TRANSFORMING EDUCATION THROUGH CRITICAL LEADERSHIP, POLICY AND PRACTICE

Inclusive and Innovative Leadership in Higher Education

Fostering Diversity, Well-being, and Pedagogical Excellence

EDITED BY

ROBERT E. WHITE

Inclusive and Innovative Leadership in Higher Education

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION THROUGH CRITICAL LEADERSHIP, POLICY AND PRACTICE

Series Editor: Stephanie Chitpin

Transforming Education Through Critical Leadership, Policy and Practice is based on the belief that those in educational leadership and policy-constructing roles have an obligation to educate for a robust critical and democratic polity in which citizens can contribute to an open and socially just society. Advocating for a critical, socially just democracy goes beyond individual and procedural concerns characteristic of liberalism and seeks to raise and address fundamental questions pertaining to power, privilege and oppression. It recognizes that much of what has gone under the name of 'transformational leadership' in education seeks to transform very little, but rather it serves to reproduce systems that generate structural inequalities based on class, gender, race, (dis)ability and sexual orientation.

This series seeks to explore how genuinely transformative approaches to educational leadership, policy and practice can disrupt the neoliberal hegemony that has dominated education systems globally for several decades, but which now looks increasingly vulnerable. The series will publish high-quality books, both of a theoretical and empirical nature, that explicitly address the challenges and critiques of the current neoliberal conditions, while steering leadership and policy discourse and practices away from neoliberal orthodoxy towards a more transformative perspective of education leadership. The series is particularly keen to 'think beyond' traditional notions of educational leadership to include those who lead in educative ways – in social movements and civil society organizations as well as in educational institutions.

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ROBERT E. WHITE

St. Francis Xavier University, Canada



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Contents

About the Editor *vii*

About the Contributors *ix*

Foreword *xv*

Preface *xix*

Chapter 1 Managing Business Performance for Private Higher Education Institutions in South Africa *1*
Christo Bisschoff, Ridwaan Asvat and Christoff Botha

Chapter 2 The Aims of Higher Education: A Holistic Framework *35*
M. Jawad Hashim

Chapter 3 Strategic Leadership in Online Teaching Transformation: Insights From Focus Group Discussions With Public University Academics *63*
Leenshya Gunnoo, Thakoor Sharma Geerawo and Kesseven D. Padachi

Chapter 4 Digital Pedagogy: Are We Ready to Bridge the Digital Divide in Africa? *89*
Isaiah Owoeye, Felicity Daniels and Jennifer Chipps

Chapter 5 What Matters Most in Positive Education: Content, Course Structure, or Professor? *115*
Sarah McAllister, Mackenzie Lawson and Olivia Lena Pastore

Chapter 6 Stakeholders' Involvement for an Inclusive Pedagogy of Special Education Needs Students *137*
Simi Sonatun-Seegoolam and Diroubinee Mauree-Narrainen

Chapter 7 Transformative Leadership: Ethical and Professional Responsibilities of Educators and Mental Health Practitioners at Post-Secondary Institutions to Foster Social Justice and Equity *159*
Ahlam Rahal and Késa Munroe-Anderson

Chapter 8 Disrupting Ageism in "Active for Life" Research and Recreational Pursuits: A Professor's Lived Experience of Leading and Following *177*
Rebecca Lloyd

About the Editor

Robert E. White is a Senior Research Professor at St. Francis Xavier University, Canada, and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto. Dr White's research includes educational administration and policy, postmodernity and globalization, qualitative research design and critical pedagogy. Dr White is an Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Leadership in Education* and is a Consulting Editor for the *International Journal of Underrepresented Languages*. Recent publications include *Policy Matters: Perspectives, Procedures & Processes*; *Leading Under Pressure: Educational Leadership in Neoliberal Times* and *Qualitative Research in the Postmodern Era*.

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About the Contributors

Ridwaan Asvat has been involved in private higher education since 2009 in a management capacity. Originally a bookkeeper, he moved on to focus on community development and education across Southern Africa before he joined one of South Africa's latest clothing producers in positions ranging from finance, purchasing and supply chain, and, finally, on the production line. After that, Ridwaan joined Legal Aid South Africa as an administration manager before moving on to higher education, where he is currently serving as the Director: Business Development and Operations of Regent Business School. He holds an MBA degree and has just completed his PhD in Higher Education within the African experience. Ridwaan has presented at various international forums around the African continent and is passionate about the future of Africa. Ridwaan served as external examiner for MBA and doctoral students, while continuing his research endeavours into strategic management and performance of private higher education. Ridwaan lives in Durban (South Africa) with his wife, Shenaaz Docrat, and two children, Muhammad and Ammaarah Asvat. In his spare time, he explores his passion for the outdoors and classic movies.

Francis Bangou is a distinguished scholar and administrator currently serving as the Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. Since joining the faculty in 2007, he has established himself as a leader in second-language education, particularly in the integration of digital technologies, the promotion of equity and inclusion within academic spaces and the adaptation of second-language teachers and learners to unfamiliar environments. His research is grounded in post-structuralism and new materialist perspectives, specifically the relational ontology of Deleuze and Guattari, and aims to disrupt traditional educational norms to foster innovation.

Christoff Botha was awarded a PhD in Industrial Sociology from North-West University in South Africa. He is a Chartered Human Resource Practitioner and is registered with the South African Board of Personnel Practitioners. He also specializes in gender research and did a professional Post-Graduate Diploma with the University of Johannesburg. His research focuses on the roles women play in mining, performance-based human resource management and higher education management. Apart from research and writing, he has also practised employment relations on a part-time basis for more than 20 years. Christoff is a seasoned part-time farmer and recently extended his cattle and pecan farming activities by planting olive trees on his farm outside Potchefstroom. He is a

tenured professor at the AMBA-accredited North-West University Business School in South Africa. Christoff is married to the love of his life, Doret. Their children are both married, and Christoff and Doret are proud grandparents of Christopher, their grandson from their daughter, Nestene.

Christo Bisschoff began his career as an agricultural economist at the North-West Cooperative, whereafter he joined the University of Pretoria as a lecturer in Business Management. He studied part time at the University of South Africa and obtained the MCom (1990) and DCom (1992) degrees, specializing in Marketing and Agricultural Business Management. Christo focuses his research on brand loyalty, business ethics and still researches his favourite topic, agricultural business management. He collaborates with his international network and focuses on comparative inter-country research. He published many accredited articles, addressed audiences at international conferences, reviewed several accredited journals and obtained his National Research Foundation research rating in 2020. He resigned as the chairman of the International Business Conference but still serves as editor to publish the conference proceedings. Christo lectures on Market Management at North-West University's business School in Potchefstroom. Christo loves to be out in nature and enjoys fishing, hunting and off-road adventures. He is married to Antoinette, and they have two sons. Christo (Jr.) is a Sports and Exercise Scientist and Senior Lecturer at North-West University, and Wilhelm is an Electrical Engineer in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Jennifer Chipps is an Emeritus Professor in the Faculty of Community Health Sciences at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the SARCHI Research Chair in Digital Health. Before joining UWC, Jennifer held positions at the University of Sydney in Australia, New Zealand Health Research Council, NSW Department of Health in Australia and the Department of Telemedicine at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), South Africa. She holds a PhD in Telepsychiatry from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. She serves on the International Council of Nurses Telenursing Working Group (ISfTeH), AMIA—the International Nursing Informatics Special Interest Group (SIG), the WHO Guidelines Development Group for Interventions to Reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness. Her research interests include digital health, including AI, informatics and mHealth; immersive educational digital technologies, epidemiology, mental health and evidence synthesis.

Felicity Daniels is employed at the School of Nursing, University of the Western Cape (UWC), for the past 31 years. She leads the Strategic Division within the School, which focuses on advancing research and scholarship, academic development, evidence-based practice and internationalization. She holds both a Master's degree in Public Health and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the UWC. She is involved in several national and multinational research initiatives, with a particular focus on nursing education and digital education technologies. Professor Daniels is recognized as an expert in nursing education and served as consultant to the National Department of Health in South Africa. She played a

pivotal role in developing new nursing programmes at UWC and at universities and nursing colleges across all nine provinces of South Africa. She currently serves as an evaluator of nursing programmes submitted for accreditation to the Council on Higher Education in South Africa.

Thakoor Sharma Geerawo is a Lecturer in the Department of Accounting, Finance, and Economics at the School of Business Management and Finance, University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM). He is a FCCA and holds a PhD, a Master's and a BSc (Hons.) in Economics and Finance from the University of Mauritius. Before entering academia, he gained valuable experience as technical staff in various ministries and private companies. His research interests are in Financial Management, Accounting and Finance, Sustainability Reporting (ESG) and Earnings Management. Also, he leads research-oriented problem-solving and complex data analysis. He has proven transferable skills in critical thinking, effective communication and team management.

Leenshya Gunnoo is a Lecturer in the Department of Accounting, Finance, and Economics at the School of Business Management and Finance, University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM). She is a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA) and holds an MPhil/PhD in Financial Services Management and a BSc (Hons.) in International Business Finance from the University of Mauritius. Before entering academia, she gained valuable experience as technical staff in various ministries and private companies. Her scholarly contributions span themes such as financial literacy and inclusion, digital innovation in higher education, technology adoption among SMEs, sustainability practices, leadership and governance in public institutions, green consumer behaviour and social dimensions of digital transformation. She has also served as a reviewer for multiple international journals and conferences, demonstrating active engagement in global academic networks.

M. Jawad Hashim is a Professor of Family Medicine at UAE University and a Consultant Physician. He completed residency training at the University of Rochester and was certified by the American Board of Family Medicine in 2002. With over 200 articles, abstracts and textbooks, he is a well-recognized researcher. Prof Hashim has been acknowledged for his outstanding achievements with several distinguished awards and international honorary fellowships. He is a frequent speaker at international scientific conferences and the inventor of Combination Theory of Learning, Trust Informed Consent, the Diabetes Score, LecturePlus and the e-value for effect sizes. Prof Hashim is among the top 2% of most cited scientists worldwide.

Mackenzie Lawson is a doctoral student in Forensic Sciences at Oklahoma State University. She completed an Honours Bachelor of Biomedical Science with a minor in Psychology at the University of Ottawa, followed by a Master of Science in Medical Sciences with a concentration in Forensic Medicine at the University of Florida. Her Master's studies examined the use of sexual violence as a weapon in conflict zones. As a doctoral student, Mackenzie aims to deepen her expertise in specialized forensic practices, including bloodstain pattern

analysis, victimology and other advanced investigative techniques. Upon completing her degree, she hopes to apply her knowledge and passion to her work as a forensic identification technician.

Rebecca Lloyd is a Full Professor and SSHRC-funded researcher in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa who researches physical activity education and practice with a Function2Flow interdisciplinary motion-sensing consciousness. Her areas of expertise include phenomenological methodologies, active ageing education, physical education, teacher education, partnered practices, pedagogy and dance. See https://function2flow.ca for methodology, physical activity and active ageing research and resources and follow Professor Lloyd on Instagram to see the many ways she experiences the joy of movement in research, Latin dance and Life!

Diroubinee Mauree-Narrainen holds a Doctor of Philosophy, MSc Computational Science & Engineering, BSc (Hons) Computing & IS, Diploma in Business Administration, Diploma in Marketing Management, Diploma in Industrial Psychology and a Diploma in Bharatanaatiyam. She served as business administrator (investment firm), IT professional (bank and training firms), research assistant (R&D firm), IT administrator (shipping and aviation firm) and an IT educator in secondary schools. She is currently a Senior Lecturer at the School of Business Management and Finance, University of Technology, Mauritius. She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Education, Indian Empire University (2022) and Honorary Doctor of Technology (D.TECH) in Crown University International (2024).

Sarah McAllister is a PhD candidate in Education at the University of Ottawa. She completed an Honours Bachelor in Human Kinetics with a minor in Psychology in 2020, followed by a Master of Arts in Human Kinetics in 2023. Her Master's thesis investigated the impact of positive education and yoga on undergraduate students' mental health. As a doctoral candidate, Sarah strives to further advance our understanding of how to promote social connection, mental health and resilience among university students. She is drawn to the intricacies of the human brain and is passionate about student well-being, positive education and human flourishing.

Késa Munroe-Anderson is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. There she leads the Master of Education in Inclusive Education—Equity and Social Justice Cohorts designed to develop Nova Scotia's capacity of equity leaders in education. She is also the Coordinator for the inaugural Africentric Bachelor of Education Cohort for African Nova Scotians and persons of African descent, which responds to the need for equitable representation of Black teachers in Nova Scotia's public school system. Munroe-Anderson's research explores the role of spirituality in the lives of African Nova Scotian adult and public school learners, Ubuntu Leadership in education, and Africentric methodologies, including storytelling, which validate the knowledge, worldviews, voices and experiences of learners and educators of African descent. Dr Késa Munroe-Anderson teaching and

leadership honour and acknowledge the humanity and dignity of racialized and other marginalized people and their knowledges.

Isaiah Owoeye had his PhD at the School of Nursing, University of the Western Cape (UWC), South Africa. He is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Health Professions Education at the Faculty of Dentistry, UWC. He holds both Bachelor's degree in Nursing and Master's degree in Mental Health Nursing from the University of Nigeria. He had over a decade of teaching experience as a nurse educator at the School of Psychiatric Nursing, Aro-Abeokuta and at the Faculty of Nursing, Afe Babalola University, Nigeria. In 2018, he was the best nurse educator in the school, and in 2021, the most supportive lecturer at the faculty. His research interest is in nursing education and mental health nursing. He is a registered nurse educator, psychiatric nurse and a fellow of the West African Post-Graduate College of Nursing & Midwives (Faculty of Administration Management and Education). He is an examiner of the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria.

Kesseven D. Padachi is a Professor in the field of Accounting and Finance at the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM). He is a PhD holder in small business finance and also a FCCA. He joined the University in June 2001 after spending some 10 years in the private and public sector as a professional accountant/auditor. He has acquired wide practical experiences in the field of accounting and auditing. He has developed a research interest in small firms, and his current research area is on short-term financial management practices of SMEs. He also has research interests in corporate governance, e-banking and corporate finance, particularly issues relating to capital structure. He has published a number of papers in international refereed journals and presented papers at numerous international conferences.

Olivia Lena Pastore is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Algoma University. She completed an Honours Bachelor in Biology with a minor in Psychology at the University of Ottawa, a Master of Arts in Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa and a PhD in Kinesiology Sciences at McGill University. Olivia's primary research interests include understanding and promoting health behaviours and mental health among adults through motivation-based and mindfulness-based interventions. Outside of school, Olivia can be found teaching yoga or reading a good book.

Ahlam Rahal is an Assistant Professor at Acadia University, Registered Counselling Therapist from Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists (NSCCT), licenced Palestinian school counsellor and researcher interested in critical multiculturalism and power dynamics and social justice in mental health and educational settings. In her professional background, Dr Rahal has worked as a counsellor in Canadian and Palestinian public schools and post-secondary academic institutions, providing students from marginalized social groups with mental health and educational services. She also works as counsellor educator, teaching and researching in the fields of counselling, critical multiculturalism and social justice. Reflecting on her professional and personal journey, Rahal believes

that mental health practitioners and educators should be transformative leaders and social justice advocates for supporting equity-deserving groups.

Simi Sonatun-Seegoolam, bearer of a BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy, a Master of Business Administration (General) and currently a student of MPhil/PhD, has been practicing as a freelance Occupational Therapist for about 10 years with Special Educational Needs students, working in Administration for about seven years and teaching as a part-time lecturer in the field of Knowledge Management for about three years.

Foreword

Francis Bangou
University of Ottawa

When the editors of this volume, Stephanie Chitpin and Robert E. White, extended the invitation to write this foreword, I accepted with immediate and profound enthusiasm. My decision was rooted not only in my professional relationship with the editors but also in a deep-seated conviction that the themes explored herein are timely. In an age of unprecedented societal and institutional uncertainty, this volume emerges as an important catalyst for scholarly reflection and pragmatic action.

The first pillar of my enthusiasm for this project stems from the exceptional calibre of its editors. My profound respect for their professional credentials provided an early assurance that this collection would meet the highest standards of academic rigour. I have had the distinct privilege of knowing Stephanie Chitpin for many years as a colleague at the University of Ottawa. Throughout the years, I have observed the remarkable trajectory of her career and the significant expansion of her scholarly influence. Stephanie Chitpin is a scholar of national and international distinction whose research programme is as iterative as it is innovative. Grounded in the Objective Knowledge Growth Framework, her work has fundamentally shifted the discourse in educational leadership and equity. By bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and the practicalities of student outcomes, she has fostered a culture of reflective practice that resonates across borders.

Similarly, Robert White stands as an internationally esteemed voice whose scholarship has immensely enriched the global dialogue on inclusivity, democracy and well-being within educational administration. Beyond his own extensive list of publications and edited volumes, his role as the Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Leadership in Education* cements his position as a gatekeeper and visionary in the field. Together, Stephanie Chitpin and Robert White bring a complementary synergy to this volume, ensuring that it is not merely a collection of disparate chapters but a cohesive contribution to the global educational landscape.

Beyond the credentials of its editors, I am captivated by the volume's focus on the critical intersections between higher education, leadership, diversity and inclusion, well-being and pedagogy. In my capacity as Dean of the Faculty of Education, I am a daily witness to the ways these elements intertwine to shape the broader educational environment. We no longer live in an era where these themes can be addressed in isolation. For instance, to discuss pedagogy without

considering well-being or leadership without addressing diversity is to ignore the fundamental realities of the modern university.

We are currently navigating an era defined by intensifying transnational flows of information, people and cultures. In this context, it is imperative to understand how higher education institutions can innovate both philosophically and pedagogically. Our mission is in part to equip students with the competencies necessary for success in an ever-changing, diverse and hyper-connected world. However, empirical research consistently indicates that such innovation cannot occur in a vacuum. Without robust and supportive institutional leadership, the creation of inclusive and innovative teaching environments becomes an increasingly insurmountable challenge.

This challenge is exacerbated by a harsh economic reality. Particularly in the province where this text was authored, we have witnessed years of declining financial support for universities. This disinvestment is not merely a budgetary concern; it is often accompanied by an erosion of public confidence in the capacity of higher education to meet modern needs. Regrettably, this is a global trend. Higher education institutions are facing unprecedented levels of external scrutiny, often fuelled by reactionary movements against Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives. We see, with increasing frequency, the systematic dismantling or erasure of established EDI policies that were designed to protect the most vulnerable members of our community.

Furthermore, we are grappling with technological disruptions that are forcing us to rethink our very ethos. The rapid ascent of artificial intelligence is not just a tool for efficiency; it is a force that compels us to disrupt our traditional pedagogical practices and redefine what it means to be an educator. This transformation must also be pursued with a heightened awareness of the ongoing environmental crisis, a looming shadow that will define the lives of the generations we are currently educating.

This somber societal and institutional climate inevitably takes a toll on the physical and mental well-being of the higher education community. Administrators, professors and students alike are operating under compounding stress and uncertainty. Faced with these pressures, one might be tempted to view these challenges as insurmountable or to wait for external intervention. However, the contributors to this volume have resolutely rejected such passivity. Instead, they have chosen to frame these pressures as catalysts for creativity and institutional renewal.

A significant merit of this volume is its commitment to diverse perspectives, positioning itself at the crossroads of the global and the local. By assembling a diverse collection of studies from Canada, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, Mauritius and the United States, the book provides a panoramic view of the educational experience. This geographic breadth allows for a deeper exploration of how specific local contexts shape the interrelationships between higher education, leadership, diversity and inclusion, well-being and pedagogy, while simultaneously providing a space to uncover the striking convergences that exist across different regions. It proves that, while our contexts may differ, some

fundamental experiences with innovation, diversity and pedagogical excellence in higher education are shared.

For all these reasons, I recommend this book without reservation to all academic leaders, administrators, educators and researchers. It is a rare volume that manages to be both theoretically grounded and immeasurably practical. Within these pages, readers will find more than just academic critics; they will find robust decision-making models and empirical results that serve to feed both scholarly reflection and daily professional practice.

This book does more than just describe current states of higher education; it offers a roadmap for how we might lead and teach with creativity, inclusivity and prioritize well-being in an age of disruption and uncertainty. It is an essential addition to the library of anyone committed to the future of higher education.

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Preface

Robert E. White

St. Francis Xavier University

On Creative and Innovative Leadership

Leadership appears to be everywhere and nowhere at the same time. The entire globe seems to be inundated with those who would be called leaders, yet who have few followers. To this end, it is unlikely that those who would be leaders can be truly defined as leaders. In short, leaders require more than a title or a position in order to qualify as such. True leaders require a vision, a capacity and a disposition to lead. What we often see are leaders in name only.

How did this come about? Where are the real leaders? They are among us but are often at work behind the scenes. How can one tell the difference between the real leaders and 'politicians' who lay claim to the title of leader? True leaders must have agency; they live according to their values, their beliefs and their moral compasses. This makes the real leader a variable quality, unpredictable when it comes to formulaic representations of policies and political intrigue. Given that true leaders are committed to unassailable truths that they live by and that this makes them boundary crossers, real leaders are also expected to be mobile, both vertically and horizontally. What this means is that the leader must be able to span real and metaphorical distances. (S)he can cross from one area of concern to another while also being able to converse and act with those who are both above and below in terms of status, formally and informally.

Effectively, this places the leader at the nexus of many things, temporally and materially. In addition to agency, unpredictability and mobility, a leader must also be authentic. That is to say, the leader must be truthful, factual and transparent in all things leadership. The best leaders are those who are able to deal with difficult situations both in practicality and in conversations. Directness and kindness, combined, are powerful allies for a strong leader. Finally, as previously noted, leaders must have someone who is interested in following the vision held by the leader. This may be no small undertaking.

This volume considers leadership from a creative and innovative stance. The leadership presented on these pages may be formal or informal. However, what counts as leadership, in this volume, is the power of the topics presented. Francis Bangou, Dean of Education of the University of Ottawa, has graciously agreed to offer a foreword to this volume. As an active and effective leader, Dean Bangou offers serious insights into the leadership project.

This volume sits at the intersection of many qualities. First of all is the geographical vantage point from which our contributors speak. From South

Africa, the United Arab Emirates, the Island of Mauritius and the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Nova Scotia, we hear the voices of various spokespersons on the topic of leaders and leadership. In addition, these voices are expressed in terms of opinion pieces, empirical studies postcolonial research designs. There are a multiplicity of intersectionalities revealed throughout the pages of this volume.

Chapter 1 embraces private higher education in South Africa. The contributors are all seasoned business managers and professors who have established a model for private higher education institutions to manage business performance successfully. In this sequential mixed methods study, Christo Bisschoff, Ridwaan Asvat and Christoff Botha not only analyze the current state of affairs in higher education in the South African context, they also offer deep insights into the needs of this country now and for the future. Educational and financial demands bedevil business school directors, managers and investors in private higher education. This chapter aims to measure and offer much needed leadership in managing business performance antecedents at private higher education institutions.

The second chapter continues in this vein, as it examines the aims of higher education. M. Jawad Hashim, from the United Arab Emirates, offers a holistic framework that strives to lead higher education into an area that is at once more manageable in terms of student needs but also attends to the needs and concerns of a variety of stakeholders. Taken together, these first two chapters set the tone for leadership in higher education settings.

Next, Chapters 3 and 4 concern themselves with leadership as it pertains to digital matters. Chapter 3, from contributors Leenshya Gunnoo, Thakoor Sharma Geerawo and Kesseven D. Padachi, speak to strategic leadership in online teaching. However, they are not concerned with the status quo but envision a transformation in digital teaching and learning. Insights are gleaned from focus group discussions with public university academics. Several significant influences emerge from these discussions, including external support systems, perceived usefulness and the availability of adequate infrastructural facilities. In addition, the digital competence of academics and educational leaders emphasizes the need for proficiency with digital tools. This study contributes valuable insights and implications for educational leaders, policymakers, administrators and related stakeholders seeking to enhance online teaching practices in higher education institutions in Mauritius.

Chapter 4 is also concerned with digital processes but asks the question as to whether Africa is ready to bridge the 'digital divide' between the countries that have the technological background versus those countries which continue to struggle with inadequate tools. Acknowledging that technology has outstripped pedagogy, these leaders in nursing education, Isaiah Owoeye, Felicity Daniels and Jennifer Chipps, develop digital educational guidelines through a mixed- or multi-methods study. Although the site of the study was Nigeria, this development of a set of guidelines for digital education technology, pedagogical, ethical, technical and administrative conundrums represents a state of the art situation for many African countries and beyond. Of note are key guidelines for

developing digital education guidelines for low-resource countries, which is essential to guide state of the art pedagogical practices in nursing.

In Chapter 5, Sarah McAllister, Mackenzie Lawson and Olivia Lena Pastore ask what matters the most when it comes to positive education courses. Current research has yielded limited insight into specific factors contributing to the effectiveness of positive education in promoting student wellbeing, especially at the post-secondary level. The purpose of this study was to explore university students' perceptions of the components of a positive education course that most influenced their mental health, quality of life and happiness. Results suggest that both the professor and the structure of a positive education course contribute more significantly to students' well-being than the class content. These findings have important implications for educational leaders who may be involved in designing and delivering positive education courses in post-secondary contexts.

Chapter 6 finds us returning to the tropical Island of Mauritius, where Simi Sonatun-Seegoolam and Diroubinee Mauree-Narrainen speak to the need for leadership in developing an inclusive pedagogy for Special Education Needs students. Collaboration between educational leaders and different stakeholders is required in building such an inclusive pedagogy. A key objective was the identification of various stakeholders. This quantitative study identified the point that occupational therapists interacted most often with other stakeholders, including educational leaders. Educational and behavioural technologists were the least called upon. Recommendations are proposed that serve to improve stakeholder involvement, which enhances the SEN learning process.

Chapter 7 speaks to transformative leadership. This chapter, by Ahlam Rahal and Késa Munroe-Anderson, delves into the ethical roles and responsibilities of educational leaders and mental health practitioners at post-secondary institutions. Post-colonial philosophies and frameworks aid in deconstructing concepts of professionalism, professionality and intellectuality in post-colonial and oppressive social and educational contexts. The necessity of adopting transformative leadership styles and taking active roles in dismantling oppressive systems through educational and mental health interventions is paramount in this chapter, which also offers applicable strategies for disrupting and decolonizing oppressive cycles. For these authors, the way forward is to revisit critical questions on professional responsibilities and provide pathways for equity and social justice.

The final chapter in this volume responds to the aging process and describes how one leader has approached competitive dance as a method for inquiring into ageist attitude and beliefs. The phenomenon of being 'active for life' showcases the positionality of the researcher as an emerging leader in active aging research. Taken together, this volume offers an interesting view into the process of leading, being a leader and discussing leadership roles and values.

Hopefully, the readers of this volume will accept the positions and viewpoints of these worldwide researchers who have sprung from a multiplicity of geographic locations, situations and conditions. As such, these chapters come together to explore, explain and strive to understand not only what has been accomplished in various parts of the world but also what still remains to be

discovered, uncovered and recovered in terms of creative and innovative leadership. It is our hope that you, the reader, will enjoy this volume as much as the editor and staff at Emerald Publishing have enjoyed providing this work of art for undiscovered, new and established leaders in any walk of life.

Robert E. White
December 19, 2025

Chapter 1

Managing Business Performance for Private Higher Education Institutions in South Africa

Christo Bisschoff[a], *Ridwaan Asvat*[b] *and Christoff Botha*[a]

[a]North-West University, South Africa
[b]REGENT Business School, South Africa

Abstract

South Africa has a well-developed higher education system for public universities. However, these institutions struggle to meet the educational demand due to financial constraints and high demand. This has created a market opportunity for private higher education. This study aims to analyze the higher education sector in South Africa and develop a model for private higher education institutions (HEIs) to manage business performance successfully. A sequential mixed-method research design conducted eight qualitative interviews with executive managers to substantiate the 24 antecedents identified in the literature review. A meta-analysis workshop with board members and top managers validated 16 antecedents. Quantitatively, 250 questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale were distributed to private business school supervisors and managers; 247 were completed (signifying an effective response rate of 98.8%). Reliability via Cronbach's alpha coefficients established the reliability of each antecedent. Content validity, as per exploratory factor analysis, discarded 26 of the 85 measuring criteria while retaining satisfactory reliability (Cronbach alpha 0.974), sample adequacy (0.926) and variance explained (70.6%). The confirmatory factor analysis validated the managerial performance model. This study is valuable to business school directors, managers and investors in private higher education to measure and manage business performance antecedents at private HEIs.

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Glossary

CFI—Comparative Fit Index
CMIN/df—Degrees of Freedom
CR—Composite Reliability
df—degrees of Freedom
DHET—Department of Higher Education and Training
HEI—Higher Education Institutions
IS—Information Systems
IT—Information Technology
Kur.—Kurtosis
NFI—Normed Fit Index
PHEI—Private Higher Education Institutions
R—Standardized Regression Weight
RMSEA—Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
Sig.—Significance
TLI—Tucker-Lewis Index

Introduction

Participation in higher education has increased significantly in African countries, and in 2018, the highest growth rates in higher education were recorded, albeit growing from a low enrolment base. This surge in education presents a promising opportunity for private higher education in Africa, particularly in South Africa, to expand its operations and contribute to the region's development. An assessment of the number of global enrolments in higher education, as reported by Calderon (2018), showed that the 214.1 million students in 2015 (base year) will grow to 250.7 million (14.6%) by 2020, to 377.4 million by 2030 and to a staggering 594.1 million by 2040. This is a conservative estimate because actual figures in 2020 showed that 254.8 million students enrolled globally (signifying a growth of 19%) (UNESCO, 2024). Sub-Saharan African countries will be the new frontier for higher education. About 18 countries in sub-Saharan Africa will feature in the top 50 populations aged 18 to 23. South Africa is a developing nation, and increased participation in higher education is a critical strategy for addressing the skills shortage, high unemployment rates (32.9% in March 2024) and poverty (Statistics South Africa, 2024). 25.8% of the country's population enters higher education (as per the latest statistics) (Statistics South Africa, 2022).

South Africa's higher education system is well developed to serve public universities. However, due to financial constraints and high demand, state-funded higher education struggles to meet the demand. This has created a market opportunity for private higher education. In this competitive landscape, manager-leaders of private higher education institutions (HEIs) must maintain high levels of business performance to remain competitive. This study addresses

this challenge by proposing a management model that not only measures business performance antecedents but also guides the manager-leader on areas of improvement or where to maintain good performance. Considering the new draft policy towards reclassifying South African HEIs, this model is particularly relevant because it offers a strategic tool for private institutions to manage their performance amicably.

East Asia and the Pacific are anticipated to be the region with the highest volume and share of enrolments, with an increase of 148.8 million (39.4% share) by 2030 and 257.6 million (43.4% share) by 2040. Noteworthy is the fact that North America and Western Europe, however, anticipate a decline of global enrolments, since 2015, of 10.7% by 2030 and 7.4% by 2040. Sub-Saharan Africa's growth in enrolments in higher education will be highest as countries advance and strengthen their national education systems, leading to increased completion rates in secondary education. Enrolments are anticipated to grow from 7.4 million in 2015 to 8.8 million by 2030 and 21.7 million by 2040. Sub-Saharan African countries will be the new frontier for higher education. About 18 countries in sub-Saharan Africa will feature in the top 50 populations aged 18 to 23. Also, 32 sub-Saharan African countries will be ranked among the top 50 countries in population growth for the 18–23 cohort. South Africa is a developing nation, and increased participation in higher education is a critical strategy for addressing the skills shortage, high unemployment rates and poverty.

The South African higher education landscape comprises 26 public and 123 private HEIs (DHET, 2018). Public and private higher education enrolments reached 1.1 million in 2016. Public HEI student enrolment in 2016 was 975,837, which decreased by 9,375 students compared to 2015. However, the higher education enrolments increased to 167,408 in 2016, which comprises a growth in student numbers by 13.7 % (20,198) compared to 2015 (DHET, 2018). This is also changing rapidly, and both public and private higher education institutions (PHEIs) are faced with changes such as global student mobility, market growth, increased access via branch campuses or improved communication technology (Roztocki et al., 2019), as well as franchised and joint degrees. English is the language of choice for teaching and research, for growing globalization and for the rapid rate of technological developments worldwide (Altbach & De Wit, 2018).

This overview of the higher education environment highlights opportunities and challenges. This study aims to analyze the higher education sector in South Africa and provide a basis for developing a relevant model so that a PHEI can roll out this model to ensure successful business performance and, ultimately, ensure growth and sustainability.

Problem Statement

Most African governments are challenged to comply with higher education needs. These challenges include limited capacity at public institutions, poor quality of training, providing access to students and increasing capacity as the

population grows. Governments are further constrained when graduates leave HEIs, and there are few or limited opportunities to find productive and gainful employment in Africa. Public higher education cannot cope with the high demand created by population growth (The Africa Report, 2018). Private higher education is an alternative option to alleviate the demand for HEIs. Already, 21% of African children and young adults are educated by private institutions. By 2020, this number had grown to 25%, while predictions show further growth by 2025 (Caerus Capital, 2024).

Higher education in South Africa is currently fluid, as HEIs are focused on social, financial and political equity and redress, to which the government is committed (Chetty & Pather, 2015). The South African government aims to raise university enrolments by 2030 to 1,500,000 (a projected participation rate of 23%) as opposed to the 2011 enrolments of 899,120 (a 16% participation rate). Also, South Africa aims for 4,000,000 enrolments (approximately a 60% participation rate) in colleges or other post-school institutions. To achieve these goals, the Department of Higher Education and Training must build, resource and support an expanded higher education system (Research & Markets, 2017). Public institutions will not be able to cope with the increased demand. PHEIs in South Africa are but one way to alleviate the demand for education.

PHEIs operate in a market-oriented business environment that faces typical micro- and macro-economic factors. The political and regulatory environments, as well as market forces, have a direct impact on private higher education. The South African higher education regulatory and accreditation frameworks ensure the provision of quality and the maintenance of high standards in both public and PHEIs in South Africa. However, although private and public institutions offer similar degrees, the current higher education legislation prohibits PHEIs to use the title of 'university.' They are also not entitled to receive any subsidies or tax rebates, or use government facilities. These, and other regulations, are currently under revision in the White Paper on the Classification of HEIs (Shaikh et al., 2024). These financial realities signify that PHEIs need a better understanding of the business environment and its role-players to not only be competitive as businesses of higher education but also be able to compete in the open business environment for lucrative investors seeking a fair return on their investments. Hence, the primary objective of this study is to develop a management model that effectively measures the business performance of a PHEI in South Africa.

Research Objectives

This study aims to analyze the higher education sector in South Africa and provide a basis for developing a relevant model for PHEIs to manage successful business performance and, ultimately, ensure growth and sustainability. The study begins by reviewing the literature on higher education and private higher education to establish a broad theoretical framework to guide this study. After statistically ensuring that the respective theoretical measuring criteria selected

measure the specific business performance antecedents, the paper presents a model to measure business performance in private higher education in South Africa. This article validates a theoretical model to measure and manage business performance at South African PHEIs.

The Role of PHEIs in South African Higher Education

Private higher education providers in Africa have increased throughout the continent, and typical examples of countries that rely heavily on PHEIs are Gabon (47%), Mozambique (32%) and Ethiopia (24%) (Garwe, 2016). These private institutions compete in a highly publicly regulated environment where institutions must function, survive and compete with one another, as well as with public HEIs (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2013). This is especially relevant to the South African educational environment. In this environment, Bezuidenhout and De Jager (2014) note that PHEIs are business-orientated, entrepreneurial and directly affected by market forces, whereas their significant competitors in the public sector are operating in a more secure environment where state subsidies secure a substantial part of their income. However, regarding this competitive environment, Pouris and Inglesi-Lotz (2014) conclude that private higher education has moved to the centre stage of education business strategies to prosper and contribute to economic prosperity, fuller employment and social cohesion. With government constraints regarding resource allocation to public universities, PHEIs are filling the educational gap.

PHEIs have eased the social demand for access to higher education and have strategically segmented the education market, charging tuition fees that are market- and market-segment-related. In this case, some private education institutions serve the elite through high-priced programmes, while others target lower-income markets with very affordable prices and payment options. Both business models compete well in maximizing the wealth of the shareholders. These business models, followed by the private institutions, also allow for disproportional faculty salaries; this is more difficult to address in the public sector because the government influences the salaries of academics. As a significant cost centre, salaries are an essential denominator of the profitability of any business, especially in a service environment such as education (Garwe, 2016).

In South Africa, as of February 2018, according to the Department of Higher Education's Register of PHEIs, there were 100 registered and 28 provisionally registered PHEIs (DHET, 2018). There are also 26 public universities. Even though PHEI functions within the same quality, regulatory and accreditation environment as public institutions, it operates within a constrained environment. Typical constraints are as follows:

- PHEIs cannot use the title 'university.'
- PHEIs do not receive any government subsidies, tax rebates or facilities.
- PHE institutions' survival depends on achieving their business goals and financial well-being.

- Their performance must be measured and monitored like any other business because they are essentially private businesses offering education to the open market.
- Research outputs are encouraged, yet not rewarded, by the DHET.

Business Performance

Performance or Business Success?

It is essential to determine if the organization is successful or not. This is done by measuring the level of performance of an organization. The measuring process generates comparative information, which assists the organization in determining if it has improved or not with respect to the list of comprehensive activities measured within the organization (Kaur et al., 2017). However, Coetzee (2017) strongly warns against the term 'success' because of its relativity. He mentions that perceived success differs from person to person. He, for example, states that success could be achieved by one person completing a marathon, while for another, it translates into winning the marathon. If performance is used, definite measurement criteria are applied to quantify performance. In this case, the specific completion time of the marathon for both persons can now be objectively documented and compared. Performance thus includes an objective criterion, such as the time it takes to complete the marathon. The same analogy is true when business performance is at stake. It is vital to measure performance according to specific criteria to render a verdict on the performance of an organization (Kaur & Sharma, 2014). Also, the key is to accurately determine the measuring criteria and ensure the criteria's applicability to the specific type of organization. (This is a key focus of this study, where specific measuring criteria need to be developed to measure the performance of the PHEI.)

Defining Business Performance

Many researchers and business analysts have attempted to define business performance. Most definitions include institutional objectives and criteria for measuring business performance as a construct. Some also include the intelligence generated by the business performance measurement process. The concept also seems to have been well researched, as the core of definitions has changed little over the past decade. Some business performance definitions are as follows:

> Business performance measures are a set of quantifiable metrics taken from various sources. Together with an appropriate analytical process, they allow business management to track and assess the current status of a specific business, project, or process. (Baskerville, 2015, p. 2)

> Businesses measure what they manage, and business performance aims to achieve this. This complex activity requires focus and clear objectives and goals to be measured. (Van Looy & Shafagatova, 2016, p. 1797)

> Business performance management entails reviewing the overall business performance and determining how it can better reach its goals. (Business Directory, 2024, n.p.)

After considering the above and other definitions, business performance implies specifically formulated outcomes, a component of the measurement of these outcomes that an organization achieves during a particular period and the application of the intelligence generated from the measurement. Therefore, to measure business performance, it is necessary to establish whether the desired outcomes have been met. In practice, this means that the desired outcomes must be identified clearly, and efficient measuring criteria (other than mere accounting norms) must be developed to measure effectively how well (or not) the organization achieved these outcomes.

Measuring Business Performance

Measuring business performance requires a multidimensional approach because various factors impact businesses. These could be micro-, market or macro-environmental factors (Kurniawan & Christiananta, 2018). Hariyati et al. (2018) further state that modern business performance is strongly influenced by the external business environment, where factors such as globalization, disruptive technological changes, the free flow of goods, services and information, and instant communication abilities are prevalent; these are all aspects that influence the organization in reaching its desired outcomes. Business performance measurement also incorporates financial objectives, such as value creation for the shareholders or stakeholders of the business. In this regard, Primadonna and Emrizal (2018) state that modern business performance cannot be measured only from a financial perspective. Financial information is a basis for only one of many performance outcomes a modern business should achieve. Back in 2002, Hussain and Hoque (2002) strongly argued for the consideration of non-financial performance measurements that could improve business performance. Today, many business analysts and researchers (Butler, 2017; Hecht, 2018; Kaplan Knowledge Bank, 2018; VisionEdge, 2018; Yulliansyah & Razimi, 2015) support Hussain and Hoque by stating that performance measures such as reputation, innovation, customer value, competitiveness, the balanced scorecard and customer indices are key performance measurement antecedents. In addition, these analysts also add that constant communication and enabling technology abilities, specifically in the education business environment (Learning Portal, 2018), play an important role in the performance of these institutions by

maintaining customer loyalty, forming relationships with customers and developing trust with customers as part of the business performance measurement exercise.

Measuring business performance is central to any organization, whether a public enterprise or privately owned. All organizations are challenged to operate productively and to achieve their planned outcomes as effectively and efficiently as possible (Van Looy & Shafagatova, 2016). In this quest, using an appropriate business performance model containing the relevant performance indicators is vital to measure the organization's business performance against the planned outcomes. Notably, the planned outcomes and business performance measurement model should align with an organization-specific business development strategy (Sandeep & Bedi, 2016). This strategy and the expected outcomes should be efficiently and effectively communicated throughout the organization so that all personnel in the organization know what the performance expectations are, how they will be monitored and what feedback is needed when feedback is expected so that managers can motivate employees to achieve these desired results (Sandeep & Bedi, 2016; Teeratansirikool et al., 2013). Measuring business performance is not an end but a mechanism or tool for reviewing strategy and effectively using the organization's resources to guide management towards achieving higher performance levels (Sandeep & Bedi, 2016).

Identifying Antecedents to Measure Business Performance

The results and progression towards developing a conceptual model to measure the performance of PHEIs are presented step-wise, as illustrated in the research methodology (Fig. 1.1).

Step 1: Identification of Business Performance Antecedents Through Literature Research

Identifying and analyzing various relevant performance measurement models provided several constructs and their measuring criteria, albeit not all relevant to private higher education. Table 1.1 reflects a list of selected studies, which by no means reflects the full list of models used to identify antecedents to measure business performance. These studies are generalized over various industries and were not specific to higher education. The table also shows the particular construct, industry and antecedents the researchers employed to measure the industry's performance. More specifically, Table 1.1 lists business performance models that originated from higher education and other relevant industries. It is noteworthy that most performance models in higher education resonate with the dominance of public education institutions in South Africa. Many of these models are unfit for application in private education institutions. Subsidies and educational goals often take precedence over private business performance goals in public institutions. This absence of applicable and adaptable models necessitated a fresh approach, where all business functions in the private sector