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A critical discourse analysis of the mission and vision statements of public universities in South Africa.

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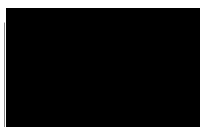
Submitted in partial fulfilment on the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Sciences: Educational Psychology in the School of Applied Human Sciences, College of Humanities, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg Campus.

March 2021

DECLARATION


I, Luke Benjamin Bartholomew, declare that:

1. The research that is reported within this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain any other persons' data or other information, except where specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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 - i. Their words have been re-written and the general information that is attributed to them has been referenced.
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5. This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet.
6. A Turnitin originality report has been attached as Appendix A, in support of the above declarations.



Luke Benjamin Bartholomew

Date: 25 March 2021



Dr. Nicholas Munro

Supervisor

Date: 25 March 2021

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Purpose of a University	1
1.2.1. An Overview of the Historical and Current Purpose of South African Universities	2
1.3. Mission and Vision Statements	4
1.4. Research Objectives and Questions	7
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
2.1. Introduction	8
2.2. Differentiation in Higher Education	8
2.2.1. Differentiation in Higher Education (Pre-1994)	9
2.2.2. Differentiation in Higher Education (Post-1994)	11
2.3. Massification	13
2.4. Globalisation and Internationalisation	15
2.4.1. Globalisation and Internationalization of the Curriculum	16
2.5. Decolonisation	16
2.5.1. Decolonisation of Curriculum (Post-Apartheid)	17
2.6. Theoretical Framework – Critical Pedagogy	18
2.7. Conclusion	19
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	21
3.1. Introduction	21
3.2. Research Objectives and Questions	21
3.3. Research Paradigm	22
3.4. Method	23
3.4.1. Sampling and Data Collection	23
3.5. Data Analysis	25
3.5.1. Thematic Analysis	26
3.5.2. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)	28
3.5.3. Validity, Reliability and Rigour	29

3.5.4. Ethics	30
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS CHAPTER.....	31
4.1. Introduction	31
4.2. Findings from Thematic Analysis	31
4.2.1. Theme 1: A Critical Socio-Political Agenda	32
4.2.2. Theme 2: Collaborative and Conducive Institutional Environments	34
4.2.3. Theme 3: Excellence and Achievement Aims	35
4.2.4. Theme 4: Knowledge Production.....	38
4.3. Findings from the Critical Discourse Analysis	39
4.3.1. Universities as “The Solution”	39
4.3.2. Universities as the “Place to be”	41
4.4. Conclusion.....	43
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	44
5.1. Introduction	44
5.2. Universities as “the Solution”	44
5.3. Universities as the “Place to be”	46
5.4. Globalisation and Internationalisation	49
5.5. Contextualised curriculum	50
5.6. Institutional differentiation	51
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	54
REFERENCES	56
7. Reference list	56
Appendix A: Turnitin originality report.....	64
.....	65
Appendix B: Ethics approval letter.....	66
Appendix C: Change of title approval letter	67

ABSTRACT

According to the South African government's National Development Plan and Department of Higher Education and Training, universities need to play a central role in the knowledge economy, the production of new knowledge and skills, and contribute towards redressing inequalities that were perpetuated by South Africa's apartheid past. The study reported in this dissertation explored the dominant discourses within the mission and vision statements of the 26 public universities in South Africa. The main research question that guided the study focused on identifying the dominant discourses in the 26 public universities' mission and vision statements. Sub-questions aimed to firstly identify whether there were differences and similarities within the mission and vision statements according to current modes of institutional differentiation, and secondly to determine the extent to which the discourses within the mission and vision statements reflect current national and global efforts to reconstruct and redress past inequalities. There is a relative dearth of knowledge on university mission and vision statements within South Africa and so this research adds to the limited pool of knowledge that currently exists on this topic. The researcher analysed the data through the use of thematic analysis as well as critical discourse analysis, locating this analysis and the entire study within a critical pedagogy framework. The findings suggest two prevailing discourses in the 26 public universities mission and vision statements, namely universities as "the solution", and universities as the "place to be." The first discourse positions South African universities as "the solution" to several socio-economic, political, and development problems in South Africa (and to some extent globally), while the second discourse presents universities as idealised, nurturing, and intellectually stimulating places for students and (academic) staff members. The findings suggest that South African mission and vision statements do, to some extent, reflect the national and global efforts to reconstruct and redress past inequalities, however there is very little that distinguishes universities on the basis of current modes of differentiation. The study is important as it provides a critical perspective on idealised discourses inherent in South African universities' mission and vision statements and questions whether current modes of institutional differentiation are adequately reflected in these statements. The study is of relevance to government officials, university executives and staff, and students and other relevant role-players who may use university mission and vision statements to inform policy, partnership, funding, employment, or study decisions.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This research was focused on identifying and exploring the prevalent discourses that are found in South African public higher education, as communicated through the 26 South African public universities' mission and vision statements. Chapter 1 starts with explaining current thoughts on the “purpose” of a university, and then proceeds to explore more specifically how the purpose of South African universities may have changed with the progression of time. Chapter 1 then identifies how a university's mission and vision statements is one communication device through which the university might construct its purpose to stakeholders. Vision and mission statements are then singled out as potentially useful resources of data that can be used to identify and explore dominant discourses within the public higher education context. The chapter concludes with an overview of the research objectives and questions which have guided the study reported in this dissertation.

1.2. Purpose of a University

Although universities serve multiple functions and purposes, Morphew and Hartley (2006) aptly isolate an overarching purpose of a university as needing to generate and distribute knowledge and contribute to democratic and socio-economic transformation agendas. Notably, however, many factors, such as context, history, culture, socio-political pressures and economic trends tend to influence the ways in which a university's purpose is executed (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). As in other countries, South Africa has a unique socio-political history and culture that has influenced the evolution of South African universities, or at least compelled them to evolve, in order to serve their “purpose”. Regarding the current educational landscape in South Africa, the National Development Plan (2012) identifies South African universities as needing to fulfil three main functions or purposes. First, universities need to both educate as well as provide students with the necessary skills needed for the labour market. Second, the universities' curricula needs to be able to produce knowledge and values and assess the knowledge and values being transferred through the curricula. Third, universities should create opportunities for social mobility and help overcome the inequalities created by apartheid. One of the ways in which universities could

overcome the inequalities created by apartheid is through strengthening social justice and democracy within South Africa (National Development Plan, 2012). Although the universities' mission and vision statements, explained further in section 1.3, may only be representative of the universities stated purpose, and not a true reflection of what is enacted by the universities on a daily basis, the mission and vision statements may be a way in which the purpose and function of the institutions are conveyed and communicated to stakeholders. Typical university stakeholders include (inter alia) prospective and registered students, alumni, staff, other local and international universities, community groups, industry and professions, and the government.

1.2.1. An Overview of the Historical and Current Purpose of South African Universities

A defining feature of South Africa's past and present are the levels of social inequality that have been embedded in all spheres of life. Specifically, the past history of apartheid and the perpetuating effects of colonialism have played a major role in social inequality in South Africa. As a reflection of society, social inequality has necessarily been transferred into higher education structures and systems (Bozalek, 2012; DOE, 2013). Therefore, a current major South African and higher education goal is to minimize these inequalities and since 1994, the South African government has been committed to transforming higher education (Badat, 2010). The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, which has been amended to the Higher Education Amendment Act 9 of 2016 has stated its desire to create a single coordinated system for higher education, which will seek to restructure and transform higher education programmes (South African Government, 2017). It hopes to redress past discrimination and ensure that all individuals have equal access to higher education (Badat, 2010). It would therefore be relevant to explore the extent to which South African universities, through their current mission and vision statements, are consistent with the National Development Plan and Higher Education Acts.

During apartheid, different universities (now referred to as historically white and black universities) were created along racial lines, and these universities prepared students from different groups, separated by race, for different roles within the economy (Ntshoe, 2015). In addition to supporting a capitalist economic system, the differentiation within South African universities, explained further in section 2.2, was a racist system that benefited the interests of white people. Correspondingly, the system inhibited the successful progression of any

person who was not white to a position in society that did not suit the apartheid government's agenda (Ntshoe, 2015). Shortly after 1994, it was important for South African universities to develop plans to ensure that the inequalities between historically white universities (HWUs) and historically black universities (HBUs) were reduced rather than strengthened. The Department of Education's vision in 1997 for higher education was that there will be transformation leading to a democratic, non-racial and non-gender biased and differentiated higher education system. The vision was to eliminate unfair discrimination, create equal access, and facilitate increased chances for academic success. In addition, the vision aimed to redress past inequalities that arose from race-based differentiation and to bring about the decolonisation of education (Department of Education, 1997).

According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (2014) in the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, higher education in South Africa is focused on building an expanded, effective and integrated post-school system. The White Paper lays out a vision of a post-school system that has been transformed in line with the policies that government has set out with regards to developing South Africa and improving the economic, social and cultural life of the people of South Africa (DHET, 2014). The vision includes the South African higher education system being integrated in a way that seeks to improve the quality, quantity and diversity of post-school education while making it more equitable (DHET, 2014).

The advent of democracy in South Africa initiated important changes in terms of creating equality and ending forms of unfair discrimination such as racism and sexism. It is extremely important that South Africa's higher education system reflects these same changes, and encompasses and promotes an equal, non-racist, and non-sexist environment. Higher education is of vital importance as it plays a key role in the development of societies and effects social, cultural and economic factors (DOE, 1997).

The transformation taking place in South African universities is being strongly influenced by the pressure of redressing the apartheid past. In addition, in South Africa there has been a recent focus on advocating for the decolonisation of higher education (Pillay, 2016). This move strives to bring about the end of colonial systems of knowledge and practices (and entrenched white privilege) within university institutions and the country as a whole. The move to decolonise South African higher education, explained further in section 2.5, has been propelled and accompanied by mass action amongst students protesting for free higher

education (i.e., #feesmustfall) (Ludski, 2015). The fees must fall movement became a movement against financial exclusion for students who are economically disadvantaged (Pillay, 2016; Rondganger, 2021; Nxumalo, 2021).

It is therefore important to assess South African universities current mission and vision statements in order to see how the mission and vision statements differentiate and whether they are consistent with the changes being made in higher education in South Africa.

A central focus of higher education post-apartheid, explained further in section 2.2.2, has been how to make higher education more inclusive as there is still a great disjuncture between inclusive policies and actual experiences of staff and students within higher education (Bozalek, 2012). Post 1994, policy has been aimed at developing a single and coherent system that will offer quality education to all South Africans contributing to the economic and social needs of the country (Bozalek, 2012).

According to the Department of Education the institutional missions of universities need to be in line with the national framework (DOE, 2013). This includes universities needing to develop a clear mission as well as establishing management, administration and academic structures to ensure that the mission is implemented successfully (DOE, 2013).

Economic growth is not guaranteed by the education of a country's citizens, but without education, economic growth is highly unlikely, and social and cultural development would probably be constrained. Moreover, the implementation and achievement of greater social justice relies heavily on all sections of society being able to have equitable access to quality education (DOE, 2013).

1.3. Mission and Vision Statements

Mission and vision statements typically articulate the values and goals of an organisation. Therefore, they are worth analysing (at both surface and critical levels) if interrogating the social, political and economic nature and positionality of an organisation is contextually relevant (Raynor, 1998). Contemporary higher education trends (e.g., massification (section 2.3), globalisation (section 2.4), nationwide student protests, and higher education transformation in relation to fees, funding and decolonisation (section 2.5)) (Badat, 2010) speak to the need for a critical analysis of the values and goals of the 26 South African universities. Mission and vision statements signal the direction an organisation proclaims to

go in and what they value or want to achieve. Mission and vision statements can therefore be of importance in evaluating how an organisation positions itself, what they purport to stand for, and how they are wanting to be perceived amidst contemporary circumstances. In the higher education environment, mission statements are effectively what drive an institution and are potentially responsible for attracting a certain kind of student as well as placing certain expectations on students. Mission statements are also used to assess an institution (Ntshoe, 2016).

In addition, mission statements are an important tool in helping direct, formulate and implement strategic planning, while also helping guide the organisation follow these goals (David, 2005; Pearce, 1982). Mission statements are also important as they inform the public about the organisation's characteristics and values and how they are going to try meet them (Morpheew & Hartley, 2006; Seeber et al., 2019).

The Higher Education Act of 1997 assigned the responsibility of South Africa's higher education quality assurance to the Council of Higher Education (CHE) and its sub-committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). This included quality promotion, institutional audit and programme accreditation. Two areas of interest to the study that are criteria covering the focus of evaluation in the audit are area 1; the Mission of the institution and the links between planning, resource allocation and quality management, and Area 2; teaching and learning, research and community engagement. The audit panels evaluations are guided by the institutions mission and goals as well as the institutions level of development. The quality issues in community engagement are evaluated predominantly in relation to what is outlined within the institutions mission. Within the HEQC's audit system it conducts a fitness of purpose of institutional mission, goals and objectives which is determined in relation to the institutions response to local, national and international context (including transformation issues) and assesses the links inks between planning, resource allocation and quality management within the institutions. Higher education institutions are required to play a transformational role within the national higher education agenda which is of great importance. Some of these transformation agendas include increased equity and opportunities for previously marginalised groups to access higher education, and for teaching and research to play a role in creating greater responsiveness to local, regional and national needs as well as the need for greater engagement with the local and broader community. Mission issues also have to be in relation to international quality benchmarks so that a broader comparability can be established with reputable higher education institutions abroad.

This highlights the important function and role missions play within higher education and how they are used in the auditing process by the HEQC (CHE, 2004).

The mission and vision statements of universities tend to contain ideological and institutional cultures within them (Swales & Rogers, 1995). Mission and vision statements also provide guidelines for shaping the universities' decisions, actions and behaviours (Ayers, 2005; Davis et al., 2007; Srinivasan, 2013). Analysing mission and vision statements within South African universities is therefore of importance as it can help illuminate the values and goals as well as ideological and institutional cultures that are deemed important within a South African context, and within the South African higher education context.

Many mission and vision statements consist of a collection of phrases which often tend to be vague or unrealistically ambitious (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). According to Delucchi (1997), some higher education institutions tend to include unclear statements and goals because it makes it difficult or impossible to prove whether the university or institution is failing to live up to their mission and vision statements and intended goals.

In a Turkish study, Efe and Ozer (2015), asserted that historical and cultural backgrounds as well as political and economic conditions tend to be decisive in the shaping of universities' vision and mission statements. The proposed research was grounded in the methodology used by Efe and Ozer (2015), however it was conducted on South African universities bearing in mind both the global and South African context.

The researcher explored and identified the discourses within South African universities' mission and vision statements and assessed the extent to which they were consistent with the current dynamics and agendas within South Africa and South African higher education. The research was an important part of the need for critical reflection on the proclaimed values and goals of South African higher education. The research also assessed the ways in which South African universities' vision and mission statements contribute to discourses of equality and fairness, and whether these discourses are consistent with the current national reconstruction and development trends.

1.4. Research Objectives and Questions

The main objective of this study was to identify the dominant discourses in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa. Two sub-objectives of the main objective were to explore:

- the differences and similarities in dominant discourses in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa according to current modes of institutional differentiation, and
- the extent to which the dominant discourses in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa reflect current national and global efforts to reconstruct and redress past inequalities.

The main research question for this study was:

- What dominant discourses are evident in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa?

Two sub-questions were embedded within the main research question, namely:

- What differences and similarities are there in the dominant discourses in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa according to current modes of institutional differentiation?
- To what extent do the dominant discourses in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa reflect current national and global efforts to reconstruct and redress past inequalities?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the dominant themes in South African public higher education. Drawing from the themes identified in current literature and in the 2014 White paper for post-school education and training (DHET, 2014), this chapter first explores the concept of differentiation in South African public higher education and second explains the role of globalisation and internationalisation. Third, the chapter explores the massification of higher education (i.e., expanding student access), along with the efforts made by universities to enhance student success. Fourth, the concept of decolonisation in South African higher education is explored. Lastly the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy, in which the research is positioned in, is explained.

2.2. Differentiation in Higher Education

Differentiation is a process where a single social, organisational, or operational unit (e.g., universities in a country) is split up into multiple units (Van Vucht, 2007). Units that are created from the single social, organisational, or operational unit are typically structurally different from one another, however together they function equivalently to inform the overall functioning of the original social, organisational, or operational unit (Van Vucht, 2007). Within the context of higher education, different institutions may focus on different forms of knowledge production. Although these institutions focus on different forms of knowledge production, as a whole, all the institutions together ideally cover the entire knowledge production enterprise needed for higher education in a particular country. Horizontal differentiation (e.g., the growing diversification of education programmes, courses and fields of study) is a response to South African students increasing demand for access to higher education, and this differentiation assumes multiple functions of higher education institutions (new units) in different contexts (DHET, 2013).

Differentiation is an important theme in pre- and post-apartheid South Africa. Although it has been used negatively in the past (i.e., racial differentiation, and subsequently preparing students from different race categories for different kinds of employment in different

racialised areas in South Africa), it is regarded as being necessary in contemporary higher education systems because it signals a response to the requirements of the economy and the need for a broad and diverse labour force (DHET, 2013; Singh, 2008; Van Vucht, 2007). Much of the informal differentiation (e.g., HWUs and HBUs) within the contemporary South African university sector is related to the country's historical legacy and has led to notable inequalities among the universities.

Differentiation currently seeks to improve access and opportunity within public higher education for all South Africans (DHET, 2013), which has not been afforded to the majority of citizens in the past. According to Meek et al. (1996) not all forms of differentiation are beneficial and may be contested by other role-players who may be disadvantaged by the possible impacts of differentiation (Singh, 2008). Differentiation in higher education can be seen as both offering value as well as being a risky strategy. As implied above, this is because, on the one hand differentiation has the potential to create social and economic responsiveness, but on the other hand has the potential to weaken and distract focus on other important social imperatives (Singh, 2008).

2.2.1. Differentiation in Higher Education (Pre-1994)

During the apartheid years in South Africa different universities were formed according to racial groups, and university students that were separated along racial lines were prepared by the universities for different roles within the economy (Ntshoe, 2015). This was done through separating universities based on race, ethnicity and language. These universities also differentiated their education programmes and curricula, with HBU's only being offered certain courses and programmes of study. This differentiation in HBU's with regards to the education courses and curricula offered, served to limit the roles of black individuals in society (Bozalek, 2012). This differentiation during apartheid had negative impacts on access, mobility and opportunity for the majority of the country's population (Singh, 2008).

The institutions were not only separated according to black and white population groups but the programmes at these institutions were also separated with university programmes differing between the historically white and historically black universities based on the roles considered appropriate for the different social groups. HBU's were more likely to offer nursing and public administration as opposed to medicine and political philosophy which

were offered at HWU's in order to serve the interests of the white population (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012).

The term 'curriculum' refers to (inter alia) the syllabus, product, process, and praxis of a course or programme of study (Coate, 2006). In a curriculum the syllabus is the focus on the body of content or knowledge that is sought to be transferred (Ende, 1992). Syllabus in higher education can also be seen as the necessary requirements for a degree which includes things such as a list of topics and books (Coate, 2009). There are four main principles that typically inform a curriculum, these being the goals, content and useful learning experiences, teaching methods, and assessment that are typically seen as making up a curriculum.

Curriculum is used in order to provide students with the knowledge, skills and beliefs that are deemed necessary for the needs of a diversifying society and in order to respond to global competition. Curriculum also needs to inform emancipatory action and requires constant evaluation in order to ascertain what in the content of the curriculum is valuable and what needs to be changed (Annala et al., 2016).

The differentiation of academic curricula according to race within the university institutions during apartheid was created in order to support capitalism, and to support a system that promoted the interests of white individuals while excluding the successful progression of any person of another race (Ntshoe, 2015). Differentiation during apartheid resulted in many university institutions becoming reserved for certain groups of people based on race, and as well as having certain ideological, economic and social functions (Badat, 2009).

The different categories of universities, differentiated by race, were both resourced and governed differently with HWU's having been given administrative and financial power while HBUs and former Technikons being constrained in both their budget and ability to make decisions (Bozalek, 2012). The difference of administrative and financial power as well as their educational curricula created differentiation amongst the universities and was the major factor contributing to the inequality between historically black and white institutions (Badat, 2009). HWU's were given administrative and financial power to make decisions with regards to the spending of government subsidy, tuition fees, employment of staff and in how they wanted to invest their surplus. In contrast to this HBU's and former 'technikons' were more constrained in their decision making with budgeting for these institutions needing to go through the process of gaining approval from the government department for expenditure with these negotiated budgets often resulting in institutions having to return unspent funds

back to the government department at the end of the financial year. This often resulted in an end of year spending spree which led to some wasted funds and more significantly the inability to build financial reserves meaning that these institutions often did not have the capacity to plan and handle financial resources effectively. HBU's were also under funded and under resourced based on the understanding that the needs of these groups were less with teaching venues and libraries being poorly equipped (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012).

Another significant feature of HBU's was the campus architecture being designed strategically to impede movement in order to combat any cases of civil unrest. These poorly designed campuses still continue to negatively impact learning environments presently. HBU's have also been affected by their geographical locations as they are located in deeply rural areas which were former 'homelands' or in urban areas, often on the outskirts of more affluent areas, which were designated for the population groups that they were intended to serve. The geographical location and architecture often resulted in overcrowding and location also had a negative impact on academic potential as it contributed towards further social segregation (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012).

2.2.2. Differentiation in Higher Education (Post-1994)

Currently, South African public higher education institutions are categorized according to three types, namely traditional universities, universities of technology and comprehensive universities (DHET, 2013). South Africa needs a purposefully differentiated higher education system as there are a large range of social, economic and educational requirements needing to be met (as with any developing and developed country). There is great importance for a diverse public higher education system which is seen as the ideal endpoint though the process of differentiation, including diverse institutional visions, missions, and purposes (DHET, 2013; Singh, 2008).

Currently, in South Africa, and globally, differentiation in higher education is regarded positively and so there is a need for diverse institutional missions within South African universities. This differentiation and diversity will assist in universities being able to effectively respond to the broad range of national labour market and economic requirements, as well as improve efficiency and responsiveness (DHET, 2013). Differentiation is also intended to help improve access to educational opportunities as well as improve the success rates of participation in higher education programmes for all South Africans (DHET, 2013).

In the debate around differentiation in public higher education in South Africa, Van Vught (2007) argued that differentiation has many positive effects. Differentiation has the potential to improve access for students from many different backgrounds and allows for social mobility by offering different means of entry into higher education. It will assist in meeting the needs of the labour market by creating growth in the number and variety of specialisations needed for social and economic development. It creates a more heterogeneous environment and promotes diversity (Cloete, 2015).

Although differentiation in public higher education is seen mostly in a positive light there are also challenges that arise due to differentiation. According to Shay (2012), the challenges of curriculum differentiation have been most apparent with regards to the comprehensive universities in South Africa. Curriculum differentiation in HE is the differentiation in academic courses, degrees and diplomas offered within a HE institution. Within HE you can study a three-year diploma qualification, a three-year general degree or a four-year professional degree qualification at the basic level of HE. The curriculum is differentiated as it can be seen as being made up of generic, practical, theoretical and professional or vocational knowledge with various different degrees and diplomas on offer (Shay, 2012).

In 2004 the South African government created the comprehensive university which was a new institutional type in order to assist transformation in post-apartheid (Shay, 2012). Most comprehensive universities came about as a result of mergers between Technikons and traditional universities. The mergers between these institutions resulted in a single institution “inheriting” different curricula that was typically on different sides of the “technical/academic” divide.

According to Jungblut (2016) there has been much debate surrounding German higher education and the need to introduce greater differentiation to ensure that universities keep up with the world’s leading universities. This debate around institutional differentiation is not a singular phenomenon as many other countries have used institutional differentiation in the hopes of improving competitiveness and efficiency (Jungblut, 2016). In order for universities to be able to effectively meet the requirements for differentiation as well as the needs for the diverse labour market, they need to improve access to higher education and the flow within these higher education institutions, which leads to the next theme explored (i.e., massification).

Other negative impacts stemming from differentiation are that due to the impact of HBUs' being limited in their ability to manage their finances has led to several HBU's being placed under administration due to their perceived failure to appropriately manage their financial affairs. Another negative impact is due to the locations of the HBU's as spoken about in section 2.2.1, with many of the universities located in remote rural areas being less likely to attract highly qualified staff than in more urban located universities (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012).

2.3. Massification

One of the main focuses of the South African government and the Department of Higher Education is on participation, which focuses on the issue of increasing access to higher education, transforming it from elitist to a mass system through the process of "massification". Established in 1998 through the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) also has a mandate to promote access to higher education. The process of promoting access to higher education requires diversifying the curriculum, programmes and qualifications as well as gaining more funding in order to cater to the majority of the South African population (Reddy, 2004). Massification is the term used to describe the movement to increase student enrolment in higher education (Hornsby & Osman, 2014). Massification is also seen as a process that challenges traditional universities as being institutions of the 'elite' that only allowed access to a few "elite" students (Hornsby & Osman, 2014).

There are many positive elements to massification such as the widening of access to knowledge and tertiary education as well as the democratisation of higher education. In the debate around massification, massification is said to have elements of social justice as the increasing of access to higher education is considered a public good and a way in which 'elite' structures can be broken down (Hornsby & Osman, 2014). In the debate around massification of higher education, it is widely accepted that massification is necessary in responding to both equity and development (Hornsby & Osman, 2014).

There are arguments against massification in higher education, with an argument being that massification results in the enrolment of students in excess of their capacity, creating a trend of large classrooms of students and unmanageable student to lecturer ratios (Mohamedbhai, 2014). Large class teaching in higher education can be seen as a problem for learning, success, and quality education for students, which in turn may have negative implications for

the socioeconomic development of the country (Hornsby & Osman, 2014). In addition, an argument against the effectiveness of massification is that it has led to growing class sizes, however, there has been no proportionate increase in financial or physical support for the students enrolling in higher education. This has meant that universities have to accommodate larger numbers of students with the growing enrolment while having less resources at their disposal (Hornsby & Osman, 2014).

Due to shortages of public funding, many higher education institutions are not able to increase physical infrastructure in proportion to increased student enrolment. The infrastructure such as lecture rooms, administrative offices, libraries, laboratories and sanitary facilities are often grossly inadequate to meet the needs of the large student populations in public higher education institutions. Recruitment of additional academic staff is also a challenge as there is either a shortage of funds or not enough candidates with the necessary qualifications (Mohamedbhai, 2014).

Although the increase of enrolment in higher education may contribute to addressing issues of equity in South Africa, issues around student success does not seem to have received the same levels of attention and focus (Mohamedbhai, 2014). Although student success is an important theme in contemporary South African higher education, learning environments that consist of large classes of students tend to reinforce didactic teaching styles and may lead to a poorer quality of educational experience for the students. There is also an argument that larger classes result in poorer levels of engagement with the learning material, less commitment to the degrees and courses, and lower levels of motivation. This argument suggests that massification leading to larger classes of students is not a conducive environment for establishing higher order cognitive skills (Hornsby & Osman, 2014). Increasing accessibility to higher education in a bid to improve equity may be seen as creditable effort however it has little significance if students are not successfully completing their degrees and education (Mohamedbhai, 2014).

It is therefore important that universities not only ensure equity but also focus on the quality of education offered. Measures need to be put in place to ensure success of all students enrolled and that teaching, and research are relevant to the needs of the country (Mohamedbhai, 2014).

2.4. Globalisation and Internationalisation

South African higher education institutions are expected to contribute to redressing the legacies of apartheid, not only through massification, but also through making South Africa more competitive in the global economy (Reddy, 2004). One of the current themes in higher education is that of globalisation or internationalisation. Although interlinked, internationalisation pertains to international cooperation and mobility, while globalisation refers more to higher education institutions competing and collaborating with international institutions. Internationalisation and globalisation in higher education reinforce the notion of higher education as a tradable and marketable commodity (Seehole, 2014).

Internationalisation of higher education takes many forms including the movement of both students and staff cross border, international collaboration on research, universities in different countries offering joint degrees, the expansion of online learning platforms and online distance education, and mutual recognition of degree qualification amongst different countries and regional harmonisation within South Africa (South Africa DoET, 2014). All of these are important for cultivating peace and cooperation amongst countries and help assist in finding solutions to challenges faced globally such as sustainable development.

The White paper for post-school education and training (2014) states that with internationalisation, the movement of students and academics across borders helps improve communication internationally as well as cross-cultural learning. Internationalisation in education leads to stronger international relationships which help contribute towards increasing knowledge production and innovation. Internationalisation of education in South Africa also presents the opportunity to share local and indigenous knowledge with the international community (South Africa DoET, 2014).

Although internationalisation and globalisation are often seen in a positive light, Salmi (2009) argues that the idea of “world-class” that often accompanies internationalisation and globalisation is synonymous with “Elite Western” countries and is therefore biased against non-Western countries. Most of the universities that are classified as ‘world-class’ are found in Western countries and are universities that are wealthy and well resourced. These ‘world-class’ institutions are research intensive and are arguably often in a position to dictate the curriculum. The universities that are perceived as being ‘powerful’ consistently control the production and circulation of knowledge, with less resourced institutions being forced to follow these more ‘powerful’ institutions (Gyamera, 2018).

2.4.1. Globalisation and Internationalization of the Curriculum

Globalising or internationalising the curriculum often means that the curriculum becomes different in content and structure from the local or national curriculum (Jibeen, 2015; Sehoole, 2014; McDonald, 2007). Universities are expected to produce graduates that will be able to contribute towards making South Africa competitive in the global economy through globalisation. However, they are also expected to maintain the best interests of the public and produce critical citizens that can contribute to the democratic society (Reddy, 2004).

Globalised or internationalised curricula often prepares graduates for international professions and qualifications for internationally recognised professions (Jibeen, 2015; McDonald, 2007). In the debate around globalisation and internationalisation in South Africa there is the concern that globalisation and internationalisation may lead to the loss of indigenous African cultures and a further burden of Western values on local communities and cultures within South Africa (Jibeen, 2015; McDonald, 2007). According to Knight (2007), one of the biggest risk factors linked to the process of internationalisation is the loss of cultural identity. The internationalisation of higher education institutions is also creating a further divide between socioeconomic classes and is therefore argued to be creating further discrimination among students (Jibeen, 2015). Although global education may add value in offering diversity of choice it also contributes to the devaluing of initiatives that value, support and promote local culture and national beliefs, skills and knowledge (McDonald, 2007). Critical pedagogy, which is the theoretical framework used in the study and will be discussed in Section 2.6, does not regard globalisation as being inclusive and equitable for all nations, with the critical pedagogy perspective advocating that globalisation tends to further oppress groups of individuals that are already vulnerable (Kincheloe, 2008).

2.5. Decolonisation

Decolonisation is an important theme in higher education post-apartheid. The decolonisation of higher education involves political, social and epistemic processes that critically examine dominant structures within society, especially in relation to knowledge and its associated power. Decolonisation focuses on re-centering knowledge, shifting it more towards indigenous forms of knowledge and the intellectual histories of colonised people (Zembylas, 2018). It is a way of thinking that confronts European and colonial knowledge and ways of

thinking and the consequences that those forms of knowledge may have on indigenous people and their subjugated forms of knowledge (Zembylas, 2018).

The transformation taking place in South African universities is being strongly influenced by the pressure of redressing the apartheid past. In South Africa there has been a recent move advocating for the decolonisation of higher education (Pillay, 2016). This move is striving to bring about the end of white privilege within university institutions and the country as a whole. The move to decolonise South African higher education has led to mass action amongst students protesting for free higher education called the Rhodes must fall and later evolved into the fees must fall movement (Ludski, 2015). The fees must fall movement became a movement against financial exclusion for students who are economically disadvantaged (Pillay, 2016).

2.5.1. Decolonisation of Curriculum (Post-Apartheid)

According to Heleta (2016), since the end of apartheid in 1994 epistemologies and systems of knowledge within most universities in South Africa have not changed and remain very Western and Eurocentric. Due to the curriculum remaining very Eurocentric, Western dominance and white privilege remain and are still reinforced (Heleta, 2016).

Universities have done little to change their body of knowledge, being predominantly Western and Eurocentric, and implement new and different traditions of knowledge and knowledge-making post 1994 (Heleta, 2016). All universities have new policies and frameworks that promote equality, equity and transformation, however the institutional cultures and epistemological traditions have, to a large degree, not changed much (Heleta, 2016). Despite achieving political freedom in 1994, there are still major inequalities and socio-economic crises in South Africa. Public higher education universities are still in the process of trying to remediate these major inequalities and socio-economic crises that persist today (Heleta, 2016).

As mentioned previously higher education in South Africa has seen violent calls for the decolonisation of the curriculum. The curriculum in higher education has lacked the ability to respond to contextual issues, empower students and give a plurality of voices. According to Mgqwashu (2016) and Fomunyam (2017), decolonising the curriculum in higher education in South Africa is the foregrounding of indigenous or local knowledge and indigenous experiences in the content of the curriculum. This puts indigenous knowledge and experience

at the forefront of the curriculum while downplaying Eurocentric knowledge and experiences that have previously dominated the curriculum (Hornsby & Osman, 2014).

Curricula and how it is formed and what it contains can be seen as a form of power as it promotes certain knowledge to learners and society. It is therefore important to understand this connection between power and knowledge, critical pedagogy will therefore be discussed in the section that follows.

2.6. Theoretical Framework – Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is focused on power relations and seeks to gain insight into how individuals or institutions construct representations of themselves, others and the physical and social environment around them (Giroux, 2004). Critical pedagogy also highlights that politics is not exclusively about power but also about individuals learning how to become skilled citizens, a key struggle in creating political agency and democracy. It is important to also seek to understand the connection between power and knowledge and to make alternate ways of thinking visible in order to promote democracy which can be done through the framework of critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy propositions that education has the ability to create social transformation and can be seen as a form of political intervention.

Knowledge, values, desire and social relations are all implicated in understanding power and power relations which is highlighted through the lens of critical pedagogy. In order to promote democracy and create a more even balance of power, critical pedagogy needs to promote students being provided with the knowledge and competency to exercise critical judgement, social responsibility and agency. Public higher education is a vital resource that helps contribute towards a democratic nation and so critical pedagogy seeks to defend the need for public higher education (Giroux, 2004; Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011).

Critical pedagogy can be seen as a prism that highlights the complexities between teaching and learning and tends to focus on the social, cultural, political and economic (Wink, 2005). Education can be seen as a mirror of society and critical pedagogy seeks to challenge societies thinking that is reflected through education and what is being taught. Critical pedagogy seeks to create a voice for the voiceless and give power to the powerless. There is the need to focus on creating positive change that promotes advocacy and activism for those who have previously been disadvantaged in both classrooms as well as within society and this is a focus of critical pedagogy (Morgan, 2000; Wink, 2005; Braa & Callero, 2006).

Within mainstream schooling and education, knowledge is often something that is produced by “experts” that are distant and detached from the educational environment. There is a need for teachers, educators and lecturers to exercise their voice and have more of a say within the educational sphere which is highlighted through the critical pedagogy framework. Educators need to be engaged in a continuous dialogue with students, which seeks to interrogate existing knowledge and seek to produce new knowledge in order to change traditional power relations that have previously marginalised individuals and groups of individuals. (Kincheloe, et al., 2018).

2.7. Conclusion

Chapter 2 focused on the literature surrounding higher education in South Africa and some of the dominant themes within this literature as well as the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy used within this study. The dominant themes focused on within Chapter 2 were differentiation in higher education, massification, globalisation and internationalisation, and decolonisation. Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology within the study and explains the research questions, research paradigm, method section, data analysis section and the ethics within the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an orientation and understanding to the methodology and methods used in this research study. After revisiting the research objectives and questions, the chapter provides an overview of the research paradigm which the study was positioned within and then identifies the sampling and data collection strategies used. After the process of data analysis that the researcher engaged in is explained, the chapter explores the steps taken in order to ensure validity, reliability and rigour in the study. Finally, the limitations and ethics of the research are explained.

3.2. Research Objectives and Questions

As identified in Chapter 1, the main objective of this study was to identify the dominant discourses in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa. Two sub-objectives that were identified were to explore:

- the differences and similarities in dominant discourses in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa according to current modes of institutional differentiation.
- the extent to which the dominant discourses in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa reflect current national and global efforts to reconstruct and redress past inequalities.

Arising from the study objectives, the main research question for this study was:

- What dominant discourses are evident in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa?

Two sub-questions were embedded within the main research question, namely:

- What differences and similarities are there in the dominant discourses in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa according to current modes of institutional differentiation?

- To what extent do the dominant discourses in the vision and mission statements of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa reflect current national and global efforts to reconstruct and redress past inequalities?

3.3. Research Paradigm

This study was positioned within a social constructionist paradigm. Social constructionism can be understood as a theory of knowledge which centralises meaning making in a social environment (Shotter, 1994). Researchers operating from a social constructionist paradigm assume that people (and for this study, institutions) tend to socially construct their realities through the language they use and through the meaning created through shared communication (Galbin, 2014). Because this was a study about written text in the form of vision and mission statements, it was reasoned that it would be suitable to locate the research within the paradigm of social constructionism. More specifically, the mission and vision statements of the 26 public universities in South Africa are examples of language and text that can be regarded as central forms of communication which attempt to convey the functioning and positioning of the 26 public universities.

Social constructionism is context specific and so it was a useful paradigm to position this study on university vision and mission statements in (Galbin, 2014). Adopting a social constructionist paradigm can also contribute to social transformation through generating theories that offer both theoretical, discursive, and practical efforts for reconstruction and change (Gergen, 1978). This is important because much social transformation is needed within all domains of South African existence, including higher education (DHET, 2013).

Social constructionism argues that there is never a single, objective and ‘true’ explanation or interpretation of phenomena but rather there exists multiple different perspectives. Different ways of understanding events and the world are present, and there is no one obvious truth. Social constructionism seeks a more critical and questioning attitude towards ways of thinking and understanding that may be taken for granted, as opposed to a single objective truth (Burr, 2015).

According to Berger and Luckmann (1991), conversation and language are vital in the maintaining, changing and reconstructing subjective reality. Social constructionism posits that there is a subjective reality, and it is largely concerned with the ways in which

knowledge is both constructed and understood, with an emphasis on language, meaning it has an epistemological perspective (Andrews, 2012). Language can take many forms such as spoken language, body language and written language. However, for the purpose of this study, the focus is on written language.

One of the central focuses of social constructionism is with the social processes involved in the way the world is conceptualised (Dickins, 2004). Social constructionism does not view a single, universal reality but rather the view is that the understanding and knowledge of the world is dependent on individuals' perceptions, emotions and purposes about their world (Dyson & Brown, 2005). An ultimate truth does not exist as every individual constructs meaning in differing ways, even when related to a single phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Social constructionism suggests that multiple truths exist as opposed to just a single truth (Higgins et al., 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

As detailed in Chapters 1 and 2, the study started with the researcher reading extensively around current and historical discourses within South African higher education literature. While reading and writing, the researcher also reflected critically on himself being located as a member (i.e., previous and current student and researcher) of the global and South African higher education community.

3.4. Method

3.4.1. Sampling and Data Collection

The sampling technique used for this study was total population sampling. As a purposive approach, total population sampling involves including the whole of a population with a specific set of characteristics in a sample. Total population sampling is possible when the population is relatively small (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016), and in the case of this research, the population and sample were the 26 public universities located in South Africa.

Specifically, this research explored the mission and vision statements of all 26 South African public universities. Purposive sampling was used to focus on particular characteristics of a population that were of interest to the researcher which helped answer the research question (Trochim, 2006). This study purposively gathered data from the vision and mission statements of the relevant universities from the official websites which are in the public domain. The researcher made use of the information available on the Universities South

Africa website (<https://www.usaf.ac.za/public-universities-in-south-africa/>) to verify which universities were listed as public South African universities. The list of universities was also verified on the DHET and CHE websites in order to ensure that the official websites of each university was being accessed. Although the South African higher education sector is vast; comprised of 50 registered and accredited public TVET colleges in South Africa operating on more than 264 campuses spread across the rural and urban areas of the country (dhet.gov.za; DHET 2014), as well as 284 registered private colleges in South Africa according to the list (updated on 14 December 2020), found on the website of the Department of Higher Education (www.dhet.gov.za/SitePages/DocRegisters.aspx) and 26 public universities found on the DHET website (<https://www.dhet.gov.za/SitePages/UniversitiesinSA.aspx>), the researcher was specifically interested in public universities in South Africa.

The text forming the vision and mission statements of the public universities in South Africa was directly copied from each university's website and pasted into a word document. Thereafter, the text was imported and managed in NVIVO, a computer-aided qualitative-data-analysis tool. Table 1 contains the names of the 26 public universities in South Africa, clustered according to institutional type.

Table 1

List of South African Universities According to Institutional Type

<u>Comprehensive universities:</u>	<u>Traditional universities:</u>	<u>Universities of Technology:</u>
University of Johannesburg (UJ)	University of Cape Town (UCT)	Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)
Nelson Mandela University (NMMU)	University of Fort Hare (UFH)	Central University of Technology (CUT)
University of South Africa (UNISA)	University of the Free State (UFS)	Durban University of Technology (DUT)
University of Venda (UV)	University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN)	Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT)

Walter Sisulu University (WSU)	North West University (NWU)	University of Mpumalanga (UMP)
University of Zululand (Uzulu)	University of Pretoria (UP)	Sol Plaatje University (SPU)
	Rhodes University (RU)	Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)
	Stellenbosch University (SUN)	Vaal University of Technology (VUT)
	University of Western Cape (UWC)	
	University of Witwatersrand (Wits)	
	University of Limpopo (UL)	
	Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU)	

In addition to being located within the researcher's specific area of interest (i.e., university education), the 26 universities in South Africa were chosen on the basis of having made publicly available their vision and mission statements. Universities were not included or excluded in the study on factors such as location, perceived prestige, national or world ranking, classification or type, fees charged, or on the type of students that are characteristically drawn to that specific university.

3.5. Data Analysis

The researcher used a two-stage process with regards to analysing the data. The first stage in the process was a grounded thematic analysis process (which is presented by the authors as atheoretical and inductive) (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The grounded thematic analysis was used in order to identify and name dominant themes in the vision and mission statements. The first stage then informed the second stage of the analysis process, which made use of a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach. Overall, the social constructionist paradigm that informed the study (and analysis) required the researcher to find meanings that have been socially created in language and text (i.e., vision and mission statements). In addition, the

researcher had to consider the historical and current social, political and economic environment surrounding South Africa and education, with a particular focus on public higher education, and how this has impacted on social constructs that would probably be reflected in the mission and vision statements. (Vinney, 2020; Andrews, 2012).

3.5.1. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is the search for emergent themes that are deemed as being important to the description of the phenomenon being researched (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997). This process requires the identification of important themes through careful reading and then re-reading of the data selected for the study (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). This is done in order to form a pattern recognition within the data before the emerging themes are categorised and analysed (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Thematic analysis moves beyond the counting of explicit words and phrases and looks at creating themes by identifying and describing the implicit and explicit ideas within the data (Guest et al., 2012). According to Bernard and Ryan (1988), the process is simple and consists of the verbatim reading of transcripts, identification of possible themes, comparison and contrast of these themes and the identification of their structures and lastly the building of theoretical models that are checked against the data (Guest et al., 2012).

The thematic analysis used in this research consisted of six different steps in order to illuminate the relevant themes. Step one involved data immersion and familiarization. In this process the researcher began by engaging with the data and making casual notes about what was interesting about the data and possible connections within the data (Braun & Clarke 2006, 2012, 2013). This step involved the immersion of the researcher in the data through the reading and rereading of the textual data. The notes taken during this process were shaped and informed by the research question. During this step, familiarisation with the data was an important entry point as it allowed the researcher to engage with the data (Braun & Clarke 2006, 2012, 2013). In other words, the first step taken by the researcher in order to develop the findings was to become familiar with the data. The three different higher education institutional types' mission and vision statements were read and re-read for understanding and to gain a feel for what major themes were being expressed through the mission and vision statements in general.

Step two involved generating codes from the data. This step required the focused attention of the researcher to systematically make sense and identify meaning throughout the dataset (Braun & Clarke 2006, 2012, 2013). This process involved creating clear labels (codes) to ‘chunks’ of data in order for the researcher to be able to organise the data into patterns of meaning for further development. This step followed an inductive process whereby the researcher used a “bottom-up” approach in order to identify meaning from the data (Terry et al. 2017). Similar data was clumped together in order to create coherent clusters of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The researcher used a qualitative data analytic software (i.e., NVIVO) in order to organise the data systematically and in a meaningful way. Coding the data into nodes helped reduce the data into smaller and more understandable chunks of meaning. The nodes were further examined and analysed by the researcher in order to find any commonalities or differences and to lump similarly themed nodes together. During the reading and rereading of the data the researcher created 27 different nodes for mission statements and 25 different nodes for vision statements. Many of the nodes were closely connected and so after reviewing these nodes, the researcher merged the nodes together based on their links to one another in order to create six main nodes for mission statements and five main nodes for vision statements. This helped create a much clearer picture of the overall themes running through the different higher education institutions mission and vision statements.

Step three involved the searching for themes. A theme is something that holds important meaning about the dataset in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher reviewed and scrutinised the coded data to identify codes that were similar and overlapped in order to ascertain any themes from the information. These codes were clustered together in order to create themes and subthemes. The relationship between themes was also explored by the researcher during this step (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The themes were characterised according to their significance in relation to the research question.

The fourth step involved the reviewing of potential themes. This step involved the researcher conducting a quality check of the themes. During this process the researcher asked himself questions such as, is this a theme or a code? Does this theme say something useful about the dataset in relation to the research question? And is there enough data to support this theme? (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The themes were reviewed, modified and further developed. The researcher asked himself whether these themes were linked to the research question. The themes from both the mission and vision statements were very similar and so the same

overall themes were used when coding the information. The final step in the process was to further refine the themes with the aim of identifying the “essence” of each of the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A thematic map was then created for both the mission and vision statements with the final major themes created. The thematic maps serve to illustrate the relationship between the themes and the overall research question. Step five involved defining and naming the themes. Themes should have a singular focus but not be repetitive and need to directly address the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Although thematic analysis can be presented in a linear fashion (i.e., in five steps, as presented above), the process is iterative. Therefore, the researcher engaged in an ongoing back and forth process between the above five steps when undertaking the thematic analysis.

3.5.2. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Once the steps of thematic analysis had reached a point of completion, a CDA was then conducted. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) define discourse analysis as the process of analysing how certain discourses are arranged in order to achieve a particular effect in a particular context. This definition has three different components, namely the discourse deployed in a text, how a certain effect is achieved in a text, and the larger context in which the text functions. In extending the analysis that discourse analysis brought to the study, CDA was specifically used as it permitted the researcher to describe, interpret and explain how discourses construct, maintain or serve to redress social inequalities (i.e., it allowed the researcher to adopt a purposively critical stance). Discourse is both socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned. Discourse is often not transparent, and it is an aim of CDA to make it more visible and transparent.

CDA views language (or in the case of this study, written language) as something that plays a role in the production and construction of social reality and subjectivities. CDA involves the demystifying of ideologies and power by investigating the semiotic data (written). The researcher was interested in the ways in which the discourse being observed produce or reproduce social domination, and/or the abuse of power of one group over another (Fairclough, 2013).

This research is interested in exploring how university vision and mission statements reflect and perpetuate discourses that serve to influence the acts and minds of members from different groups. This study attempted to conceptualise how the language used in

universities' mission and vision statements is trying to influence social thought and action. It also analysed whether the universities subtly exercise power through the message and use of language in their mission and vision statements, and whether this exercise of power is incongruent with larger socio-political and higher education goals.

In essence, the first part of the CDA involved identifying and describing instantiation of discourses in textual data. The second part of the CDA involved identifying possible subject positions made possible within these discourses (Aguinaldo, 2012).

Questions that the researcher had in mind when conducting the CDA were, whose interests are being served by the positioning of the text? Whose interests are negated? Are there any consequences of the positioning of the text? (Janks, 1997).

3.5.3. Validity, Reliability and Rigour

The findings from this study were constantly refined and improved on with the assistance and observation of a research supervisor and peers. Specifically, a number of drafts of (sections of) the dissertation were reviewed by the research supervisor in order to improve and enhance the overall validity and reliability. In addition, the research was presented and critiqued at research seminars with peers. With the assistance of a supervisor and peers, triangulation was possible as it allowed the researcher to become aware of blind spots in the analyses of the research. This in turn helped the researcher improve the validity and reliability of the research. The researcher in this study also needed to exercise reflexivity by remaining aware of his own inherent experiences of gender, race, ability, and socio-economic and educational privilege, and how these may have affected the way in which he views the mission and vision statements of the 26 public South African universities. The researcher needed to be aware of his positionality with regards to the research, being a young white male who at the time of conducting the research attended one of the 26 public universities being analysed. The researcher also made sure to use the official websites for the mission and vision statements of the 26 public universities from South Africa.

This study also made sure not to plagiarise any previous work on the topic or any other information or websites pertaining to this topic being studied. However, it is important to understand that this research was subjective as it was analysed by an individual who cannot analyse the data without having some form of bias.

3.5.4. Ethics

The data used for the study was available from the public websites of South African universities. Therefore, the data was already in the public domain, freely available, and therefore technically did not need prior ethical approval to access and use for research and analysis purposes. However, it was decided that it would be ethical to submit the proposed study for ethical review to the UKZN Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) before the process of gathering the data collection and analysis began. HSSREC reviewed the proposed study and provided ethical clearance for the study (see Appendix B and C)

An additional ethical consideration that was taken into account was an understanding that the research was subjective as it was analysed by an individual who cannot analyse the data without having some form of bias. The researcher therefore needed to consistently critique his own positionality in the study and in relation to his experience of higher education in South Africa. Although unlikely, the findings from the study may have negatively critiqued a particular university which could have contributed towards the university being seen in a negative light.

University websites are not considered to form part of social media. This study therefore did not gain consent from the 26 public universities in South Africa in order to collect data from their mission and vision statements and the data and findings will be able to be linked back to the universities that are included in this study. The data collected in this proposed study is not considered sensitive and although inferences may be made about specific universities it is unlikely to be ethically controversial.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS CHAPTER

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 4 focuses on the findings that have been generated through the researcher's analysis of the data. The data was collected from mission and vision statements of the 26 public universities found within South Africa, as identified on these institutions' public websites. Explanations and reports on the analysis of the data will make use of some of the excerpts from the various higher education institutions mission and vision statements directly, as evidence to support the themes identified in the data.

In the next section the themes that have been created from the thematic analysis of the data in the study have been organised in order to inform the discourses related to the research objective highlighted in Chapter 2. This main research objective was to identify the dominant discourses in the vision and mission statements from the websites of the 26 public higher education institutions in South Africa. Whether the universities are fulfilling the goals set out in their mission and vision statements is beyond the scope of this study.

4.2. Findings from Thematic Analysis

Drawing on the analysis of the 26 higher education institutions' mission and vision statements from their websites, four major themes were identified to be of most relevance to the study's research questions. Before each of these four major themes are presented, they are identified in a thematic map in Table 4.1 below. Theme 1 incorporates two sub-themes, while theme 2 incorporates three sub-themes. Theme 3 incorporates five sub-themes, while theme 4 incorporates two sub-themes.

Table 2

South African Public Universities' Vision and Mission Statement Themes and Sub-Themes

	Themes	Sub-themes
1	A critical socio-political agenda	- Transformation

		- Community work and community engagement
2	Collaborative and conducive institutional environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An ethos of embracing diversity - An intellectually stimulating environment for students and staff - A supportive environment for students
3	Excellence and achievement aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic excellence - Excellence in teaching and learning - Attract quality/talented staff and students - High standards of research - Globally competitive
4	Knowledge production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research - Contribute to the knowledge economy

4.2.1. Theme 1: A Critical Socio-Political Agenda

One of the major themes that was identified in the 26 universities' mission and vision statements was the theme of a critical socio-political agenda. This theme referred to any text that related to or involved either social or political factors or a combination of the two. In addition, given the socio-political nature of social and community development in South Africa, any text that referred to transformation within society and any text relating to community engagement were also regarded as pertaining to a critical socio-political agenda. Therefore, within the theme of a critical socio-political agenda, two sub-themes were identified, namely transformation and community work and community engagement.

The sub-theme of transformation was prominent amongst half of the traditional universities' mission and vision statements. In these mission and vision statements, some of the universities acknowledged the socio-political challenges and difficulties associated with the lack of transformation that resulted from South Africa's apartheid past. These universities typically claimed to "reject all forms of unfair discrimination" in order to "redress past imbalances" (RU mission statement). One of the universities referenced its past experience of being part of the liberation struggle, highlighting its role in "helping build an equitable"

society by seeking “racial and gender equality” and aiming to promote participation of “historically marginalised” people (UWC mission statement). Some of the universities referred to advancing “transformation within our society” and creating a culture that nurtures “inclusivity” and embraces “diversity” in South Africa (UCT, UP, UWC and WITS mission statements). UFH’s mission and vision statement referred to contributing towards the “socio-economic” development of South Africa. The mission and vision statement of most universities of technology included statements pertaining to transformation. For example, MUT’s mission is highlighted as uplifting “mainly disadvantaged individuals” with a “commitment to social redress” in contributing to an equitable Southern Africa. MUT’s mission and vision statement also refers to fostering “socio-economic advancement.” (MUT mission and vision statement). SPU’s mission and vision statement also includes aiming to create “equitable development” and “justice in society” in the hopes of addressing some of the challenges in the region. MUT’s mission and vision statement refers to a “focus on serving historically disadvantaged students” in order to contribute towards transformation. CUT and MUT’s vision is to bring about “socio-economic development” and “transformation” while UFS aims to contribute to “development and social justice” in the hopes of creating change. NWU and SPU’s mission and vision statements also make references to transformation indicating that they will strive for “social responsiveness and an ethic of care” and enhance “democratic practice and social justice in society” respectively. In contrast to the traditional universities and universities of technology, only a few references to transformation were made by comprehensive universities. Specifically, WSU’s mission statement identified aiming to “address rural development and urban renewal” and “complex societal challenges”, while UJ’s mission statement claimed to inspire “its community to transform and serve humanity.

With regards to the sub-theme of community work and engagement half of the comprehensive universities made reference to the importance of community engagement. UNISA’s mission and vision statements highlight that it “fosters active community engagement” and is “100% committed to the communities” they serve. WSU’s mission statement refers to its “community-based research and community partnerships in cooperation with development agencies” Half of the traditional universities made reference to “community engagement” and being focused on the “developmental needs of its community” (UL mission and vision statements) or community work such as addressing the “health needs of the community” (SMU mission statement), creating awareness of “resources in the

community” (UWC mission statement) and “enriching and transforming local, continental and global communities” (SUN mission statement). Three of the universities of technology made reference to fostering a culture of “engagement” and “collaboration” with their communities (SPU, DUT, TUT mission statement) and MUT’s vision statement places “emphasis on community development of the rural population.”

4.2.2. Theme 2: Collaborative and Conducive Institutional Environments

The second major theme that was identified was referred to as collaborative and conducive institutional environments. An institutional ethos is the distinguishing character, sentiments and guiding beliefs of the institution. The researcher’s conceptualisation of an institutional ethos is that it pertains to the desire of an institution to formulate its responsibilities, values and aims which identify it. Some examples of such statements are “to provide a safe and nurturing student support system”, and “We will actively advance the pace of transformation within our university and beyond, nurturing an inclusive institutional culture which embraces diversity.” The theme, collaborative and conducive institutional environments was identified to include three sub-themes, namely, an ethos of embracing diversity, an intellectually stimulating environment for students and staff, and a supportive environment for students. A majority of the higher education institutions made reference to at least one of these sub-themes and the overall theme 2 in general.

One of the sub-themes of collaborative and conducive institutional environments is having an ethos of embracing diversity. Only a few of the traditional universities made reference to their institutional environment in relation to embracing diversity. For example, UCT’s mission statement makes reference to “nurturing an inclusive institutional culture which embraces diversity” and providing “a vibrant and supportive intellectual environment that attracts people from all over the world.” Similarly, WITS’s mission statement highlights a goal of creating “an environment that promotes learning and awareness of individuals from diverse backgrounds”. UNISA’s vision statement referred to “transcending language and cultural barriers” in order to promote transformation. These examples were regarded as signifying attempts by some traditional universities to prioritise the formation of alliances across historical language, race, and cultural divides.

The second and third sub-themes of collaborative and conducive institutional environments are closely related and make reference to an intellectually stimulating environment for

students and staff and creating a supportive environment for students respectively. Many of the traditional universities make reference to these subthemes. For example, SUN's mission statement makes reference to wanting to "provide a world-class environment", while UCT's vision statement makes reference to their goal of wanting to create a "learning environment that will encourage students to reach their full potential" and "inspire creativity". RU's mission statement makes reference to wanting to "provide an attractive, safe and well-equipped environment that is conducive to good scholarship and collegiality". All but one of the universities of technology referenced something within the theme of collaborative and conducive institutional environments in their mission and vision statements. With regards to creating a nurturing environment, CPUT's mission and vision statement made reference to creating a "vibrant and well-resourced" environment for its students, while both TUT and VUT's mission and vision statements made reference to creating a "conducive environment" for students to feel safe and reach their potential.

SPU, DUT and TUT's mission and vision statements all make reference to creating a culture of "engagement" and "collaboration" with their communities, while DUT's mission statement also makes reference to creating an environment that seeks to support the "university community". CPUT was the only university of technology that makes reference to being focused on creating a culture of being "environmentally conscious" and "sustainable" (CPUT mission statement). Two traditional universities refer to establishing a culture of concern for the environment with UCT's mission statement about making an "impact on our society and our environment" and RU's mission statement about making a positive impact on the environment through "actively pursuing a policy of environmental best practice".

4.2.3. Theme 3: Excellence and Achievement Aims

The major theme of excellence and achievement aims was a very prominent theme throughout the higher education institutions and seemed to be comprised of five sub-themes. Excellence is a term that appears consistently within the mission and vision statements of many universities, yet it is something that has not been well defined in academic publications making the way in which excellence is evaluated within higher education vague and difficult. The concept of excellence can have different meaning depending on the context in which it is being used, and although it can be seen as a vague concept, it is seen as an ideal to be pursued

as a core value within higher education. Excellence can be a description of the current provision as well as a goal or aspiration that universities, academics and students reach for. Commonly, excellence is used to describe something exceptional, meritocratic or outstanding that exceeds normal expectations. Excellence within higher education is often linked to the reputation of the institution and to the achievement of its students. According to Brusoni et al., (2014) there are a few quantifiable factors or indicators that measure excellence in practice or encapsulate the various ways in which excellence may manifest itself within higher education which include; high standards of academic achievement, an exceptional student experience, positive stakeholder satisfaction, commitment to research and academic development, support for social, economic and cultural development, commitment to internationalisation and the promotion of equity and academic freedom (Brusoni et al., 2014). In terms of the current theme being discussed, achievement pertains to a student's ability to engage in their studies successfully with the ability to acquire and use relevant knowledge critically, and a lecturer's ability to successfully teach content and skills to their students and contribute to scholarly debates in their disciplines.

The first two sub-themes are very closely related and refer to academic excellence and excellence in teaching and learning. Some examples of this theme in the comprehensive universities' mission statements are UV's mission statement of being "anchored on the pillars of excellence in teaching, learning research and community engagement", WSU's mission statement referring to the "advancement of quality academic, moral, cultural and technological learner-centred education" and UZULU's mission statement making reference to "quality education which upholds high standards of research and academic excellence". UZULU's vision statement also makes reference to "providing quality education" and wanting to be a "leading" university. With regards to the traditional universities, UFH's mission statement makes reference to striving "to provide high quality education", UKZN's mission statement makes reference to being "academically excellent", UP's mission statement and WITS' vision statement makes reference to being in the pursuit of "recognition" and "excellence" and UWC's mission statement made reference to being "a place of quality". UL's vision statement made reference to "epitomising academic excellence" and UKZN's vision statement making reference to wanting to be the "premier university of African scholarship". The overall sub-theme of academic excellence seems to be appropriately captured by RU's mission and vision statements, namely that it wants "to strive for excellence and to promote quality assurance in all its activities". All of the

universities of technology that had a mission or vision statement had something in their statements with regards to the sub-theme of aims of excellence and achievement. Within this sub-theme DUT, CPUT and UMP's mission statements make reference to them seeking to promote "high quality" and "excellence in learning and teaching" and "technology transfer". The theme of creating a platform for students to achieve their "potential" is also evident in TUT and MUT's mission statements. MUT's vision statement refers to the universities pursuit to be "distinguished or outstanding" due to "superiority in performance" and its desire to excel in "academic learning and achievement".

Another sub-theme of attracting quality/talented staff and students was common throughout the higher education's mission and vision statements. UWC's mission statement highlighted that it would aim to achieve this excellence by being "committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research". Many of the traditional universities spoke about employing "talented staff" (SUN mission statement), and RU's mission statement referred to their ability to "attract and retain staff of the highest calibre and to provide development programmes for staff at all levels". The overall theme of "outstanding teaching, research and scholarship" (UCT mission statement) was found in most of the traditional universities mission statements. SUN's mission statement made reference to their pursuit of wanting to "attract outstanding students" (SUN mission statement).

The final sub-theme is with regards to universities stating the desire to be globally competitive. Half of the comprehensive universities made reference to this sub-theme with UV's mission statement refereeing to their efforts at creating a "globally competitive" institution, UZULU's mission statement making reference to them providing "globally competitive graduates" and UNISA's mission statement making reference to them ensuring "global sustainability". More than half of the traditional universities made reference to the sub-theme with RU's mission statement expressing their aim of providing "outstanding internationally accredited graduates" and UFH's mission statement making reference to a "high quality education of international standards". SUN's vision statement expresses their desire to be "globally recognised as excellent" while UP's vision statement expressed that it wants to be "recognised internationally for its quality". UFS's vision statement highlights their aim at the "production of globally competitive graduates and knowledge", NWU's vision statement refers to being "internationally recognised", RU's vision statement makes reference to being an "outstanding internationally respected" institution and SUN's vision statement refers to being "globally recognised as excellent". None of the mission or vision

statements of the universities of technology made reference to being globally competitive and were primarily focused on meeting the needs of society with the focus being more local.

4.2.4. Theme 4: Knowledge Production

The fourth major theme of knowledge production was found throughout the mission and vision statements of the different higher education institutions and is made up of two-sub themes. Knowledge production refers to the various activities in a higher education institution that have to do with the production of new knowledge and information.

The first sub-theme is that of research, with many of the comprehensive universities making reference to this in their mission or vision statements such as UZULU's mission statement expressing their goal of upholding "high standards of research". Many of the traditional universities made reference to this sub-theme with SUN's mission statement referring to themselves as being "research-intensive" and SMU's mission statement making reference about promoting "interdisciplinary research" and UWC's mission statement emphasising that the research is "appropriate to its Southern African context". UKZN's mission and vision statements referred to them being "innovative in research" while UCT's mission and vision statement made reference about using research to have a "positive impact on our society and our environment". UFS's vision statement aims to be "research led", UP's vision statement aspires to be a "leading research-intensive university" and both UFS and UFH's vision statements reference the aim for "research excellence".

The second sub-theme is that of wanting to contribute to the knowledge economy. Three of the comprehensive universities made referenced to this theme. UJ's mission statement referenced the "pursuit of knowledge", UNISA's mission statement made reference to their efforts to "contribute to the knowledge and information society" and NMMU's vision statement highlighted its aim at "generating cutting-edge knowledge". SUN's vision statement made reference about "creating knowledge" and wanting to "advance knowledge in service of society". CUT's vision statement highlighted their goal of being a "centre of knowledge" and VUT's vision statement highlighted its aims at creating "leads in innovative knowledge".

4.3. Findings from the Critical Discourse Analysis

As explained in Chapter 3 (see sub-section 3.5.2), after the thematic analysis of the data, the researcher then used the principles of CDA to develop a more critical perspective of the findings. Although the findings from the thematic analysis synthesise the major themes from the mission and vision statements of the 26 public universities in South Africa, they do not necessarily identify what the contextual purpose and intended effects of the vision and mission statements are. Also, the thematic analysis and CDA were not necessarily sequential processes but were rather undertaken in a concurrent way at points in the research process. Engaging in CDA allowed the researcher to extend the findings from his thematic analysis in critical ways, and this was regarded as important because of the embedded, long standing, and persistent socio-economic and educational inequalities in South African society. Also, the critical pedagogical framing of the study as discussed in Chapter 2, necessitated a critical engagement with the data. There are undoubtedly multiple discourses evident in the universities' mission and vision statements, however, using the findings of the thematic analysis as a basis, the researcher proposes two main discourses of relevance to present. The first discourse is referred to as universities as “the solution,” and the second discourse is referred to as universities as “the place to be.” Themes 1 and 4 (i.e., a critical socio-political agenda, and knowledge production respectively) seem to position universities as “the solution” to the multiple systemic and socio-economic problems in South African (and global) society, hence the naming of this discourse. Themes 2 and 3 (i.e., collaborative and conducive institutional environments, and excellence and achievement aims) seem to position universities as “the place to be” in South African society. The researcher was focused on how the mission and vision statements and their discourses serve to influence the minds of the intended reader of the mission and vision statements. The two discourses identified are now presented below, along with their possible (intended) effects, and various probable subject positions.

4.3.1. Universities as “The Solution”

Several of the mission and vision statements of the public universities in South Africa attempt to portray the universities as being “the solution” to South Africa's current socio-political and economic problems. They also seek to be seen as role players in the South African (and global) transformation agenda and as producers of knowledge that serve to transform society and create positive changes. South African universities attempt to solidify their place within

the country (and world) through the building of the nation. Examples of text from the vision and mission statements that affirm this discourse include:

- “a research-based teaching and learning environment that will encourage students to reach their full potential, that is supportive of students from disadvantaged backgrounds” (RU)
- “Drawing on its proud experience in the liberation struggle, the university is aware of a distinctive academic role in helping build an equitable and dynamic society” (UWC)
- “To provide high quality education of international standards contributing to the advancement of knowledge that is socially and ethically relevant and applying technological and socio-economic development of our nation and the wider world” (UFH)
- “Inspiring its community to transform and serve humanity” (UJ)
- “We will actively advance the pace of transformation within our university and beyond, nurturing an inclusive institutional culture which embraces diversity.” (UCT), and
- “Create a new generation of highly-skilled graduates capable of understanding and addressing complex societal challenges” (WSU)

South Africa has deep-seated inequalities that are rooted in its past. The remaining disparity of wealth, access to education and health are still largely influenced by an individual’s intersectional identity markers (e.g., race, gender, socio-economic status, ability, language, sexuality). Although democracy has brought about a growing black middle class, and the empowerment of some women, the majority of South Africans still have not been able to attain a “decent standard of living” (DHET, 2013). The majority of black South Africans are still poor and only have access to lower-quality public services and institutions, including public educational institutions. Due to the legacy of South Africa’s past, patriarchy still ensures that many women continue to experience subordinate positions in many areas of life such as in education and training. The achievement of greater social justice and social redress is therefore very important to South Africa and is largely dependent on equitable access to a quality education by all sections of the population (DHET, 2013).

As formulated through the thematic analysis and the CDA, there seems to be a common discourse embedded in the vision and mission statements of public South African universities

as “the solution” to the deep-seated problems that have been brought about by South Africa’s apartheid past. The effect that this discourse has is to position universities as active and central entities that can participate in rewriting South Africa’s past by creating a more democratic South Africa that strives to create equity, equality and social justice. By engaging in this kind of discourse, universities aim to influence stake holders (e.g., funders, government, students) that universities in general are central to the country’s development agenda, and that a specific university is the desired choice for the socially conscious funder, student, and academic. These stakeholders can be regarded as subjects who are constructed in certain ways through the discourse of universities as “the solution.” For example, government is constructed as a potential subject within the universities as “the solution” discourse. The government is seen as a subject that could and should direct its funds and resources to universities if it wants to advance its development agenda and goals for an equitable society. Government is a powerful and resourced subject, and the universities’ mission and vision statements are closely aligned with this subject’s objectives. The mission and vision statements attempt to solidify higher education and government as co-collaborators in a post-apartheid and global development and social redress agenda. In essence, universities use a discourse in their vision and mission statements that presents themselves in a positive light to government and other potentially influential subjects. Other potentially influential subjects that are evident in the university mission and vision statements are professional bodies (as subjects who might align themselves with a university and accredit their programmes) and international institutions (as strategic subjects who might partner with a university to facilitate student/staff and financial exchanges).

4.3.2. Universities as the “Place to be”

Within the mission and vision statements, there also seemed to be the discourse of universities being the “place to be” (linked to themes 2 and 3 from the thematic analysis). The universities’ mission and vision statements sought to position the universities as ideal and idealised spaces of teaching, learning, research and community engagement. The mission and vision statements position universities as places of notable opportunity, places where an individual’s potential can be fulfilled. The universities make reference to fostering nurturing environments that are conducive for learning and growth. Examples of text from the vision and mission statements that affirm this discourse include:

- “provides quality tuition” (UNISA)
- “academically excellent” (UKZN)
- “Provide an educationally vibrant and enabling environment that is conducive to the advancement of quality academic, moral, cultural and technological learner-centred education” (WSU)
- “quality education which upholds high standards of research and academic excellence.” (UZULU)
- “strives to be a place of quality” (UWC)
- “to attract and retain staff of the highest calibre” (RU)
- “provide a safe and nurturing student support system as well as a diverse array of residential, sporting, cultural and leadership opportunities that will foster the all-round development of our students” (RU)

Universities have the responsibility not only to expand access to tertiary education but to ensure that the quality of education on offer is to an exceptional or excellent standard. According to the Department of Higher Education (2013) the indicator with the most importance in ascertaining the success of an education institution is the quality of education, support and extra-curricular services on offer, and consequently the success of the institution’s students. For this to become a reality, the university needs well educated, capable and professional academic staff members (DHET, 2013). Current students and staff as well as the public, which includes prospective students, prospective parents of students, prospective employees, current parents of students and current employees are thus constructed as subjects in universities’ mission and vision statements who are fortunate to be given opportunities to study or work at the university. This discourse within the universities’ mission and vision statements serves to influence the acts and minds of the students, staff, and public to be seen more favourably as the “place to be.” Inadvertently, this serves the interests of the university as it results in institutions receiving greater funding, more profitable partnerships, and greater status. Universities want to attract the highest calibre staff and students possible, and the rhetoric in the vision and mission statements (i.e., excellence, opportunity, all-round development) feed into the discourse of universities as the “place to be.” There is also much reference to quality of staff and teaching which seeks to position the universities favourably with regards to ‘recruiting’ bright and capable new students who can add value to the university. In contrast, the discourse could also be regarded as serving the interests of the disadvantaged and disempowered subject (i.e., disadvantaged students and members of

society) by promising to create sustainable living environments (underpinned by equity, equality and social justice) in South Africa for all individuals.

The majority of the mission and vision statements attempt to convey the institution as the university of choice with statements such as “Premier University of African Scholarship”, “preferred university” and the “university seeks to be distinguished or outstanding” and “will stand out among all others because of superiority in performance”. Much of the discourse within the mission and vision statements clearly highlights the universities aspiring to be the ‘place to be’ with statements such as “to be an outstanding internationally-respected academic institution”, “to be the benchmark institution”, “an international University of choice” and “pioneering an enterprising and transformative brand of twenty-first Century University of Technology scholarship.”

4.4. Conclusion

Chapter 4 focused on the findings generated through the researcher’s analysis of the data. The first step involved the creation of four themes from the thematic analysis on the data, which were organised with the purpose of informing the discourses related to the main research objectives found within Chapter 2. The four themes that were identified within the thematic analysis in Chapter 4 were a critical socio-political agenda, collaborative and conducive institutional environments, excellence and achievement aims, and knowledge production. There were various sub-themes that fell under the four major themes identified in the thematic analysis.

After the findings of the 4 themes within Chapter 4 were discussed the researcher went on to discuss that the themes were then used to help develop the two discourses in order to develop a more critical perspective on the findings. Although there were many other discourses evident within the mission and vision statements, the two that the researcher chose to present were universities as “the place to be” which pertains to universities positioning themselves as the university of choice, and universities as “the solution” which pertains to universities contributing towards addressing the various socio-economic problems present within South Africa.

Chapter 5 involves a discussion of the findings presented within Chapter 4 in relation to the literature and theoretical framing of the study. Inadvertently, the discussion chapter aims to respond to the study research questions

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the thematic analysis and CDA of the mission and vision statements of the 26 public universities in South Africa Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings in relation to relevant literature, while the theoretical framing of the study (i.e., critical pedagogy) is integrated into the discussion. After a discussion of the two discourses that the researcher formulated from his analysis (i.e., universities as “the solution”, and universities as the “place to be”), Chapter 5 presents a specific discussion of the findings in relation to globalisation and internationalisation, a contextualised curriculum, and institutional differentiation.

5.2. Universities as “the Solution”

As discussed in Chapter 4.3.1. several of the universities’ mission and vision statements sought to present the universities as being “the solution” with many of the mission and vision statements highlighting the universities’ intentions to contribute towards redressing South Africa’s past inequalities, highlighting the commitment to empower the powerless through the use of critical pedagogy. The second sub-question for this research study sought to explore the extent to which the dominant discourses in the universities’ mission and vision statements reflect the national and global efforts to reconstruct and redress past inequalities. Three universities make specific reference to being inclusive, six make reference to being diverse or promoting diversity, and six make reference to being equitable or promoting equity and equality. Two universities make direct reference to “social redress” with three stating their desire to contribute towards social justice. Three universities make reference to assisting individuals who have been disadvantaged or are from disadvantaged backgrounds and four of the universities highlight their goal of helping create socio-economic advancement and sustainability. Thirteen of the universities made reference to community engagement and assisting the community in some way which is one of the main agendas of universities according to the Department of Higher Education (2013). Therefore, in many ways, all of the 26 public universities commit to redressing South Africa’s apartheid past and the inequalities that are perpetuated from apartheid. This shows that the universities seek to transform the conditions that have served to perpetuate human injustice and inequity in the past. While

many of the universities do not commit to all the different facets of social redress that are needed within South Africa (and South African higher education), the majority do highlight their attempts at creating positive change and their contribution towards social redress and in so doing promote themselves as “the solution”.

According to Morpew and Hartley (2006) the main purpose of universities is to produce knowledge and to contribute towards democracy and assist in socio-economic transformation. Similarly, according to the National Development Plan (2012), the three main functions of universities is to provide a comprehensive education, assist in knowledge production and assist in overcoming inequalities brought about by apartheid. With regards to providing a comprehensive education, 14 of the universities made reference to either promoting academic excellence or being academically excellent. A couple examples of this are, UNISA’s mission statement making reference to being an institution that “produces excellent scholarship”, and according to their mission statement, UV “produces graduates imbued with knowledge, skills and qualifications which are locally relevant and globally competitive” which highlights their contribution towards producing students that are knowledgeable and ready to contribute to the labour market. With regards to knowledge production 20 of the universities made reference to research and producing knowledge suggesting that the majority of public South African universities seek to assist in redressing South Africa’s past and contribute towards the sustainable development of the country through creating knowledge. UFH’s mission statement highlights their mission towards “contributing to the advancement of knowledge that is socially and ethically relevant and applying technological and socio-economic development of our nation and the wider world” which speaks not only about advancing knowledge but also knowledge that will contribute towards making positive change and progress. CPUT’s mission statement “we will enhance and develop the quality and effectiveness of our research and knowledge production” and SPU’s mission statement states their goal to “produce new knowledge impacting on key challenges of the region” which again highlights that it is not knowledge production for knowledge productions sake but rather to effect positive change in redressing South Africa’s past inequalities. Through both of these purposes of universities that have been addressed, as well as the discourse to follow, the data suggests that universities are, at least through their mission and vision statements, attempting to contribute towards social redress and correcting the inequalities present in the country and are therefore can be seen as attempting to promote themselves as “the solution”.

Within higher education there is the agenda for universities to assist in promoting social justice, equity and equality. Within the discourse of universities as “the solution” nine of the universities made direct reference to promoting either social redress or equity and equality. UCT’s mission states that they are “underpinned by values of engaged citizenship and social justice”, NMMU’s mission states they are “committed to promoting equity of access”, UWC’s mission states their goal to “seek racial and gender equality and contribute to helping the historically marginalised participate fully in the life of the nation” and MUT’s mission highlights their “commitment to social redress. It contributes to creating an equitable and prosperous Southern Africa”. Within SPU’s vision they refer to their goal of “enhancing democratic practice and social justice in society”, UFS’s vision states that their university “contributes to development and social justice” and NWU’s vision states their goal of “social responsiveness”. RU’s mission states their goal “to acknowledge and be sensitive to the problems created by the legacy of apartheid, to reject all forms of unfair discrimination and to ensure that appropriate corrective measures are employed to redress past imbalances”. Although nine of the universities make reference to the agenda of social redress and promoting equity and equality within their mission and vision statements this is only 35% of the universities. The data obtained within this discourse clearly suggests that there is a disparity between the need and value placed on social redress within universities according to the Department of Higher Education and what is addressed within the mission and vision statements of the universities. This highlights that the national and global efforts to reconstruct and redress past inequalities by universities are not consistently and clearly reflected throughout all of the mission and vision statements of the public universities in South Africa. Therefore, there may be an ongoing need for these universities to address this need within their mission and vision statements.

5.3. Universities as the “Place to be”

The universities want to be seen as the “place to be” as universities have become increasingly competitive which has resulted in a significant increase in the competitiveness of recruiting new students (Williams, 2013). Universities have now begun marketing themselves at the level of discourse which can be seen within their mission and vision statements which are directed at prospective students. According to Fairclough (1993), a university prospectus has become a ‘genre of consumer advertising’. It has been highlighted by Hoang and Rojas-Lizana (2015) and Kozar (2014) that a major focus on university websites is positioning the

learner as consumers of their educational services through their market orientation (DHET, 2013). Inadvertently, the market orientation of university websites (and their mission and vision statements) are aligned with massification trends in higher education, as observed over the past few decades (Mohamedbhai, 2014). Universities' mission and vision statements perpetuate the massification agenda by portraying the universities as idealised spaces where everyone should and could aspire to belong.

Critical pedagogy considers how education can provide individuals with the tools to better themselves. With regards to the need for universities to contribute towards social redress and towards helping individuals reach their full potential there are many avenues in which to do so. One of the government's primary focuses, as well as that of the Department of Higher Education and Training, is on increasing student access and participation within higher education (DHET, 2013). In further reflecting on the second sub-question (pertaining to the extent to which universities in South Africa reflect the current national and global efforts to reconstruct and redress past inequalities), one of the ways in which universities are able to assist in the efforts to create social redress and meeting one of the primary goals of the government and Department of Higher Education is through increasing both equal opportunity, and access to higher education for all individuals, through the process of massification. Two of the universities made direct reference to inclusivity, with UCT stating "we will actively advance the pace of transformation within our university and beyond, nurturing an inclusive institutional culture which embraces diversity" within their mission statement and SUN made reference to being recognised as being "inclusive" within their vision statement. NMMU's mission statement states they are "committed to promoting equity of access and opportunities so as to give students the best chance of success" and UWC's mission statement states their aim to "assist educationally disadvantaged students gain access to higher education and succeed in their studies", which highlights not only the importance placed on opening up opportunities to disadvantaged individuals but also on creating a platform on which they can succeed academically. The data suggests that only a few of the universities explicitly state their intentions to increase opportunities and access to higher education and improve equality of access. Massification and equality of access to higher education are prominent agendas in higher education literature yet specific reference to this seems to be somewhat lacking within the universities' mission and vision statements.

The discourse of universities as "the place to be", as identified within the mission and vision statements, positions students and employees as subjects who are fortunate to be given the

opportunity to attend or work at the university. It is possible that this has created a line of thought that could possibly be linked to the growing need for massification, high demand for access to higher education, growing demands for free education, and subsequent protest action when this demand is not met by universities and government. The mission and vision statements may contribute towards the rhetoric that universities are “beacons of hope” for individuals within society, which has created a great demand for access. However, most universities in South Africa are unable to respond to the demand.

As highlighted within the previous paragraph, the increase in equal access to higher education is important, however so is the quality of education being offered to all students and the success of the universities’ students. This has already been highlighted within the paragraph on massification (see sub-section 2.3.). UZULU highlights this goal by “providing quality education which upholds high standards of research and academic excellence”. High quality education can be defined as an adaptive environment that actively seeks to support and assist learners and their needs, recognising that individuals learn in different ways according to their language, experience and culture, and is therefore inclusive (Pigozzi, 2009). UFH’s mission states that they “provide high quality education of international standards”, SMU’s mission states that they “provide high-quality primary health care-oriented health sciences research, education and services”, UNISA’s mission states that it “provides quality tuition” and UM’s mission states that they “offer high quality educational and training opportunities that foster the holistic development”. Many of the universities make reference to providing quality education and pride themselves on excellence. This suggests that many of the universities either offer or aspire to offer a quality education to its current and prospective students, affirming the discourse of universities promoting themselves as “the place to be”.

While the majority of universities make reference to providing quality education and their aspiration for academic excellence, very few make reference to student success and increasing academic success within their mission and vision statements. This is undoubtedly also an important agenda needing to be addressed within higher education in South Africa. Only three universities make statements regarding the agenda of increasing academic success with MUT’s mission stating that within their institution “individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential”, NMMU’s mission stating that they seek to “give students the best chance of success in their pursuit of lifelong learning and diverse educational goals” and UWC’s mission stating they will “assist educationally disadvantaged students gain access to higher education and succeed in their studies”. This highlights that while universities place

great emphasis on providing quality education and aspiring towards achieving academic excellence, the focus in most mission and vision statements seems to be on the university rather than on the students and the universities' guarantee to assist students in succeeding in their educational pursuit.

5.4. Globalisation and Internationalisation

Universities in South Africa are expected to assist in redressing the legacies left behind by apartheid and need to contribute towards positive development and change. One of the ways in which universities can contribute towards redressing apartheid legacies is through contributing towards making South Africa more competitive internationally and within the global economy (Reddy, 2004). One way in which South African universities have attempted to contribute towards this agenda is through globalisation and internationalisation. Fifteen of the universities make reference within their mission and vision statements to either globalisation or internationalisation. NMMU's mission stated that "we develop graduates and diplomates to be responsible global citizens capable of critical reasoning, innovation, and adaptability" and "we engage in mutually beneficial partnerships locally, nationally and globally to enhance social, economic, and ecological sustainability", RU's mission states their goal to "strive to produce outstanding internationally-accredited graduates who are innovative" and "contribute to the advancement of international scholarship" and WSU's vision states their goal of "focusing on innovative educational, research and community partnership programmes that are responsive to local, regional, national development priorities, and cognisant of continental and international imperatives". UCT's mission states that "we seek to advance the status and distinctiveness of scholarship in Africa through building strategic partnerships across the continent, the global south and the rest of the world", UP's vision states their desire "to be a leading research-intensive university in Africa, recognised internationally for its quality, relevance and impact, as also for developing people, creating knowledge and making a difference locally and globally", UWC's mission states their aim to "further global perspectives among its staff and students, thereby strengthening intellectual life and contributing to South Africa's reintegration in the world community" and SUN's mission stating they are "a place connected to the world, while enriching and transforming local, continental and global communities". These extracts suggests that globalisation and internationalisation are important agendas that are being addressed by universities. In contrast, some universities are yet to explicitly prioritise contributing towards

the global economy in their mission and vision statements and therefore still seem focused primarily inwardly. This highlights that further steps could be taken to ensure that these public universities value the goal of aspiring towards becoming more globally competitive in order to ensure that South Africa becomes more competitive in the global labour market in order to compete more favourably in the global economy.

5.5. Contextualised curriculum

With regards to advocating for and moving towards a contextualised curriculum, there seems to have been more of a move to globalise and internationalise the curriculum. This often means that the curriculum begins to differ in both content and structure from indigenous or local content and knowledge, often moving towards more Eurocentric content (Jibeen, 2015). While this can be regarded as positive in terms of universities produce graduates who can contribute towards making South Africa more globally competitive, it also means that the curriculum begins to shift away from being contextualised in South Africa and therefore becomes less locally relevant. In turn, this may counter the need for universities to produce students who are capable of contributing towards a more democratic country, where local and contextual problems are addressed. In the past, the curriculum in higher education has struggled to respond effectively to contextual issues and to empower students to be responsive to their local realities (Zembylas, 2018).

The need for university curricula to be decolonised and become more contextualised has become an important and necessary agenda within post-apartheid higher education. The decolonisation of the curricula focuses on the re-centering of knowledge, shifting it to more localised and indigenous forms of knowledge (Zembylas, 2018). Redressing South Africa's apartheid past is an important agenda within higher education, and this has strongly influenced the need for the shift and transformation within the curricula towards a more contextualised curricula that speaks to the people of South Africa and decolonises higher education. Fourteen of the universities made reference to their goal of offering an education and creating knowledge that is contextualised and relevant to South Africa and its people. The university that, to the researcher, most notably portrays the goal of contributing towards creating knowledge and a curriculum that is contextual to South Africa is UWC who reference in their mission statement that as a university they are "alert to its African and international context" and are committed "to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa,

and to responding in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition”. UWC also states that “the university is aware of a distinctive academic role in helping build an equitable and dynamic society” and seeks to “design curricular and research programmes appropriate to its southern African context” in order to “develop effective structures and conventions of governance, which are democratic, transparent and accountable”.

Other university statements that highlight their goal of contextualising the knowledge and curricula are RU’s vision that states it is an “academic institution which proudly affirms its African identity and which is committed to democratic ideals, academic freedom, rigorous scholarship, sound moral values and social responsibility”, SMU’s mission stating their goal to “deploy educational approaches that include evidence-based methods for curriculum development and delivery that are rooted in the community”, UV’s vision that “aspires to be at the centre of tertiary education for rural and regional development in Southern Africa” and SPU’s mission to “produce new knowledge impacting on key challenges of the region” and “engage critically with communities of discourse and communities of people in order to search out pathways to equitable development”.

None of the universities make specific reference to the decolonisation of the curriculum but rather make reference to promoting a curriculum and producing knowledge that is contextual and relevant to South Africa and its people. The curricula of universities are important as it is fundamentally what forms the foundation of the qualifications that students receive from the university. It is therefore of great importance that more universities recognise the importance of a curriculum and the creation of knowledge that are rooted in a South African context in order for these universities and their students to be able to affectively address the needs of South Africa and redress its past.

5.6. Institutional differentiation

Currently within higher education in South Africa there are three different types of university institutions. These three university institutions are traditional universities, universities of technology and comprehensive universities (DoHET, 2013), which were purposefully differentiated in order to meet the large range and diverse academic and economic requirements needed within South Africa. This differentiation was designed to assist

universities in being able to effectively respond to the broad range of requirements needed for the national labour market and economy (DoHET, 2013).

In responding to the sub-question of what differences and similarities are there within the mission and vision statements of South African universities according to current modes of institutional differentiation, it seems there were not any notable differences between the mission and vision statements of the different institutional types in general. However, one difference was that of the eight universities of technology, two make reference to the aspiration or goal of globalisation or internationalisation within their mission and vision statements, this being much less frequently referenced when compared to the other two institutional types. The two universities of technology that did make reference to the agenda of globalisation or internationalisation were VUT who stated they are “Developing a Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) that meets the needs of society in Africa and beyond” and CUT’s vision of “addressing the developmental needs of the Free State, the Central Region, South Africa as a whole and our continent”.

Within the context of higher education in South Africa, the different institutions may focus on different forms of knowledge production and have slightly different curricula. One of the noticeable differences between the mission and vision statements was that the universities of technology made specific reference to their curriculum being more technologically focused while the other two institutions made generalised references to the curriculum and knowledge they provide. Some examples of the universities of technology referring specifically to their curricula are DUT’s mission statement which refers to their goal of “promoting excellence in learning and teaching, technology transfer and applied research”, MUT stating that their “mission is to provide advanced, technology-based programmes and services that are career- and business-oriented in the broad fields of engineering, natural and management sciences”, TUT’s mission of “investing in state-of-the-art technology” and VUT’s mission of “adopting cutting edge technology and teaching methods”. CPUT’s vision is to “be at the heart of technology education and innovation in Africa” and CUT’s vision is to “be an engaged university that focuses on producing quality social and technological innovations”.

Within the mission and vision statements of universities of technology there were a few noticeable omissions of important themes and agendas within higher education in South Africa such as very few references being made regarding diversity, equality, equity or specifically social redress.

Across the mission and vision statements of the different university types separated according to institutional differentiation, there was not much to distinguish between the different universities other than previously mentioned with most of the universities having similar content within their mission and vision statements. Therefore, the differentiation of institutional types not obvious from the study data (i.e., mission and vision statements). However, this does not necessarily mean that differentiation is not actively taking place between the three types of universities in South Africa, it might just not be explicit in the mission and vision statements. The universities of technology clearly distinguish their curricula apart from the other two types of institutions, with this being the only clearly defining theme that stands these universities apart. The traditional universities and comprehensive universities mission and vision statements were largely indistinguishable which may present challenges such as potentially confusing stakeholders and blurring the perceptions of the various readers of the mission and vision statements.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 outlined the purpose of a university as well as the expectations of a university in playing a part in the restructuring of South Africa post-apartheid according to the Department of Higher Education (2013) and National Development Plan (2012). Chapter 1 then identified how the universities' mission and vision statements are one communication device through which these universities might construct their purpose to stakeholders. Vision and mission statements are singled out as potentially useful sources of data that can be used to identify and explore dominant discourses within the public higher education context. According to Morphew and Hartley (2006) the overarching purpose of a university to generate and distribute knowledge and contribute to democratic and socio-economic transformation agendas. According to the National Development Plan (2012), South African universities need to provide quality education that prepares students to be able to contribute to the labour market, the curriculum needs to be able to produce knowledge and values, and universities should be contributing towards redressing inequalities that were brought about by apartheid. The inequalities brought about by apartheid are predominantly race based, but also include social inequality and unfair discrimination (such as sexism).

Chapter 2 served to highlight what South African universities should be focusing on in order to address the goals set out by the Department of Higher Education (2013) and National Development Plan (2012). Differentiation and diversity were presented in Chapter 2 as necessary in assisting universities to meet the needs of the national labour market and the economic requirements of the country. South African universities need to improve access for students from various backgrounds including disadvantaged backgrounds as well as to promote diversity (Cloete, 2015). Although there is the need for a more equitable higher education there is also the need for a quality education to accompany this. South African universities are expected to play a role in redressing apartheid legacies and to make South Africa more competitive within the global economy (Reddy, 2004). There also needs to be a focus on the decolonisation of the curriculum through means of shifting the curriculum and content more towards indigenous forms of knowledge (Zembylas, 2018).

This research was focused on identifying and exploring the prevalent discourses that are found within South African public higher education, as communicated through the 26 South African public universities' mission and vision statements. The levels of social inequality

have become a defining feature within South Africa's society, and this has transferred into higher education (Bozalek, 2012). In order to address this South African higher education has set a major goal to minimise these inequalities. What the research revealed was that there were aspects within most of the mission and vision statements that were consistent with the National Development Plan and Higher Education Acts. The findings from the study also highlight how there does not seem to be a distinct and clear differentiation observed within the mission and vision statements according to the current modes of institutional differentiation. Universities could be more explicit in their mission and vision statements about the ways in which their universities align with modes of institutional differentiation.

Although the universities' mission and vision statements may only be representative of the universities stated purpose, and not a true reflection of what is enacted by the universities on a daily basis, the mission and vision statements may be a way in which the purpose and function of the institutions are conveyed and communicated to stakeholders. A limitation of this dissertation is that the researcher only did research on the mission and vision statements of the universities and not whether these universities actually carry out the goals and visions stated within their mission and vision statements and how they actually function. In addition, there are probably several other institutional documents (e.g., strategic plans, constitutions, terms of reference, teaching and learning policies, student development policies and plans, faculty and discipline specific documents) that could also contain important information about an institution's mission and vision. This research was therefore also limited by the time and resources available to the researcher. In addition, it is possible that different researchers may generate different themes and discourses from the universities' mission and vision statements, and therefore this dissertation represents only one possible perspective. There are also many other higher education institutions outside of the 26 public universities in South Africa that could be included in a data set in order to gain a much elaborate indication of the higher education landscape as a whole. There is therefore a need not only for the mission and vision statements to be further researched but also for the actions and functioning of universities to be researched and to see whether universities actually carry out what is stated within their mission and vision statements.

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Appendix B: Ethics approval letter



16 May 2019

Mr Luke B Bartholomew 215027835
School of Applied Human Sciences – Psychology
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Bartholomew

Protocol reference number: HSS/0269/019M

Project title: A critical discourse analysis of higher education mission and vision statements of universities within South Africa.

Full Approval – No Risk / Exempt Application

In response to your application received 03 April 2019, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 1 year from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully,

.....
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

cc Supervisor: Dr N Munro
cc Academic Leader Research: Prof R Teer-Tomaselli
cc School Administrator: Ms P Konan

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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Appendix C: Change of title approval letter



18 March 2021

Mr Luke B Bartholomew 215027835
School of Applied Human Sciences – Psychology
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Bartholomew

Protocol reference number: HSS/0269/019M

Project title: A critical discourse analysis of higher education mission and vision statements of universities within South Africa.

Amended title: A critical discourse analysis of the mission and vision statements of universities in South Africa

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 16 March 2021 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

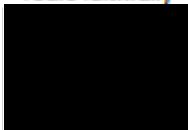
Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

cc Supervisor: Dr N Munro
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr M Mthembu
cc School Administrator: Ms P Konan

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
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