: business economic attentiveness versus social adaptability relevant to social equality. One such pressure could be cleared up unless real empirical personal freedom from the despotism of emasculating Western viewpoints is achieved. The whole National Plan for Higher Education (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET] 2001) puts into action the ambition for the HE reform agenda outlined in *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation of 1997* (DHET 1997) and represents an incredible opportunity to reflect on a course that positions HE as a key generator driving and being able to contribute to South African society's inclusive growth. The critical areas confronting South Africa's

HE system persist as indicated in the *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation of 1997* (DHET 1997) to help resolve past inequalities and convert HE to start serving a perfect society, reach pressing public demands and adjust to different realms and prospects.

Higher education institutions versus communities' power dynamics

Community leaders do not want to sit at the institution's table; instead, they want to set the table. White (2009) outlines that community leaders want to be a part of the research that defines their communities' problems and devise remedies alongside the experts who march into their places claiming to have all the ideas. These residents are devoted to mobilising themselves through community organisations to reclaim control of their communities, despite rarely having the necessary funds, volunteers, or technical knowledge (White 2009). They embrace resources from the adjacent university or any other institution but want to know where they will go. Therefore, institutions should not take their neighbours' goodwill for granted and must work hard to earn the right to be called partners. The balance of power is too unbalanced in favour of the institution to believe that pleasant actions can inspire communities to form constructive alliances.

Despite its difficulties and limitations, community participation has proven to be a crucial aspect of HEIs development. The government fostered the idea and execution of community participation in post-apartheid South Africa regarding revamping HE (Sebeco 2019). Some universities were founded to serve the needs of their immediate community and their students and faculty worked closely with the community. Higher education institutions collaborated with various faculties to develop and distribute information and formed relationships that benefitted the community, students and the university. The university's collaboration with the community has influenced their well-being and improved their lives. At the same time, the study results show that community engagement is valuable and helpful to the university and the community. Several community members are concerned that the university is not as inventive as it ought to be, especially regarding feedback from studies and the educational growth of young people in the surrounding area.

Many developed countries have fully adopted the 4IR, while others are beginning to adjust. Most of these countries provide support and institutions of training and learning in preparation for 4IR. However, many developing and underdeveloped countries are still struggling with the Third Industrial Revolution (3IR), making them unprepared for the 4IR. 4IR is a new era that creates and extends the impact of digitisation in new and unanticipated ways. It is the advent of cyber-physical systems involving entirely new capabilities for people and machines. This new revolution plays an essential role in different sectors of the economy. Manyika et al. (2017) showed that 4IR would play

a significant role in the future because of its influence on government, education, health and other key economic sectors.

The rapid change in the pace of technological advancement because of 4IR has not been seen in the history of *homo sapiens*, which is reflected in the education sector. The World Economic Forum (WEF 2016) estimates that almost 50% of subject knowledge acquired in the first academic year of a four-year technical degree will be outdated by the time the student graduates. Drivers such as a more flexible working environment (i.e., since the pandemic, many people are now using different technology-enabled devices to work in the comfort of their homes), artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, cloud computing and smart cities will revolutionise the working environment of the future. This is significant in HEIs, especially with the recent COVID-19 pandemic that has made teaching and learning transition to online and has left HEIs with no choice but to adopt 4IR technologies (Aruleba, Jere & Matarirano 2022b; Pokhrel & Chhetri 2021; Yunusa et al. 2021).

Recent studies have shown how automation in the 4IR era will reshape the labour market and education (Karr, Loh & San Andres 2020; Mkansi & Landman 2021). Most of the studies revealed the massive loss of jobs and drop in skillsets because machines are now programmed to perform several human tasks (Ansari, Erol & Sihn 2018; Seeber et al. 2020). Hence, they are used to replace humans. According to Mkansi and Landman (2021), the impact of the automation caused by 4IR has been well-adopted and established. However, little attention has been given to HEI readiness to meet the current and future 4IR curriculum needs, especially in developing nations. It is essential to redesign the curriculum to be adaptable, dynamic and fit into what is relevant today and prepare students to thrive in times of uncertainty and rapid technology changes. In South Africa, even though there is a different ongoing awareness of 4IR, there is still much work to be done. Coetzee et al. (2021) explained the current situation of the South African education system and its readiness to adopt 4IR. The study showed that there are numerous foundational challenges. For example, 79% of Mathematics teachers in some grades have subject-content knowledge levels lower than that of the students they teach (Venkat & Spaull 2015) and 78% of Grade 4 learners cannot read with comprehension (Howie et al. 2017). The quality of Mathematics and science subjects in South African public schools is also ranked as the worst in the world (WEF 2017). A speedy response is needed because the 4IR is more STEM-(Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) focused.

Aside from these practical challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic has also affected HEIs in the country. According to Aruleba. et al. (2022, pp. 172–173), the COVID-19 pandemic prompted a change in the usual teaching methods to make online education quickly transition from supplementary to key methods. This rapid transition brought obvious challenges and difficulties to HE, such as introducing new requirements and platforms for teaching and learning, the

satisfaction of these new requirements, training of lecturers and students and affordability of the necessary technologies to excel in this new education method. These platforms and technologies provided substantial help and support for education during the pandemic period and brought a new experience for users; however, they also brought several controversies and challenges mainly faced by disadvantaged users.

The findings in Omodan (2020, cited in Aruleba et al. 2022, p. 173) stated some of the critical problems disadvantaged universities in South Africa encounter when transiting swiftly to online education at the beginning of the pandemic. The identified problems were poor technology infrastructure for universities, lecturers and students with disadvantaged backgrounds. Another study by Kamal et al. (2020) shows that technical challenges (software and hardware) were the common challenges encountered by students during online education.

Several studies have been conducted on the impact of the 4IR on South Africa's economy, particularly the education sector. Mkansi and Landman (2021) explored the readiness of academic institutions in South Africa for 4IR and why producing high-value skilled graduates in HEIs is essential to address the future labour market amid limited resources. The future labour market demands would experience a significant challenge that the increase in automation and 4IR will pose. The study by Mhlanga and Moloi (2020) showed how various educational institutions in South Africa used 4IR tools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study concluded that the country's education sector, from primary to tertiary, adapted well to using 4IR tools during the pandemic when activities switched from face-to-face to online. However, this finding contradicts other findings in the literature that showed that some schools, especially the historically disadvantaged ones, learners and teachers, struggled to cope with technology (Omodan 2020).

As much as the pandemic has caused significant disruption across the globe, it has assisted countries in knowing their readiness for 4IR and technology adoption in general. The pandemic has also presented an opportunity to check the success and failures of the implemented technology systems and infrastructures and the associated cost. For South Africa, it is commendable how the big schools could access and adopt 4IR tools and switch quickly to online teaching and learning at the beginning of the pandemic. Therefore, the government must extend this accessibility to rural and disadvantaged communities by introducing initiatives that promote the adoption of 4IR in these communities. Formal and quality primary education should be ensured across the country. This will ensure that all citizens are capable and have basic knowledge of this new revolution. Lifelong learning pathways should also be encouraged. This will make everyone always relevant regardless of the revolution they are in. In other words, lifelong learning pathways aid continuous learning and can empower people for every revolution, including unforeseen revolutions

such as the Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR) and the Sixth Industrial Revolution (6IR) (Uleanya & Ke 2019).

Higher education for public good: Implications for the new academic landscape in South Africa

Higher education institutions' collaborations have occurred in South Africa to achieve a variety of goals in many organisations and national structures. The trend toward larger institutions is driven in part by the government's desire to broaden participation, increase student numbers and reduce inefficient points of contact in programmes (Utley 2002). It is also contended that a fused and cohesive administration will result in significant savings in acquiring, planning and management, student services and information technology facilities (Light & Maybury 2002). Furthermore, it is found that information systems play a critical role in harnessing many of the beneficial features of HE consolidations.

Moreover, the duration in which massive HE mergers occurred around the world also coincides with a period characterised by the rapid adoption of information technologies in HE. Since the 1990s, the rise in Internet access has increased competition in local and global education environments (Castells 2000). Internet technology enables HEIs to expand their services beyond traditional face-to-face learning by carefully supplementing developed connections or providing entirely Internet-based distance education programmes. The South African government launched a system-wide HE merger process; it has not happened for the first time in international history.

Paterson (2005) stated that the merger's structural repercussions have changed and will continue to change the landscape of learning in South African HE in different manners that cannot be compared to the limited, piecemeal and key initiative basis on which HE fusions have occurred in other national contexts. The various goals of HE, as stated in the White Paper, emphasised a 'thick' assumption of HE's adaptability that incorporated its broader social purposes, situating it within a comprehensive system of 'political democratisation, economic reconstruction and [*growth*] and redistributive [*welfare*] policies [*geared*] at equity' (*Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation of 1997* in Badat 2009). The general pattern has been to reach HE and university investments primarily through promoting economic growth and preparing students for the labour market. Higher education should cultivate the knowledge, capabilities and skills necessary for graduates to make a significant contribution to development, as such innovation can expedite initiatives aimed at greater social equality and development. Across many contexts, extensive reform of skills and programmes is also required to align curricula with the knowledge,

expertise and skills requirements of a new market. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that producing high-quality graduates, particularly in natural science, engineering and technology, would also automatically have a significant economic impact.

While substantial change occurred in HE till 1994, no 'total, immediate, and clearing deformation of structures, institutions, policies, and practices has occurred'. Even though 'a vast number of adjustments that have altered HE in South Africa' (Jansen 2004, p. 293) have occurred over the last 16 years and, whereas common themes remain, the HE system does not reflect the deviation, uprisings and separation that indicated the sector at the beginning of the 1990s.

Current challenges facing higher education institutions

South African institutions are wrangling over mandatory vaccination regulations to restore normalcy for the 2022 school year (Van der Merwe 2021). On the other hand, young people have displayed a strong aversion to vaccinations, with some pupils publicly opposing obligatory vaccinations. As the fourth wave of COVID-19 got underway, only a few student populations had been vaccinated. Van der Merwe (2021) stated that the long-term viability of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is the most significant issue confronting the university sector. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the country's devastated economy, South Africa's budget for HE is exceedingly tight.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africa's HE sector faces new technological, financial and collaborative challenges (Ramdhany 2020). Some of the most pressing difficulties for university vice-chancellors are these challenges and new possibilities for growth. Ramdhany (2020) noted that academic and research institutions need to reimagine a different future for HE to succeed. The global COVID-19 pandemic has boosted HE's digital agility agenda (Hedding et al. 2020). All academic institutions and universities must examine and embrace digital technologies. Many colleges should supply laptops and data bundles to students who rely on on-campus facilities to complete their coursework during the lockdown period, as there has been a move to online learning.

Furthermore, student debt was a focal point of violent protests in early 2021, with students demanding that debt be abolished. Another demand that arises every year from protesting students is access to cheap accommodation. Even if the problem appears less evident than before, it continues to be a problem. Because South Africa's unstable electricity supply system causes scheduled rolling blackouts known as load-shedding when demand exceeds

supply, universities have made considerable investments to ensure day-to-day operations (Van der Merwe 2021). Despite this, power fluctuation continues to be very detrimental to universities.

According to Zeleza (2021), several university administrators are keenly aware of campus violence because of protests or the plague of gender-based assault. Brutal, high-profile deaths of female students devastated the sector in 2021. This is true regarding budgetary constraints and the demand side, whether university graduates will find a job after graduation.

Additionally, human capital is still in short supply, particularly in terms of faculty, as HEIs do not produce adequate senior degree graduates. The evidence on the 4IR cutting-edge disciplines of AI and robotics, biotechnology, energy, materials, nanoscience and nanotechnology and optoelectronics is significantly worse. Academic cultures are becoming more complicated and fights over equality, diversity and inclusion are intensifying as university communities become more diverse and demand expansion (Zeleza 2021). Graduate competence remains a problem, as evidenced by continuous mismatches between university education and economic needs, which result in massive unemployment.

Moreover, the problem is to strike a balance between uneven internationalisation's historical legacies and current pressures and the continuing need for intellectual, institutional and ideological decolonisation and indigenisation (Zeleza 2021). Rankings significantly impact the increasing rivalry for students, professors and resources, notwithstanding their flaws as weapons of global academic capitalism. Ultimately, academic institutions are not exempt from the contemporary academy's increasingly harmful traits.

Community expectations

Collaboration is a cooperative effort between two or more people (Rowe 2011). As a result of the trust and sharing involved in the process, it represents the interdependence among two groups (Mirza et al. 2012). Collaboration is at the core of successful community involvement because it fosters a working culture to accomplish a common goal (Hlalele et al. 2015). This guarantees that both parties' requirements are considered. According to Shannon and Wang (2010, p. 109), collaboration entails a shared decision-making process because of common aims and identities in that both parties' interests are at risk. Collaboration, in turn, stimulates community participation and is eagerly anticipated by residents.

Community members anticipate HEI programmes to create something in the community that will stay for a long time, such as a centre where residents may participate in community and university-sponsored projects. The centre will aid in implementing and sustaining the skills people gain from the programmes. They also stated that the centre would be open to

anyone with abilities they would like to share with the community. This is because of the significant number of unemployed youths and participants stated that the centre would also assist in exchanging skills and information between the community and the institution (Sebeco 2019).

In addition, some other expectation is that the community will gain skills and information; however, there is no benefit to this because there is no confirmation of project completion or participation. Sebeco (2019) specified that community members stated that the institution could provide people with more skills, particularly the youth and approved certifications. Another expectation is that the university should offer a course in which community people will receive authorised certifications that will enable them to apply for various positions and employment. According to community people, this is beneficial because it teaches various skills and if one can obtain a certificate, it will serve as verification (Sebeco 2019).

Role of higher education institutions in enabling the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Badat (2010) stated that HEIs demonstrate their hand in transforming future technology by serving as staging grounds for advancement and instructing subsequent generations. Standard schooling has significantly contributed to the overall increase in industrial progression and technological advancement. Nevertheless, in an attempt for HE to provide coming generations with the required knowledge and skills, it is critical to consider how the 4IR will impact HE institutes and how education service will be transformed. There are numerous opportunities accessible which will shape the responsibility that HE can play in the 4IR (Sinha & Lutchman 2021).

As Nyawo and Mashau (2019) stated, ever since the beginning of the 4IR, digital technology has already restructured and vividly constrained the world's primary teaching and learning methods. The 4IR has emerged as the primary driving force behind global HE improvement. The rapid advancement of technology in HE has invented a productive teaching environment in the 21st century. Nonetheless, South African rural-based academic institutions face challenges such as poor reading and literacy skills, poor reasoning and analytical thinking skills and insufficient use of information systems. The difficulties emanate from the imbalance and inadequacy of the South African education system's abilities. The 4IR plays a critical role in global changes, such as socio-economic changes in the South African HE system (Butler-Adam 2018; Xing & Marwaha 2006). The 4IR will teach students in rural South African institutions how to use technology more effectively (Butler-Adam 2018). Those in rural institutions will particularly have the competitive skills needed in the labour market. Butler-Adam (2018), Xing and Marwala (2006) agree that 4IR-infused e-learning places students at an advantage by

increasing academic results in universities and improving confidence and collaboration. In this regard, the Internet, social media and cloud computing are increasingly transforming digital technology in HE.

Who participated and how?

This study evaluates the role of selected HEIs within Africa, focusing on 4IR awareness within their surrounding communities for the public good. A qualitative approach was adopted. Target sampling was done; only academic experts with an understanding of the university experiences and 4IR towards public good were considered. Data were collected from selected African institutions from Namibia, South Africa, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. Though participants responded from different countries, the South African HEIs in the Eastern Cape were considered the benchmark. Participants' experiences were assessed through an open-ended questionnaire shared with the participants via email and through one-on-one interviews. Only participants with experience in HEIs, 4IR and community development were engaged. Secondary data on relevant publications on the role of universities in driving technologies in communities were examined. The study was centred around universities that are mainly located in rural areas or participants who conduct research in rural communities. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis process of the primary and secondary data yielded three themes, namely:[1]

1. The role of universities in 4IR and community development.
2. Challenges HEIs face in driving 4IR in communities.
3. Strategies employed by HEIs to promote 4IR in disadvantaged communities.
4. How do the HEIs 4IR initiatives translate to the public good?
5. What needs to be done for HEIs to remain relevant and benefit the public?

Participants views

The participants' responses were classified into different themes as presented in the following sections.

The role of universities in Fourth Industrial Revolution and community development

Africa's future workforce will be among the world's largest by 2030; therefore, the 4IR represents a significant opportunity for growth when combined with the necessary infrastructure and skills for innovation and technology use. Indeed, the 4IR is radically altering global labour and

1. The participants' responses were identified as P01 (lecturer), P02 (dean of ICT faculty), P03 (ICT researcher) and P04 (ICT service provider) without disclosing their details. These themes and highlights of the findings are discussed in the next section.

production systems, necessitating the development of skills and capacities that will allow job seekers to quickly adjust to the needs of African businesses and automation in general. The responses of the participants are as follows:

> 'The university plays a strategic role in facilitating 4IR awareness in many rural areas where the dynamics of 4IR remain primarily alien. Considering that the university is a hub for skilling, reskilling and upskilling the next generation of the workforce, the university's role concerning human capital development towards a beneficial transition into the 4IR cannot be overemphasised. This is especially true in rural environments that are often perceived to lack the skills-set necessary for 4IR relevance.' (P01, 05 January 2022)

> 'Educating people or communities on different 4IR technologies.' (P02, 30 December 2022)

> 'As technology evolves, it's become increasingly important that universities focus on developmental programmes for rural developments. The use of smart farming can be encouraged to assist farmers in rural areas. Other support areas include telemedicine, open educational resources, and research programmes that would enhance people's lives. Provision of the relevant infrastructure will aid these communities in quickly adopting 4IR.' (P03, n.d.)

> 'Capacity-building such as infrastructure development, technological training and encouraging communities to be receptive to change.' (P04, 08 January 2022)

The responses from the participants are similar to Nsengimana's (2018) findings that state that Africa's workforce is already getting more educated and prepared to take advantage of the 4IR's opportunities. Institutions are reluctant to encourage technologies that threaten existing jobs because providing work for the expanding youth population is prioritised in most African countries. Some existing technologies tend to replace low-skilled workers with higher-skilled workers, limiting 4IR participation to economies with relevant skills (Naudé 2017). African countries must invest in education and reskilling initiatives to guarantee that technology enhances rather than replaces labour. Infrastructure for connectivity is also essential because certain fundamentals must be in place. Universities must play a role in supplying student professionals, including those in the TVET and basic education sectors. There is a need to create a pipeline from primary school to TVET colleges to transition into HEIs smoothly. This is like P03 and P04 responses. Rural areas could be developed so that people do not have to travel to cities to find work. The 4IR would help open business opportunities in rural areas. Instead of merely developing technology hubs in cities that lure everyone to the city, there is a need to create technology hubs in the highlands and rural areas. According to Ndung'u and Signé (2020), data-driven precision farming approaches are being used by African entrepreneurs and start-ups to assist farmers in optimising productivity and reducing waste using the Internet of Things (IoT). This can be related to P03, which suggested using smart farming to motivate farmers in rural areas.

Challenges higher education institutions face in driving Fourth Industrial Revolution in communities

According to the participants:

> 'Many communities lack 4IR awareness. Moreover, those informed about the 4IR have minimal knowledge as their information is incomplete or largely negative. Thus, many communities still resist the 4IR initiatives that the universities are pioneering within these communities. Furthermore, in several communities, the lack of infrastructure that is 4IR-enablers is slowing down the pace at which the universities can drive some of their 4IR initiatives within these communities.' (P01, 05 January 2022)

> '4IR in Africa is still in its infancy – I doubt such initiatives have started. However, I think some universities do not even know what is 4IR in the first place. There is theoretical understanding which does not necessarily translate to practical understanding/usage and adoption. Furthermore, the skills/knowledge gap between communities and 4IR techs is too broad.' (P02, 30 December 2022)

> 'There are numerous challenges universities could face when driving 4IR. These include Fighting poverty and inequality; socio-economic challenges; labour mismatch, infrastructural challenges; geographical distances, et cetera.' (P03, 04 January 2022)

> 'Lack of communication: Some universities need more time to understand 4IR, lack of funding, the reluctance of institutions or stakeholders to partner with grassroots communities, lack of relevant technological infrastructure, bad government policies, unreliable Internet/wireless connection, et cetera.' (P04, 08 January 2022)

Literature has shown that HEIs face several challenges when driving and integrating 4IR in community development. One of these challenges is a shortage of funding, as discussed by P4. The lack of basic understanding of 4IR is another major challenge, as stated by P1 and P2. Other challenges are resistance to change; the political will still not being strong enough, companies and institutions' reluctance to collaborate with grassroots communities and the breach of ethical and moral principles.

Strategies employed by higher education institutions to promote Fourth Industrial Revolution in disadvantaged communities

The 2017 internationalisation project is one of many community involvement programmes that some universities use to develop new ways to formalise their vision statement and become a leader in engaged scholarships, such as the University of Venda. Internationalisation is a deliberate process of integrating worldwide and local viewpoints for the benefit of society through HE. Higher education can reach communities by delivering knowledge through an authoritative, top-down model. Over the years, this relationship with communities has evolved into a more active paradigm in

which community and university partners collaborate to develop solutions (Fitzgerald et al. 2016).

> 'Community-based sensitisation to encourage human-machine collaboration with 4IR technologies. Granting the communities access to 4IR-enabling infrastructures that are within the universities. Free and or subsidised training for skilling and reskilling of the youths in the communities.' (P01, 05 January 2022)

> 'So far, I have not seen any.' (P02, 30 December 2022)

> 'Corporate social responsibility prioritises grassroots community training and mentoring. Meaningful and extensive discussions about how the 4IR may be used to ensure that the experiences and lessons learned through community engagement have international influence are urgently needed.' (P03, 04 January 2022)

> 'Use of various media to connect diverse communities with the world, use of social media platforms, effective communication, the collaboration of diverse stakeholders, providing awareness and technological training to rural communities, et cetera.' (P04, 08 January 2022)

Ndung'u and Signé (2020b) specified that because innovation is at the heart of the 4IR, it is critical to strengthen state and institutional ability to stimulate and support innovation while also creating an enabling business climate. Increasing cybersecurity is a severe regulatory challenge. Most African countries lack a robust legislative framework and institutional competence to combat cybercrime. Instead, measures to combat cybercrime are taking place at a more local level or carried out by private sector actors. Adopting generally accepted and suitable norms and rules like these is the first step toward improving cybersecurity.

Simultaneously, businesses should invest in their workers' cybersecurity training and include cyber risk mitigation in their decision-making process. Further significantly, the 4IR can improve service delivery by enabling national identification and a new generation of biometrics that can centralise data for various uses and users. All of these are like the findings from the participants.

☐ Why are higher education institutions for public good in question?

The authors have also considered their experiences and observations in analysing the current state of HEIs. The findings have shown several initiatives that HEIs implement to empower citizens. However, the following challenges at hand affect the perceptions of the citizens on the HEI public good:

- High levels of unemployment – unemployed graduates.
- Under-development in rural areas leading to pressure to migrate.
- The high cost of attaining better and quality education.
- High cases of gender-based violence at HEIs.
- Student unrest and strikes (#FeesMustFall).

- The notion of HE for good public shifting to HE for private good.
- Urbanisation and high numbers of graduates migrating from rural to urban.
- HEIs international rankings versus local situation.

The mentioned challenges have led to critical debates on the benefits of HEIs to the community. It is quite disturbing to have unemployed graduates as it takes away the public's confidence in HEIs. Manyika et al. (2017) showed that 4IR would play a significant role in the future because of its influence on government, education, health and other critical economic sectors. Recent studies have shown how automation in the 4IR era will reshape the labour market and education (Karr et al. 2020; Mkansi & Landman 2021). Most studies revealed the high loss of jobs and drop in skillsets because machines are now programmed to perform several human tasks (Ansari et al. 2018; Seeber et al. 2020).

The other point affecting the positive views on HEIs is how the institutions have focused more on international rankings. This has somehow slowed down the efforts of universities in surrounding communities.

The detailed report by Tannock (2006) shows that the HEIs initiatives toward the public good are debatable and are no longer interpreted as the same across society. The report shows that HEIs' education, skills, knowledge creation, community engagement projects and innovation influence the communities positively. However, on the other hand, concerning South Africa, the historical background of HEIs, as influenced by the apartheid system, has affected how society views the HEIs.

Student unrest and strikes affect the public. Such strikes, in most cases, lead to infrastructural damages, societal differences and negative impacts on businesses and the economy. On the other hand, HEI student strikes have a negative impact on surrounding communities, which in turn leads to negative public views about HEIs by citizens.

From the 4IR point of view, it is evident that HEIs play a pivotal role in capacitating and empowering communities with the needed digital skills. Unfortunately, some of these efforts are then affected by many other infrastructure-related technical challenges. As such, the communities may struggle to separate the HEIs' role in such 4IR developments and typically, the blame is then given to institutions.

■ Lessons learnt from the engagements

In this chapter, it was essential to assess the roles that HEIs play in transforming society during 4IR towards 'public good'. The 4IR requires a different way of thinking and will blur the boundaries between content on its own and the application of the content, where integration in an inter- and multidisciplinary setting will increasingly become the norm. It is evident that

the sustainable link between HEI and 4IR for 'public good' is based on the following:

- The relevance of connectivity in rural areas is critical for young people's preparation for 4IR.
- Collaboration between communities and universities, as well as any other institutions that teach technology, is critical. Procuring a job might be difficult in the practical sense since businesses want to know about an applicant's employment history. As a result, it is critical to expose young people to internships. The 4IR is also crucial for reskilling and upskilling capabilities.
- As a delivery mechanism for 4IR, infrastructure is required. Human capital would aid in the competitiveness of rural communities and countries, as well as the reduction of high unemployment rates. What is promising is that, because of their capacity to compete worldwide, unemployment rates are low in most nations where this new technology is being implemented. As a result, there is concern that 4IR will result in a reduction in the workforce.
- Institutions are reluctant to encourage technologies that threaten existing jobs because providing work for the expanding youth population is a priority in most African countries. Some existing technologies tend to replace low-skilled workers with higher-skilled workers, limiting 4IR participation to economies with relevant skills (Naudé 2017). African countries must invest in education and reskilling initiatives to guarantee that technology enhances rather than replaces labour.
- The proliferation of digital technologies has the potential to provide poor people with access to knowledge, employment opportunities and services that will help them better their living standards. AI, the IoT and blockchain can improve data-collection and analysis for more focused and effective poverty reduction efforts.
- Africa's communication infrastructure constraints limit access to sophisticated technologies, such as a lack of energy and low tele-density, Internet density and broadband adoption. As a result, mobile phones and Internet use remain low. Additional technological impediments include a lack of standardised application programming interfaces and common data languages for increased integration of mostly self-contained systems and cyberattack vulnerability. Increasing fibre-optic network physical connectivity and virtual platform interoperability is crucial for upgrading technology across the continent and reducing production costs for the underprivileged (Ndung'u & Signé 2020a).

■ Conclusion

The HEIs play a critical role in transforming society. However, they rely on other key stakeholders. For example, 4IR depends on infrastructure availability,

which universities cannot provide alone for communities, creating debates on whether HEIs enable the public good. The cost and benefits of the HEIs within the communities in implementing 4IR projects are facing criticism from the citizens and are in the spotlight. This then initiates the debate on whether current 4IR initiatives by HEIs are for public good.

The current challenges affecting HEIs that spill over to the surrounding communities have led to different views about the benefits of these institutions to the public. When citizens do not directly benefit from the HEIs' infrastructure and skills, 4IR initiatives will always be criticised and not accepted by the citizens. More engagement and collaboration are required between HEIs and surrounding societies to understand how communities would like to benefit from HEIs. The chapter has presented several initiatives and views from the community's point of view and all these have implications for the academic landscape. There is a need for more engagements to align different 4IR initiatives by HEIs towards public good.

Chapter 6

Decolonising legal studies in Africa: Towards a conceptual alternative

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Abstract

While the liberal legal traditions bequeathed to citadels of legal education in African states at independence were ideal for the Western milieus from which they were transplanted, contemporary realities reveal that the ossified contents, structures and consequences of Western liberal philosophy are in dire need of urgent reconsideration and replacement with more viable options in African institutions of legal education. This paper analyses the underpinning principles of Western liberal legalism as well as the contours and dislocations they have occasioned in the training of lawyers in 21st-century Africa. In what ways could decolonised legal education simultaneously be a public good and a veritable vehicle for public good in Africa? Considering the entrenched Western-styled system of legal education in post-independence Africa, what modalities would best assure a progressive reorientation in terms of curriculum contents, pedagogies and outcomes? What will be the posture of a decolonised

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system of legal education within the higher education (HE) schema in Africa? Extrapolating from the peculiar existential challenges in today's Africa, this paper proffers the interjection of current debates through the prism of social reconstruction in shaping the orientation, curriculum and pedagogies in African institutions of legal education and training. The advocacy here finds a solid foothold in African humanism and squarely places the necessity and urgency for the decolonisation of legal education in Africa both as a central component in the broader discourses about HE for public good in the African context as well as a critical pathway to avoiding the pitfalls of anachronistic options and skewed orientations. Beyond its didactic connotations, the overarching thrust of this paper lies in its conceptual linkages with the overall epistemological relevance of HE in Africa.

Introduction

Beyond the narratives of the immensely complex global and historical phenomenon of colonialism, particularly in the aftermath of the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, this contribution attempts to provide a critique of the de-legitimation of European colonial rule over much of Africa during the 20th century, which involved the de-legitimation of several imposed political, cultural and economic systems that however failed, neglected, or omitted the legal education systems imported into former African colonies. The approach here is to squarely place the institutions, methods and contents of the training of lawyers and judges in independent African states within the mainstream of contemporary discourses on the decolonisation of HE in Africa. The underpinning premise is that the decolonisation of legal education, as an integral component of HE, cannot be divested from comprehensive agenda-setting for the decolonisation of HE in Africa.

The first part explores legal education in independent African states as a relic of colonial heritage in terms of content and pedagogy. The second part draws together multiple interpretive perspectives over a period depicting illustrations of colonial strangleholds on legal education, which are far from suitable or desirable for transformative independent African states. There is a strong contention here that the reversal of colonial values and structures will be incomplete without an overhaul of the legal orientation that has fed and sustained the old order. The third part reflects on the imperative of decolonising legal education as an integral component of the critique of Africa's broader HE system. The sentiment is expressed that to extricate the HE system from the clutches of colonial underpinnings, the structures, norms and orientation from which it draws its validity and sustenance must also be scrutinised. While not oblivious of alternative considerations and pathways, the fourth part explores the promise of social reconstruction for decolonised legal education and accentuates the perimeters of its relevance in the discourse. The contribution concludes with some final thoughts.

This contribution's overall approach and outcome is the presentation of decolonised legal education as one which pointedly responds to the epistemic injury inflicted upon Africa and Africans through colonial legalism and controlled juristic thought processes.

Legal education in Africa as a colonial enterprise

The clamour for the decolonisation of HE, in whole or in its parts, tasks us to evaluate deep-rooted ideas about knowledge systems in our milieu. It is acknowledged that in many fields, over a long period of time, beliefs concerning racial and civilisational hierarchy informed a lot of thinking about the sourcing and dissemination of knowledge, what contributed to knowledge and how knowledge should be assessed. Whatever fell outside the dominant orthodoxies of the bygone era was not deemed to be acceptable knowledge or praxis (Fataar 2018; Wiredu 2002). The outcome of that anomalous order of things informs the growing belief in today's world that much of university education around the world overlooks the vibrant efforts of scholars who were historically relegated by virtue of their race, nationality or other status. The inclination is observable in all academic disciplines, ranging from the sciences to the humanities and even legal studies.

Although the idea of decolonisation had preoccupied African nationalists and freedom fighters in the post-World War II era, that idea had primarily been about wresting political and economic power from foreign powers and placing the same in the hands of indigenous citizens in the independence era (Heleta 2016; Mbembe 2015). With the benefit of hindsight, it is now discernible that the decolonisation of HE was not integral to that idea. Because the people of Africa had been sufficiently incapacitated in various forms at the onset of European invasion, it was particularly easy for Europeans to shift their control, dominance and exploitation tactics from bringing some Africans to the West as slaves to work on plantations to shaping Africa into colonies and protectorates of the West. Knowledge-based colonisation was one of the most effective methods for incapacitating Africans (Adebisi 2016; Fataar 2018). Even though the four colonial powers who conquered much of Africa, namely the United Kingdom (UK), France, Portugal and Germany, ruled their territory with varying degrees of freedom and autonomy, the damage done to the colonies differed only in degree, not in form or process.

As part of the epistemic colonisation, the legal education introduced to Africans had been exclusively patterned after what was obtained in the societies of the colonial powers. Under this scenario, the contents of statute books, the system of administering the laws and the system of educating aspiring legal minds all follow the colonial models (Machingambi 2020; Ndulo 2002). The outcome of the legal culture imbibed by African lawyers under

colonial arrangements was a relegation of African indigenous knowledge systems, the predominance of the adversarial nature of European litigation rather than the conciliatory techniques of indigenous African communities, the reliance on memorisation and regurgitation, which were the hallmarks of the rote learning technique (Mawere 2020; Ndulo 2002).

Even though since independence, African governments and authorities in charge of legal education have been making efforts at reforming their legal education systems in accordance with global best practices of openness, creativity and alternative dispute resolution, consistent with democratic imperatives, such initiatives have been of little effect in redeeming legal education from the vestiges of colonialism (Gutto 2012; Himonga & Diallo 2017; Kok & Oeloftse 2020). It is against this backdrop that the discourse on the decolonisation of legal education in 21st-century African states should be contextualised.

Viewed from this perspective, decolonisation becomes synonymous with decolonised ways and patterns of running legal education curriculum and pedagogy and questioning the historicity of models emerging from Europe. In this light, decolonisation would involve analytic approaches and intellectual practices that interrogate the pillars of Western civilisation, namely, colonialism and modernism. This view would thus translate decolonisation into both a political enterprise and an epistemic endeavour.

Western liberal transplantations and the oddities of legal education in 21st-century Africa

In Western civilisation, the dominant political ideology that gained currency in much of the 19th- and 20th-centuries was classical liberalism, a mindset that recognises the pre-eminence of individual liberty and choice in the political and legal order of society (Ratnapala 2017). Despite the variations in form, adherence and integration concerning the scope and means of attaining and sustaining liberty in classical Western liberal thought, Western liberal ideologues generally agree on four propositions, namely: (1) that law is a public good; (2) that the rule of law is required for liberty; (3) that the rule of law is possible; and (4) that the political institutions of liberalism protect liberty and the rule of law. It will be apt to explore the connotations of each of these critical nuggets of classical Western liberal thought as they underpin our discussion.

Law as a public good

It is a key tenet of Western liberalism that law serves the public interest by facilitating a framework of rules that allows individuals to coordinate and harmonise their actions. Liberal legal theorists admit that law is used by rulers

for their own ends, but they reject the notion that law by nature is an instrument of oppression. To them, law emerged in society as a response to the coordination of the needs of the society and is therefore not a source of conflict. This is the kernel of the work of the purveyors of the Sociology of Law like Weber, Durkheim, Ehrlich and Pound (Roederer & Moellendorf 2004).

☐ The rule of law is required for liberty

In this context, Western liberalism views the rule of law as serving individual liberty by curbing arbitrary actions of officials and making the law certain and predictable. In this persuasion, law is whatever the sovereign commands to be law, with sanctions prescribed. This is the core of the legal positivism propounded by Hobbes, Bentham, Austin, Kelsen, Fuller and a host of others (Penner & Mellisaris 2012).

☐ The rule of law is possible

The idea finds expression in Western liberalism that it is possible for society to attain the rule of law and that to make this happen, there are three vital conditions, namely, (1) that the law must be knowable and reasonably stable; (2) that facts must be ascertainable to a generally acceptable standard; and (3) that the making of the law and the application of it must be distinguishable to an appreciable degree. This is where the practice of adversarial justice finds its roots, as Hart and Dworkin profoundly illustrated (Ratnapala 2017; Riddall 1999).

☐ Liberty and the rule of law underscored by the political institutions of liberalism

Western liberal legal-thinkers prescribe and depend heavily on hard-letter constitutional mechanisms such as separation of powers, due process, electoral democracy and fundamental rights to promote the rule of law and secure individual liberty. Much as they admit that unfairness and injustices often occur under liberal legal systems, they nevertheless hold that the institutions of a liberal democratic state offer the best means of government. Rothbard and Nozick were among the most prominent in this regard (Nozick 1974; Rothbard 1982). Even though classical Western liberalism had undergone changes over time, its characteristics in the classical form had become export standards to territories far beyond Europe (Riddall 1999, pp. 250–252).

As widespread and entrenched as Western liberal legal philosophy had been through the colonial project and reinforced by the collapse of communism, the ideology has not been without staunch criticisms. Over the last five decades, the Western liberal idea has come under heavy criticism in terms of its harsh formalism as depicted in the rigidity of the English common law system, conflicting rules and principles in several branches of the law, ulterior

motives in written law and the monolithic way of training lawyers and judges (Penner & Melissaris 2012, pp. 210–218). For our immediate purposes, only a consideration of the legal education dimension of Western liberal thought will be relevant.

From the perspectives of critics, it was not only the content of positive law that was flawed but even the way the law was taught. A massive movement of critical legal scholars that emerged in the 1970s asserted that the institutions training lawyers perpetuated the myth of the neutrality of judicial reasoning. To Duncan Kennedy (1982, 1983), neither the law nor judges were ever neutral in their decisions, even though judicial interpretations are veiled under the garb of neutrality.

The history of legal education in Africa has been written, in large part, as an imperial project. In that context, legal training is programmed to simply be a means to an end, that is, admission into the legal profession. So successful has this narrative of the colonisation project been that believing the law school to be something more than career training and the law to be something more than an artefact of the partisan state to be grasped and applied exclusively by lawyers appear like interloping latecomers to the narrative (Motala 1996; Ndulo 2002). Indeed, in common law countries that follow the English tradition, formal legal education was historically a monopoly of the government and it has remained so till today in numerous Commonwealth countries and this may be one key reason why the harmonisation of laws and effective law reforms have become a quagmire in 21st-century Africa.

In the African colonial experience, acute inequities of power between the colonisers and the colonised peoples, systemic deprivation of the dignity of the colonised and enduring mental distress accompanied the very notion of colonialism. The entire gamut of legal education under that system was built around sustaining the colonial project in an epistemic way. Tragically, reversing the ingrained traditions and tenets of that anachronistic system has remained a perennial challenge in Africa.

When one investigates the curriculum and pedagogy of a typical African institution of legal education, it is not difficult to find conflicts and contradictions that are vestiges of Western liberal thought. The very nature of the African legal academies, with their ossified traditions, conventions and hierarchies mirrors the society whose foundations are the academies bolstered by their promulgation of an unquestioning acceptance of the law as encapsulated within a liberal scheme of social arrangement. If decolonisation of legal education is to have a concrete impact, therefore, the way law programmes frame their curricula and teach the subjects must be a theme for rigorous interrogation and scrutiny.

What happens in a typical African law school or law programme is the ingraining through formal syllabi and classroom experience of fixed attitudes

towards the economy and society in general, towards laws and rules and towards the prospects in their ensuing professional lives. There is also that complex set of institutionalised practices through which law students are oriented towards participating exclusively in the narrow, monolithic responsibilities expected of lawyers. Not only are law students misled into trusting that the law emerges from a conscientious logical process known as legal reasoning, but they are also more often compelled to embrace the fallacy that a distinction exists between policy and law because law teachers conservatively convince their students to believe that legal reasoning is different from political or ethical considerations (Gutto 2012; Mawere 2020; Van Marle & Modiri 2012). Madlingozi (2006) captured the scenario in a most vivid way:

> Most legal academics teach students in a manner that only seeks to prepare them for uncritical application of legal doctrines to specific scenarios. This low-level teaching leads to surface-learning that does nothing to teach students critical thinking skills, does not encourage them to pose serious questions, let alone approach problems in an interdisciplinary manner. Instead, students are taught to be vending machines that chuck out a solution when one inserts a case. This sort of teaching does not enable us to bring out of law schools/faculties graduates who have a serious commitment to communities experiencing various social hardships, who pose serious questions to power and who seek to challenge the status quo. (p. 16)

Once the law student has thus inevitably accepted the legitimacy of these indoctrinations, the perpetuation of the dominant liberal legal ideology is guaranteed. When such students become lawyers, law professors, magistrates, judges and prosecutors or serve in diverse legal capacities, they only continue to preserve the ideology into which they were oriented.

Decolonising legal education in Africa: Some critical considerations

While approaches to the decolonisation of legal education do vary, there are three considerations that will be critical in ensuring that the process is neither a tick-the-box exercise nor transient. To make the decolonisation process sustainable in Africa, all stakeholders will need to bear in mind that: (1) decolonised legal education is a public good; (2) decolonised legal education is an imperative for Africa in light of the rapid consequences of globalisation and technology; and (3) the decolonised legal education is premised on establishing an alternative system that takes care of (1) and (2) above and divests law curriculum and pedagogy of the vestiges of colonialism. It is apt to elucidate each of these three crucial characteristics.

Decolonised legal education as 'public good'

In thematic discourses, HE is more frequently associated with public good (single) than public goods (plural). At its best, the public good connects

institutions of HE to a greater democratisation and human development process. At worst, it is paired with self-serving statements about the social benefits of education or research that make no effort to explain, discover, or quantify the supposed benefits. The questions 'whose public good?' and 'in whose interests?' emerge, just as they do with public goods (plural). Nonetheless, most thoughts on the public good pertain to broad-based interests, whether pursued democratically or through a proxy, such as when someone claims to speak or act for the public interest. A public good is likewise supposed to be ubiquitous, if not universal. For example, many people believe that HE should be accessible, equitable and accountable to the greater community (Marginson 2011; Mosteanu & Cretan 2011).

While there is an ongoing debate as regards whether HE is a private or public good (Kocaqi 2015), there seems to be an emerging consensus that public goods have invariable characteristics, namely, the existence of a beneficial consumption from the public goods; no exclusion of any citizen from these goods; and public goods impose costs or benefits on others (Hopson, Yeake & Boakari 2008; Morgan & White 2014; Schoenenberger 2005).

Although legal education is rarely included in discourses on public goods and qualitative legal education may not be included in the category of pure public goods (Harrison 2018) yet, for Africans, decolonised legal education may be included in the category of mixed goods, more appropriately labelled 'public goods with limited capacity' (Mosteanu & Cretan 2011, p. 38). From that perspective of a mixed good (characterised by non-exclusion and non-rivalry or exclusion and rivalry), legal education may present, in some cases, characteristics of rivalry and exclusion. In keeping with the taxonomy of public goods, mixed goods have attributes that straddle pure public goods as well as private goods. Therefore, goods characterised by non-exclusion and rivalry, that is, those characterised by non-rivalry and exclusion, have both individual consumers and society as a whole as beneficiaries; they are spread through the market or by the state or public budgets; a value can be created for them; there is a connection between the payment of a price and use of the good; there may be competition among the bidders; there is an impact of consumption on offer; these are produced by private establishments or public entities. The foregoing categorisations portend implications for legal education in many jurisdictions in Africa.

A decolonised system of legal education would be deemed to be public good where the curriculum and pedagogy address real problems, especially the problems of underserved members of society. For Africans, this will involve an experiential transition from the traditional Western-oriented model of training to a more responsible model that is more amenable to social needs and less to the clientelist, hierarchical and elitist, self-replicating legal education that we have seen across the African continent in the post-independence era.

Of course, decolonised legal education will not evolve from a void but under specific settings that define and enhance what can be accomplished. A decolonised legal education model that would find traction in public good theory, as discussed here, would thus encompass curriculum innovation, more flexible accreditation standards, market-related skills training and broader delivery of legal services rather than the monolithic kind that places a high premium on stiff adherence to black letter law and regurgitation pedagogics.

Decolonised legal education as an imperative

Since the end of the Cold War (1946–1991) and the collapse of communism in the East, the world has witnessed rapidly increasing integration of countries into a single global market via trade liberalisation, capital transfers, foreign direct investment and intense technological advancements. Higher education has not been left out, as the sector has been experiencing changes at a rapid rate throughout the world.

In the United States of America (USA) and Canada, many universities now offer various kinds of programmes that confer more responsive certifications on learners, radically different from the traditional schema of university training and aimed at facilitating the required legal services with more emphasis on practicum rather than mere theories (Critchlow 2014; MacDonald & McMorrow 2014).

In Europe, there has been the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Bologna Process, which were ground-breaking innovations in the value of qualifications earned and method of assessment in the HE sector applicable in a vast number of European countries (Nazarko et al. 2009; Pedró 2009).

Some academic institutions in post-colonial settler nations, such as New Zealand and Canada, have begun to see the necessity for a more inclusive approach to indigenous cosmologies and epistemologies to avoid alienating indigenous students (Chesterman 2008). In Nicaragua's North Atlantic Region, which is successfully employing HE to elevate indigenous and Creole students and professionals against a backdrop of long histories of prejudice, exclusion, deprivation and alienation, there is a community university. The pedagogic approach employed at the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast is founded on the notion of interculturality and it attempts to offer individual students access to HE while keeping education as a community good in mind (Cupples & Glynn 2014). Given its linkages to the geopolitics of location and pace and its origins in Latin American black and indigenous social movements, the notion of interculturality and its expression in various settings is of fundamental relevance to post-colonial characteristics.

In Asia, over the past few years, Japan and Singapore have shown the direction of law schools and law training, tilting more towards transnationalism and clinical skills rather than rote learning (Han 2007; Kamiya 2006).

From the late 1950s through the 1960s, when most former African colonies became independent states, there were increasing calls for the decolonisation of HE, which essentially meant decolonising the curriculum and knowledge systems in the African university (Ipadeola 2017; Rodney 2012; Wiredu 2002). The debates and discourses around the theme have not abated ever since.

Along with the broader calls for the decolonisation of HE came the inevitable push for the decolonisation of legal education in several African countries. While some of the factors responsible for the escalation of the debates around the decolonisation of education might have arisen out of internal conditions, the discussions have become even more pronounced considering globalisation, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the pronounced political and socio-economic challenges confronting African societies (Himonga & Diallo 2017; Mawere 2020).

The transplanted Western-styled legal education systems, which have defined the legal order and system of legal education in virtually all colonised African states, have been under the spotlight over the past few decades. Notwithstanding the varied histories, cultures, beliefs and political and economic circumstances of African countries, they all reveal common concerns around transformation in their legal education schemes. There is also a remarkable drift of manifold African jurisdictions towards globalisation and its attendant consequences in human migrations, climate change, communications, technology, trade and neo-liberal ideals. Decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy of legal education has thus become an inevitable imperative for African institutions of legal training if their outputs are to bear any sustainable relevance in a globalised world.

The questions poignantly begging for answers at this juncture are: Why should we decolonise legal education in Africa? How should Africans visualise the future of legal education? Will old-style institutions of legal training fizzle out or will they survive the 4IR?

It is argued that HE institutions providing legal training in Africa must assess how they provide student life experiences that prepare law students to be healthy and vibrant legal professionals in today's complex world and in the future. Today's legal education curricula require drastically different educational models; we must overhaul the entire concept, redesign the monolithic system, introduce technology-focused subjects required for a digital economy and introduce subjects such as systems management, artificial intelligence and data analytics to prepare our students for future roles and responsibilities. Dynamic legal education will be required to develop a greater capacity for ethical and intercultural understanding of the

paradigmatic shift brought about by the 4IR, with huge implications for the world of work and the extension of HE, as a result of the societal changes brought about by the 4IR.

The last three industrial revolutions had a big impact on schooling, but this one is bigger and faster than the others and it will upset and further complicate the world. The vast range of digital disruption that the African region is facing might therefore be viewed as a risk or an opportunity to reposition ourselves. The risk is that many jobs will be jeopardised and regional stability and commerce will be substantially altered as a result. However, because this is unavoidable, a digitally rich future will redefine the roles of both educators and learners; it is an opportunity. They will be able to apply their abilities more broadly than ever before by embracing and adapting to this digital future. How successfully we offer craftsmanship, structure our curricula, combine varied abilities, relate to society and equip our learners in the digital age will determine our collective fortune.

It will be insufficient to simply digitalise legal education, such as providing instruction and resources in an electronic format. It will also not suffice to digitalise legal practice and services, for example, by merely using this digitalised information to automate operations. To get the most out of the mix of technological opportunities and their growing impact on society, we should strive for comprehensive digital transformation, in which we holistically modify learning activities, processes, competencies and models. Our extensive local knowledge and learned experiences should place legal educators and students in a unique position to make significant contributions to the digital future.

Of course, globalisation and technology alone will not resolve Africa's myriad existential challenges. If nothing more, the current challenges being encountered in implementing various regional treaties that implicate human rights, the rule of law, regional trade and the growing reversals of the gains of democratisation, or what some have labelled 'democratic backsliding' (Bermeo 2016), make it imperative that those who will serve African societies and peoples as stakeholders of law, order, human dignity and justice are weaned from the vestiges of unproductive ideological indoctrinations.

Decolonised legal education: Quest for a viable alternative

With our understanding of colonialism's epistemological foundations, current decolonisation struggles are expectedly being waged across many frontiers, principally within the political, socio-cultural and economic spheres but also within educational systems. The latter includes not only the demand for all-encompassing classrooms but also the establishment of pedagogical models that seek to promote sweeping social change through culturally and epistemologically relevant approaches to teaching, learning and research

(Kok & Oeloftse 2020; Van Marle & Modiri 2012). Decolonised legal education (curriculum and pedagogy) can, indeed, be a large component of that effort. It can be a veritable tool for deconstructing colonial influences on knowledge systems and instruction. However, while this can sound revolutionary and transformative, it is not the exclusive step towards ultimate decolonisation.

While there is a groundswell of consensus that legal education in Africa should be decolonised, there remains the challenge of what exact approaches and strategies should be adopted. It is one thing to overthrow the Eurocentric standards of Western liberal philosophy and supplant them with novel homegrown ideals, but it will be purposeless and defeatist to have a colonial system replaced with a neo-colonial system; the educational system sought to be transformed will only turn out as another colonised experience. Superficial efforts to indigenous knowledge systems may not contribute to decolonisation but rather colonise homegrown knowledge and create further identity problems.

To prevent such an unwholesome outcome, African intellectuals should not only dedicate themselves to *thinking* about decolonisation but must also *act* to decolonise laws and knowledge systems. Decolonisation, therefore, summons us to diffuse the historicity of legal knowledge and praxis by deconstructing transplanted systems that continue to dominate indigenous thought processes, removing their class, gender and racial biases, and establishing authentic people-oriented knowledge systems. Concentrating on ensuring a stable future for African societies demands cogent decolonial measures – practical measures we must investigate and learn to apply. Working out how the landscape of law, legal training, legal practice and indeed the entire legal architecture will support a responsive HE sector which, in turn, will promote stable and economically viable African societies is an essential footstep in advancing meaningful decolonisation. Our beckoning responsibility is to identify a viable alternative that suitably aligns with the well-established principles of African communalism and humanism and provides an impetus for changing epistemic orthodoxies that sustain social injustices and inhumane conditions.

Decolonised legal education: The social reconstruction alternative

By and large, the philosophy of HE in Africa had leaned towards the essentialist approach, which had been heavily criticised for viewing the process of education and knowledge acquisition as an end (Englund 2000). This is understandable considering the vast colonial project across Africa. As legal education is an integral part of the HE sector, it goes without saying that the system of teaching, learning and research in law faculties and law schools has

followed the path of essentialism. Even though several aspects of the colonial orientation have witnessed attempts at reforming them, for example, through the introduction of students' councils, some freedom for students to choose research project topics, the inclusion of students in some administrative decisions, moot court programmes and a structure of continuing legal education in some jurisdictions, the core praxis of legal education remains essentialist (Gutto 2012; Kok & Oeloftse 2020; Ndulo 2002).

If African lawyers, law scholars and jurists are to be pulled back from that ossified orientation of essentialist training and mindsets, it is important that a radically different approach must be adopted in the institutions of legal education across Africa.

In response to the turmoil of the Great Depression, the idea emerged in the United States of America that predicated social change and progress on experiential education among the citizens and the 'continuous reconstruction of experience' (Zuga 1992, p. 50). Explaining the importance of this idea at its onset, Bode (1933) posited that:

> This reconstruction of experience, if it is to have any significance, must take the form of actual living and doing. Consequently, the school must be transformed into a place where pupils go, not primarily to acquire knowledge, but to carry on a way of life. That is, the school is to be regarded as, first, an ideal community in which pupils get practice in cooperation, in self-government, and in the application of intelligence to difficulties or problems as they may arise. In such a community there is no antecedent compartmentalization of values. (p. 19)

Expatiating on the connotations of the social construction ensuing from the above, Dewey and Childs (1933) stated that:

> Our continued democracy of life will depend upon our own power of character and intelligence in using the resources at hand for a society which is not so much planned as planning – a society in which the constructive use of the experimental method is completely naturalized. In such a national life, society itself would be a function of education, and the actual educative effect of all institutions would be in harmony with the professed aims of the special educational institution. (p. 65)

Extrapolating from our learned experiences in the monolithic structure of legal education in much of post-colonial Africa, at the university level, and in the law schools thereafter, there are a plethora of crucial values that social reconstructionism could add to our decolonisation project. Social reconstructionism is predicated on active participation through hands-on, experiential learning and application. In this case, the experience is not a mindless drill, development of regimented skills, or merely completing personally chosen projects. The overall purpose is the maximum beneficiation for society. Thus, the core of the approach is viewing the academic institution as a community through which values and conducts beneficial to the larger society would be imparted through practical action. Importantly, this approach

excludes activities such as professional training or skills acquisition that position students into preconceived roles that they must assume upon qualification and certification. Bode (1933) illustrated this graphically:

> Shopwork, for example, is not dominated by the idea of personal profit, but becomes a medium for the expression of aesthetic values and social aims. The quest for knowledge is not ruled by the standards of research, but is brought into immediate relation with human ends. Judgements of conduct are not based upon abstract rules, but on considerations of group welfare. (pp. 19–20)

In the envisaged decolonised African law school, a social reconstructionist curriculum will involve students in self-government, decision-making, the evolution of community consciousness, and relevance on the part of students as well as group projects that are focused on the institution as well as the immediate locality, district, provincial, regional, and global communities. The training of lawyers and legal minds should not be fixated on preserving the *status quo* or on elitist interests. The ultimate implication is squarely for social relevance and purpose as the guiding force for the reconstruction of experience within the law school. The social purpose must also guide the choice of content and activities which form the curriculum as well as the way law teachers present their modules.

Organising legal education on a social reconstruction paradigm

To execute a social reconstruction curriculum in legal education, the focus should be on social problems that have direct relevance to African daily lives and livelihoods. The technical processes of law should only be taught insofar as they implicate solutions to social problems. Merely theoretical, esoteric, and obsolete canons and principles of interpretation that lead to technical justice rather than substantive justice add nothing to the worldview of law students beyond ticking the boxes of knowledge if such do not enhance distributive and social justice.

The decolonised law teacher has the responsibility to instil in students' conduct and zeal for seeking out the ends of knowledge and skills that will improve the lives of Africans. By so doing, the decolonised legal academe will no longer be dependent on instruction merely as a function of accepted standards of practice but as a veritable tool for pragmatic experimentation, result-oriented, and problem-solving experience.

The social reconstruction alternative positions itself as most appropriate for assimilation into African consciousness and worldview and holds the promise of assuaging the traumas of the past and the socio-economic imbalances of the present through the instrumentality of the law.

Conclusion

Decolonising education can denote different meanings to different people in different contexts. However, what remains invariable is that the decolonisation of any system of education cannot happen in an instant but will require vigorous and continual efforts and determination within affected institutions and, indeed, throughout the HE sector. There can be no working in silos in reconceptualising and decolonising curriculum and pedagogy.

Various approaches to HE have been canvassed in post-colonial contexts, but social construction has been proffered as one which uniquely fits the purposes which decolonised legal education should serve in Africa, namely, transformative societies. Social construction strives to involve students in school and community life to help them become professionals who can revamp, rebuild, and empower their immediate and extended societies. This modest contribution is an effort to elucidate that direction.

Far from being an *ex-cathedra* pronouncement on all the dynamics that would inform the decolonisation of legal education, primarily, and the HE sector in Africa, in the broader perspective, this contribution would have served its purpose if it stimulates further intellectual engagement in these regards.

Chapter 7

Reconsidering the power of decolonisation among selected southern African university students

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Abstract

Africans are innovative, creative, and adaptive individuals who meritoriously domesticated yields, animals, and man-made tools to endure their circumstances. Thus, Africans prepared their art, music, and literature, whereas introducing Western ideology adversely impacted the African nation

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underpinned by the *ubuntu* way of life. The superpowers have become persuasive in Africa to date and some legacies that they left in the continent are playing a pivotal role in the African universities, for example, how they accomplished to impart the so-called three Rs (read, write, and arithmetic) and using English for Western benefits. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the impact of external education in African universities, which favours Western ideologies at the expense of African students; hence the importance of decoloniality to embrace African ways at African universities.

The chapter is guided by the narrative enquiry by which students (MA and PhD students) at the selected universities in southern Africa (Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe) were able to share their experiences. A qualitative method was used to obtain the students' views regarding the importance of decolonisation for the public good of African universities. Results show that the engaged students view decolonisation differently but are willing to participate in this topic. Results were categorised into different themes such as funding and decision-making, African systems, termination of capitalist agenda, dependency syndrome, and a lack of funding, social media platforms, and African theories as solutions and Pan-African ideology, as well as environmental scanning.

Introduction

Amid Africa's innumerable issues, none of it has sparked as much debate as the style of education that must be provided to African students and offered at African universities. A challenge like the feasibility and efficacy of improving the knowledge in Africa for both settlers and colonised natives continues to be a source of many discussions. Within imperial and worldwide institutions, a wide range of views and stances evolved regarding the significance of education in the growth of the economy of African civilisations. Jauade Sane (2020) noted that 'Africanising the educational system in Africa is a path to liberation for the African people'.

Moreover, the importance of education as a force for socialisation, freedom, and progress is an admissible right to education; thus, it must be accompanied by rights in education. In learning, students' cultures, demands, and languages must be protected and respected. There is a risk that African countries will continue utilising education as a means of enslavement. Teferra and Altbachl (2004) noted that a paradigm of the universal declaration of human rights must be considered to accurately decolonise education for the benefit of the public in Africa.

This chapter covers issues around African education rights, decolonisation in limbo in African universities, the involvement of students in bringing decoloniality to universities for public good, scholars' contributions in practical and meaningful ways to decoloniality, the feminist legacy in bringing

decoloniality, the role of colonialism, student activities and information communication technology (ICT), what can be done, decoloniality of doing, scholarship's impact, research findings, conclusions and recommendations. Thus, the following sections in this chapter will briefly outline some of these prior listed concepts.

Main issues confronting the African system

Superpowers continue to exert control over countries that were once colonised, often under the guise of political independence and investment. The decline of one type of colonialism prompted the creation of a new, less blatant form of colonialism known as super or new imperialism. As the author Chinua Achebe saw it, it was critical to restore the former's self-possession and demonstrate that African societies have always had their culture (Achebe 1958). The superpowers certainly continue to influence and dominate African countries politically, economically and in education, particularly at African universities. Even in certain African countries that reflect the extinction of African culture and the dominion of superpowers, English is currently suggested as the official language. Decolonisation will surely assist in solving some of the problems that students face at university, like suicide and drug abuse, as well as those that students face after university, such as unemployment and other social problems.

Furthermore, the location of universities is a key issue that illustrates the colonial legacy because no universities are situated in rural areas where most people reside. Most universities are in towns where black people were not allowed to dwell during the colonial period because of the creation of zones such as the zones of being and non-being. As a result, for decolonisation to occur, it is also necessary to rebuild or revisit where universities are located to determine whether they are serving the public interest. This issue affects the views of citizens on public good.

African education rights

The right to education is guaranteed in Africa by a slew of international, regional, and state laws. Education, as per the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, is a method of achieving all other rights. According to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, education shall strike a balance between fostering physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional well-being as well as the intellectual, social, and practical components of learning. The right to education is sometimes referred to as enlightenment or an entry point right (Beiter 2005). Thus, the right must allow the educated to take charge of their lives and promote the growth of their country, which is critical for ensuring public good.

Role of colonialism

The structural dimension of colonialism and imperialism is, without a doubt, the most well-known and unmistakable legacy. Structural decolonisation entails reallocating and re-opening material options and capabilities that are presently dispersed in ways that amplify and reproduce colonial connections, such as universities, jobs, titles, professional recognition, research budgets, leadership and elitism roles, scholarships, and admissions. Women, people of colour, and black women have long been clustered in causal and risky academic positions in Europe, the United States of America (USA), and Africa, where most peer-reviewed journals on African Studies are located, while heterosexual, white, cisgender male researchers have previously monopolised the university system (Zamani 2003). Black women and Afro-diasporic peers are burdened with 'cultural work' and held accountable for redressing their institutions' discrimination as they rise through the ranks, but their efforts are aggressively undercut and disregarded. This pipeline dilemma, or the disappearance of African and female researchers at higher levels of authority and reputation, betrays the racist and sexist education institutions that persist within universities. Such incidents affect citizens' views on the role of higher education (HE) for public good. Stream issues arise because of unequal deployments of labour, responsibilities, and assistance, culminating in some categories of individuals dropping out of school at a quicker pace than others.

Decolonisation in limbo in African universities

Originally, the assessment of academic achievement was associated with colonialist institutions of compulsory learning and is based on worldwide community guidelines. As stated by Kessi, Marks and Ramugondo (2020), decolonisation and the adequacy of the current educational framework for the region are not considered in these studies, decreasing education's value as an instrument for the public good. As a result, several Africans can only write successfully in a European language while speaking clearly in one African language. This significantly slows down the learning experience. Students of African literature will study more Shakespeare than Soyinka, Wallace more than Wa Thiong'o, which is the same as for those who are in Sciences, Economics, and any other departments at African universities. The focus and prescribed books are European, yet they are supported to use the same knowledge that they learn at the university to solve African problems, which are generally different from those that they learn, which are European, hence the continuous suffering of African states yet there are a lot of graduates in Africa who cannot find jobs and find solutions to address the challenges because of lack of decoloniality and embracing of African systems that might work for the African communities. This will assist in providing positive views towards public good.

Moreover, regardless of fluency, all African universities and intra-meetings are conducted in the European English language. The language-in-education dispute has economic and political ramifications, yet maintaining colonial dialects may compromise learning goals and be based on a colonial illusion of an unmanageable mass of languages. In fact, African languages are at the foundation of the social-communicative link, although South Africa's constitution recognises the equity of its many languages (Ramose 2003). Consequently, whereas the university is spatially available and accessible in Africa, students lack conceptual access and availability, which is a great psychological burden. Spivak (2014) claimed that colonialism is the most egregious example of conceptual violence because it deprives African learners of their ability to speak and write.

More so, in most African universities, expressing native languages is generally prohibited. Numerous textbooks are imported from Europe or translated into a European dialect. Textbook information is seen as essential and irrefutable. In contrast to European languages, evaluations that rate students' proficiency does not take into account challenges stemming from secondary fluency. In a language they are highly familiar with, someone who can count quite well in their language would be considered to have low numeracy skills. In many African civilisations, the language of teaching is rarely spoken at home and the teacher may struggle to understand it (Atuahene 2011). Clearly, this demonstrates the need for African universities to be decolonised as some students are unable to enrol because they do not meet the prerequisites that universities impose as mandatory, regardless of their capacity to do things or have a profound understanding of their culture. This raises the question of whether African universities exist to serve the public good or to serve colonial interests and private profit.

Shizha (2015) noted that colonial schooling wiped away indigenous knowledge concerning agriculture, healing and dietary plants, medical practices, societal values, farming systems, and craftsman groups. The language of the drums, bone-setting, and knowledge of medicinal herbs, all of which were once important to indigenous culture, have all been forgotten. There were various ways of learning information in and of Africa before colonisation, but these were superseded and abandoned (Shizha 2010).

Indigenous knowledge can improve global knowledge in a variety of fields, including agriculture, environment, politics, sociology, and the arts. Incorporating indigenous knowledge in the context of global ideas may be essential for planning the rights to freedom, the environment, and industrialisation.

Likewise, indigenous knowledge can help researchers in enhancing their research instruments and methodologies. As a result, post-colonial education fundamentally dislocates students from their community and does not prepare

them for the industry because of poor reading and understanding (Pratt et al. 2018). Accordingly, for African universities to solve these disparities or gaps, decolonisation must occur and African students must have a say in how universities are run. It is also at a time when the globe is dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic that some universities are enacting mandatory vaccination policies for students, demonstrating how universities have been captured and controlled while students' opinions and rights are improperly addressed on whether they want to be vaccinated or not. Such required regulations will inevitably result in dropouts and even a reduction in the number of students at some universities as some students believe in or have used traditional remedies to cure COVID-19-related symptoms, which makes them less convinced to be vaccinated. These latest developments, if not properly engaged and approached, will have a huge impact on the views of universities for public good.

Furthermore, education's status has become the goal and sole aim of education. As stated by Kayira (2015), indigenous knowledge is built on a cultural community and is at the heart of a person's identity and sense of belonging to the community. Subjugated education produces citizens with a weak human sympathy for the nation and limited technological knowledge, robbing African governments of their claim to democracy and progress. The physical is maintained while identity is eliminated because of philosophical dissonance; existence substitutes the living and reality is dehumanised. In the field of education, decoloniality relates to knowledge, language, and the overall institutional culture that supports African universities. The elimination of imperialist conceptual frameworks and social practices to concentrate on Africa is known as the decolonisation of education. Generally, decolonising is defined as a phrase that encompasses a political and normative ethic and exercise of deliberate ultimate failure, including unlearning and dismantling unfair practices, assumptions, and institutions, as well as enduring positive action to develop and maintain alternative spaces and areas of study (Pratt et al. 2018).

In addition, to close the gap that exists in most African universities, a joint effort must be made to evaluate how knowledge and power have been interpreted and denied among African students. Therefore, calls for decolonisation are consistent with interpretations of colonialism and coloniality that go far beyond periods and figures. The enslavement and subordination of people, societies, and experiences for the goals of acquiring knowledge, wealth, and power that support white Western supremacy actively or passively can be defined as imperialism, with the aim of elimination. The crucial and concluding questions are (Kessi et al. 2020): who does decolonial work serve and what (or whom) does it centre? It is not decolonial if the response in African Studies does not include black Africans and Afro-diasporic peoples, as well as the possibility of radical autonomy and independence. Decolonising entails

considering why individuals read some books but not others and facing the knowledge they convey as well as the knowledge they conceal. However, it extends even further, urging Africans to restructure academic responsibility and power so that it is based on mutual support and realistic pluralism instead of upper social and professional exclusionary systems.

The involvement of students in bringing decoloniality to universities

Student-led uprisings in South Africa from 2015 to 2016 under the hashtags #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall raised awareness of some of the systemic disparities in higher education institutions (HEIs) (Makhubu & Budree 2019). Nhemachena, Nauta and Warikandwa (2017) conducted a study at the University of Namibia in 2016 to ascertain student opinions on the #FeesMustFall movement in Namibia. Students advised that the university administration rethink its offerings, while others praised the #FeesMustFall movement, pointing out that the protesters in Namibia were mostly from low-income families. Students alluded that the demonstration was beneficial to them because tuition fees were not raised, and the government recognised that the high tuition fees presented a major impediment for students (Nhemachena, Nauta & Warikandwa 2020).

Furthermore, historian Safia Aidid started a global discussion on #CadaanStudies, condemning the elimination of Somali scholars in favour of a prevalence and domination of white academics creating fortunes around Somali politics (Berns-McGown 2016). Such campaigns and events are much more than just hashtags; they depict long-running battles involving power, agency, and impact in the context of Africa, politics, and people. They rely on a long history of anti-colonial resistance around the world, encompassing coordinated activities like the anti-apartheid protests. These also highlight the role of students, the ongoing next wave of scholars in expanding human normative imaginations and developing new avenues for academic integrity. Advocates urge that, as Africans, students face representation, legitimacy, and accountability in the curriculum and research, not just when riots erupt but daily. The chapter argues that student involvement and participation are critical for the public image of HE. It is for this reason that the chapter is centred around students participating in the new academic landscape.

Student activities and information communication technology

Local student activists have questioned the slow pace of transformation in South African colleges as well as the national government's lack of progress in addressing the country's white economic hegemony (Molefe 2016).

Activists say that the country's economic riches and resources are controlled by a white minority while most black Africans remain poor (Heleta 2016). Although university policies emphasise the need for reform, equity, and equality, African students continue to be marginalised in most universities. Black African students are systemically repressed in terms of language at historically white or advantaged universities, which is a significant determinant of academic failure (Van Rooy & Coetzee-Van Rooy 2015). Accordingly, underprivileged black students must function in a learning culture and syllabus that are mostly founded in Western history and thinking and presented in modern English.

To add more, a reflection on the dialectical relationship between previous colonial educational policies and the praxis of current pedagogies that stifle the growth of indigenous knowledge at South African universities' computing departments is vital. Furthermore, it is maintained that computing decolonisation cannot be a separatist movement. In fact, a 'decolonised' curriculum should not prioritise one set of knowledge domains over another (Heleta 2016). Instead, decolonisation indicates that both Western and non-Western worldviews are relevant and helpful in combating hegemony in computing education. The developments in language policies in the computing discipline and the impact of colonial and contemporary neo-liberal policies on the South African HE sector may be made by using hermeneutics as a theoretical framework and document analysis as a research approach.

Conversely, curricula, according to Heleta (2016), contribute little to the genuine decolonisation of knowledge systems at universities as they are integrated with dominant Eurocentric epistemologies. Thus, progressive academics bear the responsibility of decolonising their curricula to democratise pedagogy and learning culture. Decolonisation is viewed as a critical process of amassing and reconstructing knowledge systems with indigenous content, and it necessitates collaborative effort by both educators and students (Heleta 2016). Academics from Africa and South Africa have reacted to the call for the creation of local or indigenous material. Von Holy et al. (2017, p. 1) created the 'BantuWeb' project, an online digital library that encourages users to contribute 'resource-scarce languages' (RSL) materials to a web-based portal. Computing departments should provide dual-medium education to enable such curriculum reorganisation. Researchers suggest that computing departments use software development and software engineering skills and concepts to integrate fully underdeveloped African languages within the field. Existing software, such as Microsoft's Local Language Programme launched in 2012, may be valuable in assisting computing departments in their efforts to Africanise their curricula. Setswana, Sesotho sa Leboa (Northern Sotho), isiXhosa, isiZulu, Afrikaans, Wolof, Malagasy, Hausa, and Kiswahili are among the 108 African languages covered by the curriculum. Microsoft provides a

style guide for each available language to assist with the localisation of digital technology solutions in the native tongue.

Sutinen and Vesisenaho (2006) discovered that an ethnocomputing-based approach to ICT-related education could be properly deployed in the context-driven concepts of an indigenous society. Sutinen and Vesisenaho (2006) developed a contextualised fundamental programming course for second-year undergraduate teacher education students in partnership with Tumaine University in Tanzania. The course's goal was to encourage students to create programmes that were adapted to the requirements of their respective communities. The material of the course was chosen to be representative of students' daily lives. The web-based educational system, for example, was depicted as a village, a culturally appropriate metaphor. Thus, students might access and get learning content by selecting the people and the huts in the village. This purposeful use of symbolism was intended to demonstrate that programming principles do not need to be communicated in 'high-tech' Western-styled ways but can be made easily understandable by employing concepts and visual symbols that are indicative of students' local socio-cultural environment. This demonstrates that students are enthused about the economic and social benefits that contextualised technology applications can provide, particularly in terms of accelerating development activities and improving communication (Sutinen & Vesisenaho 2006).

■ Scholar's contribution in practical and meaningful ways to decoloniality

Black Academic Caucus (BAC) is a group of academics who view blackness as a perspective through which to observe, think, and act in the world, founded on African and Afro-Diasporic existence (Kessi 2017). This posture encapsulates the concept of African Studies as well as a decolonial approach to the dynamics of place, expression, and practice. The University of Cape Town (UCT) BAC is an outstanding example of decolonising the institution in action. The BAC, which was co-established by two of the writers of this chapter, was predicated on academic advocacy. The BAC's activities have demonstrated how black scholars' institutional stance has a direct impact on the potential for reshaping the academic area and reconceptualising the focus and significance of work in and about Africa and even the desires of an African and Africa-centred university and its scholarship. The BAC has supported demographic shifts in recruitment and committee participation all over the institution as well as advocating for curricular change and interrogating racialising and exploitative research techniques (Kessi et al. 2020). The BAC's numerous and overlapping tactics are based on the recognition that the knowledge production sector is broad and complicated and that university operations are interconnected and dependent.

Feminist legacy in bringing decoloniality

It should come as no surprise that the BAC began and evolved at UCT, which has been labelled as the final stronghold of class supremacy and institutional discrimination in South African HE. Significantly, the BAC was founded in a context where the university had already confessed its inability to keep black intellectuals and foster a diversified university system beyond the heterosexual, white, cisgender male and even where black academics were not developing forums to express their experience. What became evident was that when these encounters are personal, the institution triumphs, making it hard for black academics to speak up as a group and demand an appropriate distribution and re-opening of material resources and possibilities. The BAC was able to demonstrate that black academics might stay in lower ranks of educational hierarchies for way too long if they persisted at the university, although their white peers were frequently upgraded in short periods (Esso & Long 2020).

Moreover, this same BAC has also had to decolonise its intellectual activities at UCT by incorporating decolonial writings and pedagogies into the lecture hall, planning to host seminars and conferences on how to decolonise the institute, revealing scientific and epistemic racism inside fields of study, and implicating BAC members in university-wide mechanisms for undertakings on educational reform within decolonial standpoints and on the symbolic racism propagated through works of art (Kessi et al. 2020). This task demanded and required ongoing defiant decolonial action as it was all too easy to slip into the traps of co-opting the systemic epicoloniality that they were attempting to fight and ultimately deconstruct. According to Kessi et al. (2020), the rebellious decolonial practice has repercussions such as the marginalisation of black professors, particularly those working on curriculum modification to include decolonial concepts. The fact is that most white and European academics are unwilling or unable to accept African-led reform or to make room for researchers from restricted and underprivileged groups (Bonti-Ankomah 2020).

Research policies

In African universities, research expenditures are another evidence of systemic colonialism. Funds in developed nations are way bigger than in African countries and they are frequently labelled as financial assistance, necessitating framework-outlined paradigms such as investigating 'fragile regimes' or offering capacity-building (Maassen 2012). This develops a political research economy centred on the old imperial megalopolis and focused on extractive and nepotism: using knowledge to rescue Africa. Western principal researchers and institutions gain both tangible and conceptual research capital because of institutional and donor obligations, which force them to host programmes

like paying operating costs. For example, Africa's largest science academies have failed to meet donor country requirements that African researchers contribute match funds to be eligible for grants (Kessi et al. 2020). Even if intellectuals in the worldwide apply for research grants with the intention of disbursing resources and collaborating with African-based partners, power, prestige, timeframes, publication requirements, budgetary overheads, and chances for additional funding continue to stay connected to Europe and the United States of America.

What can be done: The decoloniality of doing

Whereas decolonial dialogue has resurfaced in the past few years, multiple scholars and activists have pointed out that it is not a new one. Students involved in movements like #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, #BlackLivesMatter, and others have been and continue to be driven by decolonial intellectuals whose work spans generations and continents (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). These conflicts, while not new, discover different disquiets for expression in the modern moment, expanding racial and gendered inequalities that are still primarily entrenched in coloniality (Pillay 2020). As noted by Chikafa-Chipiro (2019), what strikes out in the contemporary and growing decolonial debate across principles and application is black feminist researchers' resistance to being muted, as well as their commitment to maintaining action within the academia, notwithstanding the consequences. This demonstrates that Africans are gaining clout to raise their voices. It is impossible to deny that the mandated regulations that African universities are required to follow only disadvantage Africans who are constantly fighting to get their opinions heard. It is also important to remember that colonialism resulted in the eradication of African cultures and the appropriation of African territory and resources.

As a result, for decolonisation to occur, all colonial impacts must be addressed, with the most basic being the provision of land to Africans, as this is one of their fundamental rights to empowerment and land is the source of all wealth. The next issue is to readdress the use of language at all African universities, as the use of English makes it difficult for students who are fluent and good in their native language to enter an institution (Mutasa 2015). Giving land to Africans will also benefit parents who cannot support their children at university and must rely on monthly allowances that are insufficient and, most of the time, the same students will be forced to send money home to their parents. This is causing most students, both those who have access to grants and those who are expected to pay for them, to struggle, resulting in most of them abusing drugs or committing suicide. Thus, decoloniality is the way forward because it will not only benefit universities but will also address some challenges that people face in society. If students can bring decolonisation and universities to Africa, they could solve African problems as well.

Scholarships' effect

Scholarships have been shown to benefit students, the economy, and education. Mutula (2009) specified that several low-income families and individuals had found HE to be outrageously costly. Fees will not be paid by students in this case. Furthermore, because scholarships are not reimbursed, students and their parents are relieved of the burden of reimbursing the principal plus interest. Students will not seek part-time work to cover their education costs and will instead focus on their studies, resulting in high-quality results (Zvavahera 2014). Therefore, an employer prefers scholarship students because they are seen as competent and focused, and whenever organisations grant scholarships, the country is more likely to educate more people who contribute to the economy. It is also important to note that some political leaders in Africa have played a vital role in providing programmes that support marginalised children, especially those who come from rural or underprivileged families, and this comprises the ex-presidents Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, Nelson Mandela and Jacob Zuma in South Africa to mention a few.

Investigation method

This contemporary study investigates the role of decolonisation in African universities through interviews with African students (MA and PhD) from Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. The study examines students' perspectives on the impact of African education in the African context. The study used the qualitative approach.

Participants

This study's subjects comprised a group of selected students from the selected countries. The participants were chosen through referrals from colleagues in the selected countries where the authors have exposure and have resided in the countries, which makes them known in the areas. Targeted sampling was applied where referrals and some known to the authors were engaged for the research.

Data-collection procedure and data analysis

The study used online interviews whereby the open-ended questionnaires were distributed through WhatsApp and Google Docs to the participants. Participants were asked for their consent to participate in the study. The data were coded by categorising them into different themes, and to maintain participants' confidentiality, the participant's answers were only marked as 'respondents'. Thus, the categorisation of data as respondents helped in maintaining the confidentiality, ease of access, and integrity of the data.

Guiding theoretical framework (narrative enquiry)

A narrative review is a practice of examining people's life experiences. To understand one's experience, it is vital to explore their life account, which denotes the experiences that somebody has lived through, such as, in this case, the students' views on the role of decoloniality in African universities. Clandinin (2006) pointed out that the narrative approach aims to explore life sequence, which involves an individual's social arrangements in the timing, duration, spacing, and order of occasions and roles of social being trajectories identifying that these features are consequences of strategies that people convey onwards within the limitations of their social world. Thus, the narrative approach is central to this study as its target was to investigate the role of decoloniality in African universities.

Research findings

From the interviews conducted, the main themes which emerged are discussed further.

Awareness of student bodies

The starting point was in relation to awareness of students' organisations and how the participants felt and perceived the impact of these organisations on universities. The themes which emerged were custodians of student welfare, and they were seen as platforms of political consciousness.

Custodian of student welfare

The student bodies are known for their role as being the intermediate or liaison officers within the HEI. Critical matters relating to student rights and welfare are the primary focus of the respective bodies. As alluded to by Respondent 04, they are an interaction platform for similar-minded compatriots, and they do not serve as a distraction to the students' main activity at university, which is education. The student bodies serve as the voice of the students with respect to grievances, and this is done by enforcing university policies, as noted by Respondent 06:

> 'Student organisations help students to air their grievances when it is necessary, therefore, creating effective communication, which helps universities to make proper decisions (decision-making).' (Respondent 01, unidentified, 30 December 2021)

> 'Yes, I'm aware of student organisations in Namibia and these student organizations have a positive impact on students at universities [...] student organisations such as NANSO are the boarding communication entities that help assure that student individual needs, complaints and wants are attended to.' (Respondent 02, unidentified, 02 January 2022)

> 'Student organisations that I'm aware of allow a gathering of students with similar minds and similar interests and they play a vital role in providing a platform to interact with other people while furthering their education in the process.' (Respondent 04, unidentified, 06 January 2022)

> 'Student organisations help to enforce university policies and mediate on issues concerning students like fees.' (Respondent 06, unidentified, 03 January 2022)

Politically aligned versus political consciousness

Respondent 03 alludes that student bodies are key in relation to student political consciousness as it keeps them abreast with African-related matters. These bodies are characterised by diverse and like-minded peers within the university space. One of the most critical areas they tackle is financial and academic exclusion which they fight for by making academic leadership accountable and responsible to their constituent.

> 'Student organisations that I know play an integral role in some of the issues like land reform, fees must fall and other related issues in Africa.' (Respondent 03, unidentified, 05 January 2022)

> 'Yes, I'm aware of their existence and particularly the role they play in making universities accessible to all and combating all forms of exclusions, such as financial and academic. They help the universities, on the other hand, to breed vibrant, accountable, transparent, responsible leaders.' (Respondent 07, unidentified, 02 January 2022)

> 'The impact of the student organisations is that they help bring together a diverse group of people with similar interests in that university space.' (Respondent 05, unidentified, 03 January 2022)

Value of African education systems in African higher education institutions

Participants described the significance of the African education system. From their opinions, the themes which emerged were African solutions for African problems and not that important.

African solutions for African problems

The African education system is seen as highly significant as it allows one to relate information, which provides a solid foundation for tackling the challenges that Africa faces. The understanding of the systems better places the student as agents for change because of the fact that when one knows who they are and where they come from, they not only relate but can advance development through the African lens. Respondents 01, 02, and 10 all believe that knowing one's roots helps students comprehend where they came from

and helps them identify where they are going. Respondent 06 highlights the significance of theories applicable to Africa as crucial to resolving African problems. Respondent 08 stated that the existing system is harmful to Africa's development objective because it maintains ongoing inequality. This validates the decoloniality argument as it addresses the present imperial order.

> 'Would make things relatable and, in turn, prompt students to come up with ways of resolving the issues faced in Africa.' (Respondent 10, unidentified, 30 December 2021)

> 'To a greater extent, African education is important to African universities in the sense that it helps the student to have a proper understanding of where they came from; this then, moulds the African student through African culture, norms and values.' (Respondent 01, unidentified, 30 December 2021)

> 'It helps African students to learn about our local African laws, origin and descendants.' (Respondent 02, unidentified, 02 January 2022)

> 'Very important.' (Respondent 03, unidentified, 05 January 2022)

> '[...] half-half, content and value of skills is what really matters.' (Respondent 04, unidentified, 06 January 2022)

> 'Very important. African education must be incorporated as we are Africans.' (Respondent 05, unidentified, 03 January 2022)

> 'Theories that directly apply to Africans will be able to solve our problems, in turn, therefore, African education is very important to our universities.' (Respondent 06, unidentified, 03 January 2022)

> 'It is important because if we talk about African education, I understand it to be decolonised education system. It's a system of education that seeks to resolve African problems, not the one that seeks to sustain capitalism and imperialism. It's the education system that will completely change the values and ethics of African students to be suitable to current conditions to destroy those conditions.' (Respondent 08, unidentified, 04 January 2022)

Not that important

Universities on the continent have been chastised for their continuous support for neo-colonial and imperial agendas. The existing system continues to fail to adapt African styles of teaching; instead, the current imported education system advances the demands of foreigners. An Afrocentric education system is still a fantasy on the continent, as evidenced by the legal system's refusal to legislate the African modes of thinking.

> 'African universities are currently biased towards the neo-colonial and imperial agenda. The current differential education systems that exist in Africa are imported and imposed by the Western oligarchs to advance their capitalist agenda. We are yet to see an Afrocentric education system being legislated anywhere in Africa.' (Respondent 07, unidentified, 02 January 2022)

> '[...] is not important.' (Respondent 09, unidentified, 06 January 2022)

Challenges faced by African students because of the current education system

In relation to challenges they faced because of the current education system, participants indicated the use of English as a medium of instruction, unaffordable education, lack of resources, and an incompatible system with the economy.

Medium of instruction

Respondent 01 was concerned about the disadvantages of using English as a medium of instruction. There is an inability to express oneself appropriately in a foreign language. The language barrier extends to culture as the medium is insufficient to express oneself fully. The continent appears to be behind the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

> 'There is quite a plethora of challenges that African students face due to the current education system- the use of the English language as a way of communication. As far as we know, English is a borrowed language, therefore, African students at some point fail to articulate them. Due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, technology is moving at a faster rate and because of that, some students fail to operate those new technologies. [...] culture distortion as current education fails to recognise the background.' (Respondent 01, unidentified, 30 December 2021)

Unaffordable education

Higher education is still considered a privilege, owing to the economic imbalances and a lack of finance. Those who cannot afford HE are at the mercy of the world. Funding remains a hindrance to accessing formal education. Funding is a key resource to academic inclusion, especially noted during the COVID-19 pandemic and global lockdowns when the excessive costs of acquiring internet data played a key role in underrepresenting some students. There is a constant failure by the governing state to cushion the costs of education through government subsidies.

> 'As Africans, there is a higher gap between the rich and poor, which leaves the poorer to be feeling left behind and neglected when they are unable to afford proper education.' (Respondent 02, unidentified, 02 January 2022)

> 'Funding.' (Respondent 03, unidentified, 05 January 2022)

> 'Lack of resources, data for e-learning, tuition fees/no subsidies from the Zimbabwean government. The education system is borrowed and controlled by Westerners or superpowers; hence, it did not apply to our African setting.' (Respondent 06, unidentified, 03 January 2022)

Incompatible system to the economy

The current education system is criticised for its inability to address the socio-economic challenges of African countries. This is so because, as it is not

compatible with giving graduates the skills to be independent and be a part of the financial muscle of the population, it leads to high dropout rates. There is no willingness from the education system to search for one's talents and develop them. Throughput rates remain the focal point rather than the quality of the product. The Eurocentric approach to labour production remains its pitfall.

> 'Inability to respond to the societal issues, the highest level of dropouts, articulation challenges, unemployability, and dependence syndrome.' (Respondent 07, unidentified, 02 January 2022)
>
> 'The current education system is already trimmed and finalised. It's neither flexible nor creative. By the time kids go to Grade 1, there is already a set of subjects that children are already given to study. There is no willingness from the education system to search for one's talents and develop them. They simply want kids to pass what is already prescribed.
>
> 'Secondly, learners end up choosing courses that are based on what is available, not what they are passionate about.
>
> 'Learners drop out before they finish their courses due to funding problems that institutions make impossible to resolve.
>
> 'Learners end up being lazy and uninterested in their jobs because it is not something they wanted to do. [...] become unhappy, the workplace becomes stressful and end up depressed.
>
> 'Learner's graduate and still do not get employment only because what is offered in institutions of higher education is not consistent with the need of the industries and markets. These further courses stress and means that state resources have been wasted. Learner's graduate and become labour reserves. Due to being unemployed, they take any job no matter how much it pays. Imagine a teacher working as a petrol attendant [...].' (Respondent 08, unidentified, 04 January 2022)
>
> 'Most content delivered in African universities is not relatable as it is from outside say Europe.' (Respondent 10, unidentified, 30 December 2022)

The solutions that you think can bring an education system that solves African issue

Lastly, the participants were required to highlight the solutions that ought to be provided by the current education system. From their opinions key areas identified included: enhancing the decoloniality agenda, having access to HE, and changing the medium of instruction.

Enhancing decoloniality agenda

The Pan-African ideology can be used as a guide as it is key to the African way of life. Indigenous knowledge systems must be innovated as the natural way of life does not decrease life expectancy and philosophies supporting the indigenous innovations need to be adopted. The mind of the African itself

needs to be decolonised along with the modes of instruction within the university systems.

> 'More awareness should be done on decolonising African minds to ensure that people will adhere to African ways and systems in universities and other places.' (Respondent 01, unidentified manager, 30 December 2022)

> 'Eliminating old system.' (Respondent 03, unidentified, 05 January 2022)

> 'Dynamic solutions that apply to current African issues and introduce philosophies that promote indigenous innovations.' (Respondent 06, unidentified, 03 January 2022)

> 'Ideologically, Africa must adopt Pan-Africanism as the guiding ideology and principle. It must strive for socialist education, which will allow our organic talents to be nurtured, change in pedagogy to respond to the years of mental degradation of African people.' (Respondent 07, unidentified, 02 January 2022)

> 'Decolonisation of education.' (Respondent 09, unidentified, 03 January 2022)

Access to higher education

One of the major pitfalls of HE is the inability to access the underprivileged. Grants are not equally distributed as the victims of apartheid keep being discriminated against by the funding models of HE. The state needs to conduct a sober reality check; this will ensure that it is well-informed on the key challenges being faced by the community they serve. What is taught in universities must be aligned with the needs of the communities.

> 'Affordable higher education and equally distributed grants to financially accommodate the less fortunate.' (Respondent 02, unidentified, 02 January 2022)

> 'The first one is to have an environmental scan. What exists amongst our African societies and how it could be used to develop the people of that area? And the skills and resources needed for production to take place. Because, the first aim of African education is to make people producers, not just consumers of products.

> 'After that, the government must consult societies on how they could play a role in the economy of the continent. And then set up courses in institutions based on the needs of the people and the dynamics of their surrounding areas.' (Respondent 08, unidentified, 04 January 2022)

Changing the medium of instruction

Education may be deliberated in the native languages that the locals can comprehend. African cultures need to be incorporated into the education system. This will enhance how African issues can be accurately deliberated on social media platforms. The curriculum must simply adopt African-based learning modules.

> 'Better delivery of these African issues, i.e., social media, public debate, etc.' (Respondent 04, unidentified, 06 January 2022)

> 'Make education available in African languages, find ways to integrate African culture into education.' (Respondent 05, unidentified, 03 January 2022)

> 'Introducing African-based modules.' (Respondent 10, unidentified, 30 December 2021)

Discussion

Funding and decision-making

Most of the respondents indicated that they were aware of student organisations at universities. They also indicated that these student organisations play an important role in helping students air their grievances when it is necessary, therefore, creating effective communication that helps universities to take proper decisions (decision-making). They also act as mediators to address student needs and grievances, as well as helping to enforce university policies and mediate on pressing issues such as HEI fees. Respondents also indicated that student organisations allow a gathering of students with similar minds and similar interests. Besides, they play a vital role in providing a platform to interact with other people while furthering their education. Hence, the impact of student organisations is that they help bring together a diverse group of people with similar interests in that university space. More interestingly, other respondents clearly specified that student organisations that they know play an integral role in some issues like land reformation, fees must fall, and other related issues in Africa. This is in line with Makhubu and Budree (2019), who claimed that student-led uprisings in South Africa under the social media hashtags #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall raised awareness of some systemic disparities in HEIs. This clearly shows that student organisations or groups are vital at universities as they participate in activities that benefit students for the public good.

African systems

Most of the respondents indicated that African education is very important, while one respondent stated that content and value of skills really matter, not the system. Only one respondent said that it is unimportant. Respondents specified that African education is important because it helps students to have a proper understanding of their background. This builds the African student through African culture, norms, and values; it helps African students to learn about their local African laws, origin and descendant. More so, other respondents stated that the African education system is important because it assists in developing theories that directly apply to Africans, which contributes to solving problems and would make things relatable and prompt students to come up with ways of resolving the issues faced by Africa. These findings support Pratt et al. (2018) as they pointed out that post-colonial education dislocates students from their community and does not prepare them for any other situations because of poor reading and understanding. Shizha (2015) noted that colonial schooling wiped away indigenous knowledge concerning agriculture, healing and dietary plants, medical practices, societal values, farming systems, and craftsman groups, which also correspond to what the students indicated; hence, there is a need for decolonisation that will bring African systems in universities.

Terminating capitalist agenda

Furthermore, some respondents detailed that African universities are currently biased toward neo-colonial and imperial agendas. The current differential education systems that exist in Africa are imported and imposed by the Western oligarchs to advance capitalistic agenda; hence, there is a need for the Afrocentric education system to be legislated. The other main crucial point was that it is a system of education that seeks to resolve African problems rather than the current one that seeks to sustain capitalism and imperialism. These findings clearly support Kessi et al. (2020), who specified that the enslavement and subordination of people, societies, and experiences for the goals of acquiring knowledge, wealth, and power that support white supremacy actively or passively could be defined as imperialism. The questions remain: whom does decolonial work serve and what (or whom) does its centre? It is not decolonial if the response in African Studies does not include Africans as well as the possibility of radical autonomy and independence?

Dependency syndrome and lack of funds

Students or respondents highlighted several challenges that they face because of the current education system. This includes the following: being unable to be employed, dependency syndrome, language barrier, a lack of grants or funds and resources, a lack of search on one's talent because of the educational requirements that are in place, dropouts, graduates who cannot be hired for jobs (labour reserves), as well as a lack of acknowledgement for the African culture. Spivak (2014) claimed that colonialism is the most egregious example of conceptual violence because it deprives African learners of their ability to speak and write. The findings also correspond to those of Ramose (2003), who indicated that African languages are at the foundation of the social-communicative link. Although the equity of many languages is recognised and the university is spatially available and accessible in Africa, students lack conceptual access and availability, culminating in ineffective teaching and studying habits, thus posing a great psychological burden. Furthermore, when it comes to funding, the students raised the issue of a lack of funding, which was part of the scholarship effect as noted by Mutula (2009), who specified that scholarships had been shown to benefit students and the economy as education indicated that several low-income families and individuals had found HE to be outrageously costly. Thus, for these challenges to be addressed, there is a need for decolonisation to take place.

Social media platforms and African theories as solutions

The respondents suggested some solutions that can address African issues. Some of the respondents indicated that the main solutions are affordable

HE and equally distributed grants to financially accommodate the less fortunate, eliminating the old system and better delivery of African issues, for example, through social media and public debate. Furthermore, making education available in the African language and finding ways to integrate African culture into education are some of the solutions that were specified by students. They also included dynamic solutions that apply to current African issues and introduce philosophies that promote indigenous innovations as well as African-based modules. Von Holy et al. (2017) created the 'BantuWeb' project, an online digital library that encourages users to contribute or upload resource-scarce language materials to a web-based portal. Students have also suggested having such social media platforms that make Africans aware of BantuWeb's system.

Pan-Africanism ideology and environmental scanning

In addition, other students indicated that Africa must adopt the Pan-Africanism approach as the guiding ideology and principle. It must strive for socialist education that will allow one's indigenous talents to be nurtured and change in pedagogy to respond to the years of mental degradation of African people. One of the respondents also directed that environmental scanning is a solution. This includes what exists amongst African societies and how it could be used to develop the people of that area and the skills and resources needed for production to take place. This is because the main aim of African education should be to make people producers, not just consumers of products. More to it, collaboration is also a vital solution whereby government and institutions must consult societies on how they could play a role in the economy and then set up courses in institutions based on the needs of the people and the dynamics of their surrounding areas. This is in line with Van Rooy and Coetzee-Van Rooy's (2015) finding that black African students are systemically repressed in terms of language at historically white or advantaged universities, which is a significant determinant of academic failure. Thus, this shows that there is a need for an African ideology that will solve the current challenges.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, it is evident that the colonial system continues to take an active part in African universities and that students face obstacles both during and after their studies, as reported by many of the participants. These difficulties include dependency theory, language, access to resources and finances, as well as the inability to find and keep work, which affect public views on HE. On the other hand, the students who took part in this study noted that the vital solutions include collaboration between government, universities, and society, environmental scanning to determine what is needed in the area, finding one's

skill and having social media platforms that discuss African systems and offering of African modules with indigenous language and harnessing African theories.

Africans must come together and accept their heritage. It is also clear that for decolonisation to take place, Africans should have access to land, embrace African culture, values, and ways of life, and embrace ideologies that assist in addressing their problems. Africans should rally behind one another and collaborate to discover the most effective solutions and systems for the continent. Africans must oversee their future. As a result, when it comes to education, it is apparent that colonisation has destroyed African creeds, norms, and values that make up African culture to a greater level.

While the African continent cannot be described as culturally homogeneous, its people are remarkably connected, which explains why most of the issues raised by the students in this study are nearly identical, although they are from different countries and institutions. In Africa, however, sovereignty and decolonisation are still elusive. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Franz Fanon (1961) wrote, 'Each generation must discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it, in relative opacity'. Therefore, the main mission for each young African should be decolonisation to shift away from glorifying outside systems or relying more on externals. It should also be noted that some women are beginning to preach the importance of decolonisation. For example, the South African Minister of Tourism Lindiwe Sisulu's (2022) opinion piece titled, 'Hi Mzansi, have we seen justice?' has been widely criticised by several groups and some people, but it remains one of the pieces aimed at decolonising the legal system, demonstrating the role of those on authority and feminists in decolonisation. The chapter provides useful insight into the benefits of embracing decolonisation and the re-culturation of HE in the best interests of Africa's future. Incorporating the voices of older African students in African HEIs made a unique contribution and reinforced the need for instruction in indigenous languages at the tertiary level. Decolonisation remains in limbo, and it could be heard in the yearning for change from the voice of the participants and this has an impact on public good.

Chapter 8

Managing conflict at higher education institutions in South Africa

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Abstract

Conflict is inevitable in any organisation, and higher education institutions (HEIs) are not immune to it. Conflict ranges from minor confrontations and demonstrations to violent strikes. With the surge in public universities, HEIs can draw benefits from various conflict management styles and how these can manage in mitigating the crisis. Given that conflicts are miscellaneous and disputable, managing them requires the integration of various approaches and theories. Literature, observation, and experience pinpoint conflicts as prevalent, complex, and inevitable in any workplace, including HEIs, and resolving that has never been more challenging. Poor handling of conflict can result in absenteeism, employee turnover, diminished teamwork, decreased

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productivity, strikes, demonstrations, and litigations. Conversely, effective handling of conflict may enhance teamwork and increase morale, satisfaction, and productivity. This chapter aims to advance strategies for managing diverse types of conflicts, their impact, and conflict management styles that assist managers in public HEIs. This chapter focuses on the 'dual-concern theory', 'complexity theory', and 'contingency theory' to impart to the discussion to establish the nexus between the variables and the relevance. These will enable managers to identify when and how to react and in what ways to react to conflict to find an amicable balance since perpetually adopting a single style like avoiding, compromising, dominating, integrating, or obliging conflict management style alone in all circumstances cannot assist managers in resolving conflicts as there is no best way to manage conflicts. Therefore, the choice and adoption of a strategy to manage conflict can add value to the provision of public good, which should be informed by the timing, magnitude, and impact of the conflict at hand.

■ Introduction

Conflict in HEIs and how it is managed has a negative impact on the institution's core businesses. When two or more parties believe their aims are at odds, conflict ensues (Novta & Pugacheva 2021). Law and order have been disrupted, public tranquillity has been disturbed, and lives and property have been lost because of HEI crises (Lukman, Balkaran & Gobingca 2019). Disagreements, conflicts, protests, and strikes can all result from this discrepancy. 'Conflict management' is the act of reducing the negative aspects of conflict while strengthening the good ones (Melin 2021). Conflict management is defined by proponents as the systematic and proper use of political, social, economic, and even military solutions to a crisis that threatens an organisation's peace.

Higher education institutions, in general, find it difficult to operate in the face of conflict and, by and large, end up allocating significant time and resources to resolve conflicts, resulting in decreased productivity, demotivation, and slowed progress, as well as negative feedback from the conflicting parties. On this note, Lamm et al. (2020) argue that conflict is neither entirely good nor entirely bad but that how it is handled determines whether it succeeds or fails. As such, it is pivotal for managers to acquaint themselves with knowledge regarding when to ignore, accommodate, or compromise in conflicting circumstances (Berger 2017). Conflict is unavoidable and no institution can be immune to it; to ensure good governance in the higher education (HE) sector, managers should adopt differing approaches, strategies, and theories to ensure stability.

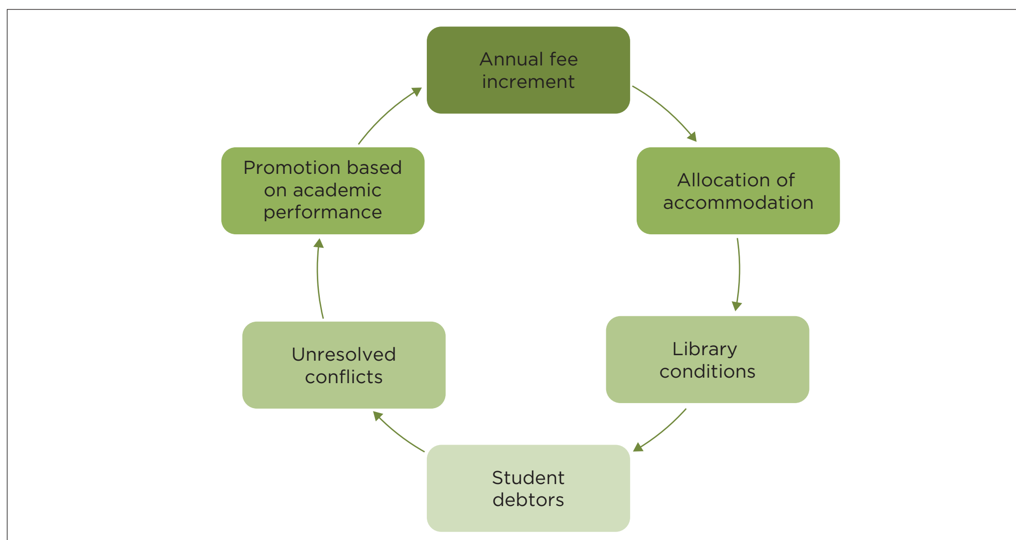
In any institution, minor or trivialised conflict can cripple progress and make the organisation prone to discrepancies and deficient productivity. Moreover, uncontrolled conflict can result in stagnation, hostility, and an

unproductive work environment. Conflicts can result in stagnation, promote hostility among stakeholders, and create an unproductive work environment (Lukman et al. 2019). One of the most important roles managers may play is recognising, understanding and detecting various types of conflicts and handling them in a way that maximises good outcomes while minimising the risk of bad repercussions. Higher education institutions of all sizes must implement proactive and reactive conflict management strategies, particularly for disputes that arise from both internal and external sources.

To effectively manage conflict, Burr (2016) advised managers to examine the institutional culture to select the best conflict management style, strategy, or theories to use, as adopting ineffective management styles can be worse than having no system at all. As a result, they must examine and determine if a specific style will succeed or fail in their institutions. This allows them to choose rigorous methods for managing conflict among stakeholders and promote platforms for subordinates to voice their concerns and lodge grievances without the fear of being intimidated or disrupting teaching and learning, which is the core fundamental duty of any HEI.

Cause of conflict

Conflict depicts a scenario in which persons or parties encounter a clash of conflicting ambitions, wants, and needs (Nurhalim 2022). It is a situation in which two or more persons, or a group of people, are in a 'disagreement' about important matters. Individual characteristics, organisational structures, and institutional cultures all have a role in the main triggers in HE.



Source: Lukman (2019).

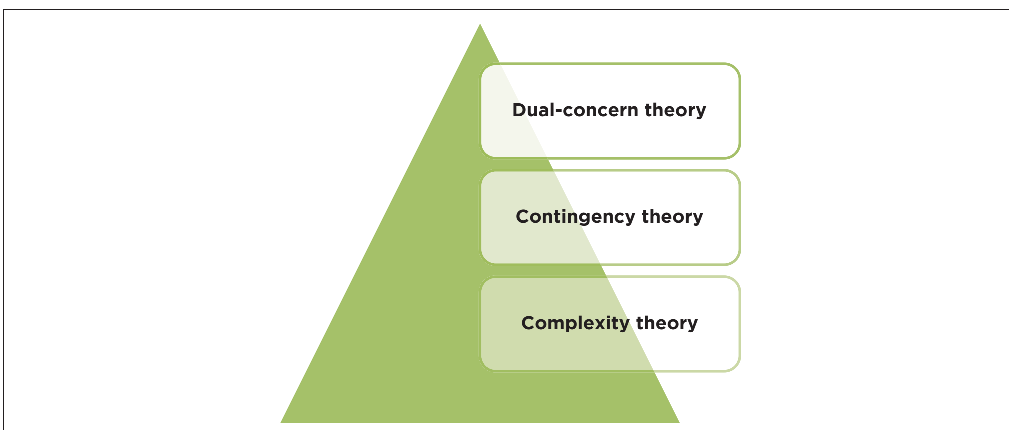
FIGURE 8.1: Cause of conflict at higher institutions of learning.

Figure 8.1 presents the apex of the causes that trigger conflicts at HEIs, as non-legitimate expectations destabilise academic arenas and negatively affect the academic almanac (Lukman, 2019). The latent forces that trigger conflicts among stakeholders are common in nearly all HEIs and present 'paybacks and setbacks' (McNally 2005). Hence, its negative ramifications and consequences and management are regarded as a key management competency and promoter of good governance. According to a study conducted by Lukman et al. (2019), the following were identified as some of the major causes or factors leading to conflicts in HEIs.

In as much as conflict can be destructive, it can also be constructive by altering wrong decision-making and implementing activities that are ineffective for quality teaching and learning. Furthermore, conflict can be beneficial if it targets measures that can improve practices that promote a harmonious environment for an academic enterprise. Within the last decade (2012–2022), the South African HEIs faced various challenges that led to the breaking of the established order and disrupted academic programmes because of newfound expectations from its stakeholders. These ranged from transformation, decolonisation, salary increment, and the #FeesMustFall movement.

Theories and their significance in managing conflicts

A theory is a mechanism used to describe how things happen and why they work the way they do. A theoretical framework is a theory's structure into which specific research fits or resonates (Creswell 2014b). Amongst several theories, the following three were selected for this study because of their specificity.



Source: Authors' own work.

FIGURE 8.2: Theoretical frameworks for conflicts management in higher education institutions.

The dual-concern theory

The dual-concern theory was developed on the assumption that parties involved in a conflict are prone to be assertive or empathetic in managing it. Assertiveness refers to the extent to which one is concerned with self-satisfaction at the expense of others, and empathy (cooperativeness) refers to the extent concerned with satisfying the needs of the opponent.

In the dual-concern theory, according to De Dreu, Van Dierendonck and Dijkstrap (2004), conflict management can be classified into high and low concerns. In dealing with communal conflicts, stakeholders are prone to prefer themselves or the other party involved in the conflict. This theory stipulates that managers and subordinates exhibit concern for self (assertiveness) or concern for others (empathy) (Sadri & Wu 2013). Conflict resolution entails balancing worries about attaining one's own aims and concerns without intruding on others' issues and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships in this respect.

The contingency theory

The theory of contingency emphasises the use of diverse approaches for managing conflicts, as there is no single approach that fits all conflict situations. Given that there is no pact on the safest way to manage conflict, the ideal way of acting or reacting is contingent on the circumstances at hand (Csaszar & Ostler 2020). The contingency approach is often labelled as the 'situational approach'. The primary ideology of this theory was developed on the assumption that managers struggle to find solutions for issues in their organisations; however, the magnitude and nature of the problem determine which best approach or methods to use.

The complexity theory and conflict transformation

The complexity theory stresses that conflict occurs in divergent landscapes that include unboundedness, multi-causal, and non-linearity (Miiro 2016). In the context of HE, this implies that conflict erupts across all stakeholder levels, from students, members of subordinates and senior staff. It can also be in the form of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and intergroup conflicts. Managing these conflicts requires managers to detect their roots at an early stage and place mitigating measures timeously before they deteriorate beyond control.

Constructive and destructive conflicts

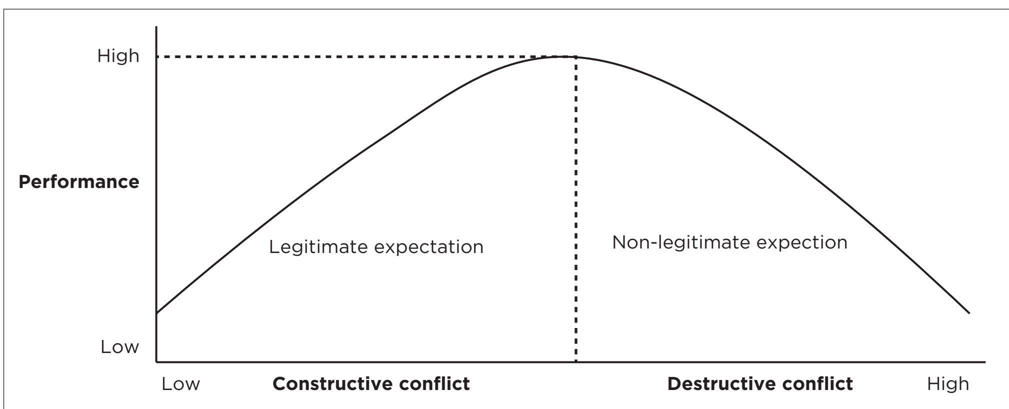
Conflict is not wholly destructive, despite its possible negative consequences. Conflict can be constructive if the drive is aimed at resolving problems and achieving goals in a way that will not be harmful to the organisation or organisations; they can usually be changed to benefit the individuals involved.

In HE, a modest amount of conflict spurred by legitimate expectations can increase success and stability, but a large amount of conflict spurred by non-legitimate expectations can suffocate stability and success.

Constructive and destructive conflicts in relation to expectations

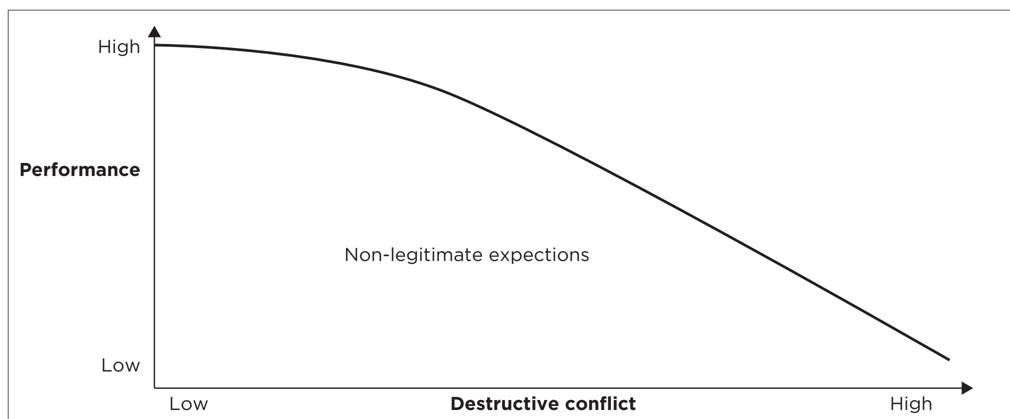
Figure 8.3 depicts how performance increases with an increase in constructive conflict that is triggered by legitimate and genuine expectations. These expectations can promote stability, success and positive performance when addressed properly. This implies that the higher the constructive conflict in an organisation, the higher contentious issues will be addressed for the betterment of the organisation (Lukman et al. 2022). Legitimate expectations in this context mean that an individual or party involved in conflict have a reasonable expectation of being treated in a specific way or receiving something owing to certain precise agreed practices in the past or being promised by the authorities concerned (Pathujan 2021).

Figure 8.4 illustrates how an increase in destructive conflict can influence stability and performance in HEIs. Failure to manage conflict properly will not only impede the business's teaching and learning but performance in other domains will also be negatively influenced. Unlike the legitimate expectation, non-legitimate expectation conflict refers to a situation whereby individuals or parties engaged in conflicts to achieve something or to be treated in a way that is contrary to agreed legislation, are not supported by a reasonably agreed promise by the concerned authorities. Having the presence of this kind of conflict in excess in any organisation will result in demotivation, mismanagement, and bad governance.



Source: Authors' own work.

FIGURE 8.3: Performance versus constructive and destructive conflicts.



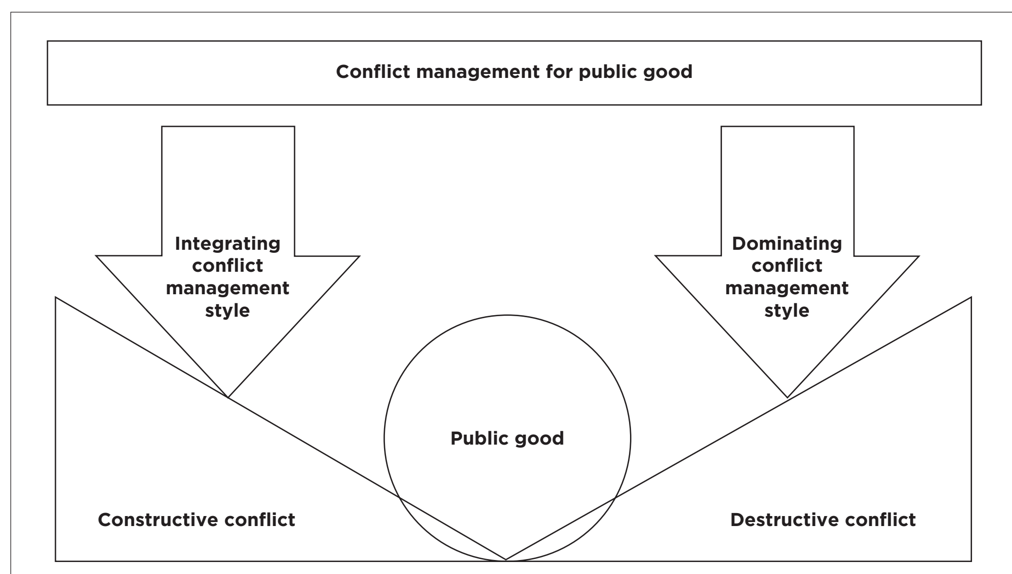
Source: Authors' own work.
FIGURE 8.4: Destructive conflict versus performance at higher education institutions.

Conflict management styles

Having discussed the two types of conflict as being either constructive or destructive, it is paramount to highlight some of the management styles that could be best adopted by HEI managers to handle these to ascertain progress in the sector. Among many, this chapter will focus on the accommodating conflict management style, the dominating conflict management style, and the integrating conflict management style being the most dominant used by managers in HEIs. Given that there is no absolutely perfect way to handle conflict, managers can draw benefits and lessons from diverse cases' findings and recommendations gained through various empirical studies conducted. Students at the University of Limpopo resorted to conflict to have their library closing hours extended from 08:00 to 00:00 during the exam period. The students' demand was resolved by the management of the institution using the integrating conflict management style, and arrangements were made to accommodate this demand and the closing time was extended to 00:00 as per the Student Representative Council's request (Ntsala & Mahlatji 2016).

Lukman et al. (2019) conducted a study with a sample of 180 participants investigating the management of conflict at HEIs in relation to stakeholders' expectations. The study revealed that the integrating style of managing conflict management style was the preferred conflict management style used by managers to handle communal conflicts because of its ability to accommodate the concerns of both parties and provide amicable resolution. Moreover, this conflict management style integrated both parties' expectations in finding a mutually agreed-upon solution.

Figure 8.5 illustrates how public good is influenced by constructive and destructive conflicts. In line with the literature reviewed, theoretical frameworks,



Source: Authors' own work
FIGURE 8.5: Conflict management model for public good at higher education institutions.

and the findings that emerged in an empirical study conducted across the campuses of University *X*. Prior to this, the institution was riddled with conflicts among its stakeholders that eventuated to the breakdown of law and order that resulted in the loss of property and lives, which became a serious issue of concern. An independent assessor had to be appointed to curb the conundrum, and they conducted an empirical study in the institution using a sample from all categories of the stakeholders and submitted recommendations aiming at eliminating destructive conflicts and enhancing peace, stability, cooperation, and public good. As it appears in Figure 8.5, there is no single all-encompassing approach to managing conflict; however, leaders can opt to use an integrating style when dealing with legitimate expectations. Essentially, the integrating conflict management style is appropriate to handle conflicts instigated by genuine expectations. Outcomes of these constructive conflicts will help to address contentious issues and provide mutual understanding and enhance public good.

On the other hand, the dominating conflict management style can be used to control destructive and violent conflicts that threatens public peace and stability. This conflict management style emphasised that managers should prioritise the interest of the organisation above that of the party engaged in destructive conflicts driven by non-legitimate expectations. Whereas integrating conflict management provides a win-win outcome, the dominating conflict management style should be used in a way that will minimise instability, destructive behaviour, and lawlessness that can negatively influence public good.

Furthermore, the integrating conflict management style stresses that all parties involved in conflict cooperate and address their incompatible interests. This approach is linked to problem-solving and involves the exchange of information in search of the best alternatives. Users of this style are prone to be transparent, frank, or neutral when handling conflicts. Al-Hamdan, Nussera and Masa'deh (2016) accord that the integrating style provides more encompassing ideas and resolutions to contemporary problems facing the HE sector. Notwithstanding, an integrating conflict management style enhances a win-win outcome at the end of the conflict, which is, in a nutshell, a significant concern for self and for others. It also can be regarded as a catalyst for promoting good governance in HE for public good.

Avoiding conflict management style refers to a situation where the parties involved in the conflict resolve to downplay the conflict (Yaseen et al. 2021). This conflict management style represents a situation marked by exhibiting low concern for self and high concern for others. In this regard, one of the parties involved in the conflict withdraws from it or decides to be neutral (Rahim 2017).

This style keeps stakeholders away from confronting the issue, especially when the chance of winning is very slim or impossible. This approach does not provide a lasting solution and the problem may accelerate or escalate to a larger problem. One of the benefits of adopting this style, supported by To et al. (2021), Alnajjar and Abou Hashish (2022) and Roy, Perrin and Assens (2022) is its ability to prevent hostility at the expense of the organisation. The avoiding conflict management style has the tendency to avoid conflict, which implies low concern for self and low concern for the other party. This approach is discouraged from being used consistently.

The dominating conflict management style refers to a management style whereby one of the conflicting parties coerces or suppresses the other party. The dominating conflict management style indicates a win-lose situation, which implies a high concern for self and low concern for others, as this is in line with Khalid and Fatima (2016) and Yetunde, Igbinoba and Adejumo (2021). The disadvantage of implementing this style is that managers who dominate are aware of the rights of the other party but deliberately dominate at the expense of the other party. Moreover, this style is an undesirable win-lose situation (Rahim 2017). On the other hand, this style can be used by managers who have concerns about developing the organisation, even at the expense of preserving and maintaining relationships. They use their position to force their opinions to be accepted by their subordinates. The dominating conflict management style is used predominantly by members of the top echelons of organisations.

Conflict management and coordination in the provision of public goods

In mid-October 2015, conflict erupts across South African HEIs with a popular slogan for the #FeesMustFall student movement. The main aim of this debacle was to halt the increase of tuition fees in an attempt to increase government subsidies and funding of public universities. Protests commenced at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) with the blowout to the University of Cape Town (UCT) and subsequently spread to other HEIs. To address the conflict, the South African government used the accommodating conflict management style by announcing 'no fee increases in 2016' and liberty to each institution to decide how much their tuition fees would have to increase. Hence, the South African ruling government recommended that HEIs consider a fee alteration of up to 8% in 2017.

The aftermath of these conflicts results in significant good to the public translated into the new policies formed by the government, which accommodate not only students who come from a poor background but even the missing middle-income students who come from families with an income between ZAR350,000.00 and ZAR600,000.00 per annum were also accommodated (Matukane & Bronkhorst 2017).

After students' conflicts exploded, a set of new policies and principles of funding were introduced for the cohort of new entrants to HEIs in South Africa. The new scheme transformed the landscape of financial support for poor and working-class students by making it easy and assessable to the masses. While the previous scheme identified the poor and working-class as households with less than ZAR122,000.00 per annum, the new scheme escalated the range of these categories to ZAR350,000.00 per annum to accommodate more students. In essence, good conflict management and its proper coordination can become catalysts in providing public good, as it appears in the #FeesMustFall debacle and other catastrophic conflicts. In sum, management exponents are correct to allude that 'conflict is not bad in its entirety' (Maiti & Choi 2021). How conflict is managed can become central to peace-making and public good. Government can create policies that prevent conflict, but implementation can transform conflictual relationships among stakeholders into peaceful relationships not only in HEIs, but workplaces in general because the problem is not the conflicts per se but the way the managers manage them.

Conclusion

Nevertheless, conflicts at HEIs occur at multi-levels. It is most complex and non-linear that cannot be surmounted using one approach perpetually while serving the interest that is non-exclusionary. Therefore, managers in HEIs

should incorporate diverse styles and strategies when handling conflicts in their respective public institutions. Policymakers and policy implementers at HEIs should advocate the use of integration to minimise the negative impact and enhance the positive aspects of the conflict. Members of high-ranking senior management in any organisation should be encouraged to undergo training in conflict management to bolster their practical understanding of conflict management in HEIs. On this note, they should be made aware that constructive conflicts must be encouraged, and destructive conflict must be avoided or minimised for public good.

At this juncture, there is no consensus on which of the conflict management styles, when employed, will best ensure public good. However, circumstances surrounding the conflict, the time at which the conflict erupts and the nature of the conflicts are the determining factors that will guide HEI managers precisely on which style to adopt and which will properly assist in addressing and managing the conflict. Based on the findings, this study suggests that universities implement constructive conflict resolution processes to handle all emergent disputes. Constructive conflict resolution may lead to stakeholder satisfaction and innovation, hence improving HE quality in general. Future research in these universities, according to the report, should focus on students' perceptions of service quality and satisfaction. These approaches can be used to resolve disagreements in HE. Because the conflicts HEIs experience vary, effective conflict management approaches vary. The existence of competent conflict management by the school will have a positive influence on the school's sustainability and can assist in reaching objectives and improving performance, as well as assist in making conflict resolution decisions based on diverse information thinking and views. In the HE community, adopting the correct conflict management technique will boost effectiveness and efficiency.

Chapter 9

Monitoring the core business of higher education

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Abstract

This chapter discusses diverse tools and mechanisms that can be adapted to monitor the core business of higher education (HE) in South Africa. The main present concern of HE is to produce graduates who have gone through an effective system in as far as teaching and learning, community engagement and research are concerned. Formalised current monitoring systems are dominated by policy, legal principles, and ethical practices adopted by various structures in higher education institutions (HEIs), the public sector, and non-governmental organisations. Although there are support mechanisms for monitoring HE, there are still gaps that must be addressed in the existing monitoring systems, such as quality management systems, to improve the university's core business. This chapter advances the debate on university monitoring and evaluation to sustain benefits relating to the public good by assessing both internal and external monitoring systems adopted in HE.

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Introduction

Scholars alluded to the new movement on HE for social responsibility that contributes to economic and social development. Maamar et al. (2015) argue that monitoring of university business should go beyond tracking progress and provide an end-to-end view of progress in terms of how goals have been achieved by the organisation. The quest for good governance in HE also sparked debates to check whether the set objectives are achieved on an annual basis to enhance governance and accountability of university operations and academic programmes. This chapter will evaluate strategies and mechanisms adopted by HE in monitoring its core business by alluding to teaching and learning, research, and community engagement (CE).

Monitoring teaching and learning

International quality assurance monitoring systems

International standard quality assurance (QA) focuses on the international monitoring systems, responsibilities, and roles of HEIs. These systems have a profound influence on the African and South African QA bodies and policy directives, which builds on the QA model of monitoring universities' activities in teaching and learning. According to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), monitoring of teaching and learning involves a wide range of activities that assess the effectiveness of pedagogical techniques aiming at producing teaching outcomes that enable students to acquire knowledge transmitted in various teaching styles (Fukahori 2014). Quality teaching can be enhanced through various dimensions, including effective curriculum planning and design, acquiring good course content currently informed by the discipline, guided teaching styles used in various learning contexts, and offering collaborative teaching projects blended with research and CE. It has also been echoed that to improve quality teaching, instructors and lecturers must include students by conducting student feedback mechanisms that they can collect from learners (Saidi 2020). Student feedback can be perceived as useful when it reflects gaps in the subject matter and the teaching methods used by the instructors at the end of the course or module (Hanus & Fox 2015). The university support unit must also design assessment tools that are learner-centred and not discriminatory to instructors to improve the teaching material and styles used by lecturers and a well-adaptive learning environment must be adopted to support all students, including vulnerable groups of students.

The pressure for universities to monitor their core business comes from abroad and local partners. The recent developments in exchange trade networks in education services have resulted in further talks and agreements in the

incorporation of international trade agreements, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and other agreements of trade protocols like the North American Free Trade (NAFTA), European Union (EU), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and Southern American Trade Bloc (MERCOSUR). These developments impacted HE through the preparations and planning for the recognition of professions by professional bodies. The quest for recognition by professional bodies came into existence because of benchmarking for correct standards needed in the working industries. In the study to benchmark different approaches to improving standards in HE, Al-Khalifa (2015) asserts that different countries across the world demonstrate a commitment to QA that can influence the continuous improvement of their academic and operational performance.

Using various international QA bodies, universities across the world can use benchmarking to compare and monitor their progress among the best-rated HE across the world. Among the indicators used to compare and monitor progress, universities can learn some lessons on how other universities have progressed in the expansion of HE to increase access and success in teaching and learning and in developing needed skills by producing competent graduates needed by the economic and labour environment. In the context of social responsibility, benchmarking can also be adapted to measure the practicality of HE spending across universities and relate that with the countries' wealth (Bendermacher, Wolfhagen & Dolmans 2017). Therefore, these bodies must research and adopt the attributes of the universities and merge them with the international and national standards for skills needed by national economies.

Professional bodies

The national universities and the national professional bodies share a responsibility to benchmark the correct matching standards on teaching and learning by verifying qualification standards that are offered by foreign universities and comparing them with theirs. The qualification bodies have a role and responsibility to accept and accredit the university qualifications based on the required standards and norms of each academic programme informed by its discipline. These standards and attributes assist the graduates in advancing their mobility. Countries like South Africa hold membership for signatories such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), United Nations (UN), World Trade Organization (WTO), African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC), which also have education protocols that explain how values in education can be shared and enhance equity, equal opportunities, and liberation to member states. These values are negotiated by member states and are monitored along with other factors, such as market opportunities and economic, political, and social

factors in the context of HE services. According to Salym (2021), benchmarking is used to discover areas of best practices for the improvement of university performance as far as the university's core business.

There is a growing movement on monitoring HE and pressure on governments to place proposals for further liberalisation of trade in HE services on the current GATS negotiations table. There are international members of states that are concerned with the promotion of multilateral proposals being negotiated for the internationalisation of quality promotion, such as the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA), Japan, Australia and New Zealand. The advantage of holding a signatory in a global organisation is the sharing of knowledge transferred in aspects that include the economy, scientific research, disciplinary curriculum, teaching styles, and others (Hénard & Roseveare 2012).

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has authorised the USA International Organic Certification and Accreditation Company to administer, certify, and enforce organic regulatory operations according to the National Organic Programme (NOP) standards. This is an FDA-accredited non-profit corporation based in San Diego, California, established in 1989 as a global corporate certifier operating throughout the USA, Canada, Latin America, the EU, and Japan. Some private certifying agents are also involved in the inspection of the operation that applies to organic certification. They do a thorough top-bottom inspection of the site that differs in scope depending on the facility being inspected. These items being inspected must be crucial in the curriculum and syllabi of academic programmes on organic food sciences and agriculture, such as the inspection of crops and fields inspection, soil conditions, crop preparation and health, approaches to the management of weeds and other crop pests, water systems, storage areas, and equipment.

The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) is well-known globally for its involvement in the assurance of theory and practice of QA in HE. They have a diversity of organisations holding their membership as QA agencies that function across many countries through networks and have memberships as associates with interests in HE QA. The INQAAHE have strong links with universities given that they have expanded their academic mission on servicing their members with activities associated with the professionalisation of qualifications, networks through forums and gatherings, publications in their journal – *Quality in Higher Education* – and their digital bulletin, maintaining their 'Guidelines of Good Practice' database, being actively involved in monitoring and funding projects, and financial support for a professional qualification in QA. The aim of the network for professional QA is to collect information, network and share among members, and share best practices that can improve teaching and learning beyond local borders. There is an increasing number of international students enrolled in public HEIs.

South African monitoring systems for teaching and learning

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) formulated a framework for the internationalisation of HE, along with the South African *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997*, to promote the internationalisation of the curriculum within South African HEIs. Besides the relations and agreements formed by governments within and across continents, HEIs are open to the intentional cross-border integration of students by fostering intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments.

The Council on Higher Education and the National Qualifications Framework

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is responsible for overseeing the registration and accreditation of academic qualifications while monitoring the quality of those programmes and their institutions (CHE 2021). The *South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act 58 of 1995* created a new framework for education and training in South Africa. The SAQA developed a single, unified system and infrastructure for classifying and regulating qualifications of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to ensure that NQF qualifications are assured of high quality. The NQF is a formal system describing how qualifications, skills programmes, and learning programmes are registered. Academic and learning achievements obtained by learners in adherence to these programmes are recorded and nationally recognised. This leads to an integrated approach to education and training.

The NQF that is presented in Table 9.1 is like a single but wide ladder that covers many possible learning and career paths, which include all forms of education and training. The ladder allows synergy and transfer of credit points from one type of learning to another or from one career to another. Vertically, the NQF has different rungs or levels that make it clear how far a person has achieved vertically and horizontally. All types of career paths have the same steps or levels. Qualifications are registered on different levels based on the exit level of that qualification, that is, what the person will know and be able to do once they have completed their qualification. The imperative role of the revised NQF has been a directive by the ruling party and government to steer the transformation agenda by developing acceptable accreditation norms and standards. There is a need for broadened participation from students and other stakeholders that supports HE quality management.

The registration of South African qualification was not monitored systematically during the apartheid era because of separation and disintegrated HEIs, which were not uniformly coordinated.

TABLE 9.1: The national qualifications framework.

Level	National qualifications framework Sub-framework and qualification types			
10	Higher education qualifications sub-framework	PhD PhD (Professional)	†	Occupational qualifications sub-framework
9		MA MA (Professional)	†	
8		BA (Hons) Postgraduate diploma BA	Occupational certificate (Level 8)	
7		BA Advanced diploma	Occupational certificate (Level 7)	
6		Diploma Advanced certificate	Occupational certificate (Level 6)	
5		Higher certificate	Occupational certificate (Level 5)	
4	General and further education and training qualifications sub-framework	National certificate	Occupational certificate (Level 4)	
3		Intermediate certificate	Occupational certificate (Level 3)	
2		Elementary certificate	Occupational certificate (Level 2)	
1		General certificate	Occupational certificate (Level 1)	

Source: DHET (2019).
Key: †Qualification types beyond Level 8 on the occupational qualifications sub-framework (OQSF) have not been determined; PhD, doctoral degree; MA, Master's degree; BA, Bachelor's degree; Hons, Honours.

The CHE is established to advise the DHET and HEIs on the processes of registration and accreditation of HE qualifications and programmes in the context of the National Qualification Framework. In addition, the *South African Qualifications Authority Act 58 of 1995* provided for the development and implementation of NQF and, consequently, the establishment of SAQA.

The South African Qualifications Authority

The SAQA's functions are to oversee the development of the NQF, formulate policies and criteria for registering bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications, such as the National Standard Bodies and Standard Generating Bodies, and accrediting bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing the quality of the provision for the achievement of registered standards and qualifications. This means that the Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) oversee the implementation of the NQF and ensure the international comparability of standards and qualifications. The SAQA's purpose is linked with the functions of consultation and collaboration with stakeholders in the implementation of acts such as the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996*, the *Higher Education Act 58 of 1997*, *Skills Development Act 97 of 1998*, *Further Education and Training Act 98 of 1998* and the Professional Statutory Councils.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the DHET, together with the CHE, is established to advise the minister of HE on all matters related to HE, to undertake QA activities through the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), to report annually to the parliament on the state of HE, to monitor the achievement of policy goals, to convene an annual consultative conference of national stakeholders, and to contribute to HE development through publications and conferences. This also includes the initiatives around the planning of institutional audits and registration of qualifications (CHE 2020). Amongst these activities of HE, research goals were among the important ones in advancing knowledge to develop the broader SA society.

Developments in meeting the targets specified by the SAQA also implicate postgraduate programmes that are research-based. These academic programmes ranging from Hons or MA to PhD studies are grabbling with change that is complex and affects the HE landscapes. Too many bureaucratic procedures and red tape are not the only challenges, the socio-economic and political factors also stifle the progress of universities in meeting research targets (Alvesson, Gabriel & Paulsen 2017). Progress can be observed in curriculum restructuring in HE and the registration of qualifications through standards generating bodies (SGBs). There is a need for accountability and improvement in QA since the inception of these bodies. This was a milestone in the development of the previously historically underdeveloped institutions (HUDIs).

Higher education institutions are expected to register their academic programmes to the new NQF. After these initiatives, private HE was also required to comply with the new registration guidelines. All new HE programmes are required to be accredited as a condition of provision and public support on funding. However, institutions were struggling with the translation of their programmes into the new NQF and SAQA guidelines because of the scope and complexity of their problems inherited from the apartheid legacy. In addition, challenges in the HE system resulted in a backlog in assessing and approving their application on time although targets were set (CHE 2017).

All institutions are required to register their qualifications under the NQF. The NQF contained different standard-generated outcomes for all subjects, and all institutions were required to specify their learning outcomes when they registered their qualifications. Some institutions did not welcome this exercise, but the change was inevitable. Overall, the HE sector was becoming complex with a new face in governance.

Technology and innovations in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) instigated the spreading of cross-border curricula to impart knowledge through research and teaching. This has reopened the focus of local students – who are not only mobile – but are willing to benefit from

international HE. There is increasing demand for exchange programmes between universities for staff and students to study abroad and teach in foreign countries while also learning various practices and teaching methods. All these strategies for the internationalisation of HE require some form of monitoring progress on the standards of those programmes and projects where staff and students are involved in partnerships and collaborations.

In the current decade, various strategies for teaching and research initiatives were conceived from benchmarked models and approaches from other international HEIs. Some of the new methods of teaching came into being because of the internationalisation of the curriculum during reforms that required the incorporation of international, intercultural values into the local content of the curriculum without compromising the learner's needs and the systematic requirements. Such requirements are addressed through curriculum and policy reforms that are part of the agenda for transformation. Pondering the transformation agenda, CHE (2017) notes curriculum reforms as embedded in the change of various learning outcomes, teaching styles, assessment tasks, and support services of academic programmes.

According to Khan (2017), HEIs must prioritise its curricula by considering the suitable modes of teaching, research, and CE that will overcome the limitations inherent in the apartheid system and broaden the access and success of students. The internationalisation of HE must be able to dismantle the hegemony of the colonial legacy and accommodate the transformation of systems that shape intercultural knowledge and abilities. This will also prepare students for the world of work by performing professionally, emotionally, and socially in an international and multicultural environment (Atkinson & Messy 2012). However, internationalisation of the curriculum must suit the obligation to fulfil transformation mandates and systematic coherence as far as QA and other monitoring systems and organisations and at the state level. The *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 Section 3 Policy Framework for Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa* (DHET 2019)[2] is put as follows:

> South African higher education institutions cater to growing numbers of international students, particularly at the postgraduate level. The presence of these students on our campuses requires clear national and institutional policies, processes, and services. (p. 11)

2. Department of Higher Education and Training, 2019, Policy Framework for Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa, determined in terms of Section 3 of the *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997*, as amended. Published by the Department of Higher Education and Training, prepared by the Chief Directorate: University Education Policy and Support.

Institutional arrangement in the monitoring of teaching and learning

Experience showed that fostering quality teaching is a multi-level endeavour. Support for quality teaching is provided at three interdependent levels in an institution:

Programme reviews

Universities can adopt various ways to improve and support quality teaching using a diverse range of strategies and activities using internal and external experts. Universities must continuously arrange intervals for internal monitoring using programme reviews that are presented in Table 9.2. The rationale for programme reviews is to identify gaps in the articulation of programmes and to check the content and the disciplinary relevance of the academic programmes. Universities usually appoint teams in each faculty to conduct programme reviews with the assistance of coordinators or managers from the QA and the experts from the discipline where the programme falls. The reviewers must be willing to use available expertise and resources in the institution (Gooding, et al. 2018).

TABLE 9.2: Internal monitoring dimensions for teaching and learning.

At institutional level	• At this level, quality teaching can be enhanced through project design and compliance with various policy initiatives and strategies to enhance the performance of both learners and instructors. • Quality improvement strategies can also be implemented through programmes and projects designed by faculties and departments through internal quality assurance systems. • In South Africa, the Council on Higher Education Quality Committee advises universities to facilitate access to mobility and progression within education, training, and career paths. It is also responsible for enhancing the quality of education and training at the institutional level by conducting institutional and programme audits.
Programme level	• Faculties and departments can take actions to audit and measure academic programme design, content, and delivery in their respective disciplines. • Departments can also conduct environmental scanning and identify gaps that need to be addressed in their programmes. They can also invite their advisory curriculum bodies and professional associations to assess the relevance of their curriculum before they are taught at different levels.
At individual level	• Universities can introduce various initiatives and workshops to assist instructors and lecturers in achieving their objectives by motivating them to share their ideas and support improvements to student learning and adopt a learner focus environment. • These three levels are essential and interdependent. • Supporting quality teaching at the programme level is key to ensuring improvement in quality teaching at the discipline level and across the institution. • Programme reviews can be conducted on internal quality and teaching expectations.

The anticipated review process includes a review team of experts who can prepare a programme report with a portfolio of evidence to prepare a self-study document. Reviewers can also conduct a site visit with the departmental team. After a thorough and robust evaluation of the evidence, the review team can provide feedback to the programme owners and managers. Later, the reviewers can prepare a response report with recommendations and submit it to the reviewed department to work on the recommendations. The dean, senior vice-chancellor, president and provost can also approach the council to recommend the progress on action plans.

There are a variety of activities that are commonly used, and they all depend on the availability of resources and infrastructure to conduct them and can include the following services:

1. Continuous support from teaching and learning and quality management centres.
2. The university can offer staff development initiatives such as professional development activities aiming at offering short and in-service training courses to improve the performance of staff in their teaching and learning work.
3. Faculties and departments can also arrange top achievers and excellence awards for staff and students and competitions for those who excel at their work.
4. Teaching and research seeds available to employees must be monitored to assess if they can support the engagement of employees on teaching and learning styles and strategies to inform their teaching and innovation. Some scholars can collaborate with libraries and information centres to advance teaching innovation pedagogies and communities of practice.
5. Faculties can organise mentorship, community service work, and coaching of young lecturers by senior staff. Some staff members can attend quality circles to advance their quality teaching.
6. Staff members in diverse units can do quality circles and learn various methods of teaching from their peers in neighbouring universities.

Monitoring research activities in higher education

This section highlights the monitoring strategies adopted by the South African HE in monitoring research activities aiming at improving health and quality of life. In most parts of the world, public universities that are research-centred are compelled to comply with national research policies and respond to systematic factors and adapt to change. However, today's institutions are impacted by the international and global environments in the pursuit of achieving their research objectives, as stated by the DHET, CHE, National

Research Foundation (NRF) and other research institutions that support and fund public HE. At the planning level, DHET is a major stakeholder that steers the direction of planning for knowledge production in HE. The organisation of the new academic landscape for HE was achieved through the implementation of the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE). One of the major objectives of the NPHE was to 'Secure and advance high-level research capacity to ensure intellectual inquiry and application of research for technological improvement and social development'. The plan intended to advance research and innovation in HE by sustaining the research strength and promoting a responsive research profile that will meet national development needs and build a competitive and capable staff that acquired research skills. In the context of public good, the following aspects may be surmised.

Policy framework

While there is a major paradigm shift in the governance of policy research and regulation of HE research and innovation. Public universities are not just provided research grants by DHET, NRF, and other institutions governing research without regulation and accountability. The current research grants are accessible when public HE institutions can produce research outputs. University research policies shifted from being philanthropic towards a responsive and accountable manner. The current shared knowledge through research projects is regulated to benefit the public good and improve the quality of life and health of society. At the institutional level, the university's strategic plans must be aligned with the strategic plans of the research directorate and be cascaded to the faculty research plans. The university plans must be monitored continuously. This section highlights the monitoring strategies adopted by the South African HE in monitoring research activities aiming at improving the quality of life.

University research enterprise and social responsibility

The discoveries made by researchers at public universities have significantly advanced our shared knowledge and improved the health and lives of the public through their research enterprise. The South African HE system is organised in a manner that public universities must be compelled to increase their research outputs to access the research subsidies in various faculties. They can also set in place monitoring systems that are linked to individual staff performance and departmental performance.

The monitoring of university research is complex; hence it must be systematic in a way that includes all the stakeholders involved in various research projects aiming at addressing societal problems and advancing

development efforts. The completion of some of the activities and research projects adds value to the corporate world, scientists and academics. For academic researchers, long-term monitoring research is always linked to their work performance. When researchers produce more research outputs, they can be promoted and be awarded to advanced academic Achelous. At the same time, the conduct of research by scientists in public research universities results in breakthroughs in discoveries and innovations that address societal problems and challenges. Scientists who invent and produce valuable research results are mostly awarded Nobel Prizes in various disciplines like physics, chemistry, physiology, medicine, and social sciences. Each public research university that claims breakthroughs made on its campus can be celebrated to have improved health, quality of life, and advanced new industries. At the national level, various structures monitor the organisation and quality of all the research activities conducted by public universities.

It is a fact that research activities are not delivered as a purely public good because of the rewards and benefits attached to them. Although the production of knowledge benefits society at large, the universities conduct research in South Africa to be rewarded by the DHET and other research institutions when the HEIs produce throughputs in the form of publications. At the same time, there is a dependency shift from the conduct of research for the public good because of resource dependency, where research is conducted to gain benefits and status. Under such conditions, organisational resources unlock behavioural shifts in academics in a university. Universities also require resources like funding, time, and human capital with research skills from senior academics, which are also scarce. In some cases where there are no organisational resources, the research output becomes reduced.

The existing relationship between donors or funders and HEIs poses a strong rationale for monitoring and evaluating research activities in HE. The resource dependency theory states that 'organisations themselves interlocks the behaviours of various participants that are responsible for production in the organisation' (Bergh et al. 2019). The underlying premise of this theory is that resources, as part of the environmental factors, have a profound influence on the production of various outputs in an institution of HE. However, some universities must adapt to such situations and respond to policy demands and stakeholders' needs while operationalising their programmes. Leadership styles and behaviours count as a necessity to drive the monitoring processes and activities by being accountable and trusted.

There is a nexus between organisational resources and monitoring systems. The increasing research activities and collaborations make it difficult for universities to motor research. Also, the South African economic system influences research decisions that consider the systematic nature of societal challenges. The funding formula for research promotes *resource dependency*

by compelling these institutions to compete for funds and shift their behavioural patterns by focusing more on resource administration and applied research to survive. However, the main source of institutional funding comes from government subsidies and grants, tuition fees, and research grants. Universities of Technology (UoTs) are still lacking in soliciting funds from research grants, especially in the Commercial and the Arts fields, because of their legacy challenges.

The observable dependency of HE on subsidies drives some of the goals of conducting research and dissemination of research findings. It should be noted that the end-products of research are in demand. This can be observed from the economic demand that triggered the power of modern corporations and industries to depend highly on the new inventions that require the intellectual and service capabilities of researchers and scientists. The 4IR compels universities to advance research efforts according to the capability and technical know-how of technicians. Ironically, research can also harm the public good, as now the world competes in product design, creativity and innovation, and product placement to demanding customers.

At the institutional level, the DHET uses research output measurement of research activities to evaluate university research. There is innovative software that measures the impactfulness of researchers in various universities around the world and locally. Therefore, university impactfulness must be considered when monitoring and evaluating research. The university evaluations must have criteria for measuring accountability to the broader society, which is linked to the personal improvement of the scientists regarding how they contribute to society's main concerns like the economic downswing or curbing of corruption in public organisations. At the personal level, researchers can evaluate their research impact barometer by using monitoring networks like Academy, open access platforms, and Google Scholar.

■ Tools for monitoring community engagement

As noted by the CHE (2017), university communication with stakeholders is a reciprocal process that denotes an inclusive relationship existing between an HEI and its stakeholders. Not all the stakeholders are interested in a reciprocal relationship; some perceive a university as a donor, while others believe in being in a reciprocal relationship with a university when they are engaged in collaborative efforts that can fulfil a common purpose. In the context of public good, university engagement is interlinked to 'public good', as the notion of serving society by being impactful has been a focus whenever the university is engaging stakeholders. In post-apartheid South Africa, the public good has been infused by the DHET in HEIs and by other cooperating entities through the notion of social responsibility. Some of the monitoring tools are discussed further.

Compliance with institutional policies

Monitoring and evaluation of university CE must be embedded in the policy of the universities and the other canters that are involved in CE; each component of CE can have a system for the appropriate oversight and monitoring of the manner of CE. The *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation of 1997*, the NPHE and the *Education White Paper Post-School Education and Training: Building an expanded, effective and integrated post-school system of 2013* also state how CE and service-learning work. The implication on the contents of CE by those policies leaves room for monitoring CE activities so that gaps can be identified and addressed.

There must be systematic controls and regulations that are binding to limit the abuse of power between the actors and the university communities. Public research universities, through teaching and research, drive innovation contours that anchor further corporations and companies cluster and networks and connect with business incubators, technology accelerators, and small business start-ups. These actors advance their business with the communities to improve the quality of life. Therefore, there are relations existing between universities and the industry that we cannot ignore. This indicates that when serving the interests of the public, there are relationships and partnerships formed between the stakeholders and the industry.

The end-products that come out of the teaching and learning and research can offer some benefits in the innovations and developments conducted by the universities in collaboration with the industry through CE. Reports from meetings and activities of CE, collaborations, and partnerships do not just serve as evidence of the occurrence of CE; they are monitoring tools. These reports can include faculty reports, senate reports, campus annual reports, and commissioned reports submitted by researchers. Monitoring the rules and practices for CE is applied differently in HEIs. Partners must comply with policies and rules governing CE, and these policies must be revised continuously for improvement and as part of the monitoring strategy. It should also be noted that the infused model of CE may complicate the methods of monitoring and evaluating CE in HE. The infused model of CE includes all structures, policies, priorities, and activities of CE. Therefore, monitoring based on such components of the infused model must be integrated and facilitated through the directorate of Quality Management and the CE centre. The CE centre or the directorate of CE can conduct monitoring and evaluation using various methods, such as formative, summative, process, outcome, and impact assessment methods depending on the intended use (South & Phillips 2014). Community engagement must not be regarded as just a mere by-product of beneficial extra but as activities that are categorised as part of a range of identifiable activities that aim at improving the quality and relevance of teaching and learning, and research.

Training sessions and workshops

The staff trained on CE by the university must be informed and aware of various strategies of CE, on how it works and carefully considers the deliberated ideas of partners as equal to those of academics. They can have strategic planning sessions and evaluation workshops to evaluate the success and challenges of all their projects and programmes. The HEIs can also consider the overall institutional trajectories and development – especially the historical legacy when crafting and evaluating their institutional-development plans. The university CE strategy must be a blueprint that is a compass guiding collaborations and partnerships with other organisations. It must also inform decision-making and implementation and must be aligned with the university infrastructure. Industry partners can also offer placement for students and offer lasting planning and financially sustainable universities concerning its future envisaged enrolments, academic programmes, operations, staffing, and infrastructure requirements. According to Krauss et al. (2020), the evaluation of empowerment CE programmes should focus on assessing whether the values and principles and objectives of the programmes are achieved.

Programme and project evaluation

On the same idea of monitoring and evaluation of the core business of HE, HEIs can adopt programme evaluation as a tool to track and evaluate whether the objectives were achieved. This chapter suggests the following interdependent steps can be adopted in monitoring and evaluation of CE programmes:

1. Identification of stakeholders needs to understand deeply what is needed to be evaluated and for what purpose.
2. Identification of goals and objectives. The evaluator must engage stakeholders to describe the programme evaluation's expected outcomes.
3. Designing evaluation and consider the need for it to be feasible, realistic, ethical, and result-based.
4. Planning for data-collection and recommend tools for gathering data.
5. Analysing data and writing reports and indicate sources of evidence in evaluation, like the stakeholders, participants, experts, documents, and observations.
6. Analysing data and writing of reports and key findings. Share the results with the CE centre and the audience. Justify conclusions that are linked with the results.
7. Revisit the programmes being evaluated and make decisions on whether they need to be strengthened or re-designed. Share lessons through the dissemination of results.

TABLE 9.3: Typology of projects and programmes for monitoring and evaluation.

Teaching and learning	Research	Community engagement
• Teaching and learning policies and guidelines • University strategic plans • First-year enrolment planning • Benchmark tests • Enrolment plans • Throughput rates • Curriculum reform projects • Vital statistics (annually) • Evaluation of academic programmes for quality assurance • External curriculum • Colloquiums of teaching and learning	• Postgraduate support programmes • Research outputs • University funding projects • University research accountability barometer • Research strategies and national policies • Digital open access • Academic support • Seed grants • University impact on research • Systems data monitoring • Journals and DHET scholarly books and their impact on HEIs • National relevance and global ratings	• Partnerships and collaboration projects • Service-learning projects • The relevance of industry relations and memorandums of agreements • Student placements • Academic citizenship • Evaluation of relationships among university and people, organisations, government and service providers

Key: DHET, Department of Higher Education and Training; HEIs, higher education institutions.

Performance management in higher education

Higher education performance management can be used to assess university responsiveness to the core business and the staff performance by setting performance indicators for both academic and support staff in line with the core business that is presented in Table 9.3. However, performance management at some universities did not gain any momentum, even though employee key performance indicators (KPIs) are outlined in their job descriptions. Kalfa Wilkinson and Gollan (2018) argue that there are contestations and resistance to compliance with performance management in academia. However, assigning KPIs to the job classification of staff is a good method for preparing performance evaluations to monitor progress in all the university units, especially on taming tendencies that downgrade the university mission. For a start, the KPI can be developed from the role classification and the university strategic planning. For the public good to be a success, university units must conduct an internal and external performance evaluation.

Conclusion

This chapter challenges universities to go beyond just teaching, conducting research and CE. They must re-conceptualise 'public good' to develop a strong component of 'social responsibility that can assist them in aligning their core business with the public good'. Graduates and skilled artisans produced by universities must have a social relevance rather than simply acquiring skills for

personal growth and development, and they must have a sense of direction that looks beyond their interests.

The authors alluded to various aspects relating to the core business of HE pointing directions on the future relevance of the universities, colleges, and UoT. It is a fact that public universities are significant stakeholders that should be driving economic development efforts in Africa. They must be at the forefront to facilitate teaching, learning, CE, and research to meet serious needs to create public goods and services in emerging economies like South Africa. In developed nations like western-European countries, the booming creative economy is supported by public universities through the production of knowledge and creative, technical, and intellectual skills needed for the production industry. Therefore, the immense production demand for goods and services is provided out of innovations and technology invented through research and skills of the anchor institutions. Universities are training grounds for the creative and technical industry. Therefore, universities, government agencies, and non-governmental agencies cannot work in silos; they must support each other for the sake of the public good.

This chapter notes the institutions and structures that monitor quality teaching and learning, research, and CE in South Africa. It reflects on the internal and external institutions that maintain the balance of order and quality to promote public HE. It should be noted that there is a need for inclusive participation in monitoring HE to augment its responsibility of implementing its goals towards the public interest. In the context of public good, public universities experienced substantial challenges because of the expansion of student numbers and the demand to improve their infrastructure for teaching and learning. Quality improvement is required to maintain standards and criteria of qualifications. The HE institutions are experiencing a shift towards a diversified student profile and staff workforce in their operations and there are more expectations from stakeholders for them to be accountable and respond to societal needs. Teaching at a university is associated with the high-profile evaluation of the entire institution through internal and external QA bodies. The perceptions of stakeholders matter in evaluating the extent to which the institutions are managing their operations and programmes in recognition of the university's commitment to social responsibility. In driving towards attaining values associated with the public good, there is a great expectation of HE governance structures to be accountable and responsive to societal interests. It is evident that HE is arguably functioning towards social responsibility in South Africa and not towards the fulfilment of the mandates of private education. Public universities in South Africa can move towards the attainment of inclusive decision-making that is influenced by social democracy but not market ideology that favours private rights instead of the public good. The dominant neo-liberal ideas have blocked the recognition of perceiving education as a public good. In the interest of the broader society, this book is

redefining the public good that is associated with social responsibility and rigour in HE. Monitoring of HE must also focus on improving the research culture, and academics must not only focus on competing goals aiming at acquiring research subsidies, promotions, and awards. At the same time, HE faces a greater need for accountability from students, parents, employers, and taxpayers to account for their performance and demonstrate their teaching quality.

Chapter 10

Towards a new social contract for public good

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Abstract

Scholars in this book pondered on various constructs on which the 'academic landscape' can respond to the call to do more than responsive and contribute to the production of higher education (HE) as a public good and focused on various themes. This last chapter concludes with the issues dealt with in different chapters in response to the public good. A new social contract for the public good is proposed with implications. A social contract, as defined by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke, is regarded as an informal agreement between the state and society in which citizens can consent to allow the state to interfere in their business, in exchange for an obligation for the government to support and subsidise services like HE as a basic need, while the government can expect the people to comply with the regulations. This chapter also advances a debate on the future of the HE landscape as proposed in the draft on the criteria to recognise universities in South Africa.

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Introduction

Scholars made a significant contribution by analysing the HE landscape with a scope that is guided by the post-apartheid South African era. As noted by Siemens and Matheos (2022), global and technological factors put more pressure on HE core business. These global forces have impacted HE in South Africa to some extent. Transformation and government national plan influenced the formation and the operation of the academic landscape through various structures and policies. The apartheid government created a poor infrastructure for the previously disadvantaged universities and created a strong and efficient infrastructure for the previously advantaged Higher education institutions (HEIs). Simultaneously, universities located in the homelands had to be underdeveloped structurally because of the homeland ruling that was manipulated by the apartheid government. This HE landscape is also impacted by international factors and local challenges; hence the agenda for transformation was on the table for far too long before the new democratic government could plan and operationalise it. This last chapter concludes with the argument on the extent to which HE can be produced as a public good. It also focuses on the social contract for the academic landscape. Lastly, this chapter also alludes to the new proposed draft for the criteria for recognition of types of South African universities.

The implications for the academic landscape

Redefining the scholarship of teaching and learning

Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrate that HE is impacted by systematic changes and is constantly striving toward adopting external and internal environmental factors. These factors have an impact on the operations of HEIs and influence the way HE can change the quality of life of the citizens in South Africa. Ipek and Karaman (2020) are of the view that advancements in technology and innovation influenced teaching in universities and societies.

Chapter 3 presented the case of technical vocational educational training (TVET) colleges in planning for responsive vocational education. The responsiveness of the HEIs towards public good raises mixed feelings as the scholars claim that HE is producing private and public good. Higher education is influenced by those accounts that occur locally and in the borderless arrangements between countries, regions, and continents. The main goal of the public good can be linked to common systems such as research agendas, collaborations, and partnerships in engagement, knowledge production, and learning systems that can promote citizens' values through HE.

While scholars are precise in understanding public goods in South Africa, their focus is on the role of universities in improving the quality of citizens. At the global level, public good expectations are broad as they include global

dimensions of relationships between countries. These expectations include regulation of interconnections, collaborations and partnerships, regulations of people's movements and protocols that impact people's lives. Scholars in this book argue on diverse attempts on how HEIs can open up to produce outputs for the public good.

This book recommends a new social contract on the scholarship of teaching and learning be arranged between the universities and the stakeholders, where stakeholders can contribute to the public good. It emerged that the arrangement between the universities and the beneficiaries is imperative to improve their lives. Some scholars focus on the conduct of teaching and learning that is responsive to the needs of the stakeholders and the broader society. Chapter 3 provides a narrative on how technical vocational educational training (TVET) can adopt a strategic plan that is responsive to the needs of the industry and the broader community. The public TVET colleges are government-funded and offer skill training and academic vocational certificates for the world of work. These institutions offer programmes that are at a lower National Qualification Framework (NQF) band of universities and Universities of Technology. Hence, they struggle to articulate to other HEIs. Like other HEIs, TVET colleges need to focus their responsiveness on improving the quality of life as they have been doing. As noted in Chapter 3, TVET colleges can prepare graduates for the world of work, but they cannot address all the threats that impact their core business. The chapter on TVET colleges adds value to this book as it demonstrates the practicality of vocational qualification in adding value to society through skill development.

On a different note, Chapter 4 calls for HEIs to play a significant role in improving society through social education, economic development, and digital transformation. Traditional universities (TUs) and Universities of Technology (UoTs) in South Africa can embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) by preparing an economy driven by the 4IR. This chapter identifies threats to those universities that are lacking behind the 4IR, which also puts HE in the spotlight. This chapter also warns the universities on the risk posed by the 4IR, as displayed by high unemployment rates on graduates in those disciplines which are not accommodated by the economy, high cost of education, high gender-based violence cases from HEIs and less community participation in HEI projects, the citizens begin to question the role of such institutions for the public good. Universities have also embraced technological change in their teaching and learning (Moradi & Chen 2019).

Universities and their stakeholders can advance their programmes to redirect these threats by creating opportunities that can add value to the lives of the citizens by offering programmes that have an entrepreneurial edge and offer incubation courses for those school leavers who can be self-employed, and partner with other service providers and communities to advance development initiatives. The debate about whether HEIs education is a public

good or not is becoming a popular discussion topic that must also be realised by applying the aspects of the 4IR.

Chapter 5 provides a unique articulation of the liberal legal traditions that are bequeathed to citadels of legal education in African states, mostly in countries that were formerly colonised by the British Westminster. This chapter reveals the threats within the legal fraternity and the path traversed by this fraternity to seek independence in knowledge production from its Western European counterparts. This chapter analysed the underpinning principles of Western liberal legalism as well as the contours and dislocations they have occasioned in the training of lawyers in 21st-century Africa. In what ways could decolonise legal education simultaneously be a public good and a veritable vehicle for the public good in Africa? Considering the entrenched Western-styled system of legal education in post-independence Africa, what modalities would best assure a progressive reorientation in terms of curriculum contents, pedagogies, and outcomes? The advocacy here finds a solid foothold in African humanism and squarely places the necessity and urgency for the decolonisation of legal education in Africa both as a central component in the broader discourses about HE for the public good in the African context as well as a critical pathway to avoiding the pitfalls of anachronistic options and skewed orientations. Beyond its didactic connotations, the overarching thrust of this paper lies in its conceptual linkages with the overall epistemological relevance of HE in Africa.

Chapter 6 focused on the impact of external education in African universities, which favours Western ideologies at the expense of African students, hence the importance of decoloniality to embrace African ways at African universities. The involvement of students assists in having a sustainable education system relevant to our continent. This chapter provides insights into how African universities can infuse their culture to advance a sustainable future for the society that is now challenged by the problems of modern society. Importantly, this chapter advances a debate on how superpowers have been persuasive in instilling their education in African society and left some legacies that have destroyed healthy African lifestyles (Frere 2022). Some of the important aspects that should be on the agenda for the public good can be channelled through different themes such as funding and decision-making, African systems, termination of capitalist agenda, dependency syndrome and a lack of funding, social media platforms, and African theories as solutions and Pan-African ideology as well as environmental scanning.

Scholars also alluded to strategies that can eliminate and manage conflict in the HE academic landscape. Lessons can also be learnt from Chapter 7. At the centre of debates, themes such as the student-centeredness approach, improving inclusive governance to allow students to make a decision is critical, and alleviation of tensions emanate from students' dissatisfaction. HE students play an important role in the university's transformation and are key stakeholders (Fomunyam 2017).

In some instances within this book, scholars alluded to diverse ways of enhancing research that is responsive to society through collaborations and development (both international and national). In the current decade, governments and other stakeholders are promoting more engagement in a broader context.

Collaborations and partnerships are becoming more popular in the current decade in most universities as part of the agenda for globalisation and regionalisation. Higher education is advancing more strategies to address complex challenges associated with conducting collaborative research (Bidandi, Anthony & Mukong 2022). Post-apartheid South Africa has seen a greater focus on community engagement by universities and its inclusion as one of the core focus areas of HE in addition to teaching and research. The shift towards a responsive HE compelled these institutions to position themselves in the engagement of development research projects to offer better solutions and tap expertise and resources from what the community can offer. As a lesson from this chapter, universities can operate as a social enterprise for development, focusing mainly on the sub-theme of 'Parentship and Collaboration in Research and Development'.

Scholars alluded to various aspects that shape and challenge the academic landscape in South Africa. Implementation of policies and application of various methods to alleviate problems and manage the core business is a problem. Thus, monitoring the HEIs is imperative to foster long-lasting solutions to their problems and to facilitate attaining their goals associated with improving the quality of life. The last chapter offers some insights into monitoring HE through external and internal quality bodies. Because of the complexity of HE, this chapter canvases the project management approach towards monitoring and recommends tools for monitoring as far as teaching and learning, research, and community engagement.

This chapter aims to cover and unpack decolonisation by engaging students from selected Southern African universities to harmonise and ensure the public good. The chapter on managing conflict shed light on the types of conflicts, their impact, and conflict management styles that can assist managers in managing HE while aiming at improving the quality of life. There is a dual-concern noted by scholars based on the 'complexity theory', which advises managers on how to engage in contingency planning to avoid conflict and how to comprehend when and how to react to conflicting situations to arrive at an amicable solution among the stakeholders involved.

Leadership and governance

Leaders in HE are challenged by their changing roles in being responsive to society and on how they can lead higher learning projects and programmes aiming at serving the public good. They need to realise their

visions and the missions of their institutions by including stakeholders without compromising their institutional autonomy and the agenda for transformation. While the HEIs are recommended and allowed to exercise autonomy and academic freedom, they are expected to carry a daunting task of shared governance with stakeholders while responding to systematic factors. Thus, relations between senior managers and the university structures must focus on the agenda of managing the core business of the university and also consider improving the quality of life of the citizens within their proximity.

University governance systems are restricted by their guidance from government public policies while transmitting knowledge for the public good (Kezar, Chambers & Burkhardt 2015). There is not much flexibility for some institutions to redesign their brand that will respond to public good swiftly. The agenda for transformation as a project is amended from time to time without completing its mandate. For instance, historically underdeveloped universities and UoTs have taken a direction that is not far from that designed by their purveyors. The limited resources do not allow some institutions to fully transform and harmonise their new policies and remove the old apartheid policies. There are still some elements of power abuse and boiling among the HEIs.

Much work has been done in transforming leadership in HE and in providing diversified academic leadership by including women in senior HE positions. We welcome the appointment of four female vice-chancellors in South Africa. There has been much work done in a short span of time, with less progress made to develop some previously disadvantaged HEIs. The limited human capacity to address the national and global demands weakened the governance structure in HE. There is a great need for HE to advance strategies to address the gender gap and attract more females to leadership positions.

The rationalisation of the South African HE system will have implications for funding agencies, both within and outside the country, regardless of the model adopted for organisational engineering. However, the failure of universities to implement the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) questions its existence or formulation. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) must set aside a special budget for funding the re-restructuring process or rationalisation and make sure all stakeholders have a common voice. There is nothing said about the long-term maintenance costs of the operations.

The new funding formula for HE is a challenge to HE because it is based on merit. However, financial support through student loans by National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and the research funds is restricting – they are only awarded on merit. There is a problem with the way the fees are structured in all the universities. The government needs to spend more on education and the universities need to reduce the registration and fee structures for their programmes once they get more funding from the government. The HE funding

structure needs a huge overhaul to reduce the tuition or do away with it. Tuition fees are high in almost all of South Africa's tertiary education budgets. According to data from Statistics South Africa's (StatsSA) (Republic of South Africa [RSA] 2016) latest Financial statistics of higher education institutions Report, a sum of ZAR22bn out of a total income of ZAR67bn was sourced during the 2016 fiscal year (RSA 2016). The South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) and DHET apply equity ratios for the distribution of budgets, but that is not enough for the previously disadvantaged universities.

The funding model for research does not promote public good; instead, it promotes the self-realisation of academic goals. The new UoTs will have to strive for better Research Capacity and Ratings to acquire a suitable research culture. New directives are needed to increase international research funds for collaborations and partnerships in research to enable South Africa to compete in the global village. It should also ensure that better funds are deployed and academics at the UoTs are motivated and capacitated on how to channel research funds like their university counterparts.

The organisational dynamics

Chapter 8 observed the management of conflict, which is part of the organisational dynamics (OD) practice. Whenever a conflict is left unattended it leaves cracks in a university. Organising on modification of units and departments in academic institutions in the post-restructuring created skill gaps and has also enhanced skills in other faculties. Universities can infuse organisational development to advance human capital by looking at such social phenomena to bring about stability. A desired situation is a major concern of organisational development. The OD was developed as part of a reaction against the scientific management approach (Schmuck 1994, p. 10). The concern of this approach was to shift the focus from the technical side and pay attention to the human side of work. This was not unusual as the Hawthorne study also demonstrated the effect of motivation on workers when workers' conditions are improved at work. Organisational dynamics is not sensitive to training, but it asserts that people's feelings are aroused when people find great satisfaction or experience deep frustrations in doing their jobs and working with others.

Another important aspect of OD is the concern for reaching a consensus on decision-making in HEIs (Schmuck 1994, p. 11). This idea implies that the success of the tasks and operations of these institutions can depend on consensus. However, this does not claim that there are no decisions reached without consensus. And it does not mean that decisions are all made consciously – by administrators and leaders only. Schmuck and Runkel (1994, p. 11) identified three socio-psychological conditions that beset HEIs: (1) educator's goals, (2) hierarchy and specialisation of work, and (3) social pressures.

Higher education institutions operate within these conditions. Human beings as workers run their units or departments. Workers in these institutions are affected by institutional goals – they should all work collectively to achieve such goals. The achievement can sometimes be reflected through student achievements and other intellectual outcomes. Secondly, these institutions have an organisational structure with layers of bureaucracy; their organisational structures determine the essence of their core business by dividing work among different individuals with specialised expertise.

Relations and value points in higher education

Higher education institutions can only survive when there are teams that work towards the improvement of their learning environment. These teams operate in a vertical hierarchy and horizontally. In as far as vertical teams are concerned, power flows from the university council to the vice council, from the vice-chancellor to the senate and deputy vice-chancellor (DVC) and then it flows to the faculties and the governance structures. These structures make the most crucial decisions for academic organisations. University faculties are responsible for creating academic programmes with relevant content that will provide signals on how the end product will look after the empowerment of teaching and learning that has taken place. The most crucial aspect is the scholarship of teaching and the accreditation of programmes. The accreditation and registration of academic programmes is also a quality control mechanism that affirms the fitness of the university and the staff in offering those academic programmes.

The recent massification of academic institutions in both private and public universities has caused a lot of hindrance in the offering of academic programmes because some measures of regulating the fitness and purpose of the universities were crucial for these universities to offer content that will provide a strategic value point for HE. It is important to engage stakeholders in public universities and the students and faculty in decision-making. The openness of universities to society must also be handled with caution. Some scholars call for the reorientation of academic programmes towards the 'sustainable development goals' (SDGs), with themes aligned with the disciplinary conditionalities and national policies (Mulà et al. 2017).

Monitoring and evaluation of the academic landscape are important, along with the accreditation of programmes. Accreditation must also be twinned with the reviews of teaching and learning to improve how content can be added to the academic programme. Private universities must also be regulated to address the legacy challenges. Issues of evaluation (accreditation) cannot be separated from teaching to enhance the assessment of competence for each academic programme along with the academic and support staff. It is

not doubtful to imagine a new approach to engaging stakeholders in curriculum designs and evaluation teams. The advisory bodies must evaluate the relevance of the contents in the curricula and the syllabi based on the industry needs. This also calls for a new peer review method. Instead of faculty members examining each other, they can call their peers from other universities to evaluate them and their students.

■ Re-emerging 'public good'

Globally and nationally, HE has been supported by governments to pursue the strategic mission of its existence. Along with regulation protocols and policy directives, government influences the core business of the HEIs. Noting various assertions by scholars, this book calls for a new social contract for HE to redefine public good and focus on the new context of public good that aims at improving the quality of lives of the citizens. It is evident from the previous chapters that HE has been exposed to various threats that cannot be addressed fully as HE is experiencing these precarious situations. It is worth noting that economic and political stability in a country is imperative for managing public goods.

In the recent economic and political gains of political leaders from the acquisition of public funds through corruption, implicated leaders have abused public trust. Therefore, they are setting a bad example for their leaders. Therefore, the corrupt and unethical government does not set a good example for university governance. Flavin (2019) agrees that state funding for public goods does have a direct impact on the quality of citizens' lives. When corrupt leaders abuse public trust, there will be consequences for the university's operations and outcomes. This can be observed in the minimum loyalty observed from university graduates entering the world of work, whether it's the public sector or the private sector. Also, some university leaders are in crisis, while some are at a crossroads, and others are in need of intensive care because of mounting complex societal challenges (Yeomans & Bowman 2021). They need strong government leaders to guide them and motivate them to comply with transformative policies imposed by the government.

Leaders are responsible for managing conflict when engaging in public good games through platforms of policy-making, decision-making, and mediation. This chapter suggests that universities can benefit when managing conflict as a collective while serving their communities. According to Jack and Recalde (2015), a collective can decide on the type and nature of leadership thought suitable for servicing public goods. It is a fact that an autocratic leader who imposes change on managers and the rest of the university structures is not suitable to lead in HE. A democratic leader who is a servant to the university and committed to implementing the mission of the university can add value to producing public goods.

University governance must accommodate cooperative governance that has reciprocal benefits. Hence leaders are compelled to align their style of leadership to the needs of the collection, including the DHET in South Africa. Wang, Chen and Wang (2017) demonstrated that through varying periods of public goods experiments, good leaders could promote cooperation in the public good game at a surprisingly high level.

Universities must be concerned about how they become impactful through curricula that can influence learners' critical knowledge production (Jansen, Vera & Crossan, 2009). Various university attributes must demonstrate the required impact of students on society and be prepared to develop a new breed of cadres that will enhance African culture and confront the African realities and global technological demands (Fumunyam 2017).

It is expected that the project of a public good is not new; hence, this book calls for leaders to tap into critical skills needed to drive the process and re-work their core business as it is expected. This book argues that there is an opportunity for HE to redirect its strategic position to focus on adding value to the social contract of public good that aims at improving the quality of life. Angelo Letizia (2017) puts it as follows:

> Higher education institutions can create knowledge, engage in research, service and teaching to stop the enclosure of the various commons and in the widest sense, help to forge a new vision of public good in the 21st century. (p. 149)

They can forge a new social contract not just with their stakeholders only but with their communities, their region, the nation, and the world. These stakeholders can produce reciprocal results and can also emerge as threats when they are not monitored. Hence chapter eleven demonstrated that monitoring the HE core business is imperative to sustain it and project threats that can later impact a new vision of the public good. Nonetheless, these four threats do offer a framework for researchers to use and analyse different pieces of information that can enhance the public good.

Higher education institutions, rooted in nation-states, cannot solve all these threats. Yet, while they find themselves in a precarious situation, there may be an opportunity here. Higher education institutions can create knowledge and engage in research, service, and teaching to stop the enclosure of the various commons and, in the widest sense, help to forge a new vision of what it means to be public in the 21st century. They can forge partnerships and collaborations that are partial to politics to avoid academic drift. A new social contract must focus not just on their learning communities but on their local stakeholders and communities, their national organs of state, regional structures, and the world. The environmental threats mentioned in Chapter 2 are by no means the only threats that will impact the university's vision with infused value on the public good. Institutions must deal with oppressive internal arrangements that can also impose risks that can offer threats that offer opportunities for

the public good. As Paul Frere (2020) alluded to the pedagogy of the oppressed, we need to break the stereotypes of oppression and move toward an inclusive approach to imparting knowledge in our universities.

Globally and nationally, HE has been supported by governments to pursue the strategic mission of their existence. Along with regulation protocols and policy directives, there is a strong influence on the business of HEIs. Noting various assertions by scholars, this book calls for a new social contract for HE to redefine public good and focus on the new context of public good that aims at improving the quality of life of the citizens. It is evident from the previous chapters that HE has been exposed to various threats that cannot all be solved, while HE has been found to be experiencing these precarious situations. These books argue that there is an opportunity for HE to redirect its strategic position to focus on adding value to the social contrast of public good that aims at improving the quality of lives. The HE leaders must involve all stakeholders in decision-making, framing their impact and negotiating the key benchmark areas to be infused into the curriculum instead of imposing what was decided by colonial hegemony and outside stakeholders (Motala, Sayed & De Kock 2021).

Higher education institutions can create knowledge and engage in research, service, and teaching to stop the enclosure of the various commons and, in the widest sense, help to forge a new vision of what it means to be public in the 21st century (Leibowitz 2012). According to Letizia (2017, p. 149) they can forge a new social contract not just with their state but with their community, their state, nation, and the world. These threats are by no means the only threats that will impact the creation of a new vision of the public good. Nonetheless, these four threats do offer a framework for researchers to use to analyse different pieces of information.

Because of the impact of the systematic changes to HE, HEIs can determine the future as they provide various types of knowledge needed to drive public good. The new inventions and various economic, social and political systems are also based on diverse ideas that can be monitored systematically, as noted in Chapter 11. Some of the strategies to monitor knowledge production are mentioned in this chapter and they are mirrored in how the HE is organised and socialised.

■ The future of the academic landscape

After several debates on the challenges of the new academic landscape and the implementation of the NPHE, the stakeholders and some scholars alluded to the need to respond to these challenges. The first government response was to assess the structure and performance of the merged institutions. Scholars deliberated on the formation of comprehensive universities, where a

historically disadvantaged university had to merge with historically disadvantaged universities (Temoso & Myeki 2022). It was clear that the merger of these institutions was problematic; hence the DHET imposed a divisional model to be implemented by University *X*, and each campus had its structure. It was later clarified that a multi-campus structure could be sustained through resources and needed resources and an efficient and effective management structure (Dwesini 2019). The other problematic merger was the merger of a historically advantaged university and a historically disadvantaged university. Some of the merged universities were affected by an incomplete harmonisation of the academic programmes and operational policies; as a result, the DHET intervened and introduced a divisional model. The divisional model was not a clear-cut solution to the problem and was inappropriate for solving the merger challenges. Hence, the DHET issued a new bill that would restructure the HE again and introduce a complete landscape.

The new Draft Policy for the Recognition of South African Higher Education Institutional Types (RSA 2022b) proposes the following criteria for the new institutional types, which are discussed further.

A university college

According to the proposed draft on the recognition of the South African HEIs (RSA 2022b), university colleges will exist to be upgraded in future to be universities. The DHET is planning to groom these colleges to offer a variety of diplomas and degrees with a variety of specialities that include skill development. These colleges will comply with governance requirement that has been specified in the *Higher Education Act of 1997*, which also applies to universities.

Implications

It is expected that these colleges can be newly formed and can also emerge from several downgraded universities or campuses. Some of the colleges will still have the potential to develop or grow or evolve into established universities over time and be managed and monitored by a recognised or established university (whether public or private) and funded (whether publicly or privately) for this purpose. This also implies that the colleges will get recognition for their qualifications through the managing university. South Africans can learn from the experiences of African universities and other universities in developed countries on how to improve a university college. University colleges are set to evolve and succeed in offering undergraduate programmes that are registered on South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) and accredited by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) from the NQF level 5–8 and must have the potential to offer programmes from 9 to 10 (Masters and PhD) programmes.

The advantage of the proposed university colleges is that they are expected to have advisory bodies that will advise them on curriculum planning that will be informed by stakeholders' needs and current developments in the designated field of study. The scope of teaching, research, and community engagement will be determined by the mandate of HE.

These colleges can produce HE as a public good if the government can directly fund their operations. To minimise competition, diversity programmes must be offered to avoid similar offerings in close locations. In some provinces where there are multi-campus universities, the creation of university colleges will have complications. Already, there are important observations on the TVET colleges that are already financed by the state out of general revenues. The TVET colleges produce lower-than-expected throughput rates, with fewer chances of graduates being placed in senior management positions as compared to university graduates. The advice is for colleges to avoid relying on high prices or any user charges like student fees and markets, as individuals do not completely reveal their preferences; hence not all students can meet the obligations of paying full costs. Both university colleges and universities can be provided as public goods if they are not private.

In the context of public good, these institutions must be accessible to all and they must not be subjected to forms of competition. That is why White Paper 3: Programme for the transformation of HE clearly stated that competition among institutions must be avoided in the provision of academic programmes of HE. Public goods are subject to market failures, and economies of scale also operate in some cases of public goods, but they must be minimised as compared to those of private education as universities run with overheads. Within the university structures, teaching and learning can still focus on upscaling the required knowledge and skills needed to enhance development in the country. Research can also focus on various strategies to advance development that aims at addressing societal problems. New knowledge can also advance innovations and cutting-edge research that can be impactful to society.

Universities

Universities are expected to be intensely involved in advancing research. Universities are large-scale institutions that are expected to focus on offering undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes belonging to diverse disciplines and fields (proposed draft for the Recognition of Institutional types 2022). As expected by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and DHET, the core business of the universities is expected to impact international, national, and regional needs and engage a broader array of community needs.

Implications

The universities that have been progressing well according to the *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997* in terms of their core business and governance issues are automatically going to meet the proposed criteria of a university. The universities that do not meet the proposed criteria might be downgraded to colleges. These changes are not new because the national plan for HE provided objectives and criteria for universities to transform and restructure their academic programme qualification mix (PQM) and work on diverse aspects that include their core business and governance issues. The new proposed draft for the recognition of institutional types (RSA 2022b) requires universities to have a wide range of relevant academic programmes or studies. They must have an average of 90% of their programmes registered on the South African NQF. However, some universities have paid attention to the global factors and are participating in the Universities Global Ratings; hence, they have responded to the international factors such as globalisation and innovations by adapting through their requirements of teaching and learning, research, and community engagement. The other implication is that the historically disadvantaged universities are grabbling with change because of their increased enrolment numbers. They have not been given enough time to complete transforming their organisational structures according to the national governmental plan. There are also challenges experienced by merged institutions as they cannot completely harmonise their policies and their academic programmes (Matsiliza 2018).

Universities of technology

The new proposed draft for the Recognition of Institutions in South Africa is not clearly defining the role of UoTs. Some of the UoTs might end up being university colleges. Those that cannot meet the criteria of a university will remain to be colleges that can offer professional programmes and divert their focus towards skill development and vocational studies. Some UoTs have 90% of their programmes on their programme and qualification mix (PQM) registered on SAQA and accredited. Few UoTs have received better international rankings that offered them a better advantage toward being upgraded to university colleges and later to universities.

Conclusion

This book demonstrates that the HE landscape is systematically impacted by environmental factors that emanate from global technological development and economic, social, and political factors. To focus on the public good, this book recommends HE to rethink a new directive that supports the public good while they are operationalising its core business. The issue of 'public

good' is an interesting discourse that puts public universities on the spot by compelling them to be more responsive to stakeholders' needs and have an accountable governance structure. This book also acknowledges that HEIs are exposed to systematic challenges that force them to adapt to change. It can be argued that the existing governance systems of HE are at crossroads. Hence, this book calls for the infusion of tenants of public goods into the core business of public HEIs.

The issue of responsiveness is not new in HE. The proposed social contract between universities and the government is to alter their core business to enhance opportunities that can improve the quality of life of the citizens. The economic forces and global forces have changed the information cycle to accommodate new developments in HE, such as blended learning, decolonisation, social cohesion among stakeholders, research partnerships and collaboration, programme reviews and policy monitoring and evaluation. The current decade of knowledge production has resulted in new movements across countries because of the formation of global trade and support for development. It is also imperative to acknowledge that there are risks involved in the new social contract because of the dual nature of South African society, which also promotes competition and government policies that require throughput rates in teaching and research for universities to receive funding from the government.

Therefore, this book also calls for the performance of the universities to be measured and monitored through policy indicators to avoid academic drift. There is a positive future in the current academic landscape. Traditional universities (TUs) and UoTs have displayed progress in the throughput rates and the research outputs in post-apartheid South Africa. For several decades, HE has focused on the Western European models in providing education and research.

The new constructs of decolonisation paved the way for scholars to redefine their purpose for the public good by aligning their core business with African realities. For the re-emerged public good, we need a systematic change. The new academic landscape has already been prepared through a systematic change. The transformation has paved the way for the production of knowledge that can improve public lives. These institutions will also need to motivate staff to do more than just social responsibility instead of focusing on self-fluffiness. Stakeholders and staff must work in teams and support one another and comply with the policies of the university. Higher education institutions in South Africa can learn from their global partners and African universities who have strongly prioritised the notion of earmarking HE as the public good. In a country that is supported by a mixed economy, it is acceptable for graduates to pursue public good in both private and public HEIs while understanding that public good must not be aligned with profit making.

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Global, regional, and local environmental factors affect the higher education sector. Traditional universities (TUs), universities of technology (UoTs) and vocational colleges are compelled to evaluate the extent of the impact and adjust their respective strategies to adapt their teaching and learning strategies, research and community engagement to improve citizens' quality of life. This book, *Higher education for public good: Perspectives on the new academic landscape in South Africa*, discusses such strategies by evaluating the extent to which higher education in South Africa can be responsive to such changes and achieve public good. The authors of this book examine the South African academic landscape as a unit of analysis to examine what the concept of 'public good' means for higher education and the discourse toward improving quality of life.

This book provides a fresh entry point into the debate of decolonisation of higher education in South Africa and education for the 'public good'.

Recently, this debate has been dominated by the decolonial school of thought. The debate around the decolonisation of higher education can be demarcated along two streams: decolonisation of curricula, mainly discussed as epistemic freedom, and secondly, access to higher education by students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

Epistemic freedom is a debate among scholars with a global reach. From this perspective, the book fills a critical gap, reflecting education's responsiveness to societal needs. Thus, the book emphasises the importance of tertiary education as offered by higher education institutions (HEIs) that are inextricably connected to their societies, not by ivory towers.

The book has a specific focus on assessments and how universities were forced to adapt to the changing realities brought about by the outbreak of COVID-19. This study complements old debates about a university's relevance to society and its responsiveness to new challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic.

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