



An Analysis of Challenges Faced by Academics During the Transition from Contact to Online Learning

Siyasanga Mgoduka¹  & Hloniphile Cleopatra Zwane² 

¹ School of Development Studies, University of Mpumalanga, South Africa.

² Department of Business Management, University of Zululand, South Africa.

ABSTRACT

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic affected many lives and sectors across the world. In the higher education sector, Covid-19 caused a drastic shift from contact learning to multiple forms of online learning. It is in this context that the paper undertook a critical analysis of the challenges experienced by academics because of Covid-19. A comprehensive literature search was conducted on 6 databases (Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Jstor, Academic Search Complete, SpringerLink, and SAGE Journals) for relevant studies published from the year 2019 to 2022. Moreover, further relevant studies were retrieved from the reference list of studies identified from the initial search. The search terms employed by the researchers were COVID-19, remote learning, e-learning, online learning, higher education, information technology and asynchronous learning systems. For the selection of the most relevant articles for the final review, the researchers employed inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies that addressed higher education online learning and the challenges encountered by higher education due to Covid-19 were eligible for inclusion. The findings revealed that academics encountered multiple challenges during the transition from contact learning to online learning, these include the academic's limited experience and lack of training in the pedagogy of online learning, challenges related to planning and adaptability, issues of network and connectivity, insufficient teaching and learning resources, workload, and stress along with the uncondusive physical spaces and environment. Based on the findings presented, this study recommended that the pedagogical strategies must be revised. Furthermore, necessary adjustments in infrastructure in higher education institutions must also be made. This will ensure the smooth running of the teaching and learning process. Moreover, the systematic flaws and transformation gaps in higher education institutions have been made clear by the shift from contact learning to online learning. Thus, this study concludes that blended learning may emerge as the default teaching mode in higher learning institutions, this ensures the maximisation of efficiency.

Correspondence

Siyasanga Mgoduka

Email:

Siyasanga.Mgoduka@ump.ac.za

Publication History

Received 24th October, 2023

Accepted 12th December, 2023

Published online:

22nd December, 2023

Keywords: Covid-19, Online Teaching, Contact Or Face-To-Face Education, Higher Education, Technology.

INTRODUCTION

Societies across the globe occasionally face pandemics, which can have either revolutionary or epochal effects. These pandemics are revolutionary in that they force a fundamental shift in how one perceives or thinks about the world. The severe respiratory coronavirus disease (Covid-19) that emerged in 2019 is one of such barriers that fundamentally altered the way that education is provided and received globally. The changes that had to be made were extensive, to the extent that one may have a whole discussion on life before and after COVID-19. Covid-19 has reformed how individuals must live and work to an extent that even the education system was forced to adapt to e-learning. To save the academic projects as well as student's future, universities, colleges as

well as school online and digital platforms were quickly introduced. This change was very new to some schools and universities and basically many individuals struggled to adopt a suitable system for teachers and learners. Online teaching and learning have currently become the new normal. The main issue that faces educators and policymakers is how to best educate young people for a future that is still mostly uncertain.

According to Whittle, Tiwari, Yan and Williams in teaching and learning crises and emergency multimodal teaching and learning is the temporary solution which replaces the normal contact of teaching and learning.¹ Hodges et al. have a similar view that even academic programmes that were designed and planned to be delivered in contact have changed to be delivered virtually to accommodate an epic catastrophe.² Additionally, Blessinger and Bliss and Tsabedze and Ngoepe argue that online teaching is very flexible, non-restricted, welcoming and non-prejudiced to the extent that if students have the appropriate gadgets such as laptops and smartphones, they can participate in online learning regardless of their geographical location.³ The authors further stated that online learning is good and cheap as learners can access education in their nearby libraries as well as in the comfort of their homes as they are not restricted to the walls of institutions.

Although the transition from contact to online learning has its advantages, it also has some challenges. Academic staff members especially have been presented with a lot of challenges because of this transition, and many have had to acquire higher degrees of technological skills and expertise in order to be effective.⁴ Also, not being able to interact with other students in the class caused students to suffer from feelings of isolation.⁵ Existing literature on covid 19 and online learning presents the benefits of online learning, the challenges faced by students and the technological choices and resources.⁶ It is in this context that this article analyses the challenges that academics faced in relation to the shift from contact to online teaching and learning. A review of current literature on the topic of online learning will be outlined first, followed by the methodology employed and thereafter the findings and discussions will be outlined. The study will conclude with recommendations drawn in relation to the challenges encountered by academics during the transition from contact learning to online learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, which first appeared in Wuhan, China towards the end of 2019, is the cause of the human illness COVID-19.⁷ The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global health emergency in late January 2020 after numerous nations reported confirmed cases and the first deaths were recorded in early January 2020.⁸ Government rules and regulations across the globe caused the majority of enterprises to close. In addition, schools were closed globally.⁹ The higher education sector was forced to switch from in-person instruction to online instruction within a short amount of time.¹⁰ Due to their separation from their comfortable on-campus surroundings, students had to deal with feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and social isolation during the shift.¹¹ According to Lieber, parents enrol their children in higher education for a minimum of three reasons: 1. To acquire knowledge and develop better adult brains; 2. To acquire a qualification that communicates tenacity and success to potential employers; and 3. To make friends and mentors who will support them throughout their lives.¹² These objectives can be challenging to accomplish when studying at home. In contrast to previous pandemics, the Covid-19 pandemic has been the most consequential of the twenty-first century.

¹ Clayton Whittle et al., "Emergency Remote Teaching Environment: A Conceptual Framework for Responsive Online Teaching in Crises," *Information and Learning Sciences* 121, no. 5/6 (2020): 311–19.

² Charles B Hodges et al., "The Difference between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning," 2020.

³ T. J. Bliss and Patrick Blessinger, *Open Education: International Perspectives in Higher Education* (Open Book Publishers, 2016); Vusi Tsabedze and Mpho Ngoepe, "A Framework for Archives and Records Management Education in an Open Distance E-Learning Environment in ESwatini," *Education for Information* 36, no. 2 (2020): 157–75.

⁴ Michael W Marek, Chiou Sheng Chew, and Wen-chi Vivian Wu, "Teacher Experiences in Converting Classes to Distance Learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic," *International Journal of Distance Education Technologies (IJDET)* 19, no. 1 (2021): 89–109.

⁵ Jenna Gillett-Swan, "The Challenges of Online Learning: Supporting and Engaging the Isolated Learner," *Journal of Learning Design* 10, no. 1 (2017): 20–30.

⁶ Marek, Chew, and Wu, "Teacher Experiences in Converting Classes to Distance Learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic"; Whittle et al., "Emergency Remote Teaching Environment: A Conceptual Framework for Responsive Online Teaching in Crises."

⁷ Marek, Chew, and Wu, "Teacher Experiences in Converting Classes to Distance Learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic."

⁸ Marek, Chew, and Wu, "Teacher Experiences in Converting Classes to Distance Learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic."

⁹ Lee Gardner, "Covid-19 Has Forced Higher Ed to Pivot to Online Learning. Here Are 7 Takeaways so Far," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 20, no. 5 (2020): 1–6.

¹⁰ Gardner, "Covid-19 Has Forced Higher Ed to Pivot to Online Learning. Here Are 7 Takeaways so Far."

¹¹ A Ghebreyesus, "Psychiatrists Beware! The Impact of COVID-19 and Pandemics on Mental Health," *Psychiatric Times* 37, no. 3 (2020); S Weissman, "It's a Different World," *The Underrepresented Underprivileged Hit Hard by Coronavirus-related Campus Closures. Diverse* 4 (2020): 10–12.

¹² Ron Lieber, "Colleges Won't Refund Tuition. Autumn May Force a Reckoning," *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/your-money/college-tuition-refunds-coronavirus.html>, 2020.

Consequently, an investigation into how it affects universities will have a significant influence on the corpus of current knowledge.

Online Learning Variations

Technology-related technologies and online education are developing quickly. Consequently, e-learning, remote learning, hybrid learning, blended learning, and distant learning are some of the terms linked to online learning.¹³ Each of these terms simply describes how technology is used in education. For the sake of this study, online learning is defined as a type of distance learning in which teaching is primarily offered through the use of the Internet and technology is used as a mediator of the learning process.¹⁴ Online learning is often used interchangeably with e-learning.¹⁵ Students are normally expected to regularly attend scheduled online classes, discussions and presentations, all of this varies according to different educational institutions or instructors. With online learning, students are able to use information technology tools for submissions and they also receive feedback online.

Olimov and Mamurova describe information technology (IT) as the study or application of systems (particularly computers and telecommunications) for information storage, retrieval, and transmission.¹⁶ IT tools and other infrastructure supporting higher education can be broadly divided into two categories: synchronous and asynchronous.¹⁷ Asynchronous learning systems are built on communication networks that do not require participants in the learning process to connect with each other in real time.¹⁸ Asynchronous learning systems include popular online learning platforms such as Moodle and Blackboard, which are meant to facilitate stakeholder interactions through an untime-limited request-response structure.¹⁹ In contrast to asynchronous learning, synchronous online learning is carried out through video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Skype and involves the exchange of knowledge in real time.²⁰ Higher education institutions adopted these platforms with the goal of digitally replicating classroom situations. Turnbull et al. state that in order to reproduce all in-person educational activities in a fully virtual setting, these two modes must be blended.²¹

Teacher Experiences

The research on the experiences of academics in response to the Covid-19 pandemic is sparse in literature, and this study is aimed at addressing that gap. A study by Arora and Srinivasan revealed that the actual benefits of virtual teaching were less than expected, and this was because of issues related to network availability, training and lack of human interaction, due to these, virtual classroom usage and success were constrained.²² The rapid change in the teaching environment due to COVID-19 and the sparseness of literature regarding the experiences of academics in response to the pandemic led the authors of this current study to conclude that a study on the challenges faced by academics during the transition from face-to-face learning to online learning would be valuable.

METHODOLOGY

This paper employed secondary sources to accomplish the aforementioned objective. The literature on the difficulties faced by academics in switching from in-person to online learning as a result of COVID-19 was examined and analysed, and the data was interpreted using thematic content analysis. This study aims to analyze the difficulties faced by academics as they switch from contact to online learning as a result of COVID-19.

¹³ Kimkong Heng and Koemhong Sol, "Online Learning during COVID-19: Key Challenges and Suggestions to Enhance Effectiveness," *Cambodian Journal of Educational Research* 1, no. 1 (2021): 3–16.

¹⁴ Gardner, "Covid-19 Has Forced Higher Ed to Pivot to Online Learning. Here Are 7 Takeaways so Far."

¹⁵ Heng and Sol, "Online Learning during COVID-19: Key Challenges and Suggestions to Enhance Effectiveness."

¹⁶ Shirinboy Sharofoviya Olimov and Dilfuza Islomovna Mamurova, "Information Technology in Education," *Pioneer: Journal of Advanced Research and Scientific Progress* 1, no. 1 (2022): 17–22.

¹⁷ Puti Fitri Larasati and Harry Budi Santoso, "Interaction Design Evaluation and Improvements of Cozora - A Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Learning Application," in *2017 7th World Engineering Education Forum (WEEF)* (IEEE, 2017), 536–41, <https://doi.org/10.1109/WEEF.2017.8467168>.

¹⁸ Larasati and Santoso, "Interaction Design Evaluation and Improvements of Cozora."

¹⁹ Darren Turnbull, Ritesh Chugh, and Jo Luck, "Transitioning to E-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic: How Have Higher Education Institutions Responded to the Challenge?," *Education and Information Technologies* 26, no. 5 (2021): 6401–19.

²⁰ Turnbull, Chugh, and Luck, "Transitioning to E-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic"; Lucas Kohnke and Benjamin Luke Moorhouse, "Facilitating Synchronous Online Language Learning through Zoom," *Relc Journal* 53, no. 1 (2022): 296–301.

²¹ Turnbull, Chugh, and Luck, "Transitioning to E-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic"

²² Bhavna Arora, "Exploring and Analyzing Internet Crimes and Their Behaviours," *Perspectives in Science* 8 (September 2016): 540–42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pisc.2016.06.014>.

Several studies have been conducted to better understand the shift in education from in-person instruction to online instruction.²³ As such, these studies will offer valuable information to support the goals of this paper. A thorough search of six databases for pertinent studies published between 2019 and 2022 was done. Furthermore, from the reference list of research found during the first search, further pertinent studies were found. Covid-19, remote learning, e-learning, online learning, higher education, information technology, and asynchronous learning systems were the search terms used by the researchers. To select the most relevant articles for the final review, the researchers employed inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies that addressed higher education online learning and the challenges encountered by higher education due to Covid-19 were eligible for inclusion. The table below presents the employed databases.

Table 1: Preliminary literature search database results

Database	Total number of results	Peer reviewed papers	Included for literature review
Google Scholar	300	290	20
ScienceDirect	27	27	8
Jstor	36	23	10
Academic Search Complete	40	37	4
SpringerLink	7	4	2
SAGE Journals	10	7	5
Total	420	388	49

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the review results of recent studies on online teaching and learning conducted during COVID-19, the following findings have been produced. The examined papers discussed the difficulties faced by educators and students in the wake of COVID-19, as well as the steps educators took to encourage students to learn online and acquire the skills required for graduation. The following themes can be applied to the study's results: the effects of COVID-19 on higher education, the difficulties associated with online teaching and learning, the difficulties faced by educators when they switch from in-person instruction to online learning, and the strategies used by educators to get students interested in online learning.

➤ Covid-19 consequences for higher education

Human-to-human interactions are among the activities affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.²⁴ Turnbull et al. claim that because higher education institutions were likewise enmeshed in this new social interaction, they had to quickly adjust to the shift from in-person to online learning.²⁵ Many people found the shift from in-person learning to online learning to be eye-opening, and educational institutions were compelled to embrace technology to establish virtual classrooms, recorded lectures, online exams, and quizzes.²⁶ Most of the universities already have access to some of the technologies used for online learning, like learning management systems and conferencing apps like Zoom and Microsoft Teams.²⁷

The Ministry of Education of China implemented a full shift to remote instruction and learning on the 4th of February 2020.²⁸ On the 17th of February, the New York University Shanghai made an announcement regarding the fact that classes were to be transformed from traditional class-based to online classes, while the transition of both Duke Kunshan University and Zhejiang University took place on the 24th of February.²⁹ Due to an increase in infection rates, South Africa went into a 21-day lockdown on March 26. As a result, higher education institutions were forced to close, and the country started to shift to online learning. The lockdown was later prolonged until the end of April 2020. It is inevitable that stakeholders in tertiary education will face

²³ Turnbull, Chugh, and Luck, "Transitioning to E-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic"; Kohnke and Moorhouse, "Facilitating Synchronous Online Language Learning through Zoom"; Heng and Sol, "Online Learning during COVID-19"; Mosharraf Hosen et al., "The Impact of COVID-19 on Tertiary Educational Institutions and Students in Bangladesh," *Heliyon* 8, no. 1 (2022).

²⁴ Turnbull, Chugh, and Luck, "Transitioning to E-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic"

²⁵ Turnbull, Chugh, and Luck, "Transitioning to E-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic"

²⁶ K. Mahalakshmi and R., Radha, "COVID 19: A Massive Exposure towards Web Based Learning," *Journal of Xidian University* 14, no. 4 (April 25, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.37896/jxu14.4/266>.

²⁷ Marek, Chew, and Wu, "Teacher Experiences in Converting Classes to Distance Learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic."

²⁸ Junling Li and Wanyu Che, "Challenges and Coping Strategies of Online Learning for College Students in the Context of COVID-19: A Survey of Chinese Universities," *Sustainable Cities and Society* 83 (August 2022): 103958, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scs.2022.103958>.

²⁹ Zethembe Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic" (Sage Los Angeles, CA, USA:, 2020).

a variety of difficulties when implementing a new online environment.³⁰ Marek and Chew state that a portion of the difficulties stem from the fact that most instructors in higher education have never completed courses on online learning.³¹ Furthermore, Hosen et al. assert that the lack of internet connection, electricity, and information and communication technology for students is one of the issues that are outside the control of the lecturers.³² In addition, a few obstacles are the academics' and students' inability to change, connectivity problems, and a lack of resources. Murphy, on the other hand, makes the case that an online learning environment could be more affordable than in-person instruction and advantageous for both instructors and students.³³ While some academics contend that online learning benefits students, Mahalakshmi and Radha contend that students' socioeconomic status increases their risk of falling behind in their coursework or encountering extra challenges.³⁴ A few of the difficulties that come with teaching and studying online are covered in the section below.

➤ Learning Management Systems (LMS)

With the advent of software that can be used to organize, implement, and analyze the entire educational process, learning management systems (LMSs) have become more and more common in educational institutions.³⁵ Learning Management Systems (LMSs) are defined by Mohammadi, Mohibbi and Hedayati, as internet-based mobile or web-based software programs that enable participation in the teaching and learning process from both instructors and students.³⁶ Tutor, Sakai, Blackboard, and Moodle are the most popular LMS software programs for online education.³⁷ These systems provide the following features: student enrollment, tests, quizzes, assignments, course management, messaging, and the ability to upload course materials.³⁸ Teachers in LMSs can manage course materials and other aspects of instruction.³⁹ Conversely, students have access to course materials that instructors have uploaded and can engage in additional activities that the teacher has started, like chat rooms, forums, homework, assignments, quizzes, and much more.⁴⁰

Following the COVID-19 virus's emergence as a global pandemic in March 2020, numerous governmental and private organizations, including colleges and universities were closed down.⁴¹ A significant obstacle to teaching and learning was confronting the education system because classes shifted from contact to online. Institutions had to utilize LMSs in the teaching and learning process.⁴² Mohammadi et al., the use and successful implementation of Learning Management Systems (LMSs) was a major challenge for multiple higher education institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic.⁴³

³⁰ Hosen et al., "The Impact of COVID-19 on Tertiary Educational Institutions and Students in Bangladesh."

³¹ Marek, Chew, and Wu, "Teacher Experiences in Converting Classes to Distance Learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic."

³² Hosen et al., "The Impact of COVID-19 on Tertiary Educational Institutions and Students in Bangladesh."

³³ Michael P A Murphy, "COVID-19 and Emergency ELearning: Consequences of the Securitization of Higher Education for Post-Pandemic Pedagogy," *Contemporary Security Policy* 41, no. 3 (2020): 492–505.

³⁴ Murphy, "COVID-19 and Emergency ELearning: Consequences of the Securitization of Higher Education for Post-Pandemic Pedagogy"; Mahalakshmi and Radha, "COVID 19: A Massive Exposure towards Web Based Learning."

³⁵ H. Jamal and A. Shanaah, "The Role of Learning Management Systems in Educational Environments: An Exploratory Case Study" (Linnaeus University, Växjö Campus, 2011), <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:435519/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

³⁶ Mustafa Kamel Mohammadi, Abdul Aziz Mohibbi, and Mohammad Hadi Hedayati, "Investigating the Challenges and Factors Influencing the Use of the Learning Management System during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Afghanistan," *Education and Information Technologies* 26, no. 5 (September 7, 2021): 5165–98, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10517-z>.

³⁷ Mohammed Amin Almaiah, Ahmad Al-Khasawneh, and Ahmad Althunibat, "Exploring the Critical Challenges and Factors Influencing the E-Learning System Usage during COVID-19 Pandemic," *Education and Information Technologies* 25 (2020): 5261–80.

³⁸ Almaiah, Al-Khasawneh, and Althunibat, "Exploring the Critical Challenges and Factors Influencing the E-Learning System Usage during COVID-19 Pandemic."

³⁹ Mohammadi, Mohibbi, and Hedayati, "Investigating the Challenges and Factors Influencing the Use of the Learning Management System during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Afghanistan."

⁴⁰ Almaiah, Al-Khasawneh, and Althunibat, "Exploring the Critical Challenges and Factors Influencing the E-Learning System Usage during COVID-19 Pandemic."

⁴¹ World Health Organization, 2020. *Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak, 18 March 2020* (No. WHO/2019-nCoV/MentalHealth/2020.1). World Health Organization.

⁴² N El Rouadi and Mohammad Faysal Anouti, "Flipping the Classroom Concept through the WhatsApp Platform and the Microsoft PowerPoint Presentations for the Service of Teaching Mathematics, A Case Study in a Lebanese Public School," *International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Engineering and Technology* 8, no. 1 (2021): 16384–403.

⁴³ Mohammadi, Mohibbi, and Hedayati, "Investigating the Challenges and Factors Influencing the Use of the Learning Management System during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Afghanistan."

➤ Online Teaching and Learning Challenges

Existing literature has revealed that the transition from the traditional class-based way of learning to online learning has been challenging for some institutions.⁴⁴ This transition has exposed transformation gaps along with systematic weaknesses in South African institutions of higher learning. One of the challenges is that some institutions struggle with migration from contact to online learning. Moreover, the other challenges were that academics had limited experience and needed training in the pedagogy of online learning, both students and academics experienced difficulties in adjusting to the new way of learning, connectivity and internet issues along with the lack of teaching and learning resources.⁴⁵

➤ Challenges encountered by academics during the transition from contact to online learning

Policymakers are becoming increasingly aware of the global issue of the shift from in-person learning to virtual learning. As a result, there is a rising interest in figuring out the root causes of this problem and possible fixes.⁴⁶ Universities in South Africa are no exception, they are also confronted with the aforementioned issues. Although the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has implemented numerous programs aimed at facilitating online teaching and learning, they have not yet succeeded in meeting their goals because comprehensive rural universities continue to struggle with online teaching and learning.⁴⁷ Furthermore, research that has already been done has shown that academics faced a number of difficulties while switching from in-person to online learning. These difficulties include:

1. Academics with limited experience and lack of training in the pedagogy of online learning

Existing literature on the transition from contact to online learning due to COVID-19 has revealed that a lot of academics struggled with a lack of support from their various institutions during the class conversion.⁴⁸ This is substantiated by the findings from a study conducted by Marek, Chew and Wu, which revealed that there was no sufficient training and mentoring offered to academics during the class conversion.⁴⁹ As a result of a lack of training, the findings from a study conducted by Sharin revealed that academics encountered multiple difficulties related to digital technology, including; downloading challenges, video and audio challenges along installation difficulties.⁵⁰ On the other hand, some studies revealed that despite limited training and experience, academics were still able to deal with the patterns of online learning.⁵¹

2. Challenges related to Planning and Adaptability

Online learning presents many challenges, varying from problems for students, and lecturers, and content-related challenges. Research by Sharin shows that academics struggled with the transition from contact to online learning, there was evidence of a struggle to adapt their methods of teaching and managing their time.⁵² In addition, assessments in online learning are carried out online, which makes it difficult for academics to proxy the supervision of students, which makes it impossible to regulate and control cheating.⁵³ Multiple student testing formats are applicable to online learning, such as ICT-enhanced testing formats, these include; constructed-response, performance-based formats, sentence-completion or short-answer, matching, true-false and cloze-procedure. The findings from a study conducted by Adedoyin and Soykan revealed that academics were struggling with adapting and finding

⁴⁴ Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic"; Hosen et al., "The Impact of COVID-19 on Tertiary Educational Institutions and Students in Bangladesh."

⁴⁵ Hosen et al., "The Impact of COVID-19 on Tertiary Educational Institutions and Students in Bangladesh"; Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic"; Cedric Bheki Mpungose, "Is Moodle or WhatsApp the Preferred E-Learning Platform at a South African University? First-Year Students' Experiences," *Education and Information Technologies* 25, no. 2 (March 6, 2020): 927–41, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-019-10005-5>; Shadrack Themba Mzangwa, "Transformation as Part of Evolving Organisational Culture in the South African Higher Education Institutions," *Cogent Social Sciences* 5, no. 1 (January 15, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1638635>.

⁴⁶ Hodges et al., "The Difference between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning."

⁴⁷ Mpungose, "Is Moodle or WhatsApp the Preferred E-Learning Platform at a South African University?"

⁴⁸ Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic."

⁴⁹ Marek, Chew, and Wu, "Teacher Experiences in Converting Classes to Distance Learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic."

⁵⁰ Ana Nurdini Sharin, "E-Learning during COVID-19: A Review of Literature," *Jurnal Pengajian Media Malaysia* 23, no. 1 (2021): 15–28.

⁵¹ Tatiana Markova, Irina Glazkova, and Elena Zaborova, "Quality Issues of Online Distance Learning," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 237 (2017): 685–91; Sharin, "E-Learning during COVID-19: A Review of Literature."

⁵² Sharin, "E-Learning during COVID-19: A Review of Literature."

⁵³ Olasile Babatunde Adedoyin and Emrah Soykan, "Covid-19 Pandemic and Online Learning: The Challenges and Opportunities," *Interactive Learning Environments* 31, no. 2 (2023): 863–75.

their way around the use of ICT-enhanced testing formats, it was revealed that they needed proper training on the utilization of these formats.⁵⁴

3. **Issues of Network and Connectivity**

Online learning presents both opportunities and challenges; it offers learning flexibility, while on the other hand, it becomes a constraint to a person with connectivity issues and to a person who does not possess the necessary digital devices used for online learning.⁵⁵ The transition from contact to online learning required both students and academics to stay connected to the internet. For both online learning and teaching to be a success, a fast and reliable internet connection is required.⁵⁶ Several studies found challenges with connectivity as a leading factor hindering the process of online learning.⁵⁷ The findings from a study conducted by Mseleku revealed that one of the major concerns regarding online learning was the availability of a fast and reliable internet connection.⁵⁸ Developing countries like South Africa encountered a lot of connectivity challenges during the transition from contact to online learning, this is something very common in these countries and it is because the ICT and telecommunications systems in these countries are not properly developed. The literature revealed that the main cause of students' non-participation in online learning was as a result of lack of reliable internet connection.⁵⁹

4. **Insufficient Teaching and Learning Resources**

One of the issues faced by academics and students was the lack of teaching and learning resources to support the process of online learning.⁶⁰ One of the main issues faced by academics and students with online learning is its reliance on technology equipment, according to Adedoyin and Soykan.⁶¹ The results of research by Azorin and Mseleku, which showed that a significant obstacle to the switch from in-person to online learning was a shortage of digital devices, supported these conclusions.⁶² Due to its heavy reliance on technology, online learning is severely hampered by limited access to these gadgets. Adedoyin and Soykan also hinted that it was hard for students with accessibility issues to follow online instructions and that it was hard for them to satisfy assessment deadlines.⁶³ During online learning, socioeconomic variables also posed a challenge. The results of a study by Fishbane and Tomer showed that when poverty levels rise in a community, access to technology and the internet declines quickly.⁶⁴ This means that students from low-income families are more likely to fall behind and struggle to keep up with online learning.

5. **Workload and stress**

The literature demonstrates that the transition from traditional class-based learning to online learning resulted in academics experiencing higher workload and stress.⁶⁵ The higher workload and stress were a result of the fact that classes had to be converted to distance learning and the semesters were to be completed in that mode. A study conducted by Li found that a lack of familiarity with hardware and software associated with online learning also caused anxiety in academics.⁶⁶ The findings from a study

⁵⁴ Adedoyin and Soykan, "Covid-19 Pandemic and Online Learning: The Challenges and Opportunities."

⁵⁵ Sharin, "E-Learning during COVID-19: A Review of Literature."

⁵⁶ Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic."

⁵⁷ Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic"; Wei Bao, "COVID-19 and Online Teaching in Higher Education: A Case Study of Peking University," *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies* 2, no. 2 (2020): 113–15; Saraswati Dawadi, Ram Ashish Giri, and Padam Simkhada, "Impact of COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Nepal: Challenges and Coping Strategies.," *Online Submission*, 2020; Emmanuel Aboagye, Joseph Anthony Yawson, and Kofi Nyantakyi Appiah, "COVID-19 and E-Learning: The Challenges of Students in Tertiary Institutions," *Social Education Research*, 2021, 1–8.

⁵⁸ Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic."

⁵⁹ Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic."

⁶⁰ Dawadi, Giri, and Simkhada, "Impact of COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Nepal: Challenges and Coping Strategies."; Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic"; Adedoyin and Soykan, "Covid-19 Pandemic and Online Learning: The Challenges and Opportunities."

⁶¹ Adedoyin and Soykan, "Covid-19 Pandemic and Online Learning: The Challenges and Opportunities."

⁶² Cecilia Azorin, "Beyond COVID-19 Supernova. Is Another Education Coming?," *Journal of Professional Capital and Community* 5, no. 3/4 (2020): 381–90; Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic."

⁶³ Adedoyin and Soykan, "Covid-19 Pandemic and Online Learning: The Challenges and Opportunities."

⁶⁴ Adie Tomer, Joseph Kane, and Lara Fishbane, "An Infrastructure Stimulus Plan for the Covid-19 Recession," *Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, Metropolitan Policy Program*, 2020.

⁶⁵ Marek, Chew, and Wu, "Teacher Experiences in Converting Classes to Distance Learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic"; Li and Che, "Challenges and Coping Strategies of Online Learning for College Students in the Context of COVID-19: A Survey of Chinese Universities"; Julie Dalgaard Guldager, Signe Smith Jervelund, and Gabriele Berg-Beckhoff, "Academic Stress in Danish Medical and Health Science Students during the COVID-19 Lock-Down," *Danish Medical Journal* 68, no. 7 (2021).

⁶⁶ Li and Che, "Challenges and Coping Strategies of Online Learning for College Students in the Context of COVID-19: A Survey of Chinese Universities."

conducted by Idris et al revealed that deadlines and unexpected interruptions also caused stress.⁶⁷ Similarly, a study conducted by Thompson and Christian, revealed that the lack of support from institutions with regards to the transition, unrealistic expectations and lack of concern regarding the academic's well-being also contributed to the stress and anxiety experienced by academics.⁶⁸ The study of Idris et al., also found that uncertainty of students learning achievements also caused a lot of stress and anxiety towards academics.⁶⁹ Similarly, the literature has demonstrated that maintaining appropriate questions and fair assessments for students also resulted in higher workloads and that caused a lot of stress and anxiety.⁷⁰ It was also discovered that because everything was done on technological devices, the increased screen time led to computer-related physical stress.⁷¹

6. **Lack of Basic Needs**

The other factor that posed a threat to the execution of online learning was the lack of basic needs. A study conducted by Mseleku revealed that the ability of students to participate was highly affected by the lack of access to basic needs such as clean water, food, shelter, electricity, security, and healthcare.⁷² These findings are corroborated by the findings from a study conducted by Kapasia et al., which found that students who were living in their own homes were faced with financial difficulties (26.5%), lack of food problems (51%) and health-related problems (22.5%).⁷³

7. **Unconducive Physical Space and Environment**

Literature has also revealed that one of the challenges identified during the transition from contact to online learning was the lack of physical space or a learning environment that is conducive enough for them to be able to learn.⁷⁴ Students from poor households particularly were extremely affected because of the lack of private space to be able to conduct learning; they were easily disturbed by family members and that resulted in them not being able to concentrate properly.⁷⁵

In summary, this study has explored the challenges that academics encountered during the transition from contact learning to online learning. The findings revealed that for a number of reasons the transition was very challenging, and majority of academics encountered problems due to the lack of training to utilize online learning systems. Network and connectivity challenges were also raised by some academics who indicated that they experienced high levels of stress and workload. These findings suggest that academics encountered a lot of challenges during the transition from contact to online learning due to Covid 19.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **High-quality tools** – It is imperative for higher education institutions to guarantee that they offer E-learning portals and other online learning platforms that are easily navigable, error-free, and of superior quality. This measure will guarantee the resolution of a common issue with virtual learning: the deficiency of instructional materials and resources to support the virtual learning process. Previous studies also demonstrated that a problem faced by educators as they moved from in-person instruction to virtual learning was that they were very stressed. Stress levels can be reduced by using top-notch online platforms.
- **Redesign** – Based on the findings presented in the previous sections, this study recommends that the pedagogical strategies must be revised. Furthermore, necessary adjustments in infrastructure in higher

⁶⁷ Fazean Idris et al., "Academic Experiences, Physical and Mental Health Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Students and Lecturers in Health Care Education," *BMC Medical Education* 21, no.1(December 27, 2021): 542, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-021-02968-2>.

⁶⁸ Lynette Thompson and Cindy Christian, "... It Just Broke Me...": Exploring the Psychological Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Academics," *BMC Psychology* 10, no. 1 (2022): 1–9.

⁶⁹ Idris et al., "Academic Experiences, Physical and Mental Health Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Students and Lecturers in Health Care Education."

⁷⁰ Idris et al., "Academic Experiences, Physical and Mental Health Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Students and Lecturers in Health Care Education"; Thompson and Christian, "... It Just Broke Me...": Exploring the Psychological Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Academics"; Issrae El Mouedden et al., "Experiences of Academic and Professional Burn-out in Medical Students and Residents during First COVID-19 Lockdown in Belgium: A Mixed-Method Survey," *BMC Medical Education* 22, no. 1 (2022): 631.

⁷¹ Obianuju E Okeke-Uzodike and Vangeli Gamede, "The Dilemma of Unrelenting Workload Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic: An Agenda for University Female Academics.," *Journal of Research in Higher Education* 5, no. 1 (2021); Guldager, Jervelund, and Berg-Beckhoff, "Academic Stress in Danish Medical and Health Science Students during the COVID-19 Lock-Down."

⁷² Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic."

⁷³ Nanigopal Kapasia et al., "Impact of Lockdown on Learning Status of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students during COVID-19 Pandemic in West Bengal, India," *Children and Youth Services Review* 116 (2020): 105194.

⁷⁴ Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic."

⁷⁵ Idris et al., "Academic Experiences, Physical and Mental Health Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Students and Lecturers in Health Care Education"; Mseleku, "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic"; Thompson and Christian, "... It Just Broke Me...": Exploring the Psychological Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Academics."

education institutions must also be made. This ensures the smooth running of the teaching and learning process. Moreover, existing literature revealed that post-COVID majority of the institutions introduced blended learning, where some of the classes are in contact and some are online. Therefore, higher education institutions need to have infrastructure that will accommodate online learning.

- **Training of staff and students** – The results showed that in addition to issues with planning and flexibility, one of the difficulties faced by academics when they switched from in-person instruction to online learning was a lack of training in online learning methodology. This study suggests that educators and students should both receive adaptation training to help them become more comfortable with technology in order to overcome this issue. This will improve their proficiency and teach them how to handle any technical problems that may arise while they are learning online.
- **Diversification** – This study also recommends that institutions utilize multiple online learning resources and platforms instead of relying on a single platform. This ensures the maximisation of efficiency. For instance, instead of relying only on Microsoft Teams, other platforms such as Zoom, and video conferencing can also be utilized.
- **Broadening accessibility** – The lack of digital devices during the shift from in-person to online learning was found to be a significant problem for both students and academics in previous studies. The findings of this study suggest that in order to ensure the effectiveness of online learning, higher education institutions should make sure that both students and faculty have access to electronic devices and a reliable internet connection.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the challenges that academics encountered during the transition from contact learning to online learning. The findings revealed that many institutions were not ready for online teaching and learning as they did not have adequate resources. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the inequalities within and between universities as some institutions were ready to move to teaching online and continue with the academic term, whereas others faced severe constraints related to students' poor access to technology and poor socio-economic circumstances. Furthermore, the systematic flaws and transformation gaps in higher education institutions have been made clear by the shift from contact learning to online learning. Thus, this study concludes that blended learning may emerge as the default teaching mode in higher learning institutions, this ensures the maximisation of efficiency.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aboagye, Emmanuel, Joseph Anthony Yawson, and Kofi Nyantakyi Appiah. "COVID-19 and E-Learning: The Challenges of Students in Tertiary Institutions." *Social Education Research*, 2021, 1–8.
- Adedoyin, Olasile Babatunde, and Emrah Soykan. "Covid-19 Pandemic and Online Learning: The Challenges and Opportunities." *Interactive Learning Environments* 31, no. 2 (2023): 863–75.
- Almaiah, Mohammed Amin, Ahmad Al-Khasawneh, and Ahmad Althunibat. "Exploring the Critical Challenges and Factors Influencing the E-Learning System Usage during COVID-19 Pandemic." *Education and Information Technologies* 25 (2020): 5261–80.
- Arora, Bhavna. "Exploring and Analyzing Internet Crimes and Their Behaviours." *Perspectives in Science* 8 (September 2016): 540–42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pisc.2016.06.014>.
- Asmundson, Gordon J.G., and Steven Taylor. "How Health Anxiety Influences Responses to Viral Outbreaks like COVID-19: What All Decision-Makers, Health Authorities, and Health Care Professionals Need to Know." *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 71 (April 2020): 102211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2020.102211>.
- Azorín, Cecilia. "Beyond COVID-19 Supernova. Is Another Education Coming?" *Journal of Professional Capital and Community* 5, no. 3/4 (2020): 381–90.
- Bao, Wei. "COVID-19 and Online Teaching in Higher Education: A Case Study of Peking University." *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies* 2, no. 2 (2020): 113–15.
- Bliss, T J, and Patrick Blessinger. *Open Education: International Perspectives in Higher Education*. Open Book Publishers, 2016.
- Dawadi, Saraswati, Ram Ashish Giri, and Padam Simkhada. "Impact of COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Nepal: Challenges and Coping Strategies." *Online Submission*, 2020.
- Gardner, Lee. "Covid-19 Has Forced Higher Ed to Pivot to Online Learning. Here Are 7 Takeaways so Far." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 20, no. 5 (2020): 1–6.
- Ghebreyesus, A. "Psychiatrists Beware! The Impact of COVID-19 and Pandemics on Mental Health." *Psychiatric Times* 37, no. 3 (2020).

- Gillett-Swan, Jenna. "The Challenges of Online Learning: Supporting and Engaging the Isolated Learner." *Journal of Learning Design* 10, no. 1 (2017): 20–30.
- Guldager, Julie Dalgaard, Signe Smith Jervelund, and Gabriele Berg-Beckhoff. "Academic Stress in Danish Medical and Health Science Students during the COVID-19 Lock-Down." *Danish Medical Journal* 68, no. 7 (2021).
- Heng, Kimkong, and Koemhong Sol. "Online Learning during COVID-19: Key Challenges and Suggestions to Enhance Effectiveness." *Cambodian Journal of Educational Research* 1, no. 1 (2021): 3–16.
- Hodges, Charles B, Stephanie Moore, Barbara B Lockee, Torrey Trust, and Mark Aaron Bond. "The Difference between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning," 2020.
- Hosen, Mosharrof, Mohammad Nazim Uddin, Shahadat Hossain, Md Asadul Islam, and Afzal Ahmad. "The Impact of COVID-19 on Tertiary Educational Institutions and Students in Bangladesh." *Heliyon* 8, no. 1 (2022).
- Idris, Fazean, Ihsan Nazurah Zulkipli, Khadzizah Haji Abdul-Mumin, Siti Rohaiza Ahmad, Shahid Mitha, Hanif Abdul Rahman, Rajan Rajabalaya, Sheba Rani David, and Lin Naing. "Academic Experiences, Physical and Mental Health Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Students and Lecturers in Health Care Education." *BMC Medical Education* 21, no. 1 (December 27, 2021): 542. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-021-02968-2>.
- Jamal, H., and A. Shanaah. "The Role of Learning Management Systems in Educational Environments : An Exploratory Case Study." Linnaeus University, Växjö Campus, 2011. <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:435519/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.
- Kapasias, Nanigopal, Pintu Paul, Avijit Roy, Jay Saha, Ankita Zaveri, Rahul Mallick, Bikash Barman, Prabir Das, and Pradip Chouhan. "Impact of Lockdown on Learning Status of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students during COVID-19 Pandemic in West Bengal, India." *Children and Youth Services Review* 116 (2020): 105194.
- Kohnke, Lucas, and Benjamin Luke Moorhouse. "Facilitating Synchronous Online Language Learning through Zoom." *Relc Journal* 53, no. 1 (2022): 296–301.
- Larasati, Puti Fitri, and Harry Budi Santoso. "Interaction Design Evaluation and Improvements of Cozora - A Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Learning Application." In *2017 7th World Engineering Education Forum (WEEF)*, 536–41. IEEE, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1109/WEEF.2017.8467168>.
- Li, Junling, and Wanyu Che. "Challenges and Coping Strategies of Online Learning for College Students in the Context of COVID-19: A Survey of Chinese Universities." *Sustainable Cities and Society* 83 (August 2022): 103958. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scs.2022.103958>.
- Lieber, Ron. "Colleges Won't Refund Tuition. Autumn May Force a Reckoning." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/your-money/college-tuition-refunds-coronavirus.html>, 2020.
- Mahalakshmi, K., and R., Radha. "COVID 19: A Massive Exposure towards Web Based Learning." *Journal of Xidian University* 14, no. 4 (April 25, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.37896/jxu14.4/266>.
- Marek, Michael W, Chiou Sheng Chew, and Wen-chi Vivian Wu. "Teacher Experiences in Converting Classes to Distance Learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic." *International Journal of Distance Education Technologies (IJDET)* 19, no. 1 (2021): 89–109.
- Markova, Tatiana, Irina Glazkova, and Elena Zaborova. "Quality Issues of Online Distance Learning." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 237 (2017): 685–91.
- Mohammadi, Mustafa Kamel, Abdul Aziz Mohibbi, and Mohammad Hadi Hedayati. "Investigating the Challenges and Factors Influencing the Use of the Learning Management System during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Afghanistan." *Education and Information Technologies* 26, no. 5 (September 7, 2021): 5165–98. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10517-z>.
- Mouedden, Issrae El, Catherine Hellemans, Sibyl Anthierens, Nele Roos Michels, and Ann DeSmet. "Experiences of Academic and Professional Burn-out in Medical Students and Residents during First COVID-19 Lockdown in Belgium: A Mixed-Method Survey." *BMC Medical Education* 22, no. 1 (2022): 631.
- Mpungose, Cedric Bheki. "Is Moodle or WhatsApp the Preferred E-Learning Platform at a South African University? First-Year Students' Experiences." *Education and Information Technologies* 25, no. 2 (March 6, 2020): 927–41. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-019-10005-5>.
- Mseleku, Zethembe. "A Literature Review of E-Learning and E-Teaching in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic." Sage Los Angeles, CA, USA:, 2020.
- Murphy, Michael P A. "COVID-19 and Emergency ELearning: Consequences of the Securitization of Higher Education for Post-Pandemic Pedagogy." *Contemporary Security Policy* 41, no. 3 (2020): 492–505.
- Mzangwa, Shadrack Themba. "Transformation as Part of Evolving Organisational Culture in the South

- African Higher Education Institutions.” *Cogent Social Sciences* 5, no. 1 (January 15, 2019).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1638635>.
- Okeke-Uzodike, Obianuju E, and Vangeli Gamede. “The Dilemma of Unrelenting Workload Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic: An Agenda for University Female Academics.” *Journal of Research in Higher Education* 5, no. 1 (2021).
- Olimov, Shirinboy Sharofoviya, and Dilfuza Islomovna Mamurova. “Information Technology in Education.” *Pioneer: Journal of Advanced Research and Scientific Progress* 1, no. 1 (2022): 17–22.
- Rouadi, N El, and Mohammad Faysal Anouti. “Flipping the Classroom Concept through the WhatsApp Platform and the Microsoft PowerPoint Presentations for the Service of Teaching Mathematics, A Case Study in a Lebanese Public School.” *International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Engineering and Technology* 8, no. 1 (2021): 16384–403.
- Sharin, Ana Nurdini. “E-Learning during COVID-19: A Review of Literature.” *Jurnal Pengajian Media Malaysia* 23, no. 1 (2021): 15–28.
- Thompson, Lynette, and Cindy Christian. ““... It Just Broke Me...”: Exploring the Psychological Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Academics.” *BMC Psychology* 10, no. 1 (2022): 1–9.
- Tomer, Adie, Joseph Kane, and Lara Fishbane. “An Infrastructure Stimulus Plan for the Covid-19 Recession.” *Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, Metropolitan Policy Program*, 2020.
- Tsabedze, Vusi, and Mpho Ngoepe. “A Framework for Archives and Records Management Education in an Open Distance E-Learning Environment in ESwatini.” *Education for Information* 36, no.2(2020):157–75.
- Turnbull, Darren, Ritesh Chugh, and Jo Luck. “Transitioning to E-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic: How Have Higher Education Institutions Responded to the Challenge?” *Education and Information Technologies* 26, no. 5 (2021): 6401–19.
- Weissman, S. “It’s a Different World.” *The Underrepresented Underprivileged Hit Hard by Coronavirusrelated Campus Closures. Diverse* 4 (2020): 10–12.
- Whittle, Clayton, Sonia Tiwari, Shulong Yan, and Jeff Williams. “Emergency Remote Teaching Environment: A Conceptual Framework for Responsive Online Teaching in Crises.” *Information and Learning Sciences* 121, no. 5/6 (2020): 311–19.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Siyasanga Mgoduka is a PhD candidate at the University of Zululand. She holds a MCom degree in Business Management (Unizulu), BCom Honours degree in Business Management (Unizulu) and a BCom degree in Business Management (Unizulu). Currently, she is a Business Management lecturer at the University of Mpumalanga. Ms Mgoduka is very passionate about research; she has publications with accredited journals, and she has presented conference papers both nationally and internationally. Her areas of research interest are entrepreneurship, marketing, marketing management, business administration along with teaching and learning. She has received numerous awards which include awards for part taking in community engagement initiatives. She is currently completing her doctoral degree focusing on: An analysis of dependency relations in tourism: A focus on the game and nature reserves in Mpumalanga. She aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by publishing more papers with accredited and high impact journals. She believes in collaboration as a tool to promote teamwork.

Hloniphile Cleopatra Zwane is a PhD candidate at the University of KwaZulu Natal. She holds a Masters degree in Commerce (Business Management), PGCE in Business management and Economics, Bcom Honors in Business management, Bcom degree(Business management and Economics)(University of Zululand). Currently Miss Zwane is a Business Management Lecturer at the University of Zululand. Her Research interests are as follows entrepreneurship, Female entrepreneurship, Youth entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, Higher education teaching and learning as well as cooperatives. She has published research articles to accredited journals and presented conference papers.