

**Progress in Language, Literature  
and Education Research**

**Vol. 3**

*Edited by Dr. Ridzwan Che Rus*



**B P International**

**Progress in Language,  
Literature and Education  
Research**

**Vol. 3**



# **Progress in Language, Literature and Education Research**

**Vol. 3**

**India ■ United Kingdom**



**B P International**

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**FIRST EDITION 2023**

**ISBN 978-81-968656-4-1 (Print)**

**ISBN 978-81-968656-1-0 (eBook)**

**DOI: 10.9734/bpi/piller/v3**



**Peer-Review Policy:** Advanced Open Peer Review policy has been followed for review. All manuscripts are thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum two peer-reviewers reviewed each manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication.

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A. L. Hillermann

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## ABOUT THE EDITOR



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He has pursued his Bachelor of Education (Agricultural Science) at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in 2003 and obtained a Master's degree in Technical and Vocational and in 2014. He obtained his Ph.D. from the National University of Malaysia (UKM). He is currently an Associate Professor at the Technical and Vocational Faculty (FTV), Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Malaysia. He has served with UPSI since November 2006 and is an academic with more than 14 years of teaching experience in the field of TVET. He has been invited as a keynote speaker at several international seminars including World TVET Conference 2015 in Sarawak, Well Being Asia Program Nagoya University in 2017, International Conference on TVET in 2018 and TVET Connex 2018 during The 9<sup>th</sup> Worlddidac Asia, EDUtech Asia 2019 in Singapore, various international and local webinars throughout the 2020-2021 pandemic and the latest EDUtech Malaysia 2022. His best achievements so far are being awarded as the Best Professor in TVET (Educational Leadership) in 2018 by the Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management and 251 Fabulous Global Education Leaders 2019 by the World Education Congress 2019. In addition, he was also appointed as a Guest Lecturer for several university (local and international) and at Nagoya University in 2017 as a Visiting Professor.

## **PREFACE**

*This book covers key areas of language, literature and education. The contributions by the authors include psychological explanations, linguistic and educational practice, cultural diversity, ethnic diversity, feminist, cocoon regime, traditional masculine norms, Islamic religious law, cognitive domain, social domain, Greek educational system, student-centered approach, student-centered environment, student centeredness, occupational stress, job dissatisfaction, job stress, learning trajectory, scaffolding, conceptual learning, policy statement, implementing stakeholders, educational reform, learning intervention model, organizational change and learning, professional development, strategic management, plagiarism, academic dishonesty. This book contains various materials suitable for students, researchers and academicians in the field of language, literature and education.*

# Effects of Occupational Stress and Burnout on Turnover Intentions among Teachers: A Case Study from Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana

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DOI: 10.9734/bpi/pller/v3/6992E

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/6992E>

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## ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction and turnover within the Ghanaian education sector, by investigating the impact of occupational stress and burnout on turnover intentions among senior high school teachers in the cape coast metropolis, Ghana. Job Stress is considered as a stimulator of turnover intentions among the employees of any organization. As the teachers belong to a noble profession i.e. profession of the Prophets, hence the researchers, in order to verify this supposition, conducted this descriptive, co-relational and cross-sectional study for determining the relationship between job stress and turnover intentions among different categories of teachers.

The study setting was Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central Region of Ghana. Cape Coast is the capital of the Central Region of Ghana and it is referred to as the citadel of education. The study employed the descriptive survey design and made use of both descriptive and inferential data analysis approaches. Teachers from the fifteen senior high schools in the Ghanaian Central Region's Cape Coast city made up the population. A multi-stage sampling technique was used in the investigation. In order to incorporate all of the teachers from the ten schools that were chosen, the study also used a census method.

The study revealed that occupational stress and burn out had significant impact on turnover intention among Senior High School teachers in Cape Coast Metropolis.  $F(2, 517) = 9.898, p < 0.05$ . Also, the results of the study indicated that generally job dissatisfaction had statistically significant impact on turnover intention of the participants.  $F(1, 518) = 82.163, p < 0.05$ . The result of the study implies that as

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teachers continuously experience burnout, they develop coping strategies that help them to mitigate job stress and still carry on with their teaching job.

It was suggested that administrators of senior high schools should be able to plan efficient initiatives such as staff professional development programs, motivational speeches, and workshops on stress management and instructor awareness-raising. Employers provide sufficient support for the well-being and working environment of teachers. Programs like workshops, in-service training, and a remunerating package should be continuously designed by schools to encourage and support teachers to remain in their positions despite the most difficult obstacles they may encounter.

*Keywords: Occupational stress; burnout; turnover; job dissatisfaction.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Teacher burnout and frequent turnover negatively affect stability and productivity in the context of higher education. Despite the fact that the relationship between burnout and turnover intention has been thoroughly studied, the role of other factors in this relationship should be evaluated in order to better clarify underlying mechanisms, particularly in the context of higher education [1]. Teachers face myriads of challenges in their various workplaces. The teaching and learning environment leading to dissatisfaction for university instructors was characterized by increased workload (including online teaching and technological problem solving) and resulting physiological effects, including insomnia, tension, and fatigue [2]. A significant portion of these are psychological issues, which include, among other things, burnout, job discontent, turnover intentions, and occupational stress. These issues are widespread right now and are a worldwide phenomenon that needs quick attention to resolve. Job Stress is the pressure and the tension which the employees have to face during the course of their duties due to unnatural demands. Occupational stress has become a permanent feature of our day to day life. Stress is a complex term which has been defined by the researchers in different ways. Some of the researchers link it to an effect thinking it as a cause [3]. However, there is no clarity on the role occupational stress has on burnout. For example, a study done at a hospital setting indicates that no correlation exists between occupational stress and burnout [3], while other findings report no significant difference existing between occupational stress and burnout [4]. The study shows that instructors experience varying degrees of stress and burnout in their line of work, despite the growing concern in society and social service organizations about occupational stress, burnout, and turnover intentions, particularly among teachers in schools. Because of this, teachers occasionally, if not always, have the desire to quit their jobs and pursue other careers. The main stressors of school teachers highlighting the following causes of stress: problems with staff members and parents, work overload, anticipation of problems, lack of time and inadequate support from the administrations [5]. In reality, stress has been considered as a significant problem in the teaching profession. Burnout as a consequence of occupational stress has implications of job dissatisfaction for teachers either directly or indirectly. As far as the consequences are concerned, burnout can affect health, giving rise to both physical and psychosomatic problems

not limited to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, guilt feelings, and low tolerance of frustration (Schulz et al., 2011). Kumari [6] argues that job satisfaction is an appropriate response to particular aspects of work such as: challenge, motivation and difficulty level. Such aspects of work environments have been reported to play an essential role in deciding the total employee job satisfaction for workers.

Bame [7], in his study on “teacher motivation and retention in Ghana,” revealed that over 70% of both male and female teachers accepted that teachers were frightened by the Ministry of Education officials in the course of their supervision by pointing out flaws in whatever they did and gave unreasonable criticisms, but declined to include clear corrections or guidance on how to deal with the situation. Bame [7] argued that this was discouraging for teachers to put in their maximum effort to their job. Furthermore, dissatisfied teachers will quit the teaching service if their substitute job is more satisfying and profitable [7]. In the work stress literature, burnout has been identified as an outcome of physical and psychological job demands [8]. In addition, high turnover rates not only impact the schools' financial stability but also Hanushek and Rivkin (2010) reported that simulation are an important challenge to the commonly held assumption that teacher turnover harms student achievement, especially that of low-performing students.

The teacher turnover problems are commonly identified as a dynamic phenomenon. A 2009 teacher turnover study conducted by the Ghana National Association of Teacher (GNAT) and the Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU) discovered a very extraordinary turnover rate of teachers in Ghana. The study indicates that in the Ghana Education Service (GES), almost 10,000 teaching staff leaves school for other careers each year (GNAT, 2009). The high prevalence of teacher turnover influences the school education reforms negatively because it interrupts the quality and continuity of teaching and learning.

According to Ghana's Director of Labour Research and Policy of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), 50 percent of the teachers interviewed voiced their intention to stop teaching before retirement [9]. From the sampled population, about 24.8 percent of those who indicated the intention of quitting did so for higher pay reasons. About 59.8 percent expressed the intention of leaving for better service conditions, while 6.5 per cent articulated the intention of changing their occupation [9]. Results give evidence that teachers encounter several grades of stress and burnout in their occupation which cause them to sometimes or most times harbour the intention to leave their job for other occupations elsewhere. Few studies have also been carried out in Africa in the area of occupational satisfaction and teacher turnover intention, [10]; on employee turnover intentions, and on work satisfaction. In order to address this gap in the literature, this current research focuses on stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction and turnover within the Ghanaian education sector, by investigating the impact of occupational stress and burnout on turnover intentions among senior high school teachers in the cape coast metropolis, Ghana.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Despite the increasing concern about occupational stress, burnout and turnover intentions in society and in social service organisation especially among teachers in schools, there have been very little studies conducted in Ghanaian Senior High

Schools on teacher burnout. The majority of the research was conducted in the United States, the United Kingdom, Malta, Finland, Canada and Israel. Several studies have made attempts to explore and investigate occupational stress, burnout and turnover intentions among teachers in general (Mendez & Lira, 2015); [11], but in different socio-economic settings.

Most of their findings revealed high levels of stress in schools and noticeable difference between low stress and high stress schools in relations to managerial, societal and physical environment, higher levels of emotional exhaustion and decreased personal achievement. High rates of these sub-domains and total prevalence of burnout correlate meaningfully with increased levels of stress on the person, profession, and community, low points of care or coping facilities, high frequency of physical and social symptoms, and decreased teacher employee satisfaction. These results give evidence that teachers encounter several grades of stress and burnout in their occupation which cause them to sometimes or most times harbour the intention to leave their job for other occupations elsewhere. Few studies have also been carried out in Africa in the area of occupational satisfaction and teacher turnover intention, [10]; on employee turnover intentions, and on work satisfaction and certain demographic characteristics, [12]; among Egyptian teachers, and about job stress, anxiety and depression [13].

No studies have explored the impact of occupational stress, and burnout on turnover intentions among teachers in the secondary school setting. In order to address this gap in the literature, this current research focuses on the impact of occupational stress and burnout on turnover intentions among senior high school teachers in the cape coast metropolis, Ghana.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

What relationships exist among occupational stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions among Senior High School teachers in Cape Coast Metropolis?

## **1.3 Hypotheses**

1. Ho: There is no significant impact of occupational stress and burnout on turnover intentions among Senior High School teachers in Cape Coast Metropolis.
2. Ho: There is no significant impact of job dissatisfaction on turnover intentions among Senior High School teachers in Cape Coast Metropolis.

## **2. LITRATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

#### **2.1.1 The person-environment fit model**

The person-environment fit model as proposed by Livingstone, Nelson, and Bars [14] predicts whether stress will occur based on the fit between the individual and

the environment. Heimbeck, Frese, Sonnentag, & Keith [15] discovered that the workers expertise, abilities and resources should meet the demands of the job and if there is any gap or misfit, it is then that difficulties will occur. They further emphasized that the greater the gap between the person and the environment, the greater the stress as demands excess abilities.

The theory is relevant to the study because it supports the evidence of occupational stress as the consequence of a condition where work demands exceed employees' ability to cope, consequently affecting the psychosocial and physiological wellbeing of the workers. The theory reveals the mismatch disproportion between working conditions and workers ability and resource to perform effectively on the job, which consequently lead to occupational stress. On the burn out concept, Cherniss model of burnout was reviewed and used to underpin this study. Cherniss (1980) as cited in Anna [16] posits that the various sources of stress and the resulting distress can be dealt with adequately by active problem solving or inadequately by developing negative attitudes. The former reduces distress because its causes are removed, whereas the latter increases distress so that consequently burnout is developed.

This theory provides backing to the study because as teachers experience burnout their energy is depleted and negative attitudes such as cynicism, limited contact with students increased indifference become a habitual pattern response to work. Mobley sequential turnover model underpinned the turnover intentions of this study. Mobley (1977) as cited in Agomah (2016) indicated that negative thought leads to job dissatisfaction and subsequent thoughts of quitting the job as in the specific case of the teaching service. This theory gives credence to the study in that as teachers perceive their job to be unattractive, they develop negative thoughts about their profession, resulting in job dissatisfaction and subsequent intention as to quit their job.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Barsky, Thoresen, Warren, and Kaplan [17] used a contingency-based approach with 590 sales personnel to model negative affectivity and occupational stress. The findings revealed that occupational stress is a predictor of adverse affective behaviours such as turnover intentions and job satisfaction. Karatepe and Baddar [18] completed an empirical study on the effects of family-work conflict and work-family conflict on job stress, job satisfaction and turnover intentions among frontline staff in Jordan. The questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of 189 participants. The results from the study disclosed that work-family dispute, family-work dispute, work stress and job satisfaction substantially predict turnover intentions.

Similarly, Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursière, Raymond [19] studied how job satisfaction, supervisory behaviour and organisational behaviour predict employee turnover intentions in different kinds of organisations. A total of 763 participants completed questionnaire for the study. The results of the study stressed the impacts of leadership in predicting turnover intentions among employees. Contrary to the



findings of Karatepe and Baddar [18], the results of Mathieu et al. [19] revealed that job satisfaction does not have a direct significant influence on turnover intentions as compared to organisational commitment.

## **2.3 Research Gaps**

Few studies have also been reported in Ghana such as: "Assessment of turnover Intentions and employee commitment among teachers of the Ghana Education Service in the Bolgatanga municipality" by Afebia [9], "exploring issues of teacher retention and attrition in Ghana" by Effah and Osei-Owusu [20], "Factors affecting job satisfaction among teachers of some selected Senior High School in Accra" by Nutsuklo (2015), "Impact of socio- demographic factors on job satisfaction among academic staff of Universities in Ghana" by Milledzi, Amponsah, and Asamani [21] and "person-environment fit and turnover intentions of Senior High School teachers in Ghana" by Nyarko-Sampson, Amponsah, and Asamani [22]. No studies have explored the impact of occupational stress, and burnout on turnover intentions among teachers in the secondary school setting. In order to address this gap in the literature, this current research focuses on the impact of occupational stress and burnout on turnover intentions among senior high school teachers in the cape coast metropolis, Ghana

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Study Area**

The study setting was Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central Region of Ghana. Cape Coast is the capital of the Central Region of Ghana and it is referred to as the citadel of education. This is due to the fact that the metropolis harbours quite a large number of Ghana's first class senior high schools and also has one of the best Universities in the country (University of Cape Coast as one of its prized assets). Presently, there exist fifteen public Senior High Schools comprising seven single sex and eight mixed schools in the metropolis. The Cape Coast Metropolis was selected as an ideal location for the study because education is held in high esteem.

### **3.2 Research Design, Population and Sampling Procedure**

The study employed the descriptive survey design and made use of both descriptive and inferential data analysis approaches. The population comprised teachers from the 15 Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast metropolis of the Central Region of Ghana. Out of this, ten were public Senior High Schools and five were private Senior High School. The target population comprised teachers in all the Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. In total, the target population for the study was 542 public Senior High School teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique. The 10 public schools were selected based on the criteria of academic excellence experienced in the public schools. The study further employed a census method to include all the teachers from the ten selected schools.

### **3.3 Data Collection Instrument**

The questionnaire comprised 76 items grouped under five sections –A, B, C, D, and E.

Section A: This section contained four items which collected data on the demographic features of the participants, such as age, sex, years of service, and education background.

Section B: This section was intended to obtain data on the occupational stress of the participants. It consisted of 20 items. The items were adapted from the Job Stress Inventory (JSI) developed by Osipow and Davis (1998). The items have been psychometrically validated. The Job Stress Inventory was modified by the researcher to make it more suitable and applicable for teachers. The items were measured using a scale of 0 to 5 representing 0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = most often and 5 = always.

SECTION C: This component of the questionnaire was developed to collect data on the burnout teachers experience in their teaching career. The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators’ Survey (MBI-ES) for educators was used for this study. It comprises 22 items of job-related feelings under three subscales: (1) Emotional Exhaustion (EE) measures feelings of being overextended and exhausted by one’s work emotionally. (2) Depersonalization (DP) measures an uncaring and insensitive reaction towards one’s recipients’ instruction. (3) Personal Accomplishment (PA) measures feelings of competence and successful achievement in one’s work. The MBI-ES is validated by the extensive research that has been conducted. Reliability coefficients for the subscales were 0.90 for EE, 0.79 for DEP, and 0.71 for PA (Maslach et al., 1996). The items were measured using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.

SECTION D: This section contains 20 items which were used to collect data of the job dissatisfaction of the participants in their teaching profession. The items were adapted from the Teachers’ Job Satisfaction Survey developed by Spector (1994). The original scale which consisted of 36 items was customised into 20 items to suit the context of this study. The reliability coefficient of the original instrument (36 TJSS items) has been reported by Ngimbudzi [23] to be 0.89. The items were measured using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 4 = satisfied and 5 = very satisfied.

SECTION E: This aspect of the questionnaire was used to gather data on the turnover intentions of teachers. This section contains 12 items measured on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items were adapted from Mobley et al. (1978) and Bothma and Roodt’s [24] Turnover Intentions Scale. Bothma and Roodt [24] reported a reliability coefficient of 0.80 for the Turnover Intentions Scale. The items were measured using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.

### **3.4 Pilot Testing of Questionnaire**

Thirty (30) teachers were used to pilot test the instrument. These teachers were selected from Accra Academy Senior High School in the Greater Accra Region. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.909 was obtained.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Procedure**

Data collected from the field were first crosschecked and edited to ensure that they were complete for analysis. It was further coded, analysed and converted into quantitative summary reports for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Basically, descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the teachers in the selected schools. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to analyse research question one. Regression analysis was used to analyse research hypotheses one and two to help identify the impact of occupational stress, burnout and job satisfaction as predictors of turnover intention.

## **4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the teachers in the selected schools. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to analyse research question one. Regression analysis was used to analyse research hypotheses one and two to help identify the impact of occupational stress, burnout and job satisfaction as predictors of turnover intention

### **4.1 Demographic of Respondents**

The results in Table 1 below show that 419 (80.6%) of the participants are males while 101 (19.4%) are females. It could therefore be concluded that the majority of the study participants were males. For that of age, participants were between 31 to 40 years, 171 (32.9%) were between 21 to 30 years, 81 (15.5%) were between 41 to 50 years and 29 (5.6%) were between 51 to 60 years. Thus, the majority 239 (46.0%) of the study participants were between 31 to 40 years. It was found that many (64.2%) of the participants being the majority had first degree while 181 (34.8%) had masters and 5 (0.96%) had Ph.D. The study results therefore revealed that the 334 (64.2%) depicts that majority of the participants were first degree holders. It was observed that 317 (61.0%) had taught for 1 to 10 years, 134 (25.8%) of the participants had taught for 11 to 20 years and 69 (13.2%) of the participants had also taught for 21 to 30 years. The study, therefore, revealed that the majority of the participants had taught for 1 to 10 years, thereby making them very experienced in teaching.

**Table 1. Demographic variables of respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Male	419	80.6
Female	101	19.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age</b>		
21-30years	171	32.9
31-40years	239	46.0
41-50years	81	15.5
51-60years	29	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational qualification</b>		
First degree	334	64.2
Masters	181	34.8
Ph.D	5	0.96
<b>Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Teaching Experience</b>		
1-10 years	317	61.0
11-20 years	134	25.8
21-30 years	69	13.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### **4.2 Research Question One**

The focus of research question one was to find out the relationships that existed among occupational stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions among senior high school teachers in Cape Coast metropolis.

Results from Table 2 show a positive, moderate and significant relationship that exist between occupational stress and burnout of participants ( $r=.522, p<0.05$ ). The result suggests that occupational stress of participants tend to lead to burnout of participants. It was observed that positive, low and significant relationship existed between occupational stress, job dissatisfaction and turnover intention ( $r=.182, r=.183, p<0.05$ ). This implies that an increase in occupational stress of participants tend to increase participants job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions. The findings of the study further showed that burnout had a positive, low but no significant relationship with job dissatisfaction ( $r=.061, p>0.05$ ). However, burnout was found to have a positive and significant relationship with turnover intention ( $r=.146, p<0.05$ ). The implication of the finding is that as burnout of participants increases participant's turnover intentions also increases. Lastly, the study results revealed a positive, low and significant relationship between job dissatisfaction and turnover intention ( $r=.370, p<0.05$ ). It could be concluded that as participants' job dissatisfaction increases, their turnover intentions also increase.

**Table 2. Pearson moment correlations of occupational stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions**

Variables	Occupational stress	Burnout	Job dissatisfaction	Turnover intention
	1	.522	.182	.183
Occupational stress		.000	.000	.000
		520	520	520
		1	.061	.146
Burnout			.162	.001
			520	520
			1	.370
Job dissatisfaction				.000
				520
				1
Turnover intention				

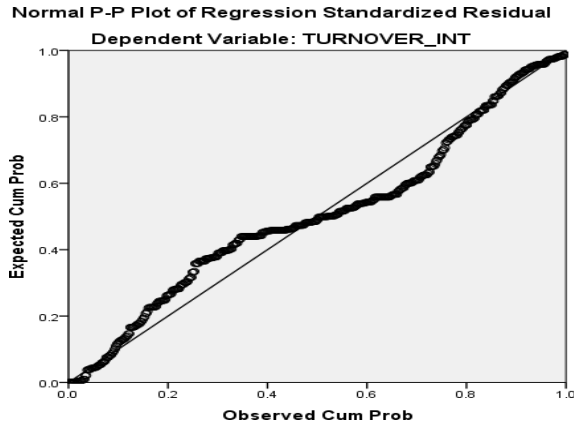
### 4.3 Hypothesis One

Ho: There is no significant impact of occupational stress and burnout on turnover intentions among Senior High school teachers in Cape Coast metropolis.

Prior to running regression analysis test, assumptions were checked. These assumptions were normality (P-P plot) and multicollinearity. Fig. 2 presents the P-P plot normality test of the study variables. As shown in Fig. 1, it was observed that most of the scores are reasonably close to the diagonal line in the centre. Pallant (2016) opined that an observation is normal when most of the scores are closed to the diagonal line in the centre. Multicollinearity (tolerance and variance factor) test was conducted to support the P-P plot normality assumption. Table 3 presents the multicollinearity results.

### 4.4 Multicollinearity Test

The results from Table 3 also showed that tolerance figures were not less than .10 which is the acceptable result as maintained by Pallant. Tolerance is an indicator of how much of the variability of the specified independent variable is not explained by the other independent variables. Furthermore, the variance inflation factor (VIF) results met the acceptable standard which stipulates that VIF values must be less than 10. It is evident that there is no problem of multicollinearity since both the tolerance and variance inflation factor results met the acceptable cut-off points. To assess the statistical significance of the results, it is important to find out how much of the variance in the dependent variable (turnover intentions) is explained by the model (which includes the variables of occupational stress and burnout). Table 4 presents the result of the data analysis.



**Fig. 1. Normal P-P plot of study variables**

**Table 3. Multicollinearity test**

Variables	Correlations	Multicollinearity	
	Turnover Intentions	Tolerance	VIF
Occupation stress	.18	.72	1.37
Burnout	.14	.72	1.37

It is evident from Table 4 that the amount of variance in the dependent variable (turnover intentions) is explained by 0.037 or 3.7% of the independent variable (occupational stress and burnout) at  $F(2, 517) = 9.898, p < 0.05$ . The results imply that generally occupational stress and burnout have statistically significant impact on turnover intention of participants. Standard multiple regression analysis was therefore conducted to ascertain the unique contributions of the independent variables.

**Table 4. ANOVA of occupational stress, burnout and turnover intention**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	R Square change	F	Sig.
Regression	11.894	2	5.947			
Residual	310.634	517	.601	0.037	9.898	.000
Total	322.528	519				

The findings from Table 5 show that occupational stress is statistically significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This is because the sig. value for occupational stress is less than 0.05. As regards the standardized beta values, it was revealed that the greatest predictor upon the dependent variable was occupational stress (beta=.146 or 14.6%). However, the results showed that burnout did not statistically impact turnover intentions of participants. This is because the sig. value

for burnout is greater than 0.05. Therefore, burnout with (beta=.070 or 7%) did not impact significantly turnover intention of participants.

**Table 5. Standard multiple regression analysis of occupational stress and burnout on turnover intention**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.605	.210		12.388	.000
Occupational stress	.222	.077	.146	2.889	.004
Burnout	.109	.079	.070	1.377	.169

*Dependent variable=Turnover Intention*

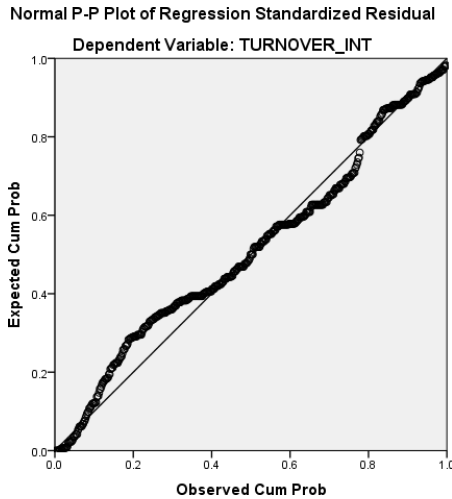
#### 4.5 Hypothesis Two

Ho: There is no significant impact of job dissatisfaction on turnover intentions among Senior High School teachers in Cape Coast Metropolis.

To test this hypothesis, standard multiple regression was considered appropriate. Standard multiple regression would help show the magnitude of the influence and relationship between the independent variables on dependent variable (participants' turnover intentions). However, prior to running regression analysis test, assumptions were checked. These assumptions were normality (P-P plot) and multicollinearity. Fig. 2 presents the P-P plot normality test of the study variables. As shown in Fig. 2, it was observed that most of the scores are reasonably close to the diagonal line in the centre. Pallant (2016) opined that an observation is normal when most of the scores are closed to the diagonal line in the centre. Multicollinearity (tolerance and variance factor) test was conducted to support the P-P plot normality assumption. Table 6 presents the multicollinearity results.

#### 4.6 Multicollinearity Test

The results from Table 6 also showed that tolerance figures were not less than .10 which is the acceptable result as maintained by Pallant. Tolerance is an indicator of how much of the variability of the specified independent variable is not explained by the other independent variables. Furthermore, the variance inflation factor (VIF) results met the acceptable standard which stipulates that VIF values must be less than 10. From Table 6, it is evident that there is no problem of multicollinearity since both the tolerance and variance inflation factor results met the acceptable cut-off points. To assess the statistical significance of the results, it is important to find out how much of the variance in the dependent variable (turnover intention) is explained by the model (which includes the variables of occupational stress and burnout).



**Fig. 2. P-P plot of normality**

**Table 6. Multicollinearity test**

Variables	Correlations	Multicollinearity	
	Turnover Intentions	Tolerance	VIF
Burnout	.370	1.00	1.00

The findings from Table 7 indicate that the amount of variance in the dependent variable (turnover intentions) is explained by 0.137 or 13.7% of the independent variable (job dissatisfaction) at  $F(1, 518) = 82.163p < 0.05$ . The results imply that generally job dissatisfaction have statistically significant impact on turnover intention of participants. Standard multiple regression analysis was therefore conducted to ascertain the unique contribution of the independent variable.

**Table 7. ANOVA of job dissatisfaction and turnover intention**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	R Square Change	F	Sig.
Regression	44.154	1	44.154			
Residual	278.374	518	.537	.137	82.163	.000
Total	322.528	519				

It is evident from Table 8 that job dissatisfaction is statistically significance at 0.05 level of confidence. This is because the sig. value for job dissatisfaction is less than 0.05. As regards the standardized beta values, it was revealed that the independent variable (job dissatisfaction) significantly predicted the dependent variable (turnover intention) at (beta=.370 or 37.0%).



**Table 8. Standard multiple regression analysis of job dissatisfaction on turnover intention**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.261	.239		5.280	.000
Job dissatisfaction	.667	.074	.370	9.064	.000

*Dependent variable=Turnover Intention*

## 5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Discussion of Results

The results of the study indicate that positive relationship existed between occupational stress and burnout of the participants. The result suggests that occupational stress of teachers tend to lead to burnout of teachers. It was observed that positive relationship existed between occupational stress, job dissatisfaction and teachers' turnover intention. This implies that an increase in occupational stress of the participants tend to increase the participants job dissatisfaction and turnover intention. The findings of the study further show that burnout has no significant relationship with job dissatisfaction. The results of the study are not in line with that of George, Louw and Badenhorst (2008) who assert that there is a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and burnout in teachers. However, burnout was found to have a positive relationship with turnover intention. The implication of the finding is that as burnout of teachers increases, the teachers' turnover intentions also increases. In addition, occupational stress has significant positive relationship to turnover intention. The results of the study imply that teachers who experience more job stress have high intention to quit. The results of the study are in tandem with that of Yin-Fah, Foon, Chee-Leong and Osman [25] who posited that there was a positive relationship between job stress and turnover intention.

Lastly, the results revealed a positive relationship between job dissatisfaction and turnover intention. It could be concluded that as participants' job dissatisfaction increases, their turnover intention also tends to increase. The findings of the study are in consonance with that of Ahmad and Rainyee [26] who opined that job satisfaction was significantly and negatively related with turnover intention. Also, the findings of the study validate that of Yin-Fah et al. [25] who found that there was a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Additionally, Besides, Cohen and Golan [27] opined that job satisfaction is related to turnover intention and intent to stay. Hence, employees who feel dissatisfied with their jobs will try as much as possible to find another job in other companies, switch to other jobs within an organisation or switch to other profession all in search for better alternative jobs. However, the results of the study are contrary to that of Mosadeghrad et al. [28] who found that there was a positive relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. The result of the study implies that as

teachers continuously experience burnout, they develop coping strategies that help them to mitigate job stress and still carry on with their teaching job.

The findings of the study revealed that occupational stress had statistically significant impact on turnover intention of teachers. However, the results showed that burnout did not statistically impact turnover intention of teachers. The findings of the study suggest that despite the fact teachers experience high occupational stress leading to burnout, they might adopt coping strategies which could help them to ameliorate or deal with burnout. The finding of the study is in line with that of Barsky et al. [17] who found that occupational stress was a vital predictor of several negative attitudinal and behavioural outcomes, such as job satisfaction and turnover intention. More recently, Karatepe and Baddar [18] observed that a high level of turnover intention could be attributed to workplace stress and suggested improving working conditions in order to enhance job performance and to persuade workers not to leave their job.

The second hypothesis was meant to find out the impact of impact of job dissatisfaction on turnover intentions among senior high school teachers in Cape Coast metropolis. The results of the study indicated that generally job dissatisfaction had statistically significant impact on turnover intention of the participants. It was revealed that the independent variable (job dissatisfaction) significantly predicted the dependent variable (turnover intention). This implies that as teachers become more dissatisfied with their job, they have high intention to quit their job. This means that low job satisfaction may lead to an increase in turnover intentions of teachers. The result of the study is not in tune with that of Mathieu et al. [19] who opined that job satisfaction had no significant impact on turnover intentions. However, the finding of the study is in line with that of Nazim [29] who investigated the level of job satisfaction and its effect on turnover intention. He concluded that employees were dissatisfied with promotion, moderately dissatisfied with wages, fringe benefits, and contingent compensation while moderately satisfied with the working atmosphere, the relationship of the colleagues and the quality of the job. He also found that there was a significant negative relationship between turnover intention and wage of employees. Hence there has been a strong negative correlation between the facets of job satisfaction and turnover intentions of employees.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

Based on the findings from the study, a number of conclusions are drawn. Firstly, positive relationship exists between occupational stress and burnout of the participants. Secondly, occupational stress had statistically significant impact on turnover intention of teachers. Finally, job dissatisfaction had statistically significant impact on turnover intention of the participants.

## **5.3 Contribution to Practice, Theory and Policy**

Heads of senior high school institutions can organize effective programmes such as a professional development programme for staff, organize workshops or talks

on stress management, motivation, awareness-raising for teachers, etc. Teachers' working conditions and wellbeing are adequately catered for by their employers. Schools should constantly design programmes such as in-service training, workshops and reinforcing compensation packages that would arouse and sustain teachers to stay on their job in spite of any daunting challenges that they may face.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

The study was conducted using quantitative methods. It is suggested that future studies should employ mixed methods.

#### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

We sought for clearance from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Cape Coast. The head masters and mistresses gave permission for the study to be carried out in their various schools. Willing participants consented to participate in the study.

#### **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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This chapter is an extended version of the article published by the same author(s) in the following journal.

Journal of Education and Practice, 5(1): 1-16: 2021.

Available:<https://www.carijournals.org/journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/524#:~:text=Results%3A%20The%20study%20revealed%20that,%3D%209.898%2C%20p%20%3C%200.05>

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/6992E>

# **Scaffolding Guidelines in Geometry Learning for Learning Trajectory Optimization**

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DOI: 10.9734/bpi/pller/v3/8261A

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/8261A>

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## **ABSTRACT**

Various problems in learning geometry and mastering geometry are faced by students at the school level and students in universities. The difficulty of learners in learning geometry can be overcome by providing proper scaffolding. The purpose of this study was to find scaffolding guidelines in the form of learning trajectories to improve students' geometric thinking levels. This qualitative research was conducted at the undergraduate student level, with a total of 527 students. The results showed that scaffolding guidelines gradually and precisely can help students go through the learning trajectory well and reach the optimal level of geometric thinking. Scaffolding guidelines in the form of learning trajectory to improve students' geometric thinking level starting from explanation and review followed by developing conceptual thinking. The development of conceptual thinking requires strategies in the form of developing representation tools, making relationships, and generating conceptual learning.

*Keywords: Geometry; learning trajectory; scaffolding; thinking process.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Scaffolding is the process of helping students who have difficulty achieving competence [1,2]. Scaffolding comes from sociocultural theory according to Vygotsky [3], which states that social interaction with others can improve the development of mental functions such as thinking and reasoning. This interaction should be within the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is the distance

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between what can be achieved alone and what can be done with help from others [4].

Scaffolding can take the form of modeling, giving instructions, questions, instructing, explaining, and feedback [5,6]. Characteristics of scaffolding according to [7] based on the difficulty or problem at hand, the learning aid allows to reach the next higher process, and finally, the learning aid allows for the independent learning process to appear.

Furthermore, scaffolding in mathematics education is the enactment of interaction aimed at learning mathematical actions and problem-solving strategies [8–11]. Scaffolding strategies in mathematics learning as conveyed by [12], consists of 3 levels. The first level determines the environment, the second level explains, reviews, and restructures, the third level develops conceptual thinking. In this paper it is limited to the third level of scaffolding to improve students' geometric thinking skills. Activities at the scaffolding level develop conceptual thinking in the form of developing representation tools, making relationships, and generating conceptual learning.

Learning Trajectory (LT) is a description of how learners' thinking about mathematics develops over time from informal to formal and complex [13]. LT places emphasis on improving conceptual understanding in learners [14,15]. This LT has benefits to support the development of curriculum or learning tools. According to some experts, LT consists of learning objectives, a cognition model called progression, and experiential learning activities to support learners' development [16,17].

Scaffolding guidelines in the form of learning trajectory geometry learning including local scaffolding shapes that produce specific assistance based on students' difficulties in geometric thinking skills. So it is hoped that scaffolding guidelines will be found in this study to optimize the geometric thinking process of students, so that they can achieve an optimal level of geometric thinking.

Students who are still at the introductory and descriptive level, have difficulty solving geometry problems. To help them achieve the expected competencies, scaffolding can be given [1]. Scaffolding guidelines are prepared based on student difficulties or problems, so as to enable students to reach higher levels. The scaffolding guidelines in this paper are a form of learning aid for students at certain levels of geometric thinking to be able to go to the next level. Scaffolding guidelines are arranged based on the pattern of students' geometric thinking processes at each level.

The first step is to make a comparison between the nearest level of geometric thinking, i.e. the descriptive level and the informal level of reasoning, and then identify the different stages and elements of geometric thinking. Furthermore, based on the theory of definitions and indicators of stages and geometric thinking elements, appropriate scaffolding guidelines are made [18]. The goal is at least from one level to the next sequentially can be obtained scaffolding guidelines and



through these scaffolding guidelines students can learn and experience an increase in the level of geometric thinking.

The purpose of this study was to find scaffolding guidelines in the form of learning trajectories to improve students' geometric thinking levels.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This type of qualitative research involved 527 undergraduate students. Qualitative data in the form of geometric thinking processes in solving geometry problems are collected by non-test methods, namely documentation, observation, and interviews. Data on geometric thought processes were collected by task analysis and think aloud methods [19]. Then the results of geometric thinking process patterns are studied in depth through interviews and theoretical studies to find scaffolding guidelines for students at each level.

Data analysis for qualitative data to analyze and map geometric thought processes using interactive models [20] which includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Validity of qualitative data by triangulation. Triangulation is carried out during data collection involving tests, observations, and in-depth interviews to obtain information [21]. Data analysis with an inductive approach where conclusions are obtained from in-depth investigation to produce the best picture.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Description of the distribution of mastery of geometric thinking levels in 13 classes of 4th semester students as in Table 1. This distribution shows that the majority in each classes, students are still at the level of introduction. The next sequence varies, namely the descriptive level and informal reasoning. Then there are only 3 classes where students reach the metamathematical level.

**Table 1. Summary of the initial abilities of geometric thinking level**

<b>Geometric Thinking Level</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Recognition	302	57.31%
Descriptive	84	15.94%
Informal Reasoning	111	21.06%
Formal reasoning	26	4.93%
Metamathematical	4	0.76%
Total	527	100.00%

### **3.1 Scaffolding Guidelines from Recognition Level to Descriptive Level**

Based on the geometric thinking patterns of the recognition level and the descriptive level in Table 2, a difference between the two is obtained. So that from the recognition level to the descriptive level, it can be completed by adding

elements and stages of geometric thinking that allow students to experience an increase in the level of geometric thinking.

**Table 2. Comparison of recognition and descriptive level thinking process patterns**

Recognition level thought process patterns	Descriptive level thought process patterns
<p>Recognize the shapes and names of geometric objects.</p>	<p>Identify the nature of geometric objects and the relationships between geometric objects.</p>

Comparison of the thought process patterns of students at the recognition level and the descriptive level showed differences in the visualization stage. At this stage, the recognition level student has a false perceptual element which means that students integrate images and pictorial cues that produce certain visual representations starting from the known components in the problem and the components asked in the question are obtained not based on geometric concepts or properties but based on estimates with a basis that is not strong and automatic or obtained unconsciously. This is because recognition level students are new to the names and shapes of geometric objects, distinguish the shapes of geometric objects, but do not yet know the properties of geometric objects and the relationship between geometric properties.

While descriptive level students are able to carry out the visualization stage with complete perceptual elements, namely integrating pictorial images and cues from known components and components asked on the question is done automatically and based on geometric concepts or properties. Although at the construction stage it is incomplete, descriptive level students show sequential false elements, where students cannot construct known component relationships and are asked based on certain geometric concepts or properties. Based on these differences, in order for students to get better at geometric thinking skills, the scaffolding guidelines are applied as follows (Table 3).

**Table 3. Recognition level scaffolding guidelines**

<b>Scaffolding Guidelines</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Developing Representation Tools	Use concrete objects or at least images to represent certain geometric objects. Encourage students to identify the characteristics and properties of these geometric objects by dividing geometric objects into simpler parts and seeing their relationships.
Create a relationship	Group geometric objects based on their similar properties. Distinguish geometric objects based on their properties.
Awakening conceptual learning	Make a definition of the studied geometric object with due regard to the previous stages.

### **3.2 Scaffolding Guidelines from Descriptive Level to Informal Reasoning Level**

Based on the geometric thinking patterns of the descriptive level and the informal reasoning level in Table 4, a difference between the two is obtained. So that from the descriptive level to the informal reasoning level, it can be completed by adding elements and stages of geometric thinking that allow students to experience an increase in the level of geometric thinking.

Comparison of the thinking process patterns of descriptive level students and informal reasoning level showed differences at the construction stage. At this stage descriptive level students have an incomplete construction stage, because descriptive level students show sequential false elements, where students cannot construct known component relationships and are asked based on certain geometric concepts or properties.

While students at the informal reasoning level are able to carry out the visualization stage with complete perceptual elements, namely integrating pictures and pictorial cues from known components and components asked on the question is done automatically and based on geometric concepts or properties. Although the construction stage is incomplete, students of the informal reasoning level show sequential false elements, where students cannot deconstruct figural units based on concepts or geometric properties related to the problem but based on analogies of similar case experiences. The discursive element is incomplete because informal level students can denote geometric objects by making statements of relationships or properties of geometric objects but cannot yet make conclusions or calculation results in the form of deduction results, but based on analogies of similar case experiences. At the reasoning stage, a false operative element appears because students operate notational descriptions of statements of known component relationships and are asked to

solve problems not based on concepts or theorems that are known with certainty. So that the final answer is sometimes right and sometimes wrong. Based on these differences, in order for descriptive level students to be better at geometric thinking skills, the scaffolding guidelines are applied as follows (Table 5).

**Table 4. Comparison of descriptive level thinking process patterns and informal reasoning**

Descriptive level thought process patterns	Patterns of thought processes level of informal reasoning
Identify the nature of geometric objects and the relationships between geometric objects	Formulate and use definitions, distinguishing necessary conditions and sufficient conditions in a set of geometric object properties.

**Table 5. Descriptive level scaffolding guidelines**

Scaffolding Guidelines	Explanation
Developing Representation Tools	Make a representation of the properties of geometric objects. Encourage students to identify the properties of geometric objects and their relationships.
Create a relationship	Formulate a geometric object definition using student sentences. Analysis of the definition of geometric objects and properties of geometric objects based on definitions
Awakening conceptual learning	Identify necessary conditions and sufficient conditions in the nature of geometric objects. Use analogies to work on similar cases.

### 3.3 Scaffolding Guidelines from Informal to Formal Reasoning Levels

Based on the geometric thinking patterns of the informal reasoning level and the formal reasoning level in Table 6, a difference between the two is obtained. So that from the informal reasoning level to the formal level can be completed by adding elements and stages of geometric thinking that allow students to experience an increase in the level of geometric thinking.

**Table 6. Comparison of thinking process patterns at the level of informal reasoning and formal reasoning**

Patterns of thought processes level of informal reasoning	Formal reasoning-level thought process patterns
<p>Formulate and use definitions, distinguishing necessary conditions and sufficient conditions in a set of geometric object properties.</p>	<p>Build evidence logically; clarify the role of definitions and axioms; provide reasons for each stage in proof</p>

Comparison of students' thought process patterns at the informal reasoning level and the formal reasoning level showed differences in the stages of visualization, construction and reasoning. Students at the informal reasoning level are able to carry out the visualization stage with complete perceptual elements, namely integrating pictorial images and cues from known components and the components asked on the question are carried out automatically and based on geometric concepts or properties. Although the construction stage is incomplete, students of the informal reasoning level show sequential false elements, where students cannot deconstruct figural units based on concepts or geometric properties related to the problem but based on analogies of similar case experiences. Discursive elements are also incomplete because informal level students can denote geometric objects by making statements of relationships or properties of geometric objects but cannot yet make conclusions or calculation

results in the form of deduction results, but based on analogies of similar case experiences. At the reasoning stage, a false operative element appears because students operate notational descriptions of statements of known component relationships and are asked to solve problems not based on concepts or theorems that are known with certainty. So that the final answer is sometimes right and sometimes wrong.

While students at the formal reasoning level are able to carry out the stages of visualization, construction and reasoning completely, where four elements appear sequentially starting from perceptual elements, sequential elements, discursive elements, and operative elements. Perceptual emergence is indicated by the integration of geometric images or cues that display certain visuals that are carried out automatically subconsciously and based on the concept or nature of geometry related to the problem. Sequential elements known from the deconstruction of figural units are derived from known components and are asked problems based on geometric concepts or properties. Deconstruction elements are indicated by denotation of geometric objects, making statements of geometric object relationships or relationships of geometric properties and making calculations or conclusions in the form of deduction results. The operative element is demonstrated by operating a notational overview of known and queried component relationship statements to solve problems. In addition, it ends with students being able to make conclusions in the form of calculation results or deduction results. Based on these differences, in order for students at the informal reasoning level to be better in geometric thinking skills, the scaffolding guidelines (Table 7) are applied as follows.

**Table 7. Informal reasoning level scaffolding guidelines**

<b>Scaffolding Guidelines</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Developing Representation Tools	Make a representation of the interrelation of necessary conditions and sufficient conditions in geometric properties. Encourage students to use geometric concepts and properties in solving problems or proving theorems.
Create a relationship	Analysis of the process of solving geometry problems or proving theorems. Evaluate the reasons for problem-solving steps or theorem proof.
Awakening conceptual learning	Explain the process of solving problems or proving theorems in several different ways.

### **3.4 Scaffolding Guidelines from Formal Reasoning to Metamathematical Levels**

Based on the geometric thinking patterns of the formal reasoning level and the metamathematical level in Table 8, a difference between the two is obtained. So

that from the level of formal reasoning to the metamathematical level can be completed by adding elements and stages of geometric thinking that allow students to experience an increase in the level of geometric thinking.

**Table 8. Comparison of thinking process patterns at formal reasoning and metamathematical levels**

Formal reasoning-level thought process patterns	Patterns of metamathematical level thought processes
<p>Build evidence logically; clarify the role of definitions and axioms; provide reasons for each stage in proof</p>	<p>Abstracting geometry without concrete models; constructing theorems in different geometric systems by comparing them with existing geometric systems.</p>

Comparison of thinking process patterns of students at the formal reasoning level and the metamathematical level shows similarities and differences. At the metamathematical level the complete stages of visualization, construction and reasoning. The four elements (perceptual, sequential, discursive, and operative) appear perfectly starting from perceptual, sequential, discursive, and operative. The majority is constructed through representations based on geometric concepts or properties. It does not always require concrete models or drawings.

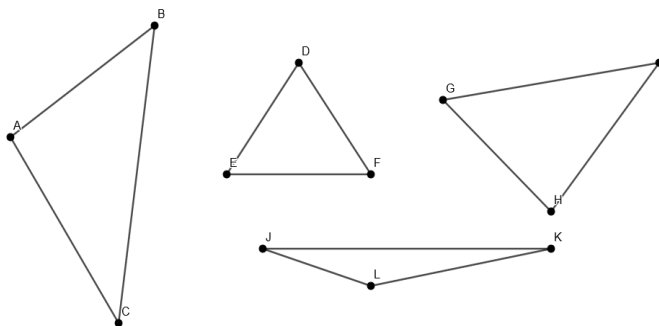
While at the level of formal reasoning the complete stages of visualization, construction and reasoning. The four elements (perceptual, sequential, discursive, and operative) appear perfectly starting from perceptual, sequential, discursive, and operative. The majority is constructed through representations based on geometric concepts or properties. It still requires concrete models or drawings. Based on these differences, in order for students at the formal reasoning level to be better in geometric thinking skills, the scaffolding guidelines are applied as follows (Table 9).

**Table 9. Formal reasoning level scaffolding guidelines**

<b>Scaffolding Guidelines</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Developing Representation Tools	Create a representation of the interrelation of the relationship of the definition and theorem. Encourage students to compare different geometric systems.
Create a relationship	Analysis of the evidentiary process without concrete models.
Awakening conceptual learning	Compose true-valued statements in different geometric systems.

After further study of scaffolding guidelines in the form of Learning Trajectory and input from experts, a combination of scaffolding forms was carried out at Geometric Thinking Learning Trajectory by providing explanation and review [12] on the concept and nature of geometry, especially for students at the recognition and descriptive level. After adjustments, the scaffolding guidelines become more in line with the student's initial abilities and help overcome learning difficulties [22]. The following is a comprehensive overview of scaffolding guidelines in the form of Geometric Thinking Learning Trajectory produced in this paper (Table 10).

Based on the scaffolding guidelines that have been produced, here is an example of its application to learning geometry material about triangles. For example, in recognition level students, the appropriate learning objective is to show various triangle shapes in pictures. At the stage of developing representation tools, use concrete objects or at least images to represent geometry objects triangle. Learning can begin by showing pictures of various triangle shapes (Fig. 1). Then students were asked what are the similarities of several triangles in Fig. 1? Students are directed to be able to answer that the various triangle shapes shown in Fig. 1 have the same characteristics, namely having three sides in the form of line segments and three angle.

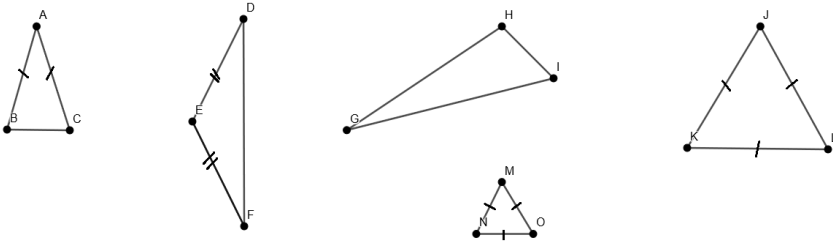


**Fig. 1. Different triangular shapes**



The scaffolding stage makes relationships, groups geometric objects based on similarities and differences in properties possessed. Furthermore, students are invited to group various kinds of triangles based on the side and angle elements they have.

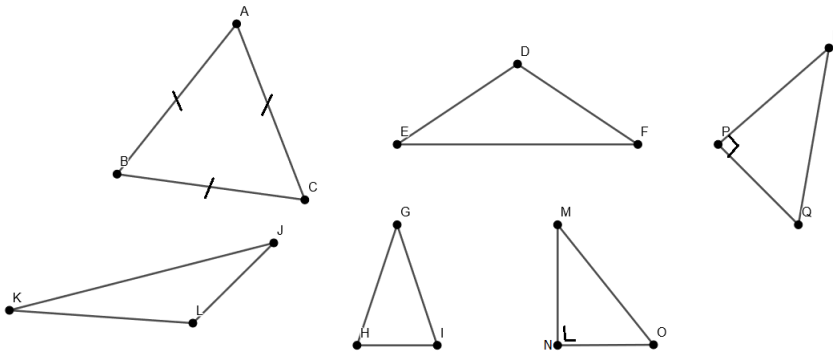
Group the following triangles by the size of their side lengths (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2. Grouping triangles by side length**

Equilateral triangle	Triangles KJL, MNO
Isosceles triangle	Triangles ABC, DEF
Arbitrary triangle	Triangle GHI

Group the following triangles based on their angle size (Fig. 3).



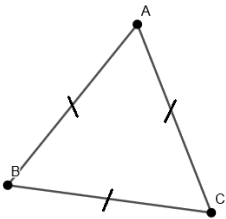
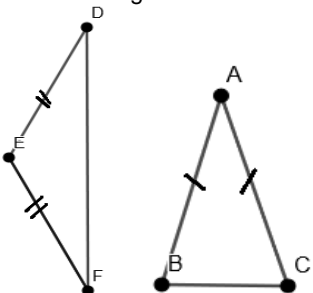

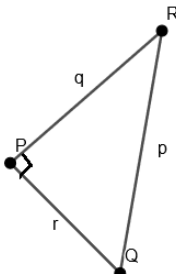
**Fig. 3. Grouping triangles based on angular size**

Obtuse Triangle	Triangles DEF, JKL
Acute Triangle	Triangles ABC, GHI
Right Triangle	Triangles MNO, PQR

The scaffolding stage evokes conceptual learning, students are invited to make definitions of various kinds of triangles studied by paying attention to the previous

stages. Through an investigation of the types of triangles, students can then find that each has properties as shown in Table 10.

**Table 10. Properties of different types of triangles**

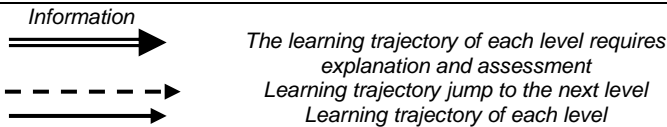
No	Types of Triangles	Properties
1	Equilateral triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. All three sides are of equal length</li> <li>b. The three corners are the same size, which is <math>60^\circ</math>.</li> <li>c. It has three rotary symmetry and three folding symmetry.</li> <li>d. It has three weight lines and a line for those who squeeze.</li> </ul>
2	Isosceles triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The two sides are of equal length</li> <li>b. The two corners are the same size.</li> <li>c. Has one rotary symmetry and one folding symmetry.</li> <li>d. It has one heavy line and a line for those who squeeze.</li> </ul>
3	Arbitrary triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The three sides are not of equal length</li> <li>b. The three corners are of different sizes.</li> <li>c. It does not have folding symmetry.</li> <li>d. It has one rotary symmetry.</li> </ul>
4	Right triangle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A corner is <math>90^\circ</math>.</li> <li>b. If the length of the right right side of the triangle is p and r, and the length of the hypotenuse that is in front of the right angle is p, then the Pythagorean theorem applies:  <math display="block">p^2 = q^2 + r^2.</math> </li> </ul>

The application of the three stages of scaffolding is to develop repression tools, make relationships, and generate conceptual learning at each level of geometric thinking as described in Table 11. This level of geometric thinking can increase because it is supported by scaffolding guidelines that pay attention to the thinking process at each level. Where the thought process or often called mental activity (cognitive) occurs in someone who uses the knowledge stored in his memory and uses it to receive and process information to subsequently use the information [23–26]. Information in geometry begins in the study of geometry learning objects, namely material in geometry starting from basic understanding, understanding, axioms, and theorems [27].

**Table 11. Scaffolding guidelines in the form of geometric thinking learning trajectory**

<b>Scaffolding Guidelines</b>	<b>Learning trajectory recognition level</b>	<b>Learning trajectory descriptive level</b>	<b>Learning trajectory level informal reasoning</b>	<b>Learning trajectory level formal reasoning</b>
Developing Representation Tools	Use concrete objects or at least images to represent certain geometric objects. Encourage students to identify the characteristics and properties of these geometric objects by dividing geometric objects into simpler parts and seeing their relationships.	Make a representation of the properties of geometric objects. Encourage students to identify the properties of geometric objects and their relationships.	Make a representation of the interrelation of necessary conditions and sufficient conditions in geometric properties. Encourage students to use geometric concepts and properties in solving problems or proving theorems.	Create a representation of the interrelation of the relationship of the definition and theorem. Encourage students to compare different geometric systems.
Create a relationship	Group geometric objects based on their similar properties. Distinguish geometric	Formulate a geometric object definition using student sentences. Analysis of the definition	Analysis of the process of solving geometry problems or proving theorems. Evaluation of	Analysis of the evidentiary process without concrete models.

Scaffolding Guidelines	Learning trajectory recognition level	Learning trajectory descriptive level	Learning trajectory level informal reasoning	Learning trajectory level formal reasoning
	objects based on their properties.	of geometric objects and properties of geometric objects based on definitions	the reasons for problem-solving steps or proof of theorems.	
Awakening conceptual learning	Make a definition of the studied geometric object with due regard to the previous stages.	Identify necessary conditions and sufficient conditions in the nature of geometric objects. Use analogies to work on similar cases.	Explain the process of solving problems or proving theorems in several different ways.	Compose true-valued statements in different geometric systems.



#### 4. CONCLUSION

Scaffolding guidelines in the form of learning trajectory to improve students' geometric thinking levels begin by starting from providing explanations and reviews for introductory and descriptive level students then continued with developing conceptual thinking. The development of conceptual thinking requires strategies in the form of developing representation tools, making relationships, and generating conceptual learning.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATION

Students at a low level of geometric thinking, namely the recognition and descriptive level, need additional *scaffolding* in the form of explanations and punches of geometric concepts and properties during learning with *learning trajectory*. If this is done continuously, then students will be familiar with the pattern of geometric thinking processes that are structured and complete. So that students have enough schemes to solve geometry problems.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank to Universitas Negeri Semarang for funding dan providing the necessary support in getting required information for this study.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/8261A>



# **Psychological Explanations and Possible Management of Consequences Regarding Language Use and Educational Practice Caused by the Decrease of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Heterogeneous Settings in Central-Eastern Europe**

**Lajos Göncz** <sup>a,b\*</sup>

DOI: 10.9734/bpi/pller/v3/2608G

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/2608G>

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## **ABSTRACT**

The paper offers psychological explanations for linguistic and educational issues that arise as a result of the accelerated loss of cultural and linguistic diversity in heterogeneous settings in Central-Eastern Europe, attributable mainly to the decline in the number of indigenous ethnic minorities. The aim is to analyze the psychological mechanisms of language and culture shift using knowledge from the psychology of learning (operant and classical conditioning) and motivation, seeking answers to the following research questions: 1) What are the possible psychological explanations of the decrease of minority language use, and linguistic and cultural shift?, and 2) What are the guiding principles that should be taken into consideration when choosing the medium of education/instruction for indigenous ethnolinguistic children in Central-Eastern Europe to mitigate this decrease? A systematic review conducted on sources from the field of the psychology of multilingualisms running the SCOPUS database, and the applied behaviour analysis (ABA) on selected sources has shown that such a systematic analysis is missing. The context of the analysis is the debate between representatives of pluralistic conceptions and their opponents over language use, cultural diversity and educational practice in heterogeneous regions. Analysing these views it turned out that the linguistic and cultural shift can be, at least

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partly, explained with the mechanisms of positive reinforcement, punishment, avoiding, and with the concepts of learned helplessness and culture shock. Regarding educational practice strong models of multilingual education offer ways to slow down the decrease of diversity. The Minority SafePack Initiative that calls for protection of European language minorities seems justifiable. It is concluded that further research is needed on interactions between decline of linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity and several developmental processes in children.

*Keywords: Psychological explanations; linguistic and educational practice; cultural diversity; ethnic diversity.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

According to Cole [8], one in seven Europeans belongs to an indigenous minority and speaks a regional or minority language. As for the European Union, it is about 10% of the inhabitants (50– 60 million people, including the candidate countries). In this article, we are speaking of areas populated with indigenous minorities in Austria, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro, labelled as Central-Eastern Europe. There are considerable differences, but also similarities in the linguistic and educational status of these communities. Most of the mentioned states took the position of linguistic and cultural pluralism in their legal systems and reject discrimination and segregation, albeit not to the same degree [9]). We focused on the similarities. The number of multilingual and multicultural inhabitants in these states is steadily declining<sup>1</sup> (see the information of the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning), consequently leading to a decrease of cultural and linguistic diversity. This situation can be a challenge for researchers, because it has many consequences on experiences and behaviours of these individuals and groups, and also on policies towards them. Comprehensive analyzes of consequences, using knowledge from the psychology of learning and motivation, are lacking. The conducted investigation intends to reduce this gap.

## **2. AIMS AND METHODS**

The main aim of the article is to analyze the psychological consequences and causes of the decline of ethnic diversity in Central-Eastern Europe concerning minority language use, especially in education. We offer psychological explanations to pluralists' and antipluralists' arguments, summarizing the discussions present on this topic. Because the position of native minority communities is taken, our subsidiary aim is to give a contribution to debates on the ongoing European Citizens Initiative called 'Minority SafePack—one million signatures for diversity in Europe', sponsored by FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities). We first analyzed the text of the mentioned initiative<sup>2</sup>. Every chapter of this document offers proposals suitable for psychological examination. The second step was the selection of sources for review from a list of 250 bibliographic units<sup>3</sup>. This list included 60 handbooks and monographs,

and 190 peer-reviewed articles from the field of psychology of multilingualism. For the inclusion of a source in the analysis, we used the keywords: bilingualism/multilingualism, diversity, indigenous minorities, psychological consequences of bilingualism/multilingualism, and bilingual/multilingual education, running the SCOPUS database. In the final analyses, we included titles written in the past twenty-two years (forty-eight items: forty peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, reports and web-references, and ten books), but also twelve unavoidable sources, although they were published in the second part of the 20th century. Seventeen sources were not included in the final report because of the lack of new information. We analyzed the remaining sixty-seven sources, and they are listed in the References. On selected sources, a systematic review [15] was conducted. It turned out that a comprehensive applied behaviour analysis (ABA), that uses principles of learning and motivation to solve problems of behaviour relevant to society, especially concerning indigenous minorities, is missing. We devoted this paper to such analysis, trying to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the possible psychological explanations of the decrease of minority language, and 2) What guiding principles should be taken into consideration when choosing the medium of education/instruction for indigenous ethnolinguistic children in Central-Eastern Europe to mitigate this decrease?

### **3. KEY TERMS, AND DEBATES ON LINGUISTIC, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN HETEROGENEOUS COMMUNITIES**

The debates on various linguistic, cultural and educational issues in heterogeneous communities usually start from two key concepts: multiculturalism (mostly connected with multilingualism in CentralEastern Europe [25], and interculturalism [36].

The most common psychological definition of multiculturalism indicates a situation where several ethnic groups share one living space and each of them is allowed to preserve and further develop its social heritage [27]; [30]. In this definition, language is treated as the most important carrier of ethnic groups' cultures. However, there are researchers [14]; [61] who drew attention to the fact that multiculturalism exists also without multilingualism; in such cases language does not play a notable role in determining someone's ethnic identity. The role of language as a marker of ethnic identity can be more or less accentuated [46].

The second key concept that should be defined is interculturalism. This notion implies cooperation; group members in a heterogeneous environment should inspiring each other to develop together [27]; [30].

In both notions pluralism is accepted; their advocates consider languages and cultures as resources [39]; [16]. From such attitude stems out their set of primary goals about the linguistic situation and educational practice in heterogeneous regions.

Considering the *linguistic* situation, pluralists believe in the importance of preserving as many languages as possible (including regional), because languages have a code on how to maintain biodiversity, which is, together with cultural diversity, a precondition of survival on the planet [55]. There is a lot of discussion about possible relationships between biodiversity and linguistic/cultural diversity; nowadays the holistic understanding of biolinguistic diversity is prevalent [34]. The view that the two types of diversity are not only in correlation, but are also in a partial causal relationship is dominant. That implies accepting the belief that languages and cultures are natural resources caused by the same factors. The process of their decline can be slowed down by measures that empower local communities by improving their living conditions. Pluralists claim that multilingualism ensures long term advantages, because uniformity is a handicap, and multilingualism, characterised by creativity, an asset that generates new ideas [54]; [37]. In many studies, for example, in May et al. [48], there is some empirical evidence on the stimulating impact of multilingualism on originality. A recent review of results in such investigations can be found in Göncz [26]. In several studies bilinguals also demonstrated enhanced sensitivity to listeners' needs [49].

An important goal of pluralists considering *educational practice in heterogeneous communities* is additive (supplemental) language learning: other languages should not be learned at the expense of the family language(s) but should be added to the existing ones. Knowing more languages contributes to the creation of an additive language situation, for whose stimulating effects there are many findings [26]; [30]. Such a situation, where in heterogeneous environments the existing cultures and languages are not ranked, develops an additive bi- or multilingualism at the individual level and influences executive functioning and development of some personality traits. Executive functions are higher mental functions that control other more basic abilities, such as attention, memory and motor skills. They are necessary for goal-oriented behaviour. They contain the ability to initiate and stop actions, to follow and change behaviour when needed, and to plan future behaviour. They enable us to anticipate outcomes and to adjust to changes, and their components are also the ability to create concepts and abstract thinking [10]; [28]. Multilingual persons are often in a situation that they have to suppress one of the languages they are familiar with but which is not functional in a certain situation, and that ability to inhibit disturbing behaviour is generalized onto nonlinguistic situations as well. For example, they are more successful at suppressing unsuitable impulsive behaviour. Presumably, this inhibition ability might also have some impact on developmental disorders like dyslexia [62] or autism [5] or psychopathy [13]. Multilingualism is also related to the increase in monitoring abilities for changes in the environment [2]; [3]; [4]. Recent sources cite some other benefits too: faster acquisition of literacy, healthier ageing, or higher tolerance as a personality trait [29];[30]. Besides, companies that employ more multilingual persons gain higher profits, and it is easier to find a (good paid) job for someone who knows more languages than for monolinguals. The investment in the preservation of the existing languages and learning of as many new languages as possible pays off for everybody.

Multiculturalism and interculturalism understood in the way presented above are in accordance with the long-term interests of all heterogeneous regions.

This belief is not shared by the opponents of pluralism. The ones who criticize pluralist ideas offer several reasons. Firstly, they believe that it is not worth complaining over the dying language and culture diversity, because language planning is not possible anyways. They point out that languages and cultures are natural phenomena with their development cycle and life span. They believe that language replacement is only an adaptive response to the changes in the environment, and they view language behaviour as behaviour that is determined by profit: only the languages that are useful for speakers, survive.

The arguments of the opponents of pluralism are not of any interest for heterogeneous regions: they accept assimilation and language disappearance. According to their ideas, native and other languages are mere communication devices and language is not a core determinant of national identity.

However, the results of many pieces of the analyzed research do not confirm these views. Most findings point to the fact that native (family) language is linked to strong emotions and it has expressed influence on the creation of identity. The role of a second language is far more modest. Many consider it only a practical means that enables inclusion in the wider community [41];[42]. Antipluralists in education prefer subtractive education (education in the dominant language, or redirecting or transitive education, or maybe bilingual education for non-dominant groups), not programmes for the preservation of native language, stating as the main reason that everybody should be given the same starting chance. Their opponents are, however, justifiably wondering: is social justice ensured only by the same starting chances, or equal outcome is also necessary? Also, the critics of pluralism lose sight of the fact that the conditions for the development of speech, general cognitive abilities, socio-emotional development and educational efficiency of children from non-dominant communities in subtractive or transitive education are not favourable, because they are often followed by double semilingualism, poorer school marks than a child's abilities are, in such education it is also reasonable to expect problems with identity development, and estrangement from parents in many minority students. Students from the dominant group might develop a superiority complex, which can also be destructive [25]; [30]. As Göncz [29] stated, it cannot be denied that some antipluralists' arguments deserve serious consideration. In analyzed sources, they, for example, emphasize that it is not sufficient to only present arguments in favour of the need for language preservation, (coding the endangered language gives the possibility for its revitalization later) but the speakers should, above all, be guaranteed appropriate living conditions [50];[51].

#### **4. PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS OF THE DECREASE OF MINORITY LANGUAGE USE, AND LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL SHIFT: SOME PROPOSALS<sup>4</sup>**

As already stated, the number of members of indigenous people in Central-Eastern Europa shows a continuous decrease and their proportion in the total

population is constantly decreasing. Now we will try to point out the causes of this decline using psychological explanations. For such explanations it is necessary to take a contextualised approach, as Lambert [40] did, introducing the pair of concepts of subtractive and additive bilingual situation. This distinction refers to whether different groups in a heterogeneous community are hierarchized based on their language, ethnicity, culture or religion. We speak of an additive situation when the groups are equally appreciated. In contrast, in a subtractive situation, the environment regards one of the groups more desirable than the other ones. In reality, these situations constitute the extreme points of a continuum with several transitional forms in between. Therefore, different heterogeneous environments can be more or less saturated with additive or subtractive features. Additive bilingualism, as a consequence of an additive situation, implies the acquisition of both/all languages as a desirable goal, and is not characterised by a shift of languages: the second language develops in addition to the first one. In subtractive situations, exchanging the language of lower status for the language of preference occurs quite frequently (language shift on a group level), as does the learning of the latter at the expense of the former (language loss on the individual level). There are considerable differences in living conditions in additive and subtractive heterogeneous situations, and both are distinct from a homogeneous environment as well. These dissimilarities have different consequences on groups and individuals influenced by them. They correlate with general cognitive and linguistic development and functioning [12], with socioemotional behaviour [64]; [33]; [27], and with educational variables [19]; [30]. Based on such research results, some plausible, albeit also sometimes hypothetical explanations of the possible effects of predominantly additive or subtractive bilingual situations concerning several aspects of personality can be formulated. As Göncz [22] stated, concerning cognition, additive situations entail discovering the rules of functioning of both/all languages, which in itself requires greater intellectual effort. In these situations functions of speech oriented towards stimulating general intellectual development also become activated. As early as in the middle of the last century Piaget [53] and Vygotsky [66] already stressed the fact that speech directs attention to various and important relations of the environment. Since various languages segment the reality in various ways [1]; [68], the attention of a bilingual or multilingual individual is oriented to more aspects of reality. Bilingualism and biculturalism in an additive situation can have beneficially impact on development in other aspects, too: it gives an insight into the achievements of various cultures, softens ethnocentrism and encourages language and cultural tolerance, facilitates the process of adaptation when a person gets into a conflict situation due to the different requirements of two cultures and is trying to overcome it [23]. Also, bringing up children differs in various cultures, and each culture requires the acquisition of different forms of behaviour at various times. As a result, an individual exposed to the influences of more than one culture develops different characteristic features and ways of conduct to the person who has experienced only one of them [45]. In contrast, in a subtractive situation, one language or culture is favoured, while the other language is excluded or its use is reduced. According to Göncz [26], in this way, the members of the inferior language group receive the message from the environment that their language and culture is non-viable and undesirable, and

should be neglected to achieve success in the society. If this attitude is intense and persists, the stigmatized language will become superfluous or even despised. The upgraded language gains in attractiveness as it conveys a sense of achievement. From the standpoint of the psychology of learning, this explains language and culture shift with mechanisms of operant learning (positive reinforcement, punishment, avoiding) and classical conditioning (behaviour, e. g. language use, is associated in space and time with pleasant or unpleasant consequences which either weaken it or strengthen it). In other words, in operant learning, behaviour (in this case language use) serves to reach a certain target. If the target is achieved (the individual receives positive reinforcement), then the behaviour leading to this success is reinforced; if not, the behaviour is weakened. Behaviour can also be inhibited by unpleasant consequences or punishment (as when the use of a language elicits disapproval from the environment). Avoidance and escape behaviour can also be considered rewarding, as they are the only ways to avoid or escape punishment. In the present case, this would mean avoiding or giving up the undesirable language (negative reinforcement). As behaviour and consequences occur together in time and space, the association is generated between the two: behaviour is conditioned by a negative or positive consequence, which either weakens it, by giving it a negative colouring or strengthens it, by making it attractive. If we exchange an undesirable behaviour for a rewarded one, the same situation in future will elicit the desirable conduct which is now reinforced (positive deconditioning). From the perspective of the psychology of learning the possibility of learned helplessness, the feeling of being powerless and having no control over a situation [59] might be also an appropriate explanation. It has a lot in common with inescapable punishment. People who perceive events as uncontrollable have many symptoms that threaten their mental and physical well-being. Minority speakers can be placed in a helpless situation when they use their language and are subjected to rejection or lack of understanding. At the same time, if they use the dominant language, they might feel uncomfortable if they feel they are contributing to language substitution. This condition seems to meet the criteria to produce learned helplessness.

With all this in mind, it is, at least partly, possible to explain why one undesirable language and culture may be exchanged for a socially preferred one. Because the undervalued language and culture appear less able to achieve one's goals, and because unpleasant consequences attend their appearance, their development in childhood slows, and later they recur with ever-decreasing frequency. Use of this language is conditioned by the distress attendant upon failure, lending it an even more unpleasant colouring. If the favoured language is offered as an alternative and is rewarded, the individual will turn to it more often; that is, he/she will abandon behaviours that lead to failure and unpleasantness, exchanging them for behaviours that ensure award and success. Indeed, at the wider community level, people's conduct is shaped by reward, punishment and disregard: they exchange inferior behaviours for more rewarding ones. Motivational psychology can also help in understanding some other psychological influences of subtractive bilingual/multilingual situations. In highly subtractive situations obstacles leading to cumulative and lasting frustrations are

more frequent for the speakers of the undesirable language and culture. According to some researchers ([35]; [59]), this may explain the significant correlation of psychosis and suicide with ethnic status in certain heterogeneous regions. Knowledge related to culture shock, a set of attitudes with a feeling of disorientation and loss [67] is also important. Namely, interpersonal interactions between people from different ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds, usually are difficult and stressful. Some form of culture shock is always present among people living in a heterogeneous environment. It is also present in minority students placed in a majority class or by university students studying abroad [17].

With the mentioned explanations in mind, what are the proposals of psychologists to slow down the decrease of language and cultural diversity in Central-Eastern Europe? First of all, they suggest the application of some prototypes or models of bilingual/multilingual education worked out to be applied also in heterogeneous communities. These models can be divided into strong and weak ones. Strong models have multilingualism (minimally bilingualism), as their linguistic aim, and both can appear in several variations [20]. The weak models encourage a shift to monolingualism in the dominant language. Among them, the transitional model and several variations of the submersion model are to be pointed out. Among the strong models of bilingual/multilingual education, the best known are the plural multilingual model, the immersion model, the two-way dual language model, and the maintenance model. All are appropriate for the preservation or revitalization of indigenous languages. Below we will briefly describe the maintenance model, which is the most accessible for indigenous children in Central-Eastern Europe. In the maintenance model (also called language shelter or heritage language model), organized and demanded for different reasons by various ethnolinguistic communities for their children, the instruction is exclusively or predominantly in the mother tongue. The state language is taught as a subject. The proclaimed aim of this programmes is to ensure that children from ethnic communities maintain and develop their mother tongue and the official language up to native or near-native level, and gain access to integration into the rest of the society. Nevertheless, at the primary school level, 20–30% of minority parents enrol their children in schools with instruction in the majority language, while at the secondary school level this percentage is above 50% [23]. This not only accelerates the decline of linguistic and cultural diversity but mostly does not favour the development of many aspects of the personality of minority children attending such linguistic submersion programmes [25]. It is obvious, that to maintain diversity in heterogeneous regions, appropriate strong models are required. To make an adequate choice, the decision-makers (educational policy experts, school authorities, teachers, and above all the parents), have to be familiar with research findings of indigenous (and other forms of) minority situations, bilingualism and bilingual/ multilingual education, and about certain aspects of personality development in such circumstances. As Göncz [25] pointed out, mother tongue maintenance programme create conditions for the development of the additive bilingual/multilingual situation (avoiding that way the undesirable effects of subtractive situations like double-semilingualism or anomie), and provides the development of cognitive linguistic competence (a higher level of



language possession, which enables the speaker to use language as a means of thinking), in at least one language, or in two or more languages. It also takes into account that the development of two languages in bilinguals is interdependent: a high level of competence in both languages of ethnic children is to be expected when their first language develops satisfactorily, aided by education in the mother tongue, because this will lead to a high level of competence in the second language, too, if the latter is studied with adequate intensity [12]. Mother tongue maintenance programme also take into consideration that education in the second language leads to different consequences than education in the mother tongue in indigenous ethnolinguistic children. Namely, indigenous ethnic children who are taught in their second language will face a break in the first language development; often lack cognitive linguistic competence in the language of instruction which will result in the children's underachievement at school, since they have to keep up with the children who have already developed under the influence of the school language and culture; because they receive the message that their disregarded language and culture are less valuable, suggesting them that the best thing to do is to give up his/her origin if he/she wants to be respected. That is why many native ethnic children attending schools in state language abandon their family language and culture and take over systems of values and rules of the group that governs the school. As children give up their mother tongue, links with the family and closer social environment are becoming far weaker. Parents are hampered in passing on family values and cultural tradition to their children, which increases the processes of family dissolution. In short: education in the second language in indigenous ethnolinguistic communities generates subtractive bilingual situations [32]. In contrast, mother tongue education generates additive situation, stimulating the development of languages, and valuing what the children bring with them from home, including the mother tongue. It is critical to the child's identity, developing a healthy attitude toward schooling. This is one of the main characteristics of the maintenance program and the reason why education in the mother tongue develops many components of an additive bilingual situation [19].

Finally, as May and Hill [47] stated, evaluative research studies [54]; [61] has shown that the submersion programmes are least effective educationally for minority language students. In the Central-Eastern European context, this seems to be the truth even in situations where the submersion program follows the maintenance program at some point in the course of education. Namely, if there is a shift in the language of instruction from mother tongue to state language, this results in a significant fall in school success [24].

## **5. SUMMARIZING GUIDING PRINCIPLES: WHAT SHOULD PARENTS (AND OTHER DECISION-MAKERS) TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN THEY CHOOSE THE MEDIUM OF EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS ETHNOLINGUISTIC CHILDREN IN CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE?**

The guiding principles hereinafter are primarily applicable to larger indigenous minorities.

From what has been said so far, it is clear that the choice of the adequate type of education is, above all, critical to the child's personal identity. The identity (namely, the awareness of belonging to a certain social group whose members share, in the communities in question, the same language and culture, and emotions and values contributing to it) is formed according to previous experiences, which relevant component is the language of education. When parents choose the language of education for their child, they are often unaware of the consequences their decision may have. (The school and educational experts should inform parents about the possible consequences of their decision. That would be their contribution to the exercise of the right to a free identity choice). It is self-evident that parents have the exclusive right to choose the language of education for their children. Parents must consider many issues if they wish their choice to be in the interest of their child. As Göncz [25] stated, "first the parents should have in mind the linguistic and other aspects of the child's development and take into consideration the educational possibilities at their disposition. Then the goals (that is, the expectations of the children's accomplishments) and the path leading to these (the educational program and the language of instruction) should be brought in concord". Almost all parents who belong to a larger indigenous community in Central-Eastern Europe wish their children to develop a high level of bilingualism: native skills in the family language, and native or near-native skills in the state language. Parents who are not familiar with the findings mentioned above and who perhaps do not have high expectations in the linguistic development often think that their children have already acquired the mother tongue in the family and that they will successfully add to it the state language through attending a state language medium school. Concerning the influence that additive and subtractive situations have on language development and the interactions between the first and the second language, we know nowadays that this well-meaning, but naive idea mostly does not lead to the development of high-level bilingualism. Due to many other circumstances, this situation very often results in the dominance of the state language, and later on, perhaps, in a language and identity shift in the long run. The development of the first language will stop at the level of surface linguistic competence (necessary for everyday communication in the family): that is why these children will be ashamed later and will not dare or want to use their first language in formal situations, and they will neither be able to nor consider it necessary to transmit it to their children. Educational experts should let parents know that if they wish to develop both languages to the same level, the influence of both languages and cultures must be approximate of the same intensity. If one language is restricted to the use in the family and the close environment only, while in all other spheres of life the child is influenced by the other language and culture, it is obvious that the first language will weaken and the more dominant one will take its place. State language medium education often causes such a subtractive situation, even though the parents have made the decision seemingly deliberately. At the same time, parents have to be aware of the fact that a child from ethnic community enrolled at a state language medium school will lag behind his/her schoolmates in language and culture acquisition. Perhaps the indigenous child will need years to learn both the language and the culture of the new group (experiencing the consequences of culture shock). If he/she wants to

be accepted and successful, this is inevitable, since—and it is the most logical thing—they represent the norm in state language medium schools. As Göncz [25] pointed out When enrolling a child with an ethnic background at a school with second language education only, parents make a radical change in the child's linguistic environment. Until then, the child's environment primarily stimulated the development of his/her mother tongue, and afterwards, the opportunities to develop his/her second language at school are better. As a consequence, the first language development is postponed and it starts to deteriorate. The second language will replace the first language, but it will develop with delay. This break in language development (the development of one language falls behind, while the other is postponed) affects thinking and its development. Therefore, if parents want their child's bilingualism to reach a high level, they should contribute to the increase of the additive bilingual situation. When choosing the education in the second language only, they contribute to a subtractive situation.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

According to the results of analysis, one of the best ways to maintain cultural diversity in Central-Eastern Europe is through education, that is to ensure adequate educational programmes for students both from minority and majority communities. For students from ethnolinguistic minorities, mother tongue education is to be followed since it increases the components of the additive bilingual situation. At the same time, it would be desirable to teach the regional language as a subject in the majority schools, because at the local and regional level, the students of the dominant group should also be allowed to learn the other language or languages used in their environment. Of course, for some students from both groups it is possible to implement carefully selected, for that region appropriate, other types of multilingual education as well. Another possibility is CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) teaching, in which some subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a second or foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of language [57]. If we approach this issue from the perspective of lifelong learning, foreign and regional language learning programmes aimed at older population seem like a good solution also for building cognitive reserve [58]. All of these possible solutions can contribute to reducing the undesirable effects of language and cultural shift, whose impact we have tried to explain with the mechanisms of operant learning (positive reinforcement, punishment, avoiding), classical conditioning, learned helplessness and culture shock. It is precisely this attempt to explain the effects of language and culture shift with these concepts of psychology of learning and motivation the main contribution of this article to the field of the psychology of multilingualism and to more successful educational practice. Taking into account the results of our analysis, it is also reasonable to claim that the research results in cognitive and social sciences contribute to a more complete understanding of the Minority SafePack intention, and it seems that they justify the launch of this initiative.

Based on what is said in this chapter, several directions in future research can be recommended. Given that the decline of ethnic diversity is increasingly present in heterogeneous settings in Central Eastern Europe, leading to changes in the level of language skills of used languages, and consequently, to new types and levels of multilingualism and multiculturalism, this situation is a big challenge for researchers interested in psychological (and other) consequences of the decrease of ethnic identity. Both theory-driven and community-driven further research is needed on basic and applied (psychological) issues, which may include investigating the interactions between the decrease of linguistic and cultural diversity and developmental processes across the lifespan. Determination of the influence of the decrease of diversity on family relationships, on intergroup relations, or mental health and wellbeing in different settings (education, employment, and treatment and intervention) also requires new research. Finally, future research needs to determine the optimum second/third language learning conditions within strong models of multilingual education, that will provide best benefits in populations of heterogeneous settings, and, at the same time, contribute to the knowledge how to mitigate the decrease of linguistic and cultural diversity in general. In other words, the decreased diversity correlate with several aspects of general cognitive, linguistic and cultural development and functioning, with socio-emotional behaviour, and with educational variables. The urgent task of science is to determine these relationships more precisely.

## 7. NOTES

1. The total population in Central and Eastern Europe has been showing a decreasing trend in recent decades. This decrease is more pronounced in heterogeneous regions, especially among minorities. There are many reasons for this: fewer newborns, higher migration rates, more frequent mixed marriages, etc. among minority than majority population, so the role of ethnic minorities in the decline of linguistic and cultural diversity is more pronounced. [Other reasons for the decrease in linguistic diversity, which can also be seen in several parts of the world, are discussed in [7]]. A lot of information about the decrease in the number of ethnic minorities can be found on the website <https://www.mercator-research.eu>, and also in [11]; [21]; [23]; [64]; [57]; [18]; [52]<sup>5</sup>, for Hungarians, and in Göncz & Ivanović [31] for several other indigenous minorities in Vojvodina, Northern Serbia as well.

**Table 1. Shows the number of Hungarians in neighboring countries in the last 110 years**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Hungarians in neighboring countries</b>
<b>1910</b>	<b>3 318 000</b>
<b>1930</b>	2 640 000
<b>1960</b>	2 790 000
<b>1990</b>	2 700 000
<b>2000</b>	2 410 000
<b>2010</b>	2 100 000
<b>2020</b>	1 870 000

Table 1 hungarians in neighboring countries enumerated in the censuses.

Some problems of multilingualism in minorities, relevant also for this chapter, approached from the perspective of (socio) linguistics and cultural anthropology, are also discussed in Borbély [6] for Romanians in Hungary, Mandić [43] for Serbs in Hungary, Mandić & Rácz for Hungarians in Serbia [44] and in Vervaeke & Mandić [65] for minorities in Central and SouthEastern European borderlands.

2. The Minority SafePack Initiative ([https://www.fuen.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/main-activities/MSPi/MSPiSafepack-EN-mit-aufkleber\\_260215.pdf](https://www.fuen.org/fileadmin/user_upload/main-activities/MSPi/MSPiSafepack-EN-mit-aufkleber_260215.pdf)) calls for protection and support of the identity of European ethnic minorities, because of their strong contribution to the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe. It includes six proposals to improve the status of European ethnic minorities.

3. The author of this article already possessed such a list. This list covers research on multilingualism from the perspective of experimental, developmental, social and educational psychology. Beside regional publishers and journals, renowned academic book publishers (like Cambridge University Press, Wiley, Multilingual Matters, etc.), and journals devoted to the field of multilingualism and communication (Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, International Journal of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education, Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, Language and Communication, etc.), or to the study of the mind (Cognition, Trends in Cognitive Sciences, Cortex, etc.), are also represented in the list. It is available upon request.

4. Some parts of this section are presented in more detail in Göncz [30].

5. This reference has been added subsequently.

Disclosure statement No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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He completed his basic studies in psychology in Zagreb (Croatia) and received his master's degree and doctorate in developmental psychology in Belgrade (Serbia) (198). He was on longer scientific training in Canada (University of Toronto, McGill University, Montreal, Laval University, Quebec), Germany (Universität Essen), Hungary (Linguistic Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), Slovakia (Comenius University, Nitra). At the University of Novi Sad, as vice dean, he was in charge of opening a study group for psychology, where he taught various psychology courses, beginning in 1992 as a full professor. He taught by invitation and supervised the preparation of doctoral dissertations at foreign universities. His main areas of interest include pedagogical and developmental psychology, the psychology of language and speech, psychology of minority communities. He participated in about thirty research projects in his field of research. He has been a regular member of the Vojvodina Academy of Sciences and Arts since 2013. He has published about 200 works (monographs, reviews, articles, scientific reports) in four languages in Yugoslavia, Serbia, and with foreign publishers.

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This chapter is an extended version of the article published by the same author(s) in the following journal.  
Cogent Education, 10(2167301): 1-14, 2023.  
Available: <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2167301>

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/2608G>

# Assessing Students' Experiences of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institution: The Case of University of Technology, South Africa

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DOI: 10.9734/bpi/pller/v3/6959C

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/6959C>

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Students' educational experiences have become increasingly important, as Higher education Institutions (HEIs) have attempted to become more student-centered learning. The purpose of this study was to explore the teaching and learning experience of first and third students in a selected University of Technology in South Africa.

**Methodology:** In this paper, an interpretive research paradigm was followed to explore the experiences of first- and third-year students on student-centered teaching and learning in a selected University of Technology, South Africa. The study incorporated semi-structured focus group interviews conducted with 20 students drawn from two selected departments. The collected data were transcribed and thematic analysis with the aid of Nvivo 12 software 2023.

**Results:** The study identified both satisfying and dissatisfying student experiences of the teaching and learning in the selected University of Technology. Students were satisfied with the caring attitude, empathic, and courteous behaviour of the staff. Nevertheless, students were dissatisfied with the teaching abilities of the lecturers, incessant strike, overcrowding and state of the lecture venues, workloads and timetables, and lack of tutors to facilitate additional assistance and support, especially to struggling and at-risk students.

**Conclusions:** The study suggests that the learning environment is essential in the implementation of student-centered teaching and learning strategies. As such, it is of critical importance for the selected university to improve the service

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quality of the teaching and learning for a satisfied student's experience in their bid to achieving student centered teaching and learning.

*Keywords: Student-centered approach; student-centered environment; higher education institution; university of technology; student centered-teaching and learning; student experience.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Since the introduction of democracy in 1994, South African higher education has undergone major transformation, particularly characterized by increased access to previously disadvantaged groups. This period also saw major changes in higher education worldwide with the emergence of the “knowledge society” and increasing globalization. Despite these changes, Scott et al. [1] claimed that the traditional approaches to education evident in pre-democratic South Africa, including course design methods and content, curricular frameworks, lecture practices and consistent scheduling of lectures, continued to be dominant in the South African tertiary education system. Similar observations have been documented more recently by other scientists, including Nyamupangedengu [2] and Tandlich et al. [3]. To address these disadvantages, HEIs should work to promote the quality of students' overall learning experience in a well-supported environment. In recent years, student-centered teaching and learning in higher education has attracted considerable research interest among academia and public commentators [4], (Baetan et al. 2016: 43); [5,6]. A study conducted by Le Roux and Van Rendburg [7] found that students have a positive experience on campus through this type of teaching, which can increase their satisfaction. Although most South African students come from a school system that promotes teacher-centeredness [8], the higher education mission, including the selected university, now generally supports student-centeredness. In 2015, for example, the selected university hosted an assessment policy workshop to enhance learning at which participants expressed satisfaction about the opportunity to engage with “student centeredness” and how it is being experienced and understood in the teaching and learning spaces. During the discussions, it was highlighted that there are varied interpretations of student centeredness and the greatest concern was around what staff perceived students expected out of a student-centered learning experience [9].

Xulu-Gama et al. [5] also conducted a study on students' understanding of the term “student-centeredness” at the same university. According to their findings, 37% of students did not know what the term meant and some said they had never heard the term used before. This suggests that the implementation of the directive is patchy and often not fully understood. Therefore, despite the policy initiatives undertaken in recent years, a detailed research study appears to be required to understand students' experiences of SCL in general and at this university and especially others, in order to find out whether their experiences with SCL is efficiently and effectively applied as per the policies. The purpose of this study was to examine the teaching and learning experiences of first and

third-year students at a selected technical university in South Africa. The following questions served as motivation for the research process:

- a. What student-centered learning and teaching and learning strategies, are currently being implemented in the two departments?
- b. What are 1st and 3rd-year students' experiences of the implementation of these strategies?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The research literature on Student-centered teaching and learning in higher education is copious and extensive, with various contributions from numerous researchers over the past few years. This section outlines the literature regarding Student-centered teaching and learning in higher education.

### **2.1 Overview of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education**

Ng'ambi et al. [10] show that the South African higher education system has undergone significant changes influenced by global trends, national development goals and pressures from local education laws. These points out that there is a growing need for higher education institutions to respond to the changing environment [11]. The current outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-2019), which emerged in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019, has also brought major challenges and changes to the higher education sector. These changes affected more than 91% of students worldwide, resulting in the nationwide closure of higher education institutions, [12]. This has had a significant impact on the delivery of teaching and learning services worldwide.

Given the above, there is a need to reflect on changing definitions of effective teaching, including changing student needs, new forms of teaching and learning delivery, changing employer needs and technological innovations [13]. Importantly, Ganyaupfu [14] investigates and claims that regular poor academic performance of many students is to some extent related to lecturers' use of ineffective teaching and learning methods and strategies. However, to ensure effectiveness, instructors must be familiar with various strategies that require an awareness of the size and complexity of the concepts being covered [14]. In response to the above realities, Toquero [15] emphasizes that universities have a greater need to strengthen curricular practices and adopt innovative teaching and learning techniques and approaches that better respond to students' learning needs beyond the traditional classrooms.

### **2.2 Conceptualisation of the Term 'Student-Centered Learning**

Although the literature on SCL is well known within the field of higher education, nonetheless, it has not been thoroughly addressed [16]. Glowa and Goodell [17] concur and state that while a wealth of information has been written about SCL in higher education, pulling this information together to determine what Student-

centered learning means is yet to be comprehensively addressed. In recent years some education reformers and researchers have sought to define the term with greater precision.

- SCL refers to an educational process whereby students are no longer seen as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge, but seekers to be guided along their intellectual developmental journey [18].
- According to Stefaniak and Tracey [19], "Student-centered learning provides students with increased responsibility, promotes critical thinking, and supports student development".
- SCL is collaborative learning where both the lecturer and the students are actively involved in the content and process of learning [20].
- Ndlovu [21] defines SCL as "a variety of learning strategies in which knowledge is constructed by the student while the lecturer serves as a facilitator of the learning process".
- Al Said et al. [22] define it as an approach that "allows students to shape their own educational paths and places upon them the responsibility to actively participate in making their educational process a meaningful one".

From the above explanation of SCL, it can be deduced that Student-centered learning is the positioning of the student in the centre of their learning process. Thus, it can be said that students are the centre theme of the teaching and learning process in higher education.

### **2.3 Students' Experiences of Student-Centered Teaching and Learning in Higher Education**

The term "student experience" has become an area of academic research in higher education over the last decade [23]. However, it is remarkably underdeveloped as a construct in scientific literature. Establishing the entire learning experience of students at a university remains a major concern, not only nationally but also internationally [24]. Each student brings unique strengths and weaknesses to their learning environment [19] and must be treated as unique human beings who bring their own aspirations, interests, knowledge, and experiences to the learning process [25].

In a study conducted by Baik et al. carried out in Australia [26], which sought to examine the experiences of first-year students the study results showed that many students find the transition difficult and are very afraid of what awaits them on their academic path. As a result, around a third of Australian first-year students consider withdrawing during their first semester of study. Based on the context of this study, students' experiences may vary from department to department depending on how they experience the level of student-centeredness. These experiences influence how they respond to their environment and serve as precursors to the learning process as they make their academic decisions. Lea et al. [27] recommended that the process of teaching and learning should consider the students' needs and expectations such that, the process needs to be fundamentally Student-centered rather than lecturer-

centred. Furthermore, and according to the aforementioned authors, it is expedient that institution of higher learning moves from an 'inside out' approach (where those in the inside knows what is best) to an 'outside-in' approach (where students' expectations are serviced). However, successful service industries think 'outside-in', researching the needs and expectations of their target market and responding accordingly [27].

## **2.4 Student-Centered Policies and Framework**

Tan and Chua (2015: 686) assert that a major movement in education reform today is for policymakers to introduce educational changes based on their students' performance in international testing and national assessment. The tendency is to borrow education policies and practices that are perceived to have worked elsewhere. Policy-makers also refer to 'innovative methods of teaching that involve students as active participants in their own learning. There is a strong conviction within the education research literature that Student-centered approaches to teaching and learning make a positive difference to the outcomes of all students (Harris et al. 2013:5).

Furthermore, global research and policy literature suggests that a student-centered approach to developing engaged learning makes a significant difference for students, particularly those in disadvantaged contexts (Harris et al. 2013:5) or who are unresponsive to a more traditional teacher-centered approach have practices methods practices. Given these concerns, jurisdictions around the world have developed standards and competency frameworks for school leaders and teachers as part of a broader global training, development and accountability agenda (Harris et al. 2013:5). According to the authors mentioned above, standards describe a common body of knowledge, skills and dispositions and thus ensure the quality in the professional preparation and development of managers (Harris et al. 2013:12). Placing the student at the center has become very important. This reflects the belief that students' individual experiences, interests and learning styles should be the focus of the student-centered environment. This study will draw on Australian student-centered policy. It would be interesting and beneficial if South African universities could compare themselves or benchmark SCL policies to those used in Australia.

## **3. RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN**

### **3.1 Study Design**

Using an interpretive paradigm that followed a qualitative research approach, this study examined first- and third-year students' experiences of student-centered teaching and learning at a selected university of technology, South Africa. An interpretive paradigm focuses on people's behavior and how people understand the world by sharing their experiences with others through the medium of language (Cooper and Schindler 2014).



### **3.2 Study Population and Sampling Process**

The study incorporated semi-structured focus group interviews conducted with 20 students which were purposively selected from two departments (Chemical engineering) and (Informational and Corporate Management) from two levels (First year and third year). Students were contacted telephonically and via the university student email addresses inviting them to participate in a group discussion. The participants were assigned into four groups (n=5) based on their level of study and departments. The focus group discussion was conducted on virtually using Microsoft Teams on a separate date and days for each of the groups. An experienced educationist reviewed and approved the focus group questions.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

Data was collected via semi-structured virtual interviews carried out on Microsoft Teams. The focus group interview lasted from 45 minutes to one hour depending on the dynamics of each discussion. The interviews were recorded on Microsoft Teams and notes were written as back-up for the recordings. All recordings were removed from the Microsoft Teams and saved in a separate device which was passworded to ensure confidentiality and security of data.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The data that emerged from the focus group interviews were transcribed verbatim, and analysed using thematic content analysis. The researcher follows the step of thematic analyses as highlighted by Saldaña [28]. In this process, the researcher developed operating codes to create categories to theme the data. The researcher read the transcripts in full and then derived codes from the data. Thereafter, the transcript was read again and sections of the text were highlighted and deductively coded as per the appropriate code, and quotations were then placed in separate documents. This process allows the researcher to identify both themes and sub-themes in the interview transcript (Elms 2018). The coding and analysis was performed with the aid of Nvivo v12 software (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2015).

### **3.5 Trustworthiness (Reliability) and Credibility**

To improve the credibility of the qualitative data, the interview guide was developed based on the constructs identified during the literature review. The interview guide was modified from previous studies that addressed similar constructs, ensuring the credibility of the interviews. Participants are expected to provide an actual representation of their perceptions and experiences regarding the delivery of student-centered teaching and learning in the selected departments. During data analysis, the researcher quoted verbatim from participants' responses. The researcher used the tape recorder to record missed clues during the interviews. To guard against biases and perspectives that the researcher might have when analyzing the data, the researcher asked two

colleagues from the two departments to review the data and the accuracy of interpretation. The researcher also ensured that an audit trail is available throughout the data process.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Response from the Focus Group

Table 1 shows the number of participants per focus group and the assigned pseudo names given to each of the focus groups. Overall, the participants were 20 in the number who participated in the interviews.

**Table 1. Focus group**

<b>Focus group</b>	<b>Abbreviated</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Focus group 1	#CE, first year	5
Focus group 2	#ICM, first year	5
Focus group 3	#CE, third year	5
Focus group 4	#ICM, third year	5

Table 2 highlights the theme and subthemes that were extracted from the study findings.

**Table 2. Identification of themes and sub-themes**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>
1. Teaching and administrative staff support structure	1) Administrative staff support 2) Teaching staff support
2. Learning environment	1) Student experience of learning environment 2) Relationship between learning environment and experience 3) Student expectations of the learning environment
3. Teaching and learning experience	1) Satisfied experience 2) Dissatisfied experience
4. Student centeredness recommendation	1) Recommendation for teaching and learning 2) Recommendation for administrative services

### 4.2 Teaching and Learning Experience

As stated by Hart and Coates [29] "understanding service complexity is especially important in education, where students are tasked with evaluating intangible products over a prolonged period". As such, this theme explores from the perspective of the students their teaching and learning experiences at the

respective departments. This theme is discussed under two subthemes, namely satisfied and dissatisfied experience.

#### **4.2.1 Subtheme 1: Satisfied experience**

Extant literature suggests that the effective handling of complaints and service recovery efforts result in satisfaction, trust, commitment, positive word of mouth and consumer retention [30]. This, Hart and Coates [29] associate to improve learning and teaching experience in the education sector. Consistent with this, Chemical Engineering third attributed their satisfying experience to staff caring attitudes and courteous behaviour. One student mentioned that she had an accident while she was going down the stairs; staff were there to assist her. Another of the colleague reveals the following:

*I was satisfied with the manner my application was handled as much as I had issues with CAO. It then had to register with another department which I later received a call from the CE department to come and register. The process was made so seamless and smoothly (#CE, first year).*

Other studies had noted that for effective service delivery, professors should possess the most important attributes of good service recovery, i.e. knowledgeable, empathetic, friendly, helpful, reliable, responsive and expressive [31,32]. Consistent with this, students shared experience of academic support of module "Fundamentals" where students had done badly in a test, the lecturer decided to intervene by dedicating 3 to 5 hours to assist the students to learn the module and they ended up doing better in the second test and assignment.

The above revelation aligns with the concept of Student-centered support teaching and learning, and thus demonstrate the empathic nature of the lecturers.

#### **4.2.2 Subtheme 2: Dissatisfied experience**

Kim [33] theorised that service failure occurs when consumers are dissatisfied with the service delivery system. Chahal and Devi [34] reveal that service failure in the higher institution may relate to teaching, examination, library, laboratories, infrastructure, administration, and other miscellaneous services such as hostel facility and canteen. Consistent with this, it was uncovered that many of the students interviewed were dissatisfied with the lecturers teaching ability, the number of students in the classes, lecturers' response, infrastructures such as bathroom and lecture venues, etc.

##### **(a) Dissatisfied with the teaching abilities of lecturers**

In terms of the lecturers teaching abilities, students lamented that some of the lecturers are clueless about the subject content. One of the first-year Chemical Engineering students reveals an incidence where the lecturer struggles to solve a problem, and thus leading to student dissatisfaction.

*In some modules, lectures seem to be clueless about the subject content. This was evident in one computer lecture where the lecturer couldn't solve a computer problem during the lesson. The whole class was very dissatisfied because if the lecturer doesn't know how to perform the actions, how are we supposed to learn from him? [He queried]. Most of the class resorted to learning it by themselves (#CE, first year).*

Sharing a similar sentiment, another of the colleague illuminated the following:

*Dissatisfied with the Physics lecturer - does not seem so handoff with the course, cannot explain during the learning, only refer to slides (#CE, first year).*

Students from the Information and Corporate management also express similar dissatisfaction with the lecturers teaching abilities.

*Issues with Business Fundamentals - The lecturer overall presentation of the course is very poor, the lecturer is not patient, cannot interact or student attention, have attitude, poor teaching skills (#ICM, first year).*

#### **(b) Dissatisfied with lack of tutor and or use of tutor**

Equally, a student raises a concern of their dissatisfaction with the lack of a tutor in a particular module. In one of the student views, students easily understood tutors when compared to lecturers in some modules.

*One of the core modules does not have a tutor, the lecturer teaches and is a tutor at the same time. This is concerning because in some modules we understand tutors more than the lectures (#CE, first year).*

On the other hand, third-year students from Information and Corporate Management were dissatisfied with tutors handling some courses other than the lecturers. In my view, the lecturer must first explain the concept before handling this to the tutor.

*For one of the courses (IMTG301) – Students are taught by the tutor, not the lecturer. The lecturer needs to explain the concept first (#ICM, third year).*

#### **(c) Dissatisfied with overcrowding of lecture venues**

Another cause of students' dissatisfaction with teaching and learning is the number of students in classes. Students revealed that some of the lecture venues are overcrowded with students. It is worth clarifying that the aforementioned overcrowding of lecture venues happens in certain modules and not all modules have such large classes.

*The class group is very huge (±400 students) and is very difficult to manage; hence students believe that the institution is not doing justice to them or the lecturer (#ICM, first year).*

*Large numbers per group for practicals (#CE, third year).*

The consequence of overcrowding in the classes was that it makes the learning environment unpleasant to students.

*Overcrowded lecture venues, make a learning environment unpleasant as some students spend the whole lecture standing because the lecture venue cannot accommodate all students (#ICM, first year).*

#### **(d) dissatisfied with the state of lecture venues**

Apart from overcrowding, the student also expresses dissatisfaction with the state of the lecture venues.

*The state of lecture venues. There are large student numbers and the venues are not able to accommodate the students to an extent that some students will have a lecture sitting on the stairs or standing. There is no ventilation, poor lighting, broken chairs, poor WIFI connectivity, smartboard and projector not working (#CE, third year).*

The above suggests a poor service delivery in terms of infrastructure. This is reinforced by the concern about the state of the bathroom in some of the lecture venues in which the students indicated to be unpleasant.

*Bathrooms – In some areas, like the S Block building, the state of bathrooms is not pleasant (#CE, third year).*

#### **(e) Dissatisfied with workload and timetables**

The workload is another area of dissatisfaction uncovered in the interview. It was revealed that students are having challenges attending the general education modules, as many believe it is additional courses to them, which is unnecessary.

*As much as the curriculum has been enriched with other modules outside the department like the General Education modules, these modules have a lot of work and most students don't feel motivated to attend them. The work overload is not manageable. Students believe that these are additional courses that they are not necessary to do as most students don't attend them (#ICM, third year).*

Students were also dissatisfied with the manner of timetable changes. Many of the third year Chemical Engineering students interviewed stressed that timetables constantly change, and these changes are poorly communicated to the students. This subsequently results in students missing classes.

*Timetable changes now and again and in most cases, this is not communicated to students properly. This in most cases affect students as they miss some of the lectures trying to locate the correct venue (#CE, third year).*

**(f) Dissatisfied with incessant strikes**

Another cause of student's dissatisfaction uncovered is the incessant strike witnessed in the University. This was revealed to affect the learning process.

*Staff and student strike at the beginning of each academic year – This affect the learning process and more time is wasted during this time and as a result, this affects the academic year. No additional time is made on the university calendar to cover for this (#CE, third year).*

Poor response time and support was also a cause for students' dissatisfaction with the teaching and learning process.

*Not getting feedback after assessments, as students are unable to see areas of improvement in time (#CM, first year).*

Added to the above, the lecturer's lateness was also caused by students' dissatisfaction.

*Some lecturers came late in class and leave early before the period finishes especially for double periods (#CE, third year).*

Voss et al. [32] reveal the causes of service failure in the education sector to include failures in the core services that would expect to receive such as delayed services in the classroom, faculty who is not available during office hours or come late to scheduled meetings with a student. Consistent with this, it can be drawn from the above statements that the lecturer's poor response to students constitute service delivery failures in which Voss and his team typified as Group 1 service delivery failures.

Equally essential, Voss et al. [32] noted that failures of faculty to respond to student needs and requests constitute Group II service delivery failures. As such, it is sufficient to say that students complain of assistance to online learning modes constitute service delivery failures.

*Access to online learning modes like Moodle – Most lectures use Moodle as a learning platform to share information but some students will complain about getting access. When this is followed up or queried with the lecturer, the student is taken from one person to the next (#CE, third year).*

Table 3 provides a matric comparison of the dissatisfied and dissatisfied experiences based on the student's level of study and their department. It emerged that more of the third year Chemical Engineering students had dissatisfying experiences with the teaching and learning experience. Only first-year Chemical Engineering students report satisfying experiences.

**Table 3. Matric coding showing dissatisfied and satisfying teaching and learning experiences**

	<b>A: Chemical Engineering (First year)</b>	<b>B: Chemical Engineering (Third year)</b>	<b>C: ICM (First year)</b>	<b>D: ICM (Third year)</b>
1: Teaching and learning experience	0	0	0	0
2: Dissatisfied experience	3	7	3	2
3: Satisfied experience	3	0	0	0

## 5. DISCUSSION

The concept of student centeredness as it relates with teaching and learning has become vital in higher education institution. The purpose of this study was to explore the teaching and learning experience of first and third students in a selected University of Technology in South Africa. The qualitative focus group discussion with the students revealed a mixed picture of their learning experiences at the selected university. While some of the third-year students, particularly from Chemical Engineering, were satisfied with their teaching experiences, others were dissatisfied. It was uncovered that many students were dissatisfied with the quality of teaching and learning, which suggests service failure. For instance, many of the students interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the teaching skills of the lecturers, the overcrowding of the classrooms, excessive workloads, and the state of the infrastructure such as bathrooms and lecture venues. The finding is corroborated by Chahal and Devi [34] who said that service failure in the higher institution may relate to teaching, examination, library, laboratories, infrastructure, administration, and other miscellaneous services such as hostel facilities and canteens. Similarly, the findings of this study, particularly from the South African perspective, agrees with Van der Westhuizen [35] who found poor service quality in higher education to include problems with registration, poor support from administrative staff, and poor computer facilities.

Of particular interest to this study, it was uncovered from the focus group interview that first-year students had a concern about the teaching abilities of the lecturers. Some of them indicated that lecturers had a poor understanding of the subjects, and lacked skill in interactions with the students. This may be due to the challenges first-year students face transiting from higher schools where they are mostly 'spoon-fed' to higher education. A similar finding was observed in Australia where it was revealed that first-year students find it challenging to transit from high school to higher education [26]. Another plausible explanation for this may be linked to the shift from contact learning to virtual classrooms caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Memon et al. [36], students expressed mixed emotions on the virtual style of teaching delivery.

Sajjad [37] reveals a link between student satisfaction and effective teaching and learning. Consistent with this, some of the third-year students from Chemical Engineering expressed satisfaction with the academic staffs' caring attitudes and courteous behaviour. This group also acknowledged the time and efforts the academic staff put into assisting struggling students. This is corroborated by Le Roux and Van Rendburg [7] who said that students get a positive experience from the kind of teaching which increases their satisfaction levels. It can therefore be said that a positive students' experiences of their teaching and learning directly influences the level of their satisfaction. This is vital in aiding the competitiveness of the university as students are the core costumers of the institution. It can be said that a satisfied customer promotes the business in this case, the higher education institution.

### **5.1 Student-centric Curriculum**

From the finding of the study, it was found that the academic curriculum allows the student to take charge of their learning process. The majority of the students expressed confidence in the learning materials and content of the courses. Hence, this study proposed that students of the selected university curriculum be student-centric in approach. This could be achieved by providing students with the opportunities to design and co-create their learning process with the lecturers. Moreover, extant literature suggests that the co-creation of curricula enhances students' engagement, motivation, identity development, and self-learning abilities.

### **5.2 Administrative Service Improvement**

While extant literature suggests that students seek empathy, responsiveness, and assurance during their academic development process, it emerged from this study that some students at the selected university were not completely satisfied with the administrative staff's commitment to service. While the university scored high on tangibles, there was a concern with administrative staff providing error-free records, as well as, providing quick and prompt services. Similar observations were reported by another scholar in the same university that students are dissatisfied with the commitment to the delivery aspect of service quality. Hence, the study recommends that the university pay critical attention to administrative staff service delivery. This may be achieved by re-training administrative staff on the importance of quality service delivery that aligns with the university's strategic goals.

### **5.3 Consolidated Student-Centered Teaching and Learning Framework**

One of the core concerns uncovered in the study was that the implementation of student-centered teaching and learning occurs in silos within the departments. The consequence of this is that the implementation of student-centered teaching and learning varies from lecturer to lecturer. Extant literature also indicates that student-centered approaches in many universities are occurring piecemeal and



in isolated pockets within the universities. Without a uniform institutionalised framework to guide the implementation of student-centered teaching and learning, achieving it may become more challenging. This study highly recommends the implementation of a consolidated student-centered teaching framework to guide the lecturers. For this proposition to be efficiently executed, the management should appoint an individual to drive the policy for it to have a great significance, especially during its implementation phase.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

In summary, the study revealed a mixed expression of students' experiences at the selected university. It was found that some of the third-year students, particularly chemical engineering students, were satisfied with their teaching experiences, but others were dissatisfied. Regarding student dissatisfaction, the key findings indicate that students were dissatisfied with the teaching skills of lecturers, overcrowding of classrooms, excessive workload and the condition of infrastructure such as toilets and lecture halls. Additionally, the study found that freshmen had concerns about the teaching skills of some lecturers. On the contrary, some of the third-year students interviewed were satisfied with the caring attitude and polite behavior of the academic staff.

## **7. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Student-centered teaching though widely discussed in the literature and have garnered attention among researchers and academia still is subject to different interpretations. More so, there has not been a consensus agreement among academic experts on how best to implement it in a higher education institution. This has made it difficult to develop single strategies for implementing Student-centered teaching and learning. From a South African perspective, the shift from an industrial to a knowledge economy requires that Higher Education and Institutions adopt more Student-centered approaches. Hence, future studies will seek to explore the extent of implementation of Student-centered teaching and learning in South African higher education institutions. Another area for future research is testing the impact of the proposed Student-centered teaching and learning framework.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

Before the collection of data, ethical approval was obtained from the Faculty Research Committee (FRC). The application for permission to conduct research at the selected university was obtained from the university through the University's Research Postgraduate Support Office. The confidentiality of the participants was assured by assigning a code in place of their names. Informed consent in the form of written approval was obtained from participants which indicated their willingness to participate in the study.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The researcher acknowledged the Durban University of Technology for the SEED funding assistance.

## **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/6959C>

# **Retention in Kindergarten for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders as an Influencing Factor in the Cognitive and Social Domain**

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DOI: 10.9734/bpi/pller/v3/6932E

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/6932E>

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## **ABSTRACT**

Student retention in kindergarten is a common practice. Retention is the repetition of the kindergarten class so that students will obtain the necessary school preparation for elementary school. However, this practice is also used for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), without sufficient research data on the impacts of retention on this group of students. The current study examines the impacts of infants' retention on their social and cognitive domain. A sample of 102 pupils from kindergartens from all over Greece was taken and it was observed that the retention was advantageous, but only when it was performed under specific conditions and a supportive framework.

*Keywords: Kindergarten retention; Autism Spectrum Disorders; cognitive domain; social domain.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In Greece, in recent years, in contrast with what happens in other countries and at odds with many international experiences at this level, the number of applications for retention into kindergarten has significantly increased. The repetition of the kindergarten class, the so-called "retention", is carried out in accordance with paragraphs 7 and 8 of article 6 of Presidential Decree 79/2017 (Government Gazette 109A) as follows:

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«§7. Retention in kindergarten for one (1) year may be approved with the consent of the parents / legal guardians, when it is established with the opinion of Centers of Educational and Counseling Support or a public medico-pedagogical center.

Centers of Educational and Counseling Support, as well as the public medico-pedagogical centers are public services based in every region of Greece, assessing students between 4-18 years old and giving advice on student difficulties. They are also able to suggest appropriate interventions for students at school. One of the suggestions they often make is that of kindergarten retention, when they consider that students are having serious difficulties and would not be easy to attend elementary school. In the Greek educational system, students between 4-6 years old study in kindergarten, between 6-7 years old in the first grade of elementary school, between 7-8 years old in the second grade of elementary school and so on until the age 11-12 years old, when they study in the sixth grade of elementary school, thus completing primary school education.

In Greece, there are two types of public kindergartens, the general kindergarten, where students of standard development study, as well as students with mild difficulties, and the special kindergarten, where students, with serious to severe difficulties. According to teachers and parents, the retention of children in kindergarten is linked to the student's individual "deficits" and is considered a "good practice" to ensure a smooth transition to elementary school. The above findings are also confirmed by international research, which often suggests that teachers and parents, based on different learning theories, believe that children who lack skills in the social or cognitive domain need more time in kindergarten to mature before transitioning in the first grade of Elementary School [1-4].

Based on this approach, retention is considered as an attempt to enhance the student's knowledge and skills and at the same time as a means of preventing school failure in their later school career. In other words, this view supports the fact that retention will benefit students, who are not yet able to meet the academic requirements of the next level. However, besides the research findings that support that retention has positive outcomes, [1-7] there is also a large number of researches that show that the retention of children in kindergarten does not necessarily improve the academic performance of students at the next level and that there is no significant difference in the school performance of students who were retained in kindergarten, with those who were promoted. Retention itself, without a supporting framework, can trap the student in a 'repetition' of cognitive activities and the expected outcome would be the student withdrawal from the learning process whatsoever [8]. Furthermore, as noted in some cases, retention into kindergarten can be a traumatic experience for students, as they are forced to stay 'behind' compared to their peers [1,2,9,10,11].

### **1.1 The Current Study**

In Greece, generally, students with ASD are expected to be retained. To date there has been a lot of researches concerning the potential benefits of kindergarten

retention. Nevertheless, little interest has been seen for a large number of students with ASD who have been retained.

In Greece the retention of students with ASD focuses almost exclusively on improving their cognitive abilities and their social skills. On the basis of the above, the purpose of the present study is to highlight whether the retention of students with ASD in kindergarten can improve their cognitive and social domain. Of course, retention is not in itself a cause of improvement or non-improvement of a student, as it relates to many other factors that have to do with both family environment and learning process. On the basis of the above, the following research questions are posed:

## **1.2 Research Questions (RQ)**

- **RQ1:** Does the retention of students with ASD in kindergarten have a positive impact on their cognitive domain?
- **RQ2:** Does retention of students with ASD in kindergarten have a positive impact on their social domain?
- **RQ3:** Is there considerable improvement when the school cooperates with the special education staff that teaches the students in the afternoon?
- **RQ4:** Does retention have positive results when it happens along with specialized supporting programs suitable for students with ASD at school?
- **RQ5:** What is the relationship between improvement in one domain and external supporting programs?

## **2. METHODS**

### **2.1 Participants**

The study involved 102 students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), who according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.; DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, [12]), they were middle to high efficiency students. Specifically, 75 students were of middle efficiency (73.5%) and 27 of high efficiency (26.5%). The age of the students at the beginning of the retention was from 5 years and 9 months to 6 years and 9 months, with an average in the present study of 6.3 years old and at the completion of the retention from 6 years and 6 months to 7 years and 6 months with average in the present study of 7 years old. In the present study, 82 boys (80.4%) and 20 girls (19.6%) participated, representing 70% of the students with ASD, who were retained in the general kindergarten in Greece, during the school year 2018-2019.

### **2.2 Research Tool**

The research tool we used in order to collect our data is Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist (ATEC) [13], created by the American Research Institute for autism. ATEC is a psychotechnic means which can provide comparative results of the impact an intervention on students with ASD may have. It consists of 4 scales



that study Speech-Language-Communication, Sociability, Sensory-Cognitive Awareness and Health/ physical/Behavior. Of the four scales, the first three were used. The first scale consists of 14 questions, the second one of 18 and the third one of 20. They are all closed-format questions and the answers are given on a 3-point Likert scale (1 = Not True - 3 = Very True).

For the study of the cognitive domain, we used the first scale, which assesses Speech-Language-Communication and the third scale, which assesses students' sensory-cognitive awareness. These two scales constituted of a new variable, the "level in the cognitive domain" variable. After Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis, a high internal consistency was obtained with  $\alpha = 0.83$ . The variable measured students' performance before and after kindergarten retention. The difference between the values of the "cognitive domain after retention - cognitive domain before retention" led to the variable "cognitive domain change". We followed the same process for the analysis of the social domain too. Specifically, for the study of students' social domain we used the second scale, which assesses sociability. Taking the final and initial measurements into consideration, that is, the results after and before the retention, we created a new variable that resulted from the difference of the two values "sociability after retention" - "sociability before retention", which was called "social domain change". At this point, concerning the sociability scale, it should be noted that the Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis showed a high internal consistency of  $\alpha = 0.79$ . As far as the change in the cognitive domain and the change in sociability is concerned, when the difference is negative, there is an improvement, while when the difference is positive, it shows deterioration. The questionnaire also consists of 13 questions about demographics, as well as questions about students' retention conditions.

## **2.3 Procedure**

The survey was conducted from September 2018 to June 2019 and all ethical rules were adhered to, such as consent of the participants, assurance of anonymity and the possibility to withdraw from the survey at any time they wish. Initially, questionnaires were sent to 130 schools across the country and 115 were sent back in the first phase (September 2018), while 102 were sent back in the second phase (June 2019), which constituted the final sample of the survey. The survey included periodic measurements, one at the beginning of the school year, in September 2018, and another at the end of the school year and hence one in the completion of the students' retention, in June 2019. Before starting the survey, teachers were thoroughly informed on how to complete the questionnaires. Subsequently, a pilot study was conducted on a small sample of participants (20 questionnaires were distributed), and after the relevant observations were used, the final research tool emerged. The questionnaires were completed by the special educators of the students who were retained. Of these, 90 were women (95.7%) and 4 were men (4.3%). Of the women 14 (15.5%) were 20-30 years old, 35 (38.8%) 31-40 years old, 30 (33.5%) 41-50 years old and 11 (12.2%) between 50-60 years old. Of the men 1 (25%) was between 20-30 years old, 2 (50%) from 31-40 years old and 1 (25%) from 41-50 years old. Concerning the special educators, 40 (39.2%) had a master's degree in special education, 33 (32.4%) had a special

education degree, 22 (21.6%) a 400-hour seminar in special education, and 7 (5.8 %) had Ph.D. in special education.

**2.4 Statistical Analysis**

The research was based on quantitative methods of measurement. Mean values and standard deviation, as well as one sample – test was used to measure the quantitative variables. Subsequently, cluster analysis was conducted and then the research questions were studied. The purpose of cluster analysis was to classify students into categories according to their response to retention. Thus, a hierarchical cluster analysis was conducted (distance: Euclidean distance, clustering method): Average Linkage (Between Groups) in a sample of 102 students based on the values of the 2 variables which study the change in social skills and cognitive domain in students with ASD respectively. Cluster analysis led to the creation of 4 Clusters-groups. The fourth was excluded because it was single-member. Thus, three groups were created that were interpreted through one-factor analysis of variance followed by Tukey HSD's Post Hoc Test. For each scale, statistically significant differences were found between the three clusters (Social domain change:  $F(98.2) = 194.76, p < 0.00$  / Cognitive domain change:  $F(98.2) = 165.84, p < 0.00$ ). The three groups that emerged are: Group 1: Students did not improve significantly in any domain (mean change 0.63 / -0.15 for the scales of Social domain Change / Cognitive domain change respectively), Group 2: Students show significant improvement in both domains (mean change -19.14 / -10.90 for the scales of Social domain change / Cognitive domain change respectively) and Group 3: Students show significant improvement in cognitive domain, but not in the Social domain (mean change -0.19 / -9.26 for the scales of Social domain change / Cognitive domain change respectively).

The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Cluster analysis**

	<b>Average Linkage (Between Groups)</b>					
	<b>Group 1</b>		<b>Group 2</b>		<b>Group 3</b>	
	<b>no improvement in both domains</b>		<b>Significant improvement in both domains</b>		<b>Improvement only in cognitive domain</b>	
	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Social Domain change	0.63	2.47	-19.14	7.16	-0.19	3.08
Cognitive Domain change	-0.15	1.92	-10.90	3.28	-9.26	3.00

**3. RESULTS**

**RQ1 and RQ2 results:** The analysis demonstrated that both cognitive and social domains of students were positively affected by retention. The one-sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in the values of scales after the retention compared to the measurement before the retention. Specifically, the mean values of the scales are significantly lower in the final measurement than in

the initial. In the case of the social domain, the difference is 5.18 points with an effect size of 52.40%,  $t(101) = 5.29, p < 0.00$ . In the case of the cognitive domain the difference is 17.96 points with an effect size of 116.13%, [ $t(101) = 11.72, p < 0.00$ ]. Therefore, as it is revealed, retention works positively for students with ASD both in the cognitive and social domains. It is clear, thus, that there has been a greater improvement in the cognitive domain of students with ASD.

The results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Mean scale changes and their statistical significance**

	Degrees of freedom	Mean difference	SD	T	Bidirectional p value	Size effect
Change of Social Domain	101	-5.19	9.90	-5.30	0.00	52.40%
Change of Cognitive Domain	101	-5.71	6.47	-8.91	0.00	88.20%

**RQ3 results.** However, the study showed that when school retention is done without the co-operation of the special education staff (e.g. psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists), who educate students in the afternoon, retention does not have a significantly positive effect on students. The  $\chi^2$  independence test shows a statistically significant dependence on the two variables. In other words, co-operation of special educators with special education staff is a strong factor in student improvement [ $\chi^2(2) = 62.453, p < 0.00$ ]. Specifically, when they co-operate, there is a significant improvement in both domains of 40.8%, 43.7% in the cognitive domain alone and no substantial improvement in any domain of 15.5%. Conversely, in cases that there is no co-operation, the percentage in the sector without significant improvement in both domains, equals to 100%.

The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.  $\chi^2$  independence test for students' improvement after co-operation between special educators and special education staff**

	Co-operation between special educators and special education staff		Total
	Yes	No	
<b>Group 1</b>	11	30	41
No improvement in both domains	15.5%	100%	40.6%
<b>Group 2</b>	29	0	29
Significant improvement in both domains	40.8%	0%	28.7%
<b>Group 3</b>	31	0	31
Improvement only in cognitive domain	43.7%	0.0%	30.7%

	<b>Co-operation between special educators and special education staff</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
Total	71	30	101
	100%	100%	100%
<b><math>\chi^2=62.45</math> p&lt;0.00</b>			

**RQ4 results:** In addition to the above, the impact of the implementation of specialized supporting programs for students with ASD at school was studied. The  $\chi^2$  independence test shows a statistically significant dependence of the two variables. Specifically, the implementation of specialized supporting programs for students with ASD at school is a strong factor in student improvement [ $\chi^2 (2) = 58.1, p < 0.00$ ]. In particular, when the school implements programs for students with ASD, there is a significant improvement in both domains at 100%, whereas when no supporting programs are used, there is a significant improvement in both domains at 12.2%, in the cognitive domain at 37,8% and no improvement at all, at 50% for both domains.

The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.  $\chi^2$  independence test for students' improvement after ASD programs**

	<b>Implementation of specialized supporting programs for students with ASD at school</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>Group 1</b>	0	41	41
No improvement in both domains	0%	50%	40.6%
<b>Group 2</b>	19	10	29
Significant improvement in both domains	100%	12.2%	28.7%
<b>Group 3</b>	0	31	31
Improvement only in cognitive domain	0%	37.8%	30.7%
Total	19	82	101
	100%	100%	100%
<b><math>\chi^2=58.1</math> , p&lt;0.00</b>			

**RQ5 results:** Table 5 shows the impact of afternoon supporting programs during the retention. The  $\chi^2$  - independence test shows a statistically significant dependence on the two variables, namely that educating students with supporting programs after school, along with retention, is a significant factor in student improvement [ $\chi^2 (2) = 25.78, p < 0.00$ ]. Specifically, when students attend additional extracurricular supporting programs, along with retention, there is a significant improvement in all domains at 33.7%, cognitive improvement at 36%, and no improvement in both domains 30,2%. Conversely, when students do not attend additional supporting programs, they do not show a significant improvement in either of the two domains at 100%.

**Table 5.  $\chi^2$  independence test for students' improvement after afternoon supporting programs**

	Afternoon supporting programs		Total
	Yes	No	
<b>Group 1</b>	26	15	41
No improvement in both domains	30.2%	100%	40.6%
<b>Group 2</b>	29	0	29
Significant improvement in both domains	33.7%	0%	28.7%
<b>Group 3</b>	31	0	31
Improvement only in cognitive domain	36%	0%	30.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>101</b>
	100%	100%	100%

$\chi^2=25.78, p<0.00$

**4. DISCUSSION**

The current study examines the impact of students' retention with ASD in their cognitive and social domain. Retention has shown to be positive in both domains, although improvement relies on other factors such as student development and maturity, family, classroom, teachers, classroom curriculum, and the community where the student grows up. There seems to be no corresponding research in Greece, aside from the general research on the results of retention as well as the reasons why it can be done without specializing in students with disabilities, let alone in students with ASD. In addition, at an international level, information on the outcomes of retention into students with disabilities is very limited. Most researches that have been done relate to retention in general and the results are mixed, such as those of Grenberg and Winsler, [14]; Giano, Williams, & Becnel, [15]; Chen, Hughes and Kwok, [16]; Hong and Raudenbush, [2]; Jimerson, [17]; Lorence and Dworkin, [18]; Moser, West, & Hughes, [19]; Walters and Borgers, [20]. The results of the present study are in line with those of other studies on students' cognitive and social improvement, such as [1,2,21,4,6,5] but also those that focus on improving students' social domain such as the researches of [22,2,3,23,24,25]. However, other researches seem to have different results with regard to students' social domain as they report that retention is detrimental to the self-esteem of the students and the relationships with their peers and this has a negative effect on their sociability [26-28]. Of course, this could be interpreted by the fact that these surveys do not solely measure the effect of retention on students with ASD, whose social skills are extremely limited and therefore there is more room for improvement. Furthermore, it is important to note that the present study could confirm the hypotheses of other studies that claim that in students with limited academic performance and social skills, such as the majority of students with ASD, retention may have positive impact [16,6,29,8]. Last but not least, the current study has a great paradox. Students with ASD do retain in kindergarten so as to be improved in the domains that are lagging behind. But since school lacks in specialized programs, it is common for the students to attend private

extracurricular educational activities. In this way school doesn't provide progress and more than that, doesn't fulfill its purpose for inclusive education.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The findings of the present study are, to our knowledge, the first to reveal the outcome of pupils' retention with ASD in their cognitive and social domain. The researches that generally refer to pupils' retention during preschool education yield controversial results. Some show that retention has positive impact, whereas some others show negative impact on the psychosocial development of the students, and another percentage shows a non-significant difference in student performance compared to those who attended elementary school. The present study clearly shows a positive impact of retention in the cognitive and social domain of students with ASD. However, a closer look at the results shows that retention could not have been particularly positive without some other factors, such as specialized supporting programs for ASD in school, education for students with ASD deriving not only from special educators, but also from special education staff after school and the cooperation between school teachers and special education staff. In other words, an interdisciplinary approach to the education of students with ASD is necessary otherwise retention could simply be an extension of kindergarten attendance before entering elementary school, without particular benefits. Let us also consider what the repercussions will be for students who are unable to afford additional specialized education after school due to the financial difficulties of their families. Through the interdisciplinary approach, it is clear that along with the implementation of specialized programs at school there is need for special education staff (speech therapists, psychologists and occupational therapists) in schools so as for retention to work effectively, for all students with ASD.

## **6. LIMITATIONS**

The present research has some limitations that should be mentioned. First of all, the sample of the study is small and therefore the results cannot be generalized. Moreover, although the tool can provide comparative results of the impact an intervention on students with ASD may have, it cannot be safely deduced that pupil improvement is due to retention or due to interaction with other factors such as student development and maturity, family, classroom, teachers, and the community in which the student grows up. Also, a limitation is presented by the fact that in the current study there is no comparison with a corresponding group of children who attended elementary school, although retention was proposed, but their parents did not accept it. It is also important to study the future progress of students in order to determine whether the benefits of retention are short term or long term. Finally, there has been no repeat measurement so far to check whether the results have been maintained.

## **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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This chapter is an extended version of the article published by the same author(s) in the following journal. Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 56(2): 240–248, 2021.

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/6932E>

# Investigating the Interconnectivity between Feminist Literature and Prison Literature in Ḥasība Abd Al-Raḥmān's Al- Sharnaqa

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DOI: 10.9734/bpi/pller/v3/6981C

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/6981C>

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## ABSTRACT

This chapter confirms the existence of an intersection between two important genres Feminist Literature and Prison Literature along with the approaches and aesthetic tools. The quest for freedom, revelation, unbosoming, revolution against persecution, and destruction of all the forms of authority constitute central points of intersection, which reach their burning point when the writer herself is the prisoner who lives the experience of imprisonment and she reveals her experience through writing a narrative text. Prison Literature is a revelation and a rebellion against suppressive authority, Feminist Literature is also a rebellion and a revolution against masculine norms, including breaking the political, social, and religious taboos. Prison literature is an outcome of real experiences, and its authors may have experienced a prison life or may heard about it through the experiences of others. Social and political reality has a connection with Prison literature. It also denounces the tactics of intellectual terror and political oppression, which violate citizen's rights, restrict their freedom, and deny them the ability to express their opinions freely.

This study suggests calling this type of literature written by such women writers as "Feminist Prison Literature" and seeks to clarify this interconnectivity and prove that the prison literature that the woman writes does not differ in its themes and features of its revolutionary content, its artistic devices and techniques from men's prison literature. This chapter has developed by reviewing a case study, the novel *al-Sharnaqa/ the Cocoon* by the Syrian woman writer, Ḥasība 'Abd al-Raḥmān. The authors of the novel reveal the woman's exposure to repressive manifestations. In return, the study reveals the woman's attempts to rebel against

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these obstacles in her quest for freedom, and boldness to penetrate the forbidden trinity.

*Keywords: Interconnectivity; prison, feminist; literature; Cocoon regime; dialectic; freedom; Taboo.*

## **1. FEMINIST LITERATURE: THE WOMAN WRITER BETWEEN SUPPRESSION AND FREEDOM**

Most of the Arab women writers have not agreed with this kind of classification to their literature because it is an outcome of masculine origin and it implies that the literature of women is inferior to that of men and denigrates them.

However, some women critics deal with this term objectively considering it a term that refers to the literature that is produced by women who are liberated from traditional masculine norms. New thoughts have been adopted by the woman which they have experienced from their personal life and emphasizes them into their literature. The new ideas helped them to retrieve its right to exist in the literary world.

While the Arab society wraps the woman's body with a halo of holiness and calls her to cover it up according to the Islamic religious law (Sharī'a) and social norms, the feminist narrative resorts to the woman's body as a tool to resist these norms and refuses the man who is in charge of these norms and their maker. The majority of women writers in the 1950s and 1960s used the slogan "sex freedom" to advocate for women's rights. Some writers started to express themselves fearlessly about breaking the familiar and diverting from the prevailing literary norms and standards. Since the current circumstances have imposed on the woman a social siege that suppresses her emotions and prevents her from making her feelings known. Besides, demanding freedom of sex is the top challenge to society's concepts because it affects the most sacred concepts and because departure from them is considered a violation of taboos and the concept of honor [28] ( p.32) [39] (p. 55).

The woman in the novels of the 1950s rejected the man's authority and the social traditions that prevented her from exercising her freedom and choosing the life that she wanted. She is an educated and active woman whose acquired awareness made her refuse what is imposed on her and she rebelled against it in an attempt to override it as a father's authority, social class, or social traditions. But this rebellion was individual, and therefore, it was negatively flawed and failing. The rebellion of these women was confined to advocating free love, sex, and rejection of authority, especially the authority of literature [28] (pp. 393-394).

That's why the concept of women's freedom at its beginning often seemed to be a blur that did not give itself easily. A deteriorated reality has often been introduced that requires refusal and overreach, and thus, the author was quick to offer alternatives that tend to prove unconvincing, giving up her demands and alternative projects after an experience that is full of failure. But since the mid-

1950s, we have been meeting some female writers who boldly distinguished themselves by boldness from breaking the ordinary and departing from prevailing literary norms [30] (p. 115).

The concept of the woman's freedom and her revolution on two levels: 'The concept of individual liberty, and the concept of collective liberty. The concept of individual liberty is summarized in easing social constraints that pressure and advocate free love and sex. Some of them joined the relaxing of social constraints with the need for science and work and saw in them a way to reach the desired freedom. In addition to the dream of the man who donates for security and stability. Collective freedom takes place at the level of society and homeland. And there are those who incorporate individual liberty into collective freedom and see two important cohesions and a significant correlation [28] (p. 398) [39] (p. 55).

In the sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a major development took place in the woman's creativity and it was no longer possible to divide the issue of the 'woman' from the issue of 'society' on all levels because of the strong connection between the woman's liberation and political reformation. The period 1960-1967 was called a period of fermentation of the constituent factors of the Arab feminist novel. Besides, women did not live on the fringes of political and social life during the harshest trials and volatility that ravaged the Arab world. Moreover, the exclusion of the feminist product in this field from the Arabic novel of war literature impoverishes the literary landscape [31] (p. 6). The mid-70s are considered to be one of the most important periods in feminist writing at the global level, and feminist literature was no longer a substitute, but an important and necessary literature [39] (pp. 55-56).

This development accelerated in the seventies and the eighties [12] (p.457) as the feminist writer became more radical and destructive to the social structure in her treatment of feminist issues. The activity of Arab women in the literary arena reached its peak due to the increase in women's voices and the increase in the education of academic writers. The Civil War in Lebanon is also considered an important motive for the development of feminist literature [12] (p.454) as it succeeded in affecting the maturity of the women intellectually and patriotically and all that is reflected in the literary texts [5] (p.85) [11] (pp. 3-5). Besides, the Civil War provided women writers with an opportunity to produce writing that destroyed the masculine structure of literature [8] (p. XXX). In addition, it produced a large number of Arab women writers and contributed to the increase of cultural and political awareness [17] (p.14).

The tragedy of the war made the woman reconsider her role, believing that her role must be changed to effective participation. Thus, feminist writing became more extreme and destructive of social structure in its handling of women's issues. The Arab author not only addressed social issues and relationships between herself and the man at the social and emotional levels but also sexual relationships. Sex constituted a clear example of the most important forms of rebellion due to restrictions on women in this area and the fact that women were not granted the right to express themselves in this context, as it was considered to be within the

scope of the taboo and the prohibited. In these circumstances, the Arab woman challenged and rebelled against male moral norms, and her contents were centered on resistance to social norms, such as marital relations, women's rights to love, marriage, men's control, and so on [39] (p.56).

Thus, in the 1970s and 1980s, women's models were transformed into positive transmission models that were different from negative ones. They are more aware, more resilient to social pain, and more independent, able through suffering and experience to eliminate all the sediments of the past that limited their start to work with men to build a bright future, transforming their relationships from rivalry to understanding, assimilation, and cooperation [28] (p, 395). It was precisely in the 1980s that the Arab woman's literary activity reached its height, with feminist voices increasing in the Arab world in these years, with the increasing number of readers reading this literature, especially the increasing number of female learners and intellectuals in the Arab countries and the increasing culture of university writers [12] (p. 457).

However, during the period of the revolution, namely since the eighties of the twentieth century till today, the woman has managed to liberate herself from the image of the 'victim' and emerged as a strong offensive character, and even an initiator to start a sexual relationship. Another important feature that appears in this period is the dependence of the Arab woman writer on herself in publishing her creative works and her rejection of the man's guardianship of her and that is reflected in establishing magazines and publishing houses that are devoted to women's feminist writing. All that increased the confidence of the Arab woman in herself and ensured her position in the literary arena in such a way that resulted in rooting the term 'women's literature' in the critics' and writers' consciousness and making it familiar [32] (pp.192-219) [33] (pp.183-192) [39] (pp. 52-57) . This affirms the woman writer's transgression of the norms of society and a violation of taboos and the prohibited [35] (pp.59-62).

There is no doubt that when the woman introduces her concept of 'freedom' she does that in an extremely specific way because she represents one of the most persecuted groups in society. The Oriental man practices his authority by robbing her of her liberties and independence, especially in her encounter with the extremist fundamental religious tide. The woman is still suffering from the duality of the man's look towards her in a society that fears the commission of sin and outrage of modesty in public but does not care about it if it is committed in secret. This duality is reflected in the man's attitude towards the woman in theory and practice. On the one hand, he is attracted to her body and his physical pleasure but, on the other hand, he fears her freedom and therefore, he wraps her body with a halo of sanctification and taboos. Consequently, the woman finds herself compelled to be engaged in two wars, a war against the despotism of the regime besides that of the man, and a war against the factors of suppression that are imposed by the masculine society that is led by men, too.

Despite the qualitative leap that took place in Arab societies in the last three decades of the twentieth century, the woman has still considered a minor creature

who submits to the authority of the man, who violates her rights and imprisons her in his norms, and standards and inherited traditions, and seeks to practice all kinds of suppression against her and prevents her from writing her literary products and publishing them [22] (p. 684). Hence, the Arab woman has suffered many times more than the man has suffered and has become the closest creature to the problematics of freedom and the suppressive mechanism of the trilogy of taboos: politics, sex, and religion.

In the shadow of the formation of feminist writing in the face of a whole history of taboos [4] (p. 12), the woman who lives on such a narrow horizon has no choice but to choose between withdrawing and giving up publishing her works or emigration to an exile that secures freedom for her. However, lots of women writers became aware of their literary role and refused to withdraw or choose to escape from one suppressive homeland and emigrate to other Arab countries or European countries in search of lost freedom.

The women writers who escaped from their homelands started writing symbolically, choosing symbolical characters from their heritage or other cultures such as Scheherazade, the mistress of the Arab women narrators, who resisted death by her word [15] (p.53). The woman also became more able to talk openly, and writing for her became a search for a broader horizon for freedom [4] (p.12). She changed her place from the position of rebellion against masculine norms and standards to the position of revolution, breaking the prohibited trilogy of taboos [15] (p. 38).

In the woman's search for lost freedom, politics were not far from her revolution. Muḥsin Jāsim al-Mūsawī's, who confirms the Arab women writers' tendency to resist their persecution, refers to the correspondence between the policy of feminist writing and the theory of literature after the era of colonialism [26] (p.221). The women writers did not hesitate to defy the censorship of the authorities. They showed strong challenges to it and struggled against the religious and social norms despite the severe punishment that they were threatened by [45] (p.33).

There is no doubt that the most prominent sign of the Arab woman's rebellion was her extreme care about the subject of 'sex', which is rarely absent from the feminist narratives as if the woman was declaring her absence of fear and her rejection to all the kinds of cultural, emotional and political authority. The woman's body was no longer prohibited or tabooed, and sex was no longer considered a 'sin' in the majority of women's writings in the modern period. In fact, the woman started looking at sex as one of her rights and it is a personal issue that has nothing to do with society. In addition to that, it constituted the first step on the road to liberation and rebellion against the masculine authoritative society [45] (pp.57-61).

If the woman is looking for a door through which to rebel; if sex in backward societies represents a 'guilt' and in religious societies 'a sin'; if the woman is the source of that guilt or sin because she is the owner of that body, which should be fortified by all types of prohibitions so that it should not become a cause of disorder that threatens the social peace that is based on religion, the breaking of that taboo becomes the first and foremost challenge of the woman writer.

The woman paid a double price for her political activity and violation of the taboos, first. and second, for her being a 'woman'. A lot of women writers were exposed to investigations or put into prison [15] ( pp.175-176) [45] (pp.31-32) such as the Egyptian writer Nawāl al-Sa'dāwī, who was imprisoned and her books were banned, the Lebanese writer Ḥanān al-Sheikh, whose novel *Ḥikāyat Zahra* was banned in most of the Arab countries, the Lebanese writer Laylā Ba'albakī, who was tried for her violation of the moral values, the Jordanian writer Suhair al-Tal, who was put in prison for describing sexual scenes in her writing, the Egyptian Salwā Bakr, who was jailed for her political activity [45] (p.31), the Kuwaiti writer Laylā al-'Uthmān, who was accused of outrage of decency and public morals and manners [48] (p.280), the Emirate writer Ḍibya Khamīs, who was jailed and prevented from returning to her homeland, the Lebanese writer Hudā Barakāt, the Jordanian writer Fādyā Faqīr, and the Palestinian Ḥamīda Na'na [30] (p.31) [15] (pp.170-171), and many others...

Sometimes, the woman writer is likely to be asked to withdraw from her resistance. For example, Farīda al-Naqqāsh was asked to withdraw and give up her struggle for the advantage of her sons. The man, however, was not demanded to give up his struggle. al-Naqqāsh, however, refused this request, pointing out that the woman suffers in the same way as the man-prisoner suffers and even more. In addition to that the woman has to fight to prove her identity and rights [10] (p.35).

Nawāl al-Sa'dāwī accounts for the woman's 'crime' in her book *Mudhakkārātī fī Sijn al-Nisā'* saying: "The Great crime is that I am a free woman in an age in which people do not want anyone except maids and slaves. I was born in an age in which they try to cancel the mind [29] (p.12), emphasizing that the prison for the woman does not mean the 'walls' only, but the prison of society and its shackles and discrimination against her, where the political oppression becomes at the same level as the religious and social oppression [18] (pp.353-367) [25] (pp. 159-176).

For many decades, the man managed to jail the woman and captivate her in his taboos, to imprison her behind invisible suffocating bars that made the woman live in exile within her home and robbed her of her will. Therefore, the woman writer makes the issue of the woman and her freedom her first concern and places it in the center of the literary text and thus, the feminine self becomes a fundamental focus in this novel without isolating her private concern from the general national concern.

Despite all these obstacles, the woman has become able to break through the taboos and ancient inherited traditions. She is no longer ready to keep silent and starts to express her opinion and say her word freely and even exaggerates her daring, and carelessness about punishment. Thus, the modern feminist narrative, which is one of the products of modernism, has become a breaking-through revolutionary narrative in confronting all the suppressive masculine taboos.

## **2. PRISON LITERATURE: CONTENTS AND ARTISTIC FORMS**

The term 'Prison Literature' [2] [34] [36] [42] refers to the writings that are written in prison or are concerned with the prison. It mainly describes the persecution of

the educated political prisoner and his torture within the walls of the prison, revealing the tools of torture and their brutality [27] (pp.72-76). Prison Literature is a product of a real experience and its writer might be a person who lived the experience of the prison in person or heard about it and lived it through the experiences of others. Prison Literature reveals its connections with the social and political reality and the extent of the authors' attempt to achieve freedom or democracy [14] (p.290). It also condemns the methods of political oppression and intellectual terror, which limits the freedom of the citizen, infringes upon his rights, and prevents him from having freedom of speech and opinion.

Prison Literature is a testimony and a document that is written in order to reveal, expose, and incite. It always takes place after the ugly and painful experience in the form of a recollection. It is generally written and published outside the homeland, far away from the existing political regime, either for fear of the reaction of the regime and censorship or after the disappearance of the regime that is accused of suppression. The beginnings of Prison Literature in Arabic literature started at the beginning of the seventies of the twentieth century and interest in it has been increasing since then. In that period, Arabic literature showed extensive interest in revealing the treatment of political prisoners and torturing them [27] (p.69), which was reflected in the novels, poems, testimonies, documents, and autobiographies. Lots of authors and thinkers were born in prison [21] (p.181), and many of them revealed in their testimonies the experiences that pushed them to write in an attempt to relieve themselves, to recreate a little, to take revenge on the regime, and to reveal the secrets of torturing and suppression that were exerted on the prisoners.

Thus, writing for them became an instrument to bridge over their torture, to resist, and ultimately to liberate themselves and get rid of the oppression of their bitter experiences. On the psychological level, the narrator at the moment of writing, breaks the shackles and chains, both physically and spiritually, by achieving his/her psychological balance by breaking the shackles of the artistic form and its techniques that are parallel with the chains of the prison.

The Place/ Prison plays the most obvious and significant role in Prison Literature, which is a term that is connected with the identity of the Place as the whole story is abridged into the Place/ Prison [32] (pp. 340-349). However, the particularity of this Place lies in its being a repulsive, hated, sieging, suppressive, hostile, and non-human place that is haunted by terror and fear. As a result of the long period that the prisoners stay in it, they acquire their special features and characteristics and consequently, their countenances get closer to one another till they become nearly similar. The prison might also create out of them different persons whose shapes, manners, and behavior conform with his shape, manners, and behavior. This is not connected to a specific place - it is the condition of all the prisons in the Arab World [24] (p. 259).

The multiplicity of prisons, and the variety and diversity of their names and places, do not mean they are different from one another. They can really look like one



prison in their climate and the image of the jailer and his treatment of the victim. All the texts of the Prison Literature introduce one image of the political prison [14] (p.243), and no matter how different the countries and regimes are, the prison is the prison and its goals are the same, and this diversity is only in the degree of cruelty, brutality, and non-humanity in torture. There is the cell, the dungeon, the vault, the isolation cell or confinement, etc.

However, the cell or 'dungeon' as a defined place is not the only place of conflict. Essentially, there is no difference between an imprisoned person in a cell and another one who is haunted by horror outside it. The machine of suppression is the same and it reaches everyone, whether the use of the whip or threatening with its use. Therefore, the citizen has no choice, whether inside the prison or outside it, except to withstand, and resist or collapse [3] (p.103).

Since our age is "the age of arrest, torture, cells and crypts, and the age of police vaults [47] (pp.54-55), the Prison is nothing but a synonym for suppression, and since the Prison/ Place is the one who has authority on the characters and events, Time becomes connected to it, and the novelistic hero becomes a time-space character [7] (pp.205-231) and anyone who discusses the human being discusses his time-space [43] (p.126) entity.

The characters enjoy a dramatic structure because they do not live an ordinary life; they live intensive suffering in which all the good things are destroyed and what remains is only humiliation. Therefore, this type of literature highlights the image of the imprisoned, oppressed, and tortured soul. There is no doubt that physical and psychological torture is also another significant pillar in Prison Literature as it is the mechanism that connects the jailer and the prisoner, who is the tool that performs the suppressive actions that aim to break the prisoner's will and smash it. Actually, the conflict between the prisoner and his jailer is not a conflict of heroism as there is no way to achieve heroic victory in the shadow of the despotism of a brutal national authority [32] (pp.277-288; 301-306).

Prison Literature observes a certain prisoner in a repulsive place in which the authority puts him. It is, then, a coercive involuntary move in which the prisoner moves to a refused place in advance to loss and ruin, and therefore there is no place to talk about as a state of heroism or elevation; it is a journey that ends with an oppressed prisoner who is chased and whose fate is marginalization, subjugation, taming or death. It is a journey of fragmentation in all its dimensions, a journey of anti-heroism and estrangement that is established on the vocabulary of horror and alienation. Because the prison is the master of the memory, the hero, after his release, is afraid to see the imprisoned "I" (ego) that stays within him. He might find it difficult to make peace with the external world and thus, he turns into an alienated weak being. The ugliness of the prison is horrible and huge, and he cannot forget it at all. This makes the human being bear the prison within himself wherever he is, and he becomes 'familiarized' with the prison and domesticated in it [34] (pp. 183-184).

It is liberty that inspires the man his ability to shape the place and build its architecture. However, robbery of one's freedom gives the place the ability to

reformulate the personality of the other and rebuild his architecture. Hence, the prison becomes a place where the prisoner loses his freedom, humanity, and identity. It is the master that recasts the prisoner, not just in his topography, but his own regulations, laws, and private world. The prisoner does not remain as he was before he entered the prison if he is released and he becomes a hero without heroism [36] (pp. 311-333). The cell in prison literature is not the sole site of conflict as a place of suppression, and prison literature seeks to highlight the extraterritorial stalking of the prisoner and the impact of the prison on him and the authority's threat to his family.

Prison Literature belongs to the trend of Modernism and intersects with it. While the Modernist Novel is a product of the periods of suppression and defeat, the Prison Novel belongs to it from this point of view as it depends on artistic styles, methods, and techniques that destroy the traditional artistic systems, *fragmentation of the traditional plot, polyphony, anti-heroism, intertextuality, fantasy, irony, the wandering open text*, etc. If the writer refuses the authority and its suppression, and if the hero is a defeated anti-hero in the shadow of suppression, modernism, after all, is not separate from the Prison Literature that the writer lived and depicted in his words, and it is nothing but the spirit of this non-human world.

This ideological fracture in the Arab world and the ensuing violence necessarily created this modernism to revolt against the bitter cruel reality on all its levels and the writer had inevitably to break through it and rebel against it from within. Therefore, the specificity of the experience requires a specificity of form that is able to contain it and thus, modernism and post-modernism are the address of this violation and destruction.

### **3. FEMINIST PRISON LITERATURE: INTERSECTION BETWEEN PRISON LITERATURE AND FEMINIST LITERATURE**

Despite our admission of difference between the feminist literature and men's literature in general, due to the difference between women's experiences the men's experiences, and despite her different biological and psychological structure, besides her different approaches and concerns, we notice that there is no much difference between the experience of the woman's writing about her experience from the man's writing about his experience. The prisoner is a prisoner and the prison is a prison, too, no matter how different the place and time are because the torturer is the same one – the despotic suppressive regime. Besides, prisoners are similar in their experiences as a result of their similarity in their human feelings.

The woman's experience might be more cruel than the man's experience due to her being a woman. Her jailer is a man and the ruler, the head of the regime is also a man, which means that the degree of the jailer's or the ruler's brutality and suppression doubles because he is a masculine character that belongs to the same biological and physiological structure. He is an authoritative cruel person who has looked at the woman for historical ancient ages with a superior look that considers her 'incomplete in mind and religion.' He does not believe in her mental

abilities neither in her legitimacy of political activity nor in her rights and liberties. Therefore, she is more exposed to the suppression of the trilogy of taboos, which are made by the man.

In view of this, and since the woman has chosen not to stand by helplessly but decided to resist all the hindering suppressive circumstances, there is no doubt that she chose writing to be her tool of resistance, revelation, and raising her voice. Consequently, her lot was like that of the man, who fully resisted the authority. Hence, the authority persecutes her and puts her in prison because the regime does not care about the gender of the opponent; anyone who resists the regime must be tamed and punished.

Her imprisonment was not something unusual for the authority to do, and her being a female does not do good to her or make her jailer deal with her in a better way; on the contrary, he practiced his suppressive masculine authority and tortured her brutally as he tortured men, and then he would rape her body and her soul. Sending a female struggler to a political prison is not a strange issue for the authority, but the new thing is that the female political struggler could write about the prison that she was locked in [14] (p.283), and she should reveal her experience and tell openly about the torture that she was exposed to and thus, contribute to the enrichment of the Prison Literature.

It is no more strange for the Arab woman writer to write in her feminist fiction about all the issues of her society, emphasizing her right to deal with any subject, and that she is not less able or less creative than the man. It was only natural that the women writers start expressing the woman's reality, showing her suffering, demanding her freedom, and asking for a change in her society. Finally, they started condemning the man in a way that amounts to bitter satire. In this way, the feminist Arab writer started combining her literary discourse with her private concerns and the concerns of her homeland. When she became bolder in later decades in her rebellion against political, religious, and social restraints and restrictions, she also became bolder in penetrating the forbidden trinity. Since she had a portion of the prison as equal to the portion of the man and was imprisoned and tortured like him, it was no wonder that she contributed in her writing to the prison literature abundantly [38] (p. 35). Prison Literature was not exclusive to the man, and Arab woman writer was not less able than the man to deal with this type of writing. In fact, she was not reluctant to reveal her experience or reveal the experiences of others and describe them in a literary text. She would also add to her suffering as a prisoner her sufferings as a persecuted and repressed woman in her society, and would gather her feminist texts in one text under this genre of literature, which I called 'Feminist Prison Literature' [35] (p.59-81).

The revelations of the Syrian writer Nabīl Sulaymān in his novel *Samar al-Layālī* can be quoted as testimonies to the clear interest in prison literature that the woman wrote through dealing with experiences of young political female prisoners, and this can be considered an example of the writer's call that intends to encourage the woman to reveal her experience in prison and the necessity of her contribution to Prison Literature. This is what the writer stated through the character of Dr. Rājī, who encouraged the prisoner Rāyā to write, confirming that the woman's share in

Prison Literature is very limited: "Are you waiting for a man to write on behalf of you?", The prisoner's reply to his question points out the writer's attitude that maintains that the man is the accused of marginalizing the woman through her words: "Our share is limited because you usurped from us the writing of history, as you usurped its making and reading, and because we left everything for you. It is high time" [40] (p. 257). As we see, Nabīl Sulaymān emphasizes and witnesses the violation of the woman's right to express herself by the masculine authority, as if he were defending the woman's right to write about her experience without waiting for the man to write it, and if the woman becomes able to write, she will become able to determine her life without being subordinate to the man and his authority.

Other examples of writing in the field of Prison Literature include: *Mudhakkārātī fī Sijn al-Nisā'* by Nawāl al-Sa'dāwī; *Ḥamlat Taftīsh* by Latīfa al-Zayyāt; *al-Sijn wa-l-Waṭan* by Farīda al-Naqqāsh; *Khams Daqā'iq wa Ḥasb.. Sab'u Sanawāt fī Sijn al-Asad* by Hiba al-Dabbāgh; *Nighativ min Dhākirat al-Mu'taqalāt al-Siyasiyyāt* by Rūzā Yāsīn Ḥasan, *Fī Arwiqat al-Dhākira* by Haifa Zankana; *Jidār bayna Zulmatayn* by Balqīs Sharāra; *al-Ḥiṣār* by Fawziyya Radhīd; *al-Ghallāma* by 'Ālya Mamdūh; *Ayyām min Ḥayātī* by Zaynab al-Ghazālī; *'Aynuka 'alā al-Safīna* by May Ḥāfiz and *al-Sharnaqa* by Ḥasība 'Abd al-Rahmān, which will be studied below as a sample of Feminist Prison Literature. Ḥasība published this novel in 1999 in Beirut, Lebanon for fear of being censored and banned in her homeland, Syria [49,50].

A text can be classified as a text of Feminist Prison Literature, from my point of view, if: the writer is a woman, the prisoner is a woman, and the woman is imprisoned in a real prison because of her penetration of the trinity of the forbidden pillars: politics, religion, sex/ traditions of society and its norms, on condition that this does not disconnect from the writer's feminist discourse. She combines in her single text the criteria of the prison literature and its pillars: prison, jailor, and the imprisoned woman, and the issues of feminist literature and its presentations, in which she deals with the woman's concerns and her issues, and offers them the central place in the text and the narrative authority. Because they in this way combine and do not separate, I found out that the combination of the term is also possible, and called it "Feminist Prison Literature". It is the literature in which the woman writer combines her personal concerns and her political, social, and religious concerns, the prison in this literature turns into various images: physical, metaphorical, and moral. Therefore, her literature is expository and rebellious against all taboos. In addition to that, if the woman writer herself is the one who was imprisoned, and then she reveals her prison experience in her literary text, the Feminist Literary text intertwines with the General Prison Literature and they identify with each other strongly and to the furthest point under the title 'Feminist Prison Literature' [35] (pp. 59-81) [37] (pp. 64-65) [38] (pp. 33-56).

The writer here did not hesitate to reveal her experience in a literary text as a political prisoner. On the contrary, she added to her suffering in the prison her suffering as a persecuted and repressed woman outside it. In this literary genre, the writer is the prisoner who was imprisoned in the prison of her country for

political, religious, or social reasons. Thus, she reveals her own experience, even though she tried to camouflage it in her writing within the imaginative narrative art. Here, the experience of the "I", identifies with the 'prisoner', "the writer in Prison Literature", with the experience of the "I", "the writer in Feminist Literature", as if we are in front of two characters in one character, where the "prisoner", in the narration of her suffering behind the bars, identifies with her suffering as a "woman" in a patriarchal society that had imprisoned her before in a metaphorical prison, which is no less severe, as it robbed her of her freedom and chained her by its legacy.

Identification between the "I" that had been imprisoned and is retrieving the prison experience in her aching memory with the "I" that is writing and retrieving those memories, to relive them at the moment of writing. The two experiences mix and integrate in their suffering and the impact of repression, in her quest to emancipate herself from this injustice, and in the interconnectivity of the creative experience when the time to reveal it comes during the process of literary writing. Her desire to reveal the pain that takes place in the soul turns into a semi-explosion that cries in the face of the world. Pain and the feeling of loss unite and the voice of revelation becomes one voice that is compatible and identical in all its feelings and emotions and reaches the highest degrees of a genuine experience [38] (pp. 35-36).

On the other hand, Prison Literature reflects two images of the man, which are necessarily determined by the reality of the prison: the jailer and the prisoner. The jailer represents the traditional image of the negative and repulsive man who is a representative symbol of suppressive authority and its brutality. The prisoner is not an example of the man who is accustomed to suppressing her on the religious or the social level, or the man who is a model of persecution on the level of the family and society; he is not the ruler and the jailer on the political level but the man who suffers like her from suppression and, like her, an oppositionist to the policy of the regime, and the tortured one behind the bars of his prisons. In this, he shares with her the same oppression, marginalization, and exclusion.

Since the educated man is prosecuted because of a thought that he believes in or a political activity that opposes the regime and, consequently, is imprisoned and tortured, and then is released after undergoing a cruel experience, deciding to talk openly and expose the regime through the power of the word and the weapon of 'right of expression'; and since the regime is afraid of this educated intellectual because he threatens its interests and authority, the regime suppresses him and tames him. The woman also seeks in her feminist works to emancipate herself and break through the taboos that prohibit her from practicing her freedom. The educated intellectual man and the feminist woman, who is educated and intellectual also, meet in their pursuit to achieve freedom. Their experiences interconnect when it is time for the revelation in the process of literary writing when writing for them turns into a tool of liberation from the pressure of the experience and images of suppression. Writing turns into an act of revenge, resistance, revelation, exposure, rebellion, and emphasis on the self and its reinforcement so that all these items become central points of intersection and interconnectivity between Prison Literature and Feminist Literature.

Yearning for freedom and liberation from the varied types of repression becomes a fundamental headline for the points of intersections between Prison Literature and Feminist Literature. Here, and at this very point, the imprisoned writer, who expressed his experience in the Prison Literature meets the imprisoned woman writer, who also revealed her experience in her literary text. They meet in the same tunnel and the same suffering; the experience is similar, and they share it as they share creativity and the creative experience. They also share repression of a common enemy and the authority of suppression in all its forms. Here, writing for them turns into a means of liberation from the burden of the experience. Their pursuit of freedom meets at a time of silence and taming, aware of the role of the pen as a weapon for their struggle.

In this way, his experience goes hand in hand with her experience of suffering, and the burden of suppression, first, and second, in their quest for liberation from this injustice, and third, in the correlation of the experience when the time of revelation in the creative process and literary writing arrives. Based on that, narration and writing in this regard turn into a means of remedial purification to empty the soul of its torture and aching memory. Consequently, writing in these two genres becomes a revenge act and a revolution of accountability and condemnation of the authorities, on the one hand, and an act of disclosure, exposure, emptying, purification, and emancipation from the shackles of the captivity of the Self, on the other. Therefore, they cannot be established or formulated except under the motif of "freedom"[38] (p. 37).

Since the educated prisoner, who is a political opponent or dissident who struggles with the weapon of the word and exposes this repression by strengthening the cry of the Self in the face of injustice, the woman is like him in Feminist Literature: she struggles against injustice, breaks through all taboos by writing and disclosure in order to strengthen her self-image and emphasize her rights, qualification, and existence, and she turns into a '*Scheherazade*' who breaks taboos and challenges restrictions and forbidden things despite her certain knowledge of the strict punishments that await her under an authoritarian society. Just as Prison Literature constitutes a revolution against regimes of suppression and their prisons, Feminist Literature is also a rebellion and a revolution against the suppressive male patriarchal norms and a breaking of the political, social, religious, and literary taboos.

If the experience of the Prison Literature is a private experience, the Feminist Literature is also a private experience that the writer describes and discloses by words. If the writer in Prison Literature often depends in his disclosure and revelation on the instruments of stream of consciousness and the first-person-singular narrator, the woman writer also depends on the same instruments in her feminist narration. While writing for the woman is a state of disclosure and purification of accountability of the authoritarian repressive man, Prison Literature is also a state of disclosure, purification, and accountability of the authority and its jailor. If prison means imprisonment of someone at a certain place and prevention of his movement, feminist thought means movement and refusal of stability. If Prison Literature yearns for freedom and refuses imprisonment, they meet here

through their refusal of shackles and yearning for freedom. Since the woman writes in order to assert herself within the male system that dominates society, the writer of Prison Literature writes in order to assert the prisoner's self and recover its right of existence after its exclusion and absenting. Consequently, both are two literary genres that are formed through the duality of 'presence and absence', the presence of the prison and shackles in the absence of freedom and absenting the self and identity [38] (pp. 37-38).

Thus, the central motifs of correlation and intersection between Prison Literature and Feminist Literature become themes of the quest for freedom, openness, rebellion against the family, revolution against society, recovery of robbed things, revenge on the thief, confirmation of the existence of every exile absenting, and smashing of all forms of authority.

This intersection reaches its peak in its absolute identification when the writer herself is the prisoner who has lived this experience, and she is the one who reveals her experience in prison through her pen. Thus, she combines the two experiences: her experience as a female, and her experience as a prisoner. She combines her being a victim of the repressive political system and her being a prisoner behind its bars, first, and second, her being a victim who is imprisoned behind moral bars of norms, and traditions that besiege her in her society; a male patriarchal authoritarian society that condemns her in advance. Her rebelling scream is doubled against the observation and censorship of the forbidden trinity: the social, the religious, and the political taboos.

The correlation between these two types/ genres also takes place on the level of form by relying on modernist and post-modernist formal and stylistic techniques by the motivation of slipping from the traditional restrictions of writing and its norms. Modernity provided them with a significant positive response to freedom and refusal of the system of the traditional authoritarian literary tradition. The quest of the woman writer to detach herself from the classical forms towards a new artistic form stems from two justifications: the first is her quest for emancipation from the authority of the man, and her revolution against the contents and male norms that are considered purely male products. The second is her attempt to circumvent the repressive system and emancipation from the suppression of the forbidden trinity. In this way, the woman writer resembles the man writer in his search for emancipation from all these authorities.

Feminist Prison Literature confirms this correlation and intersection. It also proves that what the woman writes in Prison Literature does not differ in its thematic and technical manifestations from what the man writes. This is attributed, first, to the similarity between prisons and their reality, second, to the particularity of the human experience, and third, to the emphasis on the ability of the woman writer to produce creative works. All this refutes the views that seek to devalue the woman's literature and claim that she is incapable of facing the world and its issues [35] (pp. 64-66) [37] (pp. 63-73).

#### 4. THE NOVEL *AL-SHARNAQA* AS A SAMPLE

The novel *al-Sharnaqa / The Cocoon* by the Syrian novelist Ḥasiba 'Abd al-Rahmān is a sample that illustrates my approach and arguments. The novel contains a clear presence of all the fundamental pillars of Prison Literature such as the prison, the prisoner, and the physical and moral torture. Besides, it includes the features of women's Feminist Literature and its themes.

Ḥasiba dedicated her novel *al-Sharnaqa* to the horrible space of prisons: "It is a writing that cries out what a certain career and a testimony leak about the queer Arab day... it is a bloody writing that exposes the suppresser, the suppressed, the space of suppression and its methods in an extreme way" [41](p. 291). The writer highlights the world of political female writers of different political shades that range from religious fundamentalism to al-Ba'th Party and the leftists. They are female prisoners of different human types such as Kawthar, Da'd, Tuhāma, Lamā, and others. Kawthar is probably the most prominent one as she represents the most central characters and the one that is most similar to the writer Ḥasiba herself. She is a political activist and bears the code name of 'Sanā'. The novel starts at the moment of her arrest when her home is surrounded and raided, but it seems that this is not the first time that she is arrested.

The reader of the novel notices that the writer breaks all the taboos and this indicates that this narrative text, which combines between the novel and autobiography, is a literary sample that belongs to the feminist prison literature. On the feminist dimension, the writer highlights the list of taboos that the woman lives in the shadow of traditional masculine culture: "Each year, the list of taboos expands", but Kawthar seeks to demolish the taboos and revolts against all the masculine chains and rebels against anyone that excludes her from decision-taking and refuses that anybody robs her of her freedom.

When she becomes twenty years old, she gets rid of the complex of 'body', 'taboos', 'shame', 'prohibitions' and 'sacred' things, and the like. Then she starts to plan her way in politics, a way that grants her the ability to escape from her old world, liberate herself from its shackles, and enter the secret organizations that are banned by the State"[1] (p.20). Her engagement in political life with no fear or hesitation is considered one of the features of feminist literature that appear in this text besides her appearance as an educated intellectual who is concerned with what happens in her homeland and outside it, politically, culturally, and socially, and an activist who belongs to a political organization, and a revolutionary struggler against the suppressive man who is represented in all the forms of the authority.

In her novel *al-Sharnaqa*, Ḥasiba was one of the women writers who broke through the taboo of sex daringly as she dealt with it in an intensive way. No doubt, she did that out of her emphasis on the need to destroy the man's norms and postulations and to prove her daring to break his taboos. In addition to that, she employed sexual descriptions as a part of the tools of torture that the jailer practiced against the imprisoned victim. She dealt with the rebellion of the heroine Kawthar against the foregranted sexual postulation that shackles her by the obligation to keep her



virginity till she gets married. Kawthar seeks to rebel not because she wants to achieve a sexual desire at that moment and she justifies that by saying: "I rebelled against my family and society[1](p.15); "I rebelled against a society that considered sex as an eternal complex and a shame that is made by the devil and an honor for which blood is shed"; "I got rid of my shame and my family's shame and my suppressed society when I took off my clothes... led under the pressure of the hypnotic rebellion rather than a desire at that moment" [1] (p.46).

Thus, breaking the taboo of sex and rebelling against it becomes a symbol of resisting the man and rejecting his rules. Since marriage in the masculine norms is a masculine tool that the man exploits to prove his social superiority to the woman and to impose through it her subordination and submission to him, the woman's opposition to marriage means her resistance to the man[45] (p.50). If sex can be a woman's right only under the legitimacy of marriage and through her obligation to keep her virginity, she has no way but to rebel against marriage and the sacredness of sex in it. In view of this, the woman writer deals with the virginity of the woman with the intention of breaking the taboo, like many other feminist deeds [45] (p.41). There is no doubt that this daring on the subject of sex points out the woman's conflict with the masculine authority, and it is considered a medium on which the woman leans in her redefinition of the concept of the Self publicly[45] (p.57).

To camouflage reality from censorship, the writer refers on the cover of her novel to the feature of the imaginary dimension and the illusion of the characters and their unreality. In spite of the fact that she admitted in an interview that her novel depends largely on a personal experience she lived in prison and that she had to publish it in Beirut because she realized that the censorship in Syria would not agree with its publishing, she pointed out at the beginning of the novel, that "the characters of this novel are made up of imagination even if they resemble real persons, for artistic and psychological necessities" [1] (p.5).

The other side on which the novel depends is based on her life outside the prison including childhood memories and her social and religious heritage. She points out that her work was a revelation of the experience of the prison and exposure to the shape of the authority and its nature in Syria, which practices all kinds of suppression against its citizens.

We also find another resemblance between Kawthar's character and the writer's character. What Kawthar mentioned is the same cause as the writer mentions regarding her affiliation with the Association of the Communist Work, through which she was seeking to repel persecution and rebellion in the shadow of a social and political regime that suppresses woman and practices all kinds of physical, psychological and moral persecutions against her [50].

In addition to that, there is a resemblance between the methods of brutal torturing that the prisoners Kathwar and Ḥasība were exposed to. It sounds like she was describing her suffering in those moments. This is confirmed by the testimony of Rūzā Ḥasan and her allusion in her book *Nighatīv*, which will be dealt with later in

the study. Thus, the novel reveals the integration of political topics with social and religious ones. No one of these taboos is separated from the other, which confirms the pursuit of the desired freedom on the special level of woman and the level of the people who seek freedom and democracy in general.

#### **4.1 The Dialectic Relationship between the Jailer and the Prisoner**

The relationship between the jailer and the prisoner in the women's literature does not differ in its essence from that in the men's literature. It is also a highly negative relationship that is based on a violent conflict between two sides: a strong suppressive side versus a weak unarmed isolated side. However, the different aspect here is that the weak side (the woman prisoner) is weaker than the man prisoner from the viewpoint of men and the concept of masculine culture.

The woman "is described by her physical and psychological weakness" [45] (p.35) and is considered, in principle, to be subordinate to the man and submissive to him, which indicates the superior outlook that her jailer has for her. In addition to his being the investigator/ torturer/ jailer/ authority servant, he is also the suppressive persecuting man who becomes more brutal when he sees a woman prisoner in front of him. First, he covets her body and desires to rape her as a way to suppress her; he enjoys torturing her in order to prove his control of her; *first*, control over the woman, and *second*, the control of the jailer of the prisoner. This is what Kawthar confirms when she says: "Damn it! Our arrest is a catastrophe, menstruation, pain, and long hair. Above this and that, our look is exciting sexually" [1] (p.55).

From this perspective, the jailer/ executor in this novel does not differ from his stereotypical image. He is a cruel character who commits brutal and non-human actions. This also applies to Prison Literature in general. The woman seeks to describe the man in a negative way; he is the cruel and violent hard man who seeks to smash and humiliate her by using all the available tools of physical and psychological violence. The woman prisoner becomes like any other prisoner, a mere number who is deprived of her humanity, a disfigured deformed man, who is robbed of his will and freedom.

In return, the woman prisoner tries to resist and refuses to let him humiliate her or disgrace her honor: "I summon my entity... defend it, I will not be trodden on by his shoes... I summon my honor, my dignity that was lost like dreams" [1] (p.296). She looks for all the powers of patience in herself in order to hold fast in the face of her rapist. The woman prisoner Kawthar beats her jailer when she deceives herself that the 'Tumīsha' (eye-band) has a different moral benefit. Instead of being a tool of robbery and intimidation, it turns into a tool with which she conceals her countenances and parts of her face. Thus, the investigator cannot pierce her absent looks and interpret them: "Anyway, what is there in the investigation rooms to look at? The drawer? The seat? The electricity? The brutal faces?" [1] (p.32). The women prisoners declare their strike also challenging the jailer in order to improve their conditions [1] (p.144). They also seek to employ the methods that the men prisoners in general employ in order to break the shackles of the prison such as

"knocking on the walls" or "hitting on the wall", which is the prisoners, known language, "a new addressing between the deaf and the dumb, a new language according to the newness of the prison" [1] (p. 40).

The dialectic between the jailer and the prisoner in the feminist literature is embodied in the woman prisoner's challenge, not only to her actual real jailer but to her metaphorical one - that jailer who is representative of the conservative masculine society with all its shackles that suppress her human and creative rights. The woman in the shadow of these masculine societies is in the margin, dumb, concealed, and committed to a stereotypical role as a mother a housewife, or a sexual object [23] (p.813).

Therefore, Ḥasība deals with the suppression of society and its shackles. Prisoner Kawthar confirms that her membership in the party and her political activity pulled her freedom and built her project in the shadow of a social and political system that suppresses the woman and practices all kinds of physical, psychological, and moral persecutions against her. By that, they might acknowledge her and admit her humanity and she would turn from being "an animal that walks on two," as they say about women, into a human being "who has been released despite the heavy cost that she paid"[1] (p.19).

In my opinion, the sexual rebellion constitutes another reflection of the dialectic between the jailer/ society and the prisoner/ woman. That is implied in the rebellion of the female heroine against the sex taboo after she rebelled against the political taboo, declaring her riddance of the complex body taboos. If the man is the protector of the sex taboo, and if the jailer/executioner is a man, she has no way but to break through this taboo and rebel against it just like Kawthar who gets rid of her virginity in order to get rid of her dishonor. She succeeds in her rebellion and achieves a desire that she wants to achieve and, thus, she overcame and beat her jailer.

All this injustice and persecution will inevitably push the prisoner of *al-Sharnaqa* to create an imaginary homeland according to her desires in order to protect herself from the cruelty of alienation: "I entered the cocoon. It is the cocoon, the self of the self; it is the bar in life and in the anonymities of the veils and marshes of comfort and illusion of the Ego (I), and privacy of the circumstances; the withdrawal from life step by step[1] (p.263).

The irony between prison and freedom appears in this context of dialectic between the jailer and the prisoner and it stems from the irony that the woman prisoner lives. On the one hand, she misses her freedom; her physical movement is limited and her communication with the external world is prohibited but, in return, she breaks the chains of the prison and emigrates through the movement of awareness and imagination into a different reality or imaginary homeland that she created and called *al-Sharnaqa*. She lives in moral freedom through her intellectual mental movement. Each time the jailer/ investigator seeks to rob her of her will and destroy her, the woman prisoner seeks to look for a way to resist, refusing to allow the jailer/ executioner to beat her. This cannot be achieved except by searching into the folds of her soul about light/freedom in the darkness of this place.

Here, the prisoner is likely to know herself for the first time and faces it, dives into it, and realizes the spots of her power and her weakness. She might make peace with it after she rejected it and might recollect her memories and dreams. By entering this sharnaqa/cocoon, the prisoner seeks to abate her feeling of alienation in order to give herself the feeling that she is still human with natural sensations and is capable of keeping her psychological freedom and her intellectual independence and controlling her reality even if in her illusion and imagination. It is the spiritual freedom that nobody can take from her and that gives hope to her life. Recollection of memories gives her a feeling of warmth and security and achieves for her the internal balance that she lost as there are no chains nor bars in the folds of memory. This is the quest inward to look for her salvation, the journey of her consciousness when alienation dominates the Place; it is the trip inside the cocoon.

When the woman prisoner summons her memory and her past through the techniques of interior monologue, association, flashback, reveries, and daydreams, they turn into compensatory tools and mechanisms that the prisoner needs in the shadow of her moral siege. Ḥasiba describes the reveries and daydreams through the voice of her heroine Kawthar that they are "pleasure for the prisoner; the pleasure of being in a reverie and enjoyment of the wonderful dream" [1] (p.77). which becomes a kind of salvation through treatment by illusion. She might achieve a kind of partial heroism in that. However, the dreams are likely to turn into nightmares that deprive the prisoner's sleep and comfort after the cruel torture sessions, where one's awareness is mixed with delirium[1] (pp.13, 25,28).

#### **4.2 The Antihero Prisoner**

The image of the woman prisoner is not an image of the traditional woman who is submissive to the man, but the image of the learned, educated, active, political, and daring woman. If politics, religion, society, and sex are made by men, she rejects them and rebels against them. She is a woman who initiates things even if that leads to her imprisonment and destruction. On the other hand, she can be put behind bars like a suppressed prisoner who is robbed of his will. Thus, she identifies with him and resembles him in his alienation and defeat in front of the non-human jailer/ executioner and, in this way, both of them become antiheroes in the prison. So, about what kind of heroism can we talk in the shadow of national despotic merciless Arab regimes? In an interview with her, Ḥasiba says that her novel *al-Sharnaqa / Cocoon* "is not a novel of heroes" [50].

Ḥasiba emphasizes that in her "Necessary Note" in the introduction to her novel under the title, saying: "The heroes of the novel raised the flags and were imprisoned at a time when heroism became 'madness'... the characters of the novel, and, in short, they are the result of the repeated defeats, breakdown of the values of justice, equality, destruction of the human being and extinction of dreams" [1] (p.5).

In this case, how can the writer talk about heroes at a time of intellectual and military defeats? The prisoner's inability to achieve victories over the jailer/

executioner or to free herself from the prison is evidence of her loss of the battle, and this turns her into a destroyed and smashed person. Because of this, the traditional image of the 'hero' disappears and the idea of the 'anti-hero' replaces it [44] (p.367). From this perspective, Kawthar was not a hero despite her rebellion against the social, political, and religious regime, but she could not find except defeat and debacle in the time of defeats and suppression. She says: "The tax that every woman pays if she raises her head a little if the authorities fail to destroy, her relatives will destroy her... it is the condition of defeats... it is necessary to break the wings of any woman who raises her head and destroy her.... It is the fates..., we tried to ridicule them... but they overcame [1] (p.296).

Thus, this type of anti-hero appeared in the last period of feminist literature[46] (p.197). It is the example of the anti-hero woman who fails to achieve her purpose and the masculine institution succeeds in subjugating her and hinders her from achieving her goals. The novel reflects the breakdown of the dreams, aspirations, and imprisonment of the Self in a suppressive reality.

The prisoner was well aware of the fact that she was facing a fascist national authority but she did not fear to be engaged in politics and resistance of the regime and thus, she found herself in prison, where her voice was suppressed and tamed. She sometimes showed resilience and endurance but at other times, she showed her breakdown. She also showed her complete readiness to bear her pain in order to protect her honor but she failed in most times and fell prey to rape and sexual violence from a deformed jailer/ executor and remained behind the bars submissively.

The impact of the prison on the male prisoner and the suffering that it causes are not different from its impact and suffering on the woman prisoner. Their human feelings, fear, and pain are the same; their yearning for freedom, emancipation, and longing for other people are the same. Thus, imagination becomes necessary in prison. Nothing remains for the prisoner after his jailer deprives him of everything except his imagination and dreams. The woman prisoner in the novel "misses an open life; we smell, eat, look for a far horizon that is not limited by walls nor concealed by a tree or guards", "I imagine myself, I imagine it like 'Ashtār picking anemones; I wait for Adūnīs or Ba'ī" [1] (pp. 272-275). The best moments of imagining for Kawthar are: "to smell the smell of freedom, the people in the street... to run, run and embrace them, and see the joy in their eyes embrace me, welcome me from the bottom of my heart...and forget the unhappiness, the sorrow, and the torture and prison" [1] (p.276).

As we see, the prison does not differentiate in its suppression between one prisoner and the other; it does not discriminate between those who stay in it, but it practices its suppression and alienation on anyone who stays in the prison, including the jailer himself. It is the extremely awful psychological distraction and internal laceration that the man and the woman live alike. In fact, Kawthar confirms that the prison is not more merciful to the woman than the man but more merciless and more brutal. The curse of the prison is identical to the shackles of the traditional society and its authority on women. The prison becomes a curse and a

pain, and "above this and that, our appearance is sexually exciting... the women are short of religion and mind. We got lost among the slogans of liberation and blind obedience to our homes, and consequently, to our kitchens, laundry, and children, while the men remained on the platforms conflicting about important ranks and sensitive missions and thus, we are marginalized as we used to be before. They say slogans of deception and cunning in order that we remain always behind them" [1] (p.55). "I look at myself in the mirror and see another woman in shape; how about the internal changes?"[1] (p.277). Probably, her constant repetition of the expression "I spit on everything" indicates the degree of her feeling of disgust and misery about the cruelty of this reality and its violence.

In the shadow of marginalization to the point of alienation and loss of identity, the wound in the soul of the woman prisoner becomes wider: "Our life became like that of a cocoon.. in every bed, there is a silkworm that weaves its silk by itself and its hand... this is the law of the prison" [1] (p.199). In this way, Kawthar found herself in the prison "without clothes, memories, or personal documents, displaced, and wandering between the prison, the street, and secret homes" [1] (p.78). In prison, all the values and sacrifices that the individual lived for outside the prison are destroyed, and he turns to a personal issue, which is his search for a way to survive and search for himself. In the shadow of this total destruction, this daily death, the two women prisoners, Zahīra and Mājīda, break down and get a psychological disease.

Probably, the regret of the woman prisoner Tuhāma because of her choice of politics at the expense of her daughter is the cruelest suffering that the mother prisoner lives when she loses her belief in the benefit of her struggle. She starts inquiring herself about the futility of political activity. Tuhāma, who gave birth to her daughter inside the walls of the prison, and lived with her in the cell till she became four years old, and then was released to be taken by her relatives [1] (p.250), receives a letter from her daughter that says that she will not live with her when she goes out of prison. This made her ask herself burningly: "What did she gain from this experience except her daughter's grudge against her, her hatred, and her cruel decision to refuse to live with her? Here, her feeling of irony destroys her. "How can she build a homeland and destroy her own home? What a paradox! She made her an orphan and failed in her motherhood." "I shouldn't have left my daughter and run after a struggling fame and renown". "What does it mean to win the world and lose my daughter?" [1] (p. 250, 253, 290). It is the human deformation of motherhood.

### **4.3 Images of the Physical and Psychological Torture**

The types of torture that Ḥasiba described about the prisoners of her novel, and which she herself experienced in the prison, were not less cruel than the types of torture that the jailer practiced against men prisoners as other writers described them. Kawthar was tortured by being hit with sticks, whips, and cables, in addition to a German chair, hanging on a ladder, the wheel, and even the use of electric shock in her mouth [1] (pp. 32-33) or torture by starvation and preventing her from drinking water [1] (p.143).

Rape or sexual assault for a woman who lives in an Oriental society, who sees her chastity as the most precious thing that she possesses, might be the most horrible, heaviest, and most humiliating type of torture. Therefore, the jailer would consider denuding the woman prisoner as an important basis before he starts torturing her because this act weakens the woman's determination and breaks her will.

The writer Rūzā Ḥasan, in her documentary novel *Nighatīv min Dhākīrat al-Mu'taqalāt al-Siyasiyyāt* [19] documents the brutal methods that Ḥasība was exposed to during the period of her imprisonment, and on which Ḥasība depended in her novel, and made her heroine Kawthar be exposed to the same brutality that she was exposed to. Rūzā describes one of Ḥasība's torture scenes saying: "The 'Elements' [jailer assistants] were pushing dirty pieces and rags into her mouth, closing it with those dirty things till she was about to choke, and then they would hit her with four-wire cables on her feet, her arms and other parts of her body while she was tied and lying on the floor unable to move. Each time they noticed that her body was about to collapse, they would pour a bucket of water on her to wake her up. Then they would torture her again and then they would shock her with electricity. She stayed up sleepless and without food for several days hearing nothing except the voices of the tortured ones. She also received a lot of torture by the German chair. The jailer hit her head against the wall, and electricity was on her tongue, mouth, fingers, and feet and then, she would be put in an isolation cell for four months. She lost her ability to distinguish between kinds of food and kinds of taste as a result of torturing her with electricity on her tongue. It took her months to regain that lost ability. She was also exposed to the torture of switching cigarettes off on her body" [19] (pp. 66-69, 119). This is exactly what Ḥasība described in her novel *al-Sharnaqa* through Kawthar's character, which turns her novel into an autobiography in prison and clarifies her aim to reveal the truth and expose reality with live evidence that she lived behind bars.

The text is not void of psychological suffering and description of the suppressed and suffering soul. The psychological suffering starts at the moment of arrest and the woman prisoner is exposed to insults and curses [1] (p. 33). Repulsive smell plays another role in her psychological torture [1] (p.31), and what increases her fear is the spread of diseases, insects, and animals in the prisons, which sends horror into the soul of the woman prisoner [1] (p. 37), or forces her to excrete or urinate inside the cell or prevent her from going out to the toilet [1] (p. 38).

Thus, according to the testimony of the writer, the woman's torture was not less brutal than what the male prisoner describes his torture. She was also exposed to the most horrible types of torture by a brutal jailer, who originally sees her as a female body that arouses his lust, let alone when he sees that body as his own possession with no one to watch him or deter him! On the other hand, the woman was not afraid of courageously describing the ugliness of torturing her body in detail including sexual descriptions as a cry of the challenge to the authorities and exposure to the brutality of the jailer in his violation of the scary thing that society, mainly the masculine society, boasts of. There are no scary things inside the prison, nor value for the human being, whether a man or a woman.

The woman writer seeks to break the authority rule that prevents the 'word' and forbids its speaker from expressing her thoughts about these sacred things. She does that daringly, which reflects her bravery in defying the suppressive regime and revealing the brutality of torture in its prisons. It is also an attempt by the writer to confirm to the man-writer that she is not less brave than him or less able to combat the political, sexual, and social taboos.

#### **4.4 The Artistic Levels**

The woman's special presence is reflected in the specialty of her personal experience that is formulated under the pressure of circumstances that do not resemble the man's circumstances. The male writer writes in a masculine society that contributes to his cherished in forming his language, discourse, and norms, while the woman writes in the same masculine society as a marginalized and suppressed voice and at a lower status than that of the man, which lends her autobiography more marginalization and rebellion against the taboos and coercions that she suffers from.

The study found that there is a clear intersection between Feminist Literature and Prison Literature in this novel, on the level of form and style, on the one hand, and on modernism, on the other. In my opinion, the attempt of the woman writer to break away from the classical form of the novel towards a new artistic form, through which she can bridge over the suppressive reality and reject the different forms of authority, stems from two justifications: the *first* includes her attempt to liberate herself from the authority of the man, her revolution against the masculine contents and norms that are considered a purely masculine product, and her desire to prove her creative ability and knowledge of all the new and modernist experimental tools; the *second* includes her attempt to evade the suppressive regime and break the prohibited trilogy of politics, religion, and sex. She meets at this point with the man writer in his quest for liberation from this trilogy and breaking it, too. These attempts to escape from the captivity of the classical artistic forms and their shackles, consciously or unconsciously, constitute an attempt to achieve an analogy to the freedom of content, on the literary level, by possessing her freedom to choose her literary form.

As mentioned above, the study has found that the novel adopts several autobiographical elements. In fact, the subject matter of the novel emerges from the writer's subjective experience but the writer mixes it with the imaginary element in an attempt to camouflage and evade the censor and his inquisitions.

Therefore, Nabīl Sulaymān does not consider the work to be a novel and he describes it in the following words: "The structure of *al-Sharḥaqa*, as a whole, slips away from affinity with the novel, but it aspires to it and remains a testimony – probably an autobiographical one – to the degree of the Arab suppression"[41] (p.296). The writer turns her novel into a recording novel within the frame of the Prison Literature genre as a form of a documentary that reflects facts and reality, following the men's approach exactly. She aims to write, document, declare, and protest, stating that the purpose of the writing process here is to reveal and expose



the painful reality of her homeland. Thus, her novel turns into a mirror that imitates the forbidden and exposes it. The element of the creative imagination becomes an ancillary element that helps this document.

Ḥasiba, like others, depends on the technique of *metafiction*, which is fiction that includes a commentary on its fictional identity [16] (p. 20), which positions itself at the dividing border between 'fiction' and 'criticism', and introduces questions about the relationship between 'fiction' and 'reality'. Since this novel is a challenge to the taboo and a revelation to prohibited contexts, there is no wonder that we find the writer mix between 'prison literature' and writing about her 'freedom in creativity and freedom of expression'. Thus, her personal life and private experiences turn into literary material that is written on paper freely, because reality does not guarantee that desired freedom. Here, metawriting becomes a weapon for freedom and a tool for emancipation, and since life has become a nightmare and an illusion, in the viewpoint of the Arab women writers, writing itself has become real life because writing in itself is a pursuit of freedom, and literature in itself is a free reality. Therefore, it is no wonder that we find several types of meta-literature everywhere because they are the hope that keeps women writers alive [46] (pp. 207- 210).

This is exactly what the writer did when she divulged secrets that the regime would not tolerate easily. Besides, writing about the prison is an act of revenge, in which the writer seeks to build her own world with words, and metafiction becomes the most needed tool to reinforce this world and is employed as a weapon for freedom. Thus, in this hostile reality, the woman is liberated from the power of the man and his dominance and compensates for that by her pen through which she finds her way to her freedom and realization of her humanity. Consequently, she identifies here with any prisoner who was robbed of his freedom, whether a man or a woman.

*Metafiction* is probably the most important element that she wrote on the first page of the novel under the title "Necessary Note": "The characters of this novel are imaginary, even if they resemble real characters for artistic and psychological necessities. Its heroes raised the flags and were imprisoned in a time where heroism has become a kind of madness, sacrifice has become nonsense, principles are treaded by shoes, and daring has become submission and spitting on the flags. In short, the characters of the novel are products of repeated defeats and the collapse of the values of justice, and equality, the breaking of teeth and extinction of dreams.... or their escape to heaven under the pressure of defeat, fear, and cowardice. Ḥasiba" [1] (p. 5). Metafiction appears here at the beginning in the note, which she signs under her name at the end, taking care to clarify the imaginarieness of the characters and then to emphasize their anti-heroism, as if the writer was playing, *first*, the role of the critic of her text, and *second*, the role of the 'censor' as she blurs and camouflages the reality and tries to keep away from herself the accusation that what she writes has really occurred, defining the relationship between her novel and reality, which constitutes clear metafiction.

This means that the writer interferes in advance in defining the indication of the text, through which she expresses her ideological attitude about the world she is

living in, and allows herself to comment and interpret. By that, she defines the type of the desired reading of the 'opening', and defines the relationship between the reader and the text.

Thus, the writer expresses her opinion about her non-human reality and points out its repeated defeats of injustice and cruelty. Besides, she plays the role of the critic about the 'Antihero' by clarifying her view about heroism in this age. The writer's note constitutes her revelation and uncovering of a suffering soul that seeks salvation in a time of fear and violence. All that takes place through her concealment behind illusion and denial of the reality of the characters. In this way, metafiction in the woman narrative appears to be an appearance of tool for resisting the masculine literary institute, too [46] (p. 212).

Metafiction also appears in the first threshold, namely, the title of the novel, which can be considered to be a critical practice of the writer about his work and his abridgment of the indication of the text [16] (p. 160). The writer's approach in the title *al-Sharnaqa* follows the approach of the writer Muṣṭafā Khalīfa in his novel "*al-Qawqa'a/ The Shell*" [20] in mentioning the word 'sharnaqa' within the text and commenting on it. Thus, the title constitutes an allusion to the place of the novel, where the suppression of the jailer pushed the woman prisoner to withdraw slowly and enter the sharnaqa/ cocoon exactly as the prisoner-narrator did in the novel of *al-Qawqa'a* by Muṣṭafā Khalīfa, who enters the shell looking for a shelter and withdrawal from the painful reality. Thus, the title of *al-Sharnaqa* becomes a revelation and exposure to the content of the text and even a parallel text with the contents of the novel and its indications. The title itself is symbolic of the illusive compensatory place to which the woman prisoner withdraws in her imagination in an escape from the evil of her actual reality, the reality of the prison as a repulsive and suppressive place.

The end of the novel is like the end of most prison novels and it tends to adopt the open end structure [14] (p. 242). Thus, *al-Sharnaqa* ends in Kawthar's delirium and her dreams, and then with a wonder that emphasizes the open-ended text through the employment of the tale of *al-Ghūla* (Female Ghoul) that ate the baby goats. Kawthar addresses her mother: "You were wrong, Mom, when you told the story of *al-Ghūla*; you said that *al-Ghūla* changed her shape and became a she-goat and thus, she succeeded in deceiving the baby goats and ate them. When the goat returned and knew what happened, she went to the Smith and sharpened her horns and went to fight the *Ghūla*, and she triumphed over her?" "And you stopped and did not complete the story. "What changed in the children, Mother, after they spent a while in the abdomen of the *Ghūla*, and after she sucked their blood? What has changed, Mom?" [1] (p.303). The novel ends with this question as if it were asking: what has changed in the prisoners in the abdomen of the prison, in the abdomen of suppression: suppression of the homeland and its injustice?

There is no doubt that the *Ghūla* is a symbol, and probably, it symbolizes the prison, which robs the prisoners of their humanity and sucks their blood and, consequently, the citizen becomes weak and fragile like the babies of goats in the face of the brutality of the regime and its despotism. The jailer does the same thing

to the prisoners. It certainly changed the prisoner and sucked his humanity. The *Ghūla* might also symbolize the Homeland and the whole Arab Homelands that suck the blood of their citizens and suppress them. Thus, the Homeland turns into a *Ghūla* and a prison because the homeland that suppresses its citizens is their prison and there is no difference between it and a prison with bars and walls. It is a prison that suppresses people's freedom and any attempt to think differently. Thus, the prisoner lives as an alien in his homeland. Probably Nabīl Sulaymān's query about the abdomen of the *Ghūla* confirms this argument: "Is the abdomen of the *Ghūla* a cell or a prison? Or is it this suppressive and suppressed Arab space?" [41] (p. 296).

There is no doubt that the feelings of fragmentation and alienation that the woman prisoner lives after her release are more horrible than the feelings of the man. How can a traditional society that oppresses the woman and looks at her as an inferior creature who lacks mind and religion accept her as a political activist, a rebellion, and a prison- graduate? It is the prison that conquers the prisoner and robs him of his humanity and does much more to the woman, the more violated, the more torn, and the more excluded element in society. Nothing can stay as it is in her and she will not get out of prison as sound as she used to be before she entered it. No matter how much she tries to escape from the conditions of the prison and its effects, she will not be able to get away and survive this damned fate. It is the prison that robs the man of his humanity.

Ending the novel with this query implies that the destiny of the characters is still suspended though we can imagine the degree of breakdown and psychological collapse that the ones who were in the abdomen of the *Ghūla* suffered. Surely, they will get out of it deformed, imprisoned, semi-dead, and carry their prisons inside them. The query is merely a rhetorical question that aims to confirm the brutality of the *Ghūla* / Prison/ Homeland. The authority might return to the prisoner all his things but it is unable to return his stolen freedom to him. Consequently, he lives a life of loss and fails to make peace with the world outside this 'sharnaqa/ cocoon'. The prison is necessarily, a hopeless and terrible Present; it is also a Future without characteristics and is dwelled by horror and fear. The *Ghūla*/ Prison will certainly reform the character and its identity or rob it and consequently, alienate it and defeat it with no hope of a return to what it used to be before it entered the prison, "one year inside the prison makes the person look ten years older" [1] (pp. 217-218).

#### **4.4.1 Yearning for freedom in shaking the traditional structure**

One of the features of Prison Literature is the fragmentation of the traditional plot. Since the experience of the prison is a private experience in its place and time, it certainly introduces a definite particularity of style and form in which everything is destroyed as life is destroyed inside and outside the prison. The novel of *al-Sharnaqa* is a modernist feminist text that yearns for freedom and rebels against the traditional form in order that its form will identify with its content, and destroy the formal writing foundations, and thus, its condition will be exactly like the condition of the women prisoners.

The writer employs literary styles and forms as an expression of her criticism, protest, and resistance through the achievement of some points of view that are connected to post-modernism and deconstruction. The women writers in their feminist literature aim to resist the traditional writing styles and try to be distinctive or to separate themselves from masculine writing and lead a new unusual tendency in modern Arabic literature. They challenge the men's domination, the mainstream that has always been established by men [46] (p. 217).

One of the most important features in which Feminist Literature intersects with Prison Literature is the domination of the main character. If the suppressed prisoner is the main character and he is the narrator in most texts, the woman, too, in the feminist fiction, is the main character and she is the one who takes upon herself the role of narrating the events through the employment of the first person singular in most texts and, in this way, she controls the events and the process of narration.

Here, Feminist Literature meets with Prison Literature through focalization on the Self and the emergence of the Ego (I) in it. Some critics consider the writer's focalization on the Self as the feature that turns the writings of the woman novelist into a type of 'Confession Literature', which is based on one's unbosoming, recollection, and association in recalling the components of one's autobiography. The employment of the first-person singular narrator is considered an indicator of breaking into the introduced issues seriously and a clear-cut indicator of narrating taboo content daringly [30] (p. 359). The Arab women writers intend to offer priority to the Feminine Self and therefore, they employ the first person singular pronoun maintaining that it is the best tool to achieve that goal in literature because the first person pronoun is more able to create correspondence between life and literature [46] (pp. 201- 203).

Roger Allen maintains that the majority of Arab women writers employ the voice of the female narrator in the first person singular, which is the voice of confession. This feature creates the impression that talking about a personal experience makes the reader refuse to be convinced that the pronoun represents the character rather than the writer [5] (p. 88). This argument made critics consider the *woman literature* as part of *autobiography literature* [13] (147) [15] (p. 8, 22). Since Prison Literature tends to be a literature of confessions as a tool for revealing the private experience, it intersects with *feminist literature* in this aspect, too.

Undoubtedly, the employment of the first person singular pronoun is likely to give the opportunity to the woman prisoner to sail in the space of the soul, which reveals its feelings and thoughts, which, in turn, forms the components of autobiography that depend on "a flashback narration where the present in it is the narrative time and the past is the time of the experience" [9] (p.177).

This text, which belongs to the Prison Literature and which was written by a woman, deals with the woman, and the narration is also performed by a woman, which allows the woman to be both, the narrator of the story and its subject matter at the same time, dominating the authority of narration and the world of the novel

itself. This points out the woman's attempt to dominate reality, even if on the level of imagination, through her domination of the text, and also works on the reinforcement of the woman's status by making her dominate the world of the text. If her voice is a shameful defect and is forbidden the right to reveal her feelings, expressing herself and writing whatever she likes, now she can speak out and strongly say what she wants without evasion and with the first person pronoun (I). Thus, she intensifies the employment of a poetic language, which is introduced in a special way that confirms the specialty of her experience and her language that indicates her capability of containing her feelings and suffering and proves that it is a tool that resists the masculine language.

In addition to all this, her adoption of the first person singular (I) confirms the assaulting tendency of the writer on the traditional literary norms and her working on destroying them. Probably, the writer's adoption of polyphony of female voices in this novel through giving each woman prisoner the right to express her feelings occurs as a conscious total rejection of the dominating masculinity and the traditional narrative styles of the text that were established by the man. Distribution of the narrative process onto several female characters reinforces the status of the woman in the text and the democratic spirit in it and also works on putting aside the voice of the omniscient narrator being considered an extension to the authority of the one-man who dominates reality by domination of the text. This technique appears in the writer's distribution of the narrative authority onto several female characters such as Tuhāma, Lamā, and Kawthar.

There is no doubt that the woman behind the bars of the prison turns into a prisoner who has familiar typical manners and thus, she resembles the male prisoner in his behavior and identifies with him. In the shadow of her involuntary isolation in prison, awareness and imagination must be open and work as a natural reaction to this physical shackle. In order for openness to take place, it is necessary to move from external narration to internal self-narration through the stream-of-consciousness technique.

When the woman prisoner lives under the pressure of the prison, she looks for ways that give her the ability to live. At this stage, the mind becomes a vehicle that absorbs this suppression and reduces its pressure by thinking, imaginative fantasies, and soliloquies. When the novelists' interest in the psychological time increased at the expense of the external time in the modernist novelistic work, their interest in the employment of the stream of consciousness, its tools, and its different techniques increased too, including the techniques of interior monologue, soliloquy, free association, flashback, space-time montage and dream, which, all together, work on the fragmentation of the traditional plot. Ḥasība employed these tools in her novel in clear intensity. In her intensification of the stream of consciousness, she emphasizes another feature of feminist literature as she considers this technique to be, originally, a deeply-rooted femininity [46] (p.199).

Since the language focuses on the monologue and the flashbacks, its sentences are short and intensive without being ruled by logical pauses between the ideas. It is also characterized by queries that express the crisis of the heroine and her

alienation. Besides, the large dependence on the employment of the tools of the stream of consciousness in the novel led to the division of the novel into chapters that are not arranged chronologically, which shook the traditional structure of the novel. There were no separating borders between one idea and the other and consequently, the events, time, and place intertwine into one another, reality with imagination and the logical with the fantastic.

No wonder, then, if we find this structure marginalized and fragmented as an artistic expression of the fragmented reality. All this lends clear ambiguity especially since the writer employed the technique of intertextuality in an intensive way. The writer derives her intertextualities from human thought, history, religion, and Arab and Western cultural heritage such as *Shāḥir Ḥasan*, *Laylā wa-l-Dhī b*, *Cinderella*, *Sindibād*, *Jesus Christ*, *Prophet Muḥammad*, *Ṣūfī poetry*, *Ibn Sirīn*, *Freud*, *Che Guevara*, and others" [1] (p. 10,12, 21).

When the woman prisoner loses her consciousness after the cruel torturing ceremonies, she enters a state of severe hallucination but the writer exploits these moments to employ her intertextualities in fantastic forms. Kawthar imagines herself to be "ʿAshtār who is picking anemones and is waiting for Adūnīs or Baʿal"[1] (p. 275). Her imagination slips away to mix with the myths of Gilgamesh's immortality, ʿAshtār, the blood of Adūnīs, and the wasteland of the poet T. S. Eliot..." [1] (p. 46).

During her delirium, she finds herself entering the mosque, but the Sheikh dismisses her by shouting at her: "You lack mind and religion" [1] (pp. 47-49). Here, the writer deliberately tries to reveal the pursuit of the authoritative masculine society to debase the woman's status and her position and the man's view about religion. When Kawthar returns to her bed after the torturing, the other women prisoners surround her to ask: "Tell us Scheherazade something from *Alf Layla wa Layla Arabian Nights*" [1] (p. 129) as if the torturing ceremonies and investigation were tales from *One Thousand Nights Tales*; long fantastic nights with stories of her suffering. Thus, the technique of the *fantastic*, one of the phenomena of modernism [6] comes to give the writer the ability to break through the familiar and look for creative freedom in the shadow of lost freedom.

Therefore, she exploits the technique of intertextuality to reveal through it the extent of the fantastic that is above human logic and to confirm that our reality is illogical, destroyed, non-human, and cracked because of the severity of suppression, anxiety, and alienation. No wonder, then, that she intensifies these tools as long as the citizen finds himself in a non-human prison, where the logical natural stability of the world is shaken, the human criteria are lost, and the prisoner lives in horrible fear that exceeds the ability of the human being to endure and remain sane and aware of himself. Kawthar summons Muʿāwiya's soul and talks to him, or rides Givara's head [1] (p.17, 47), or raves and sees the sheikh of the mosque making love with a dead woman and enjoys it more than ever [1] (p. 49). These images are intensive samples that indicate the ugliness and violence that our society has reached.

She also summons the topic of religious suppression and accusing people of unbelief (takfir) in the past historical ages in order to deal with repressive religious extremism. For example, she summons the period of Calīpha al-Mutawakkil who killed anyone who believed that the Koran is a created book. She mentions al-Mu'tazila and their persecution of the Ash'arī sect and accuses anyone who disagrees with Ibn Taymiyya and the interpretation of al-Jawzī and Ibn Kathīr and others, confirming that no man has the right to end the life of another man: "The issue of atheism is a relationship between Man and his God, and everyone has the right to look for and explore the entity of God" [1] (pp. 102-104).

There is no doubt that the writer condemns the Arab homeland in which the suppressive Arab regimes and the patriarchal masculine culture control people through the support they receive from the radical religious allies and the fundamental dark trends that adopt the method of accusing opponents of infidelity and blasphemy. These circumstances made the writer rebel against the religious taboo and break it daringly.

In addition to the writer's pursuit, through intensification of intertextuality, to shake the form of the literary genre and increase its ambiguity and symbolism, she also seeks to confirm the breadth of her intellectual and cultural horizon and her strong presence in the literary arena. This provides her with the opportunity to break the theory of the official traditional literature exactly as she broke the chains of the prison with the tools of imagination and awareness in her search for herself in the shadow of the fragmentation of life that she lived in the sharnaqa /cocoon of the dark wilderness.

#### **4.4.2 Place and time**

All the texts of Prison Literature display one image of the political prison and therefore, their principal physical and moral attributes and dimensions are similar [32] (pp. 340-349). The prison is always narrow, fortified, and deep like graves [1] (p.9). Despite the transfer of the woman prisoner from one prison to the other, the prison in its general shape and size is nearly the same, even if its place and time are different. Isn't the name of 'Prison Literature' connected to the identity of the place?

Entering the prison soon becomes a rejected journey to a rejected place in advance. If each journey is a transference move, it is also a compulsory movement that leads the woman prisoner towards smashing, loss, and destruction. There is no room here for talking about the travel after a triumph or elevation but an involuntary movement towards the 'abdomen of the *Ghūla*' that ends up with its residents 'its small baby goats' in defeat and fragmentation in all dimensions; it is a movement towards alienation, anti-heroism, and mental estrangement.

There is no existence for the human being without being connected to a place as he cannot detach his psychological or physical entity from the place as it is the principal catalyzer in defining his activity and behavior; it is the central space that affects the interactions of the character with itself and its environment. It also

defines the character's feelings and attitudes and it might succeed in marginalizing and excluding it. Thus, the movement of the human being in his place joins with the concept of freedom and his ability to coexist with it or his ability to challenge and defeat it. The significance of the Place in the novelistic text turns into what looks like Fate that controls the fate of the event and character alike. As we are talking about the prison as a suppressive involuntary place, it becomes the focus of the text and the focus of the excitement from the beginning of the text to its end.

The Place here is not an ordinary place but a closed, repulsive, and hostile one, which indicates the lack and absence of freedom [7] (p. 207). It is the space of home confinement and punitive practices; it is a place of exclusion of the other, his torturing and taming; it is the master who reformulates the other/the prisoner because the 'other' is short of freedom and is robbed of his will. Thus, the prison becomes the master of the novel in Prison Literature, the element that defines the features and characteristics of this literature and the address of their path.

The Place/Prison does not differ from any other prison and the writer is careful to describe it as it is exactly in Prison Literature. She gives an accurate description of it according to her perspective and feelings, which are not different from the feelings of any prisoner because the prisoners resemble one another, no matter how different their races or identities are, due to the similarity of their humanity and feelings. The Prison is able as a repulsive place to "reveal the diseases and defects" [1] (p.217). "In this place, the bottom of society, its lowest place, many wounds were opened, tragic defeats and endless fantasies. Here, at the bottom of society, the dreams were closed and wounds and defeats were opened" [1] (p. 281). The prison becomes, as Kawthar says after she has experienced the prison and its cruelty several times: "The prison is Man's mirror and his violator" [1] (p.210).

If the Place is so ugly, the Time is synonymous with it in its cruelty and rottenness. However, the prison time is not tied or limited to the Place/Prison. The novel is free in its movement between past and present through the stream of consciousness and its tools in addition to the imagination of the prisoner, in which he achieves this transcendence through mixing and association between the world of the prison and the world of freedom: the closed/open. As *Psychological Time* is the foundation of the woman prisoner's journey into herself, into her sharnaqa/cocoon, and her withdrawal from her external reality, it means that we have to look at psychological time as separate and far from the *chronological natural time* order to embody the feeling of time-passage rather than time itself.

Prison time is not the ordinary chronological time that the ordinary human being knows in the ordinary place. Time here acquires its characteristics from the psychological condition of the character. Time in its slowness and cruelty constitutes a danger to the woman prisoner in pushing her to submission and loss of determination. The time of the prison is never tired and never bored and it seeks to exhaust the prisoner through its conspiracy with the Place against him. Time passes heavily and the days lose their numbers and names; the past is mixed with the present, and delusion with reality.



Since the woman prisoner looks for openness in a closed and restricted place, she will necessarily recall the time that was her own or will imagine the coming time that will be hers, even if in a delusional way. Thus, Time in the prison depends on different times: Present, Past, and Future. If the Present is the time of the prison, it will be established on a specific dialectic in itself: the external time; the natural regular present time, which is the chronological clock time; the Jailer's time and his torture.

However, there is another time - *the internal psychological time*, the internal psychological time, the free time, which is the time of the suppressed prisoner; the time of memory or past or dreams and meditation about the future. Therefore, when the woman prisoner finds herself sieged in a closed place, such as the abdomen of the *Ghūla*/ the bottom of society and homeland, she will open onto imagination and will separate herself from her external ordinary time, the time of the *Ghūla*, in order to enter her sharnaqa/cocoon, and live the psychological time, the time of the sharnaqa in search of emancipation and escape: "We escape to flight, calendar, and irony as a treatment to the impasse that we live in and the repeated routine life [1](p. 275). She seeks to create a special world of her own, creates her cocoon according to her own desires as compensation for the cruelty of the cell, self-exiles and leaves the hostile place, detaches herself from her world, and transcends the pain of the body.

Thus, her alienation becomes a positive thing as a compensatory tool that gives her power. It is a cocoon that helps her to persevere and protect herself through her awareness, and since the journey of the body is impossible, the memory roams through her awareness and recollects her past and contemplates her present. Her imagination dives into the folds of the Self to seek hope, freedom, and morale. Since the imagination of the woman prisoner is able to break the place restrictions, freedom, and openness, this means that we are in front of the dialectic of the closed/open, external/internal, and prison/freedom, which is the dialectic of the body versus the soul and thought and the bars of the prison versus a psychological imaginary cocoon that the woman prisoner builds as an escape and a shelter from the brutality of the jailer. It is the journey of the psychological time when the place-space is closed, the space of the soul when the space of the body is closed.

## **5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This study confirms the intersection and contact between Prison Literature and Feminist Literature in their pursuit of emancipation and liberation through revelation and unbosoming of one's emotions and thoughts. It also emphasizes the argument that both are types of literature that revolt against anyone who confiscates freedom. Artistically, both genres constitute a breaking-through fiction because they confront all the taboos including the Prohibition trilogy. If Prison Literature is a revelation and a rebellion against the suppressive authority, Feminist Literature is also a rebellion and a revolution against the masculine norms, including breaking the political, social, and religious taboos. The interconnectivity must be at its highest point, especially if the woman writer is the prisoner who has

lived the prison experience and has written about her experience and revealed it through her feminist fiction.

The study also confirms that there is no difference between a woman-prisoner and a man-prisoner. Consequently, the experience of the woman becomes more bitter and painful than the experience of the man in the shadow of a suppressive masculine society that condemns the woman in advance. Her lot of punishment is double the man's punishment because she is resistant and a woman, too. Thus, the woman becomes the creature who is closer to the images of suppression of the taboo trilogy. However, this suppression does not repel her from continuing the challenge of all kinds of censorship. On the contrary, she shows strong defiance of all of the social, religious, and political norms. She chooses to expose and resist through her words and engagement in her reality and interaction with it. Her behavior rejects the opinions that aim to decrease the value of women's literature and claims that it is unable to encounter the world and its issues. The study reveals the woman's participation in the Prison Literature, which constitutes a direct and clear condemnation to this suppressive reality.

Since feminist fiction seeks first and foremost to resist the man and his rejection, and since the man is the one who plays the role of the ruler, the jailer, the executioner, and the investigator, her rejection of him and attack him is more severe. Consequently, her rebellion against him on the level of smashing of the form, style, and techniques is similar to the smashing of the contents of the novel, and reflection of its destruction, violence, and non-human reality.

The discussion of the novel *al-Sharnaqa/ Cocoon* reveals that it is a model for Feminist Prison Literature. While the woman rebels against the masculine authority in her writings and emphasizes the value of writing and freedom in her life and in revealing her suppression in all its forms, she also identifies with every writer who has written literature when he was in prison and defied the authority in order to confirm the value of writing on emancipation and liberation from the pains of the prison and revelation of the suppression of the authority in pursuit of remedial unbosoming.

Ḥasiba ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, who tasted the experience of prison by herself and was released to uncover and expose, made her novel a crying feminist sample in Prison Literature, which is not less violent or less cruel in the details of her sufferings or images of torturing than the Prison Literature that we have read and has been written by men. In view of this, writing turns into an act of liberation and salvation for every prisoner, whether a man or a woman. In addition, it becomes condemnation and exposure of the regime because writing is also an act of vengeance, unbosoming, revelation, and liberation from all the shackles of captivation of the Self. "The cocoon remains evidence to the degree that the Arab suppression has reached and the suffering that the woman has experienced, exactly like the man, due to her opposition, any kind of opposition" [41] (p.296).

## **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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- Adab al-Sujūn fī Miṣr, Sūrya wa-l-`Irāq – al- Ḥurriyya wa-l- Raqīb (2016)
- Adab al-Sujūn... Marra `Ukhrā – Dirasa fī al-Adab al-Khalijī (2020).
- Ft Butaqat al-Thālūth al-Muharram – al-Kātiba al-Khalījiya Bayna al-Adab al-Niswī wa Adab al-Sujūn (2022)
- Mut`at al-naqd fī ladhat al-naṣ (2022)

She has published several articles in English including-

- Prison literature in the arab world: features and samples. *Journal of Oriental and African Studies*. (2018).
- Aesthetics of place and its dialectics in prison literature. *Journal of Oriental and African Studies*. (2020).
- Yearning for freedom in a prison without bars in two novels: Ṣamt al-Farāshāt by Laylā al-`Uthmān and Lam `A`ud `Abki by Zaynab Ḥifnī". *European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*. (2021).
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This chapter is an extended version of the article published by the same author(s) in the following journal. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 6(12): 59-81, 2018. Available: <https://doi.org/10.15640/ijll.v6n2a8>

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/6981C>

# **Analysis of the Implementation of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in Vhembe West District, South Africa**

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DOI: 10.9734/bpi/pller/v3/2472G

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/2472G>

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## **ABSTRACT**

This chapter investigates how district officials are empowered to implement Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement effectively in the Vhembe West District in South Africa. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement is a document that guides or describes the teaching, learning, and assessment process in the South African Education System at both primary and post-primary phases of learning. A qualitative phenomenological design was used and produced a large amount of data that had to be analysed. The population in this study comprised all school principals and officials from the Vhembe West District in South Africa. Purposive sampling was used to select five school principals as they are curriculum managers and five officials from the district as monitors and managers of curriculum change implementation. The study used theories in change management to investigate how district officials are empowered to implement CAPS in the Vhembe West District in South Africa. On the basis of these theories, themes were developed in answering the research objectives. According to the study, district officials faced the following difficulties in carrying out their duties: a lack of funding to purchase teaching and learning support materials; insufficient infrastructure; a lack of district officials in particular disciplines; a lack of clarity regarding roles; a lack of collaboration; an unavailability of follow-up visits; a shortage of computers for district officials and teacher support materials; bribery and corruption in the sale of principalship positions; a slow filling of district official positions; and an inappropriate set of skills for school management and leadership. The chapter concluded that expedite curriculum delivery by filling vacancies as soon as possible and for district officials to get ongoing capacity building so they can tackle curriculum problems.

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*Keywords: Challenges curriculum change; curriculum and assessment policy statement; implementing stakeholders.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

South African schools have experienced several curriculum changes over the past few years. In this article the researcher reports on the findings regarding the challenges experienced by heads of department (HODs) with the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in accounting [1]. A qualitative approach, modelled on the interpretative perspective, was used to explore these challenges, namely: medium of instruction; time allocated to complete the syllabus; poor subject content foundation; progression of learners; and the integration of economic and management sciences (EMS). South Africa has a dismal track record of implementing curriculum changes. It is debatable yet true that curriculum implementation is not a simple procedure. The process of implementing a curriculum is quite intricate [2]. Countries worldwide have experienced changes to their curriculum and this has had an intense impact on the way in which it has been conceptualised and implemented [3]. Education reforms were implemented in South Africa in reaction to imbalances and disparities in the system that the apartheid administration had brought about. This demanded that South Africa's curriculum be changed in order to remedy the country's racist, discriminatory, and unequal educational system. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) brought in district officials to help the historically underprivileged schools by making sure that education was the means of transforming society. Their primary goal is to give all schools access to a uniform curriculum framework so that curriculum management may be done effectively. The Provincial Education Department, the schools, and the general public are all connected through district authorities.

Teachers and school principals who are involved in curriculum change process should be prepared and supported in their endeavours. Jacobs, Vakalisa, and Gawe [4] note that teachers need support to implement the curriculum.

Challenges such as neglect of district officials, undefined roles, education policies, capacity of district officials, and lack of collaboration are indications that the districts do not thrive in their endeavour to support curriculum at schools and they are still not properly addressed. The roles of district officials are unclear and lead to subjective decisions on how curriculum should be supported. This is evidenced by Department of Basic Education (DBE) [5] as it did not mention the specific roles to be played by the district officials. Lack of professional development for district officials leaves the quality of support to the ability of district officials which may not match the curriculum needs at that time such as supporting only on what they know or are comfortable with. The roles of district officials are meant to improve curriculum delivery at schools, whether the support is directly or indirectly linked to subjects because learning is holistic. Taole [6] indicates that district officials should be the intermediaries between curriculum policy and implementation in the classroom.

It is imperative that the district officials have a greater understanding of their roles in transforming education so that it can meet national goals and objectives. It appears the district officials do not understand the legislation that is pertinent to education so that they can help teachers to implement new policies that will assist them to be effective school managers who are proactive, visionary and goal-orientated but also work with all stakeholders. Follow-up visits after training are crucial to ensure that the curriculum is properly implemented. Visiting schools regularly is the mandate of district officials to see if what teachers have learnt during training can be implemented in the classroom. It can be pointed out that after workshops, no district official cares about what teachers are doing. District officials do not come to schools but they are only seen during training. There is a need for empowering district officials to make follow up visits after the training to ensure that the anticipated actions are effected. Although district officials conduct teacher development workshops, school principals also mentioned that there was no follow up visit to determine the impact the training had on the classroom performance [7]. District officials are supposed to monitor, support and implement curriculum change but they are not capacitated to be more qualified and acquire knowledge of subject in order to give enough support to teachers and learners. It appears that the district does not increase its support services to train district officials in order to help teachers to implement curriculum change.

Curriculum transformation in South Africa has become the topic of much debate within the past 29 years. “The neglect of curriculum change process and stakeholders is the cause of many failed educational reform projects” [8]. “Curriculum change requires the input of different stakeholders such as teachers, school heads, parents, community members, students, district administrators and school boards” [9].

As an educator in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase of the school system and in Vhembe West District in particular, the author has noticed that district officials are not trained adequately in curriculum change which impacts on learners and the economy at large and district officials are unable to demonstrate sound knowledge of subject content and various principles, strategies and resources appropriate to teaching in a South African context. Again, it is a well-known fact that there is no provision of necessary specialised and adapted materials for effective implementation of the curriculum in South African schools. These are major problems throughout South Africa where very little has been done to resolve the problems since political independence in 1994. In light of the foregoing, this study investigates how district officials are empowered to implement *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* effectively in the Vhembe West District in South Africa.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Defining Curriculum Implementation**

Curriculum implementation is defined as the process of putting into practice a new curriculum and checking if it makes a difference or change [10]. This definition suggests that the whole aim of implementing a curriculum is to make a

difference. Guro and Weber [2] define curriculum implementation as a continuous, negotiated, contested, unpredictable process with policy adaptations resulting in unexpected outcomes. This definition suggests that curriculum implementation is a complex process, which needs thorough planning by the designers and in most cases curriculum implementation is not given the attention it deserves. Curriculum implementation is one of the most critical elements of the curriculum process yet it is the most neglected [11].

## **2.2 The Role of District Officials in Implementing CAPS**

The Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025 [5] is the Department of Basic Education's strategy to strengthen weak areas in the education system that has been identified as needing support. Goal 27 "highlights the importance of improving the frequency and quality of monitoring and support services provided by district offices to schools". But it did not mention the specific roles to be played by the district officials. It is a challenge to learn that the roles and responsibilities of district officials in the "guidelines for organisation, roles and responsibilities of education districts" 2011 are vague. The roles of district officials are to manage curriculum delivery and to train teachers to implement curriculum change but curriculum implementation has been affected by the shortage of subject specialists to support teachers in schools. According to Diko, Haupt and Molefe [12] roles of district officials are not only limited to manage curriculum delivery, but stretched to internal assessment and examination processes. Many teachers described the current role of the district officials demanded unnecessary administrative tasks and 'box ticking' by teachers. Teachers considered the role and job description of the district officials to be mainly centred on their immediate teaching needs [13].

The training that teachers received from the district officials is not satisfactory. Lumadi [14] indicates that the training the teachers received from the workshops was insufficient as it was conducted haphazardly. Similarly, Fomunyam [15] emphasises that teachers have reported that the necessary teacher-training and support to assist them in their new tasks have not been adequate to bring about the needed changes in the schools. Troudi and Alwan [16] suggest that "training and support should be of great help in reducing the stressful effects of change during implementation" (p. 117). One cannot also lose sight of the fact that poor provision of teacher training by unskilled district officials assigned by concerning the perceived implementation of *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* (CAPS) might de-skill and limit learners' potential. Furthermore, training is not enough because the teachers were given 2–5 days workshop. Teachers were trained and maximum was about five days, so nothing can be achieved in such a short period of time [6].

It is a well-known fact that teachers have been trained to become teachers for 3–4 years and they were doing core curriculum. Fullan [17] indicates that such one-shot workshops are ineffective, as topics for training are selected by other people than those receiving training and that follow-up support for implementation is rare. The workshops were too short and insubstantial to equip staff to deal

effectively with the changes that they needed to make in class and to improve learner performance. The teachers experienced none of the envisaged external supervision, monitoring or support from the district officials in implementing the curriculum change required.

The support school principals received from district officials is not satisfactory. Bantwini [18] indicates that in the South African context, the general lack of support to schools by districts has been emphasised by researchers. Similarly, school principals and teachers note that the district only came once a year to check how far they were with the curriculum because they do not have the means or resources to come to schools [19]. Evidence confirms that district leadership matters when it comes to driving curriculum reforms, as well as improving schools and student learning [20]. The teachers are often frustrated by curriculum changes due to the lack of technical expertise to carry out teaching responsibilities, and the lack theoretical knowledge and familiarity with principles informing the implementation of curriculum change [21].

### **2.3 Challenges Faced by District Officials in Implementing CAPS**

The implementation of curriculum is dependent on many factors such as the resources that the schools have. Mohapi [22] argues that resources influence the quality of teaching and learning and the degree to which the curriculum can be managed and implemented (p. 1224). Resources are often insufficient in schools and in the Vhembe West District. This is evidenced by Musetha [23] who emphasises that there is a shortage of classrooms and that Grade 12 pupils are taught in empty rooms without furniture. It is difficult to find a school with well-equipped laboratory, enough classes and adequate learner support materials. Moorosi and Bantwini [24] assert that many districts in South Africa lack the resources and capability to provide professional curriculum management support. Veriava [25] revealed that Swobani High School in Vhembe District, near Musina, had received no supplies of textbooks at the start of 2012. A recent study by Makeleni and Sethusa [26] points out that the countries such as Brazil, Ghana, Guinea and the Philippines had shown improvement in learner performance due to sufficient supply of textbooks (p.105). It can be emphasised that curriculum cannot be relevant when appropriate resources are not supplied. Resources have always been a problem and they are still a problem and the government does not provide enough resources to all schools equally. It would be a grossly unfair to expect teachers to implement the curriculum if they have not been properly prepared to do so, or if they do not have sufficient Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM). Availability of resources plays a critical role in the efficient delivery of the curriculum. Lunenburg, [27] argues that teachers need to have access to curriculum guides, textbooks or training connected to the school curriculum. "Curriculum change is a process of using resources effectively in order to improve curriculum" [28]. It is the mandate of the district to ensure that the resources are timeously provided to schools.

Inappropriate skills for school management and leadership exist in South African schools. School principals do not have appropriate management skills to manage their schools effectively. This is evidenced by Naidoo [29] who points out that school principals need to be properly trained and skilled in school management but they are faced with a challenge to motivate the staff to accept the envisaged change. The duties of the school principals are hampered by lack of skills and by the fact that district officials fail to execute their mandate satisfactorily. District officials need to be capacitated to make sure that school principals attend workshops in order to acquire skills in the management and implementation of curriculum change. It appears that the workshops that are conducted by district officials to school principals come to nothing as they are ineffective.

There is increasing bribery and corruption at the provincial and district levels when school principal appointments are made. This tendency impacts negatively on the implementation of CAPS in the district. Heystek [30] argues that at the school level, school principal effectiveness may also be limited by the overt control of unions on the school environment. According to Tandwa, [31] school principals' posts were being sold for more than R30 000 each and also in exchange for sex (p.1). These activities of selling teaching posts and capturing the state weaken the implementation of CAPS. Bribery and corruption affects district officials as they are afraid to go to schools that are run by unions and they have no say when school principals fail to implement curriculum change. It can be pointed out that the school principal who might be appointed through bribery and corruption would not be able to implement curriculum change at school. The school principal might also lack the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude to lead and manage school effectively and efficiently. Again, it can be noted that the union-run schools in the district result in poor performance by learners, ill-disciplined teachers, mismanagement of schools and failure to execute the implementation of CAPS.

District officials are expected to visit schools and support teachers directly in their classrooms, but this is quite unrealistic, given the large numbers of schools allocated to each district officials. The moment district officials visit schools; they perform classroom observation, which many teachers do not like. If classroom observations are to be effectively used for professional development of teachers, the basic step should be the establishment of a relationship between district officials and teachers, as observation must be built on a foundation of trust [32]. Fielding [33] indicates that one of the most important factors which affect the effectiveness of supervision is the unclassified, ambivalent relationship of teachers and supervisors. Orenaiya, Adenowo, Aroyeun and Odusoga [34] suggest that co-operative attitudes and behaviours must be established between the teachers and education supervisors for achieving positive results whether by an individual, group or organization. Furthermore, the heads of the school and staff members alike prefer working with someone who has a positive attitude [35].

There is a lack of collaboration among district officials in supporting schools. Mavuso [36] found that district officials tend to work in isolation and make input in the process of quality management at school and classroom level and their input

is more directed at school than at classroom level. Bantwini and Diko [37] were also concerned about the knowledge gap regarding how district officials collaborate. There is no direct link between what is happening at classroom level and district officials. For effective functionality of schools, there has to be collaboration between district officials and school principals as well as teachers. Collaboration has been identified as a powerful tool to improve outcomes for all learners [38]. Altun and Yildiz [39] indicate that school improvement includes collaborative activities that are aimed to develop teachers, staff, school environment and physical conditions in addition to student achievement. However, Naicker and Mestry [40] found that collaboration between school principals collectively and district officials was lacking.

A challenge to district officials is inadequate supervision. Inadequate supervision results in teachers' inability to demonstrate adequate knowledge and understanding of the structure, function and development of their disciplines [41]. Ololube [42] found that in Nigeria the present system of education is control-oriented rather than service-oriented and tends to focus on maintaining the status quo by regulating institutional functions and by ensuring that bureaucratic rules and regulations are adhered to. Most district officials use their office title to create fear in the minds of teachers through their actions, thus they are more occupied with the office and title of district officials than with effective supervision. In South Africa, Dilotsohle, Smit, and Vreken, [43] found that the education system is largely about compliance with departmental regulations rather than engaging with educators about their work. Their research findings support other research done outside South Africa that the focus of the curriculum advisory service (CAS) is on management rather than on curriculum issues related to subject content, teaching or learning. De Clercq and Shalem, [44] also established that follow-up district work was ineffectual as it was more about monitoring teachers for compliance rather than to support them.

There is a lack of feedback to teachers from district officials. Productive feedback and follow-up initiatives are lacking in supporting teachers. There is thus little opportunity for discussing findings such as the need for more in-service training of teachers and whether new initiatives satisfy the identified need. Given this lack of follow-up, there is no way to ensure that supervision will contribute to school development in a cost effective way. The lack of feedback from district officials frustrates teachers and their efforts to improve. The World Bank [45] indicates that in many education systems worldwide, schools are required to submit information on which they receive virtually no feedback. This does not help schools since underperformance and poor teaching practices may continue. If feedback is provided, then the system can improve.

Teachers and school principals are in charge of curriculum change at school level and they need to be supported in a variety of ways. The teachers are not supported well by district officials as they still use out-dated methodology and strategies of lesson delivery for CAPS implementation. This is evidenced by Limpopo DBE [46] which confirms that teachers teach the new curriculum using their own methodology and have difficulty in interpreting certain aspects of the

official curriculum documents. It appears the district officials do not do their work effectively as teachers are not competent enough in CAPS implementation. Wallace and Fleit [47] cite factors affecting the success of curriculum reform makers to accurately diagnose the systemic problems or correctly evaluate programmes before implementation, as factors leading to successful reform in one situation may not necessarily apply to another.

## **2.4 Strategies Used to Empower Implementation of CAPS**

There have been attempts by the department to ensure that teachers are kept informed about the curriculum demands of the curriculum change. However, De Clercq [48] indicates that the capacity of the South African education system to provide appropriate professional support to schools has a poor track record. Overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for teachers to successfully implement curriculum change. It is a well-known fact that overcrowded classrooms have been an issue for years. The DBE [49] confirms that the issue of overcrowding requires further investigation. The reduction of teacher- learner ratio could bring relief to overworked and overloaded teachers. This will in turn reduce paper-work, which, most teachers lamented, hinders their effective implementation of curriculum change. It is not easy to teach CAPS and therefore it is difficult to implement as teachers are not adequately supported by district officials. District officials lack knowledge about CAPS and they impart wrong knowledge and information to the teachers. So, the department needs to empower district officials in order for them to train teachers properly. Ngubane [50] stated that the DBE is tasked with leadership, policy- making and the monitoring responsibility of improving the quality of learning and ensuring quality sustained education, but fails to do it properly.

School principals should be aware of the importance of the pillars of implementation and management in order to implement CAPS successfully. The government officials at the meso-level, as well as the secondary school principals at the micro-level are supposed to adhere to these principles. This process will help the district officials and the school principals to manage, co-ordinate and implement the new curriculum properly. Planning includes training of the staff, teaching materials, human resources and encouraging the school community to participate [51]. In-service training in CAPS implementation is vital as it will familiarise school principals and teachers with innovations of the curriculum implementation. Magongoa [51] argues that the DBE should train and retrain school principals to become effective in managing the new curriculum. This training should be extensive and not a once-off five-day workshop. Relevant intensive training to school principals need to be provided by district authorities and short programmes that address specific issues regarding curriculum change should also be provided. Such training may include aspects like identification of relevant learning teaching materials. Attendance at seminars and workshops on managing curriculum change implementation and sharing best practices with peers from other provinces should be encouraged and maintained. This, in turn, will help schools to be professionally managed and provided with the necessary administrative skills. Again, training before the implementation of curriculum

change is a prerequisite for meaningful and successful implementation of change.

Theories in change management have been used as frame for this study. Change denotes making or becoming distinctly different and implies a radical transformation of character or replacement with something else. Applied to empowering district officials to implement *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* effectively in the Vhembe West District in South Africa, change is the process of transforming the schools' organisational practices into new behaviours that support a shared vision of achieving the institutions' goals. The basic framework followed in this study to examine this change process was Lewin's [52] Force Field Model to embrace change and achieve organisational goals [53].

According to Senior [54] Lewin's Force Field Model states that "organisations are held in equilibrium by equal and opposing, driving and resisting forces" (p. 308). The driving forces may include competitive pressures, legislative mandates, new technology, and environmental factors while resisting forces include fear of change and negative attitudes, among others. Kurt Lewin's Force Field Model comprises three stages:

- *Unfreezing: In this stage district officials have to reflect on their current practices before they adapt new behaviours.*
- *Moving or changing: District officials consider making changes that will most likely contribute to achieving the organisational goals of schools.*
- *Refreezing: Once changes are effected, new behaviours become apparent through what is observed within the organisation.*

(QueenMary & Mtapuri [55])

In the case of this study, it is evident that the government's legislative mandates are the driving force in organisational changes at public schools. Resisting forces include established customs and practices, teacher union agreements and the organisation's culture. Senior [54] argues that the main focus of the "unfreezing stage is centred on changing the district officials' habitual modes of thinking" as a result of new legislation, diversity in school population and technological advancement, to heighten awareness of the need to change (p. 308). Thus, there is a definite need to move away from established behaviours to create new behaviours. Once the district officials have chosen a course of action, they have to share insights about the problem, its probable causes, and the identified solutions with school management teams, teachers, school governing bodies and other stakeholders of the organisation.

Moving (change) is the second stage of the process that essentially makes the actual changes. School principals embark on managing the implementation of CAPS programmes that will move the district officials to new types of behaviour. Van der Westhuizen [56] agrees that movement involves the development of new norms, values, attitudes, and behaviour through the identification of changes in the structure. In the refreezing stage, the district officials' behaviours become



apparent where a “shared vision” could inspire the participation to attain the desired future goals of the institution [57].

The objectives of this study are: To analyse how district officials are empowered in CAPS implementation in the Vhembe West District in South Africa, to identify the challenges faced by Vhembe West District in implementing CAPS in schools, to examine the kind of support that Vhembe West District provides to facilitate CAPS implementation, to identify strategies used by Vhembe West District to empower CAPS implementation and to identify the role of Vhembe West District in CAPS implementation. The rationale behind these questions was to investigate how district officials are empowered to implement *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* in the Vhembe West District in South Africa.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

Interpretivism was adopted as the underpinning philosophy for the study. A qualitative phenomenological design was used and produced a large amount of data that had to be analysed. The population in this study comprised all school principals and officials from the Vhembe West District in South Africa. Purposive sampling was used to select five school principals as they are curriculum managers and five officials from the district as monitors and managers of curriculum change implementation. The samples were chosen because of their professional roles, expertise, experience and knowledge which made them information-rich participants. School principals were purposively sampled as their schools are performing well in the district. District officials were selected on the ground of their long service in curriculum department. Participants were capable of making informed, independent decisions to participate or not.

This study used individual interviews which were conducted at the convenience of interviewees. The semi-structured interview was found to be suitable for this study because it allowed the participants to express their viewpoints about empowering district officials to implement *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* in the Vhembe West District in South Africa. This rich and in-depth information-gathering was made possible by helping respondents relax by asking them general questions related to empowering district officials to implement *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* in schools in the Vhembe West District in South Africa. The semi-structured interviews were recorded using an audio-recorder with the permission of the participants. Questions which were not clear to the participants were rephrased and follow up questions were asked to assist participants answer the questions. The questions were linked to the literature review. With a semi-structured interview, the researcher has a specific number of questions to put to the interviewees, but there was room for the researcher to probe emergent themes raised by the interviewees. The researcher did not limit the discussion of issues or ideas raised by the respondents on empowering district officials to implement *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* in the Vhembe West District in South Africa. The discussions were recorded and transcribed. Individual interviews were conducted with five school principals (participants) from five schools and five district officials. Interviews for

all participants took 30 minutes. Initial contact was made through written communication, (letter of invitation to participate in the study) and then through email and face-to-face contact.

This study used a thematic data analysis technique. This study followed the six steps of Braun and Clarke [58]. These include transcription, coding, searching themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing a report. The transcriptions were carefully and attentively read and re-read in order to be familiarised with the content thereof. Notes were taken, sorted, and organised according to objectives of the study in order to identify important themes that emerged. Based on this initial reading, clarification system for major topics and issues was developed. To protect the identity of the participants and their schools and for ethical reasons, codes were used. In order to code the data the researcher looked for small and large chunks of data that potentially addressed the research question of the study. The researcher generated an initial list of ideas about the data. The data was coded and categorised so that repeated themes emerged. The initial codes were derived from the interview guides and school principals are referred to as SP whereas district officials are referred to as DO. The searching-for-themes stage begins after all the data have been coded and collated and a list of different codes has been identified across the data set. The researcher analysed the data by forming categories or themes that were used to describe the meaning of similarity coded data. The established themes were in line with common ideas given by the participants. The researcher conducted a review of themes by going back to the coded and collated data, and by going back to the whole data set in order to review themes and determine the ones that were appropriate. The themes were reviewed by double-checking the coded data and making sure that data were used. The researcher wrote the report that involved choosing examples of transcribing to illustrate elements of the themes. These extracts clearly identified issues within the theme and presented lucid examples of the point being made. The more frequently a concept occurred in the text, the more likely it would be regarded as a theme.

#### **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The study used theories in change management to investigate how district officials are empowered to implement CAPS in the Vhembe West District in South Africa. On the basis of these theories, themes were developed in answering the research objectives. The discussions were summarised in five themes for the study. The five themes are the following: The role of the district in CAPS implementation; challenges in CAPS implementation; insufficient support from the district; inadequate training received from the district; and strategies used to enhance effective implementation of curriculum.

##### **4.1 Theme 1: The Role of the District in CAPS Implementation**

From the interviews the researcher had with the participants, the study revealed that the role of district officials is vague. This is evidenced by Department of Basic Education (DBE) [5] as it did not mention the specific roles to be played by

the district officials. Participants do not exactly know what is expected of them in CAPS implementation. The findings of this study suggest that the curriculum in the district was fairly well implemented. It emerged from the study that district officials know their roles and responsibilities in theory but to the practicality of it is challenging. The study indicated availability of district officials in schools, managing curriculum by school principals, staff development efforts by a number of the district officials, availability of well- developed curricula which were clear on the goals, objectives and content to be taught as evidence that the district officials know CAPS implementation. In support of the above responses the following comments serve the purpose:

“The district supports schools concerning curriculum change. The district officials are trained for the curriculum so that it will be easy for them to monitor the curriculum that they know” [DO1]. “The district makes sure that the relevant information concerning CAPS reaches schools urgently. School principals are consulted for the new development in the district. Almost every week we send circulars to circuits so that they reach schools urgently. These circulars are helpful and informative to teachers as they will implement and manage curriculum” [DO2]. “The district is a source of inspiration to schools and it makes sure circulars are sent to schools immediately. District officials are always available in schools although they are not sure of their roles. Our roles are written in the document but they are difficult to follow” [DO3]. “The district officials are deployed to help schools” [DO4]. “Policy documents are usually provided by district office. The district plays a major role to ensure that all learners have access to quality education although there are challenges faced by district officials” [DO5].

Evidence from participants suggests that the district officials know their role. It appears that the district office is dedicated to help in curriculum change. The visibility of district officials in schools is an indication that they are ready to execute their role although their roles are not clear. The district is seen as doing its part by consulting schools principals and making sure relevant information concerning CAPS reaches schools. This is supported by DBE [46] by indicating that teachers are provided with policy documents which guide them as to how they can prepare their lessons. (p.5). The findings revealed that the comments from the participants are in contrary with the department as there are challenges facing the district officials. Circulars are distributed to schools but reading these circulars cannot replace workshops from the district. The district has a nice document on the roles of the district officials but to put the theory into practice is difficult. Ngubane [50] confirms that the DBE is tasked with leadership, policy-making and the monitoring responsibility of improving the quality of learning and ensuring quality sustained education, but fails to do it properly.

## **4.2 Theme 2: Challenges in CAPS Implementation**

All the participants agreed that there are challenges in CAPS implementation. It emerged from the study that there is increasing bribery and corruption when school principal appointments are made. This study found that school principals

are promoted provided one produces money or accepts the position in exchange of sex. Findings indicated that teacher support materials remain the challenges in the district and school principals are also receiving inadequate training. Participants raised a concern that CAPS implementation is compromised by the lack of resources, most particularly the shortage of textbooks. The study differs from a recent study by Makeleni and Sethusha [26] who indicated that countries such as Brazil, Ghana, Guinea and the Philippines had shown improvement in learner performance due to sufficient supply of textbooks. The views of the participants were encapsulated in the following statements:

“We don’t have enough textbooks in our school. The big challenges we encounter in implementing the CAPS, are that we are poorly resourced” [SP1]. “Teaching cannot take place if the Department of Basic Education did not supply enough textbooks for learners” [SP2]. The participant raised a valid concern in that learners did not have textbooks, so they had to share the few available textbooks. The lack of resources in a developing country like South Africa is unusual. The focus on resources places the responsibility for implementation at the door of the district.

“Another pressing challenge to district officials is inadequate supervision” [SP3]. Musetha [23] affirms that there is a shortage of classrooms and that Grade 12 pupils are taught in empty rooms without furniture. (p. 1). “Workshops are not impressive and we are not doing enough in training for the curriculum because there are no materials to be used by district officials and the government does not have funds for workshops” [SP4].

DO1 commented in this way: “Teachers complained that the CAPS needed resources but most schools were under resourced. There is a problem of infrastructure failures”. DO2 said: “Teachers are requested to exchange promotional positions with money and sex. Teacher unions are running the district”. DO3 confirmed: “There is inadequate follow-up support for school principals after training. We lack resources like computers and vehicles to use when we go to workshops that are scheduled for us. There are also burning challenges of teacher support materials which are used for workshops and the materials that are to be used in the classroom, slow filling of district officials posts, and inappropriate skills for school management and leadership.”. DO4 proudly stated: “There is a lack of collaboration among district officials in supporting schools”. This can be evidenced by Mavuso [36] who indicated that the district officials tend to work in isolation and make input in the process of quality management at school and classroom level and their input is more directed at school than at classroom level. DO5 had the following to express: “I think we should stop copying other country’s curriculum, burdening our country or our kids with things that are not suitable for the conditions that we are in overcrowded classes, under- resourced schools. Feedback to teachers from district officials remains the challenge”.

The preceding responses are an indication that there are many challenges faced by both district officials in CAPS implementation. While it is valid that not having

a textbook is a serious limitation, the position that the participants have taken is not how they can overcome such limitations. It is a well-known fact and widely accepted that any curriculum extends well beyond a textbook, but it is arguable that the available textbook provided some form of basic curriculum guidance. It seems as if the district officials and school principals use insufficient resources as an explanation for inadequate implementation, and that they have not found creative ways to overcome such shortages. Furthermore, the fact that learners have textbooks is a good place to start, but teachers did not take that view. What became evident was that teachers and school principals seemed to place the responsibility for curriculum implementation outside of themselves, and often seemed to be teaching just because they had to. Bribery and corruption indicates that quality education in the district is non-existent. It appears that the failure of curriculum implementation in schools is a result of the curriculum that is not researched and this leads to copying curriculum change from other countries. Heystek [30] confirms that at the school level, school principal effectiveness may also be limited by the overt control of unions on the school environment.

### **4.3 Theme 3: Insufficient Support from the District**

It emerged from the study that there is a lack of finances in the district to buy Learning and Teaching Support Materials. It was found that the district officials were not doing enough to support schools to implement curriculum change. This is supported by McLennan, Muller, Orkin and Robertson [19] who assert that school principals and teachers note that the district only came once a year to check how far they were with the curriculum because they do not have the means or resources to come to schools. The study indicated that monitoring and support in schools is not that much possible. The study revealed that there was no adequate support concerning workshops. This is in line with the following responses:

SP1 stated: "The level of monitoring and supporting curriculum change by the department at school level is not satisfactory. The district officials sometimes come to visit schools on development purposes. Teachers are not professionally well developed". SP2 had to say the following: "The district has got financial constraints and it fails to support district officials to go for workshops". I had never attended workshops on CAPS that are adequate". SP3 responded as follows: "The district does not support the schools adequately. Yes, we were trained on CAPS, but the training session on CAPS lasted for a short time. After training I was not ready to implement the CAPS. I relied on the knowledge of other teachers who attended the training. The workshops that were conducted by the district officials are a waste of time because they just read manuals which the teachers can read for themselves". SP4 said: "Challenges facing school principals are not amicably resolved. There are not enough policy documents in our schools". SP5 confirmed: "Teachers are not professionally developed. In-service training and programs to update teachers are non-existent".

From the above interviews and quotes, it is clear that the support schools received from the district was inadequate. It appears that the department

conducted workshops without the budget thereof. Thus school principals were invited to attend the workshops in order to be exposed to curriculum changes but workshops seem to be insufficient. It is indicated that the district officials rarely come to schools in order to develop teachers professionally. This may be argued that the workshops which were conducted by the department were not useful to some teachers as the district officials read manual for teachers. It appears that schools cannot function smoothly without the supply of resources. The department must ensure that the resources are timeously provided to schools. This is supported by Bantwini [18] who confirms that in South African context, the general lack of support to schools by districts has been emphasised by researchers. Jacobs, Vakalisa, and Gawe [4] note that teachers need support to implement the curriculum.

#### **4.4 Theme 4: Inadequate Training Received from the District**

It emerged from the study that school principals were insufficiently trained to manage CAPS implementation. All participants indicated that school principals felt threatened by knowledge and expertise of teachers as they received more training opportunities than school principals. The study found that the district conducted workshops and teacher training for the CAPS although they were not up to standard. The study revealed that school principals are ill-informed about curriculum change. It was pointed out that the district officials are not qualified to train schools. To validate the above assertion, the following participants reported that:

“The district organises workshops on an on-going basis. Workshops are organised during the holidays and even on Saturdays and Sundays. [DO1]. “We did our part and school principals should do the rest”. [DO2]. “The district has provided policy documents to schools and it is the turn of school principals to read and interpret them”. On the contrary SP3 responded in this fashion: “District officials were incompetent to conduct curriculum change workshops. Workshops should also be conducted by experts who know their stuff.” [SP3]. SP4 confirmed: “The training schools received from the district is not enough. Training received by school principals to manage their schools is considered as time wasting”.

The preceding responses and quotes are an indication that the district fails to train schools satisfactorily. This implies that district officials do not have the expertise when facilitating curriculum change. Thus, the district officials should be retrained in order to know their stuff. It appears that the district officials did not get enough training or there was no training at all. It might be shameful to see district officials struggling in the presence of school principals. It can be arguable that the quality of training workshops was poor and questionable and that schools are mismanaged on account of inadequate training school principals received from the district. This implies that incompetency is common in schools. Lumadi [14] confirms that the training the teachers received from the workshops was insufficient as it was conducted haphazardly. (p.177). One may question the competence of school principals as they were trained as teachers for three years.

The experience gained by the school principals in managing CAPS and school can be challenged. They mustn't rely on district officials to implement curriculum change. School principals' comments reveal that they received common training before the implementation of CAPS. The kinds of training received by school principals included district workshops, in-service trainings and cluster workshops. The school principals' responses revealed that workshops and in-service training were of low quality due to the incompetency of district officials.

#### **4.5 Theme 5: Strategies Used to Enhance Effective Implementation of CAPS**

From the interactions the researcher had with the participants, it was evident that the retraining of district officials can make a difference in CAPS implementation. It emerged from the study that district officials are not trained adequately. Findings indicated that consistent monitoring should be done through classroom observations, class visit, moderating tests and examinations and looking at learners' work. Participants' comments are listed below:

"Retraining in the implementation of the curriculum change is necessary. Again, competence and qualifications of district officials need to be considered" [DO1]. "Monitoring of the curriculum implementation at school level should be regularly done. District officials need to be equipped in order to help school principals and teachers with ease" [DO2]. "The district conducted workshops in order to involve, train and keep teachers up to date with the curriculum changes. Teachers were grouped in clusters for the performing schools and the non-performing schools. The district should communicate the CAPS through meetings, seminars and pamphlets" [DO3]. "School principals should have a week for workshop in order to be conversant with the curriculum change. District officials should train school principals and teachers before the implementation of any curriculum change and after the launch of curriculum change" [DO4]. On the other hand SP2 responded in this way: "Teachers should be trained to have knowledge about curriculum change. I attended workshops offered before CAPS implementation, in-service training, and other workshops organised by the district together with district officials". Collaboration between, teachers, school principals and district officials should be emphasised". SP3 confirmed: "The district should create enough time for the advocacy of the new curriculum before proper training can take place. District officials from the Department of Basic Education should embark on curriculum change awareness campaign through meetings, seminars and pamphlets so that teachers can accept the changes in the curriculum before they go for training".

SP4 responded in this fashion: "Some implementation strategies to avert the challenges of curriculum change should be initiated. We are not fully involved in curriculum change, we are just being told that this is a new curriculum and this is how it works. So district officials need to come back to us. Involve teachers as to what should be done, what's best for our learners, so they must stop taking curriculum from other countries. They will formulate something that will work". On the contrary SP5 said: "The district officials are office based and they use theory

to manage the implementation of CAPS. School principals and teachers are the ones faced with the challenges on a daily basis and they are the ones interacting with learners. Teachers could formulate the best policy based on the CAPS, because they already know that assessment must be outcome based”.

From the above responses it is evident that there are strategies that can be used by the district office to enhance effective implementation of curriculum change. The above responses support the fact that the district conducted workshops inadequately. Retraining of district officials can change the standard of curriculum change. The strategies announced by the participants should be looked into as they are helpful to the implementation of curriculum change and they cannot be considered as business as usual. It is a well-known fact that district officials rarely come to schools and this make them to use theory for the implementation of curriculum change. The implication is that regular school visit will help the district to know and understand the challenges schools are facing concerning CAPS. The above responses is supported by Fomunyam [15] who emphasises that teachers have reported that the necessary teacher-training and support to assist them in their new tasks have not been adequate to bring about the needed changes in the schools.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, results have shown that there are many impediments faced by district officials in curriculum change implementation. The implementation of CAPS has brought many challenges in schools and that proper training of district officials should be done before the implementation of curriculum change. This study concludes that qualified district officials should be appointed and ongoing support from the Department of Basic Education and the provision of resources in ensuring smooth curriculum implementation is needed. The repetition of similar answers by different participants proved to the researcher that the instrument the researcher used was valid for the purpose of this study. The instrument the researcher used to interview participants did not disappoint him – it was suitable and reliable. In conclusion, during interviews, this study produced similar results from different participants; therefore, this study is valid and reliable.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results discussed in the previous sections, the following recommendations are made to help enhance the implementation of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in the Vhembe West District, South Africa:

- (1) Retraining of district officials should be done. It emerged from the study that district officials are not trained adequately. These district officials should be capacitated to implement curriculum change in order to address the challenges of curriculum change implementation.
- (2) Provision of funds should be considered when curriculum change is launched. It emerged from the study that the district has got financial



constraints and it lacks funds to buy Learning and Teaching Support Materials.

- (3) Research should be done before the launch of curriculum change. The study indicated that curriculum change has been copied from other countries and it is difficult to implement CAPS in South African schools. Research should also help district officials with skills to implement curriculum change effectively.
- (4) Capacity building workshops should be provided to teachers, school principals and district officials. The study found that the district officials should be capacitated to implement curriculum change in order to address the challenges of curriculum change implementation. The district should identify and prepare potential school principals before appointments are made.
- (5) Promoting district officials competence should be of priority. It emerged from the study that competence and qualifications of the district officials should be given preferences. The study revealed that incompetency is ripe in schools due to the training school principals received from district officials who do not know their stuff. Thus district officials should be qualified to train schools better. The appointment of qualified officials to assist in the implementation of the CAPS should make a difference.

## **7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This research study took place in Vhembe West District in South Africa whereby five school principals and five district officials were sampled and participated to gather data. As such, other school principals and district officials were not involved in the interview. A further research will be required to involve district officials and school principals in curriculum change from all districts in South Africa. Further limitation was that the 10 participants interviewed were too few and that all the participants were from same education district. Their experiences with the phenomenon of CAPS were therefore similar. A further study may interview other districts and many participants in CAPS implementation to yield different results from what this study would suggest. This research study is qualitative in design and, as a result, its findings cannot be generalised to the population of this study; instead, they can be transferred to other schools and districts with similar contexts and/or experiences. A further research will be required to involve school principals and district officials in CAPS implementation from all districts in South Africa. A larger number of participants from more schools and districts might have contributed to the variety of responses thus enriching the findings.

## **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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This chapter is an extended version of the article published by the same author(s) in the following journal. Journal of International Education and Practice, 2(2 and 3): 45-57, 2019. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/jiep.v2i2 n 3.1006>

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/2472G>

# Use of Learning Intervention for Learning and Organizational Change in a Strategic Management Course

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DOI: 10.9734/bpi/pller/v3/7124E

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/7124E>

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## ABSTRACT

Strategic management education is vital for preparing professionals for real work involvement. This paper reviews the essential component theories of strategic thinking and how they influence strategic management educators and researchers to create knowledge useful in professional contexts.

**Design/ Methodology/Approach:** The conceptualized learning intervention model (LIM) is rooted in an analysis of strategy and organizational change using intervention theory and methods of behavioral science. It also draws from theories of adult learning and development with a focus on building a learning community environment. A case study in a business school environment was conducted with a learning intervention analysis method.

**Findings:** The research concludes that strategic management education draws from diverse theoretical perspectives and learning intervention methods constructed from contextual meaning-making of knowing within practice outlined as interventionist strategies of learning. The practitioner research paper provides evidence of LIM's contexts of knowing and acting drawing on my professional experiences using coaching and facilitative roles in the educational case study of a strategic management course. More specifically, the case study reflects understanding the captured processes that supported the learning environments such as the analytical process, collective process, reactive process, and emerging learning process. Practice implications: The results of the research advance awareness of theories and methods that educational practitioners apply in coaching and supporting learners of strategic management education. It considers the importance of learning interventions by inviting strategic management practitioners to examine how they integrate the theory and practice of organizational change in creating better learning environments.

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**Originality/Value:** The study adds value by incorporating learning and organizational change techniques that integrate theory and methodology that guide knowledge development processes through the use of LIM analysis tools. It finishes with the recommended practical utility of the LIM approach as an example of how creative teaching techniques for strategic management education can be built by educational practitioners. Future research implications of practitioner research models are encouraged.

*Keywords: Coaching and facilitator role; learning intervention model; organizational change and learning; professional development; strategic management; strategy as multiple design lens.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Strategic management education is vital for preparing professionals for real work involvement. This paper reviews the essential component theories of strategic thinking and how they influence strategic management educators and researchers to create knowledge useful in professional contexts. I am limiting my focus in two ways. First, I will review theoretical literature approaches connected with strategic management perspectives underpinned by a variety of schools of thinking or paradigms from which various scholars, researchers, and practitioners draw their knowledge creation basis. I will not discuss how strategic management education is implemented in all contexts, but will rather provide insights gleaned from a model created from my practitioner-researcher experiences. I have called this approach a learning intervention model (LIM) from which I explicate ways it contributed to knowledge creation for learners in strategic management education. My second limitation is that I will emphasize learning intervention as one of the many approaches often ignored in teaching strategic management education. Practitioners or researchers may further explore related learning approaches that explore other types of intervention methods.

The review draws from strategic management's multiple schools of thought, while my methodological thinking focuses on my teaching experiences drawn from adult learning theories and behavioral science approaches. Gummesson suggested that the role of management action scientists is an art that develops interventions that lead to specific decisions, implementation, and change processes resulting in local theory tested and modified through action [1]. The findings of Brophy concerning student learning, also confirm that students learn better when provided with opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and values; learning occurring within a shared community; and focus on individual and collaborative learning goals [2]. The above theoretical perspectives provided inspiration and guidance as a contribution to the study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The expansion of business training schools in Switzerland and worldwide has led to the increasing demand to incorporate strategic management courses designed to prepare learners with relevant problem-solving skills in consulting and

management in the business world. Therefore, educators are challenged to design strategic management coursework that connects learners with the theory and practice of the field. The strategic management processes focus on descriptive methods where managers take center roles in planning and implementing strategies that lead to competitive business advantages. However, student learners attending strategic management courses are young professionals and most often with limited prior work experience in strategic management practice. Exploring how strategic management educators are responding to these challenges becomes a critical consideration in coaching and facilitating an effective learning environment for future business students. Several opportunities remain to be explored for developing business students with strategic management learning skills. For example, Sloan, suggests three kinds of critical reflection enabling learners to think strategically 1) content reflection which focuses on what, description or content of a strategic problem; 2) process reflection which focuses on how involving thinking processes are used to implement strategic solutions; 3) premise reflection which focuses on why, and position inquiries on why this the issue is relevant to the strategy [3].

Therefore, this paper examines a strategic management educational program, paying special attention to practicing critical reflection on the learning activities, interventions, and organizational changes conceptualized in developing such a program. The importance of practitioners thinking critically about their practice as four intersecting components outline 1) propositional knowledge underlying theoretical content concerns and basis of practice; 2) process knowledge: the processes in which professionals engage whilst practicing; 3) personal knowledge: self-knowledge; 4) value-based knowledge: moral and ethical values and beliefs one holds [4]. Based on the above considerations, the coaching teaching approach in strategic management educational practice using the LIM approach was designed and its practical significance is discussed below.

## **1.2 Practical Research Significance of the Study**

This article helps to inspire future practitioner researchers in the role of educational coaches and facilitators to develop new models drawn from possibilities of using multiple perspectives of strategic management foundations. This article also contributes new knowledge centered on innovative intervention learning to inspire educational practitioners interested in designing strategic design learning models that synthesize theory and practice strategies as useful for improving strategic management learning in higher education. The LIM perspective advanced in this article is evidence from this research that designing strategic management learning environments is a multifaceted approach that requires the integration of different types of theories, contextual methods, and professional knowledge skills. Strategic management education and learning will be more illuminating and innovative when academics and researchers demonstrate the integration of the theory, practice, and actions as evidence of how learning interventions were applied that demonstrate reflexive knowledge created within the practice.



### **1.3 Paper Outline**

The focus of the paper is introduced which also includes the background of the study and practical research significance of the study in using the LIM approach. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the literature review of strategic management and conceptualizations drawn from ten multiple schools of thought influencing strategic management education. Section 3 presents the methodological approach used with details of the theoretical and practical foundations of the learning intervention model and how it was applied in the case study of the business educational contexts including identified learning outcomes. Section 4 discusses the LIM framework with implications for identified processes and methods that shaped the study while Section 5 provides the critical reflection analysis which includes a discussion of the LIM application based on the case story of the business school contexts. Section 6 presents the conclusion of the paper including a summary of the practical significance of the applied model, while Section 7 outlines future research implications, and also cites some limitations of the study.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The use of case studies as a way of teaching strategic management has been used by academic practitioners and researchers. These case inquiries make it possible for professionals and students to gain a better understanding of the strategic management field. This review provides a background of strategic management education and learning from a variety of approaches. Although strategic management concepts and concerns are built around assessing business strategy, they also need to be understood from the assumptions of multiple schools of thought [5] that influence its practice. Rothaermel outlines strategic management as a field that integrates analysis, formulation, and implementation toward achieving competitive advantages for companies. Drawing from the above types of analysis the three strategic management tasks focus on analyzing, formulating, and implementing [6].

Moreover, analyzing the firm from the above framework appears to be an injection of simple formulas. However, the complexities of business issues reveal that strategic management cannot be understood from simple and quick formulas. For the most part, the rational and linear approaches associated with strategic management learning and practice have populated management literature perspectives on what is viewed as an ideal version of strategic success. According to Maranville most management scholars and practitioners have advanced a rational approach to the practice of management which is influenced by the objective and procedural epistemology of the scientific method [7]. Manning also views strategy practice from the scientific procedural approach guided by what he calls eight critical strategy practices that examine: 1) growth leadership; 2) fast learning and adaptation; 3) focus, value, and cost; 4) business model innovation; 5) resource and capability acquisition, development, and leverage; 6) stakeholder alignment and support; 7) smart sequencing & pacing; 8) disciplined execution [8]. The above assumptions associate strategic management success as generic

knowledge applicable to all companies universally. What is taken for granted in the above assumptions is the thinking that core eight management practices apply universally to all companies.

## **2.1 Conceptual Framework: Foundations of Strategic Management**

Mintzberg outlines strategic management as precise measurements and suggests the strategy is better understood from ten multiple perspectives such as 1) The design school: strategy formation as a process of conception; 2) The planning school: strategy formation as a formal process; 3) The positioning school: strategy as an analytical process; 4) The entrepreneurial school: strategy as a visionary process; 5) The cognitive school: strategy formation as a mental process; 6) The learning school: strategy formation as an emergent process; 7) The power school: strategy formation as a process of negotiation; 8) The cultural school: strategy formation as a collective process; 9) The environmental school: strategy formation as a reactive process; 10) The configuration school: strategy formation as a process of transformation [5]. Another approach outlined by Hafsi and Thomas argues that the field of strategy and strategy research is better understood within the theory and practice synergies, rather than from theory and practice separation. [9]. The authors conceptualize strategy learning and research as a theory of action integrating management processes and decision-making outcomes of engaging the environment, maintaining competitive advantage, preserving guiding track, and prioritizing organizational community values and leadership values and vision. Another foundational perspective is that strategies for studying organizations must apply domains of organized action which include analysis of environments, task environments, acquisition of power, and management of interdependence to improve competitive and cooperative strategies [10].

Firstly, in examining the above multiple perspectives of studying strategic management, it can be seen that literature draws from these driving perspectives and paradigms. Secondly, managers also draw from this strategic approach and attempt to implement their strategy formation using one or more of the above perspectives. Thirdly strategic management educators are also influenced by the above schools of thought in terms of how they design and teach strategic management courses in business schools. Overall, it can be seen that the evolution and essence of strategic management definitions, processes, and practices are to be understood from the foundational perspectives outlined above. Therefore, a term I use here is that strategic management education is a tunic of many colors because it comprises multiple paradigms and schools of thought. How strategy development in organizations and businesses is designed and implemented is understood when interpreted from one or integrated influences of the above schools of thought. For example, McKeown drawing from the configuration school suggests strategy impact is best implemented from continual, creative, and adaptive processes of action [11].

Another example of using a managing strategic change suggests strategy developments from an incremental perspective where managers or executives use their schemas based on past decisions made as a basis for engaging future

strategies [12]. Johnson also proposes a cultural perspective as a means to develop a strategy examined in cultural, political, and cognitive terms. As noted by Johnson, the cultural perspective challenges the complexities and limitations of managers' knowledge creation associated with logical systems analysis and planning. Moreover, the cultural perspective broadens and exposes managers' core beliefs and assumptions informed by the paradigm of the organizations they represent (p. 30). A paradigm is defined as a core set of beliefs and assumptions that fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment. Central to the cultural perspective strategy development integrates analysis of opportunities and threats, strengths and weaknesses, informed by paradigm assumptions, strategy implementation, and performance outputs (p. 30). Johnson also notes that the cultural audits of managers are their ability to analyze and interpret the cultural web of an organization which integrates symbolisms, stories and myths, rituals and routines, control systems, organizational structures, and power structures (p. 31). Johnson has argued that a strategic management approach from a cultural perspective is capable of exposing the cultural, social, and political processes in comparison to the logical increment perspective. While a cultural perspective uses a paradigm awareness to analyze and interpret the cultural web of an organization, it differs from Manning's strategy practices which draw from the design and planning schools of thought.

On the contrary, strategy management research explores complexities and a variety of strategy formation processes as outcomes of either deliberate or emergent strategy actions [12]. While the deliberate focus is on direction and control actions, emergent strategy patterns focus on strategic learning and venturing. Description types of strategies deliberate or emergent are outlined as planned, entrepreneurial, ideological, umbrella, process, unconnected, consensus, and imposed. It is important to note here that strategic management scholars and researchers continue to debate these perspectives of strategy either as shaped by deliberate or emergent knowledge creation approaches. Moreover, it can be argued that proponents of deliberate approaches draw their assumptions from the planning schools of strategic planning and strategic visioning. On the contrary emergent, approaches draw from the learning school and environmental school. Another strategic management research used a case study to improve the efficiency of the Singapore Hotel Industry to address its past and new challenges [13]. Taking the position school, the strategy as an analytical process was performed using a SWOT analysis by identifying the external and internal business environment which resulted in identifying the hotel's core competencies, corporate strategies, and future innovation and sustainability plans. Moreover, this case study also shares a similarity of strategy development using a cultural perspective which also employed SWOT to analyze the threats and opportunities impacting environmental forces, and strengths and weaknesses to assess the organizational capabilities [12]. However, the strategic management of the Hotel case also shows the application of 1) the configuration school to improve and transform the corporate culture of the Hotel; 2) the learning school to design emerging and future innovations and growth of the hotel [13]. The above case example demonstrates that strategic management educators, change agents and consultants need to reflect their knowledge creation foundations influencing their ideas used to design

appropriate strategic management interventions. These outlined schools of thought [5] reveal diverse background approaches towards which strategic management intervention approaches are viewed as deliberate or planned approaches depicting strategic knowledge creation as tangible positions, in contrast to emergent approaches which view strategy as broad perspectives. Another approach outlines a strategy framework inquiry and frames it as three main branches of strategy which are strategy context, strategy content, and strategy process. The strategy application from this perspective goes beyond abstractions but entails analysis and implementation of specific solutions for solving business problem issues. It entails what people do in real work environments [14,15]. The ways of studying and working with the type of strategic understanding are illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1. Strategy three branches [15], p.19**

Strategy context (internal & external)	Strategy context refers to multiple layers of environment, internal, and external to organizations. The focus of analysis is directed towards industry and cultural analysis of opportunities and threats.
Strategy content (strategic options and performance)	Strategy content concerns the nature of different strategies of choices. The aim is to establish which types of strategies are suitable and what conditions.
Strategy process (strategic planning & strategy as practice)	The strategy process examines how strategies are formed and implemented. The main focus is on how people do strategy at work and the types of tools and skills needed.

Given the above diverse approaches, it can be concluded that strategic change consultants, change managers, management educators, and researchers draw their knowledge building from one or more combinations of the above backgrounds to build their practice. These include both the traditional and newer models of strategic management schools of thought. In the next section, I shall discuss the LIM approach, and its methodological and intervention methods that I contributed in coaching learners in a strategic management program.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The learning intervention model used in this study was designed as a method to improve educational learning using coaching and facilitation as a case study in strategic management education in a Switzerland business school context. In reflection on my professional journey, I asked the following question: How could I design a learning intervention that promotes discovery and innovation in a strategic management course? The learning intervention model (LIM) was used to interpret the contextual data and the learning methods applied. Drawing from the qualitative case study method [16]. I used the literature as outlined above to highlight the learning behavior science theory and method [17] which was applied to analyze actions in organizational change interventions and knowledge outcomes of the LIM approach. According to Cummings and Worley, organizational development

intervention applies to implementing changes in strategy, structures, and processes of organizational systems [18]. It is important to emphasize that the methodological design adopted in this study is not presented as a magic formula.

### **3.1 Method of Learning Intervention Model**

The author presents a method whereby strategic management educators and researchers may reflect on their learning intervention methods and theoretical underpinnings in facilitating teaching and coaching learners in a strategic management case study education. The LIM method emerged as I sought to develop my scholar-practitioner research as a strategic management coach and educator within a Switzerland business school context using a learning intervention approach. The LIM framework provides a method for strategic management educators and researchers to learn to consider the types of instructional beliefs, tasks, interventions, and methods they could employ in creating in designing strategic management coursework.

Drawing from practice theory notions of understanding knowledge as integrated within practices [19] the emphasis focuses on how reflexive, theoretical, and analytical activities contribute to practical processes, and transformational dynamics that influence elements of practice. In particular, I shall also suggest that the LIM approach provides a method of developing strategy as a practice built around four considerations. Four considerations shape how I view constructions of strategic management educational coaching and learning. First, I seek to conceptualize the LIM as an instructional design tool that provides educators and learners with opportunities to engage in strategic learning using four processes analytical, collective, cultural, and emergence processes drawn from strategic management interventions. Secondly, I will suggest that strategic management educators and coaches design learning using theories that underpin their praxis and practices. Third, strategic management educators work in a variety of educational contexts. Therefore, the LIM can be applied to highlight how educational practitioners create learning and changes in various disciplines of studies. For example, strategic management educators could implement the LIM method to assess strategic analysis trends related to marketing, communication, team, or leadership dynamics. Fourthly, the implementation of learning intervention outcomes could be created by integrating interactive empirical activities and methodological processes of learning [20]. Raelin's definition of learning outcomes suggests creating classroom or training activities that call for practice-based learning outcomes that evaluate work or project experiences.

Drawing from my case study example evaluation of learning intervention outcomes using assignments presentations, and reports illustrated how learners worked from analytical, collective, reactive, and emerging processes. It must be stated that the author does not suggest that the LIM method represents finality in ways strategic management should be conceptualized the same in all educational contexts. However, the author believes that by drawing from multiple theories of strategic management educators and researchers are capable of creating various types of research that are grounded on multiple methods and rich contextual tools available

in their educational learning environments. Considering such possibilities would result in research projects in strategic management education that reflect diverse methodologies that highlight contextual illuminations. A diagram is used to illustrate the five key components that constitute a learning intervention model as a framework example.

**Table 2. Using learning intervention model to support strategic management education**

<b>Contexts</b>	<b>Key Learning Priorities</b>
Contextual considerations	The author conducted the strategic management educational research project in the Swiss Business School context, aimed at training learners in the Hospitality Industry (contextual industry).
Theory considerations	The author draws from an intervention theory and research method in facilitating strategic management education. This behavioral science views the intervenor as a change agent role of managers or consultants working in business cliental systems to facilitate change and learning to implement required tasks [18].
Methodological considerations	The author draws from management and organizational change as a diagnostic or intervention way of analyzing business or organizational situations. To enhance learners' development and learning the author integrated action learning, problem-based learning, and action research methods. These methods enriched the LIM approach.
Learner's considerations	The learners are comprised of learners from diverse backgrounds. To facilitate effective learning environments the author coached and supported the learners in developing their LIM presentations and LIM reports. The learners developed key insights related to analyzing the hospitality industry's external and internal domains.
Professional considerations	The author draws from his experiences and role as an instructor of strategic management education in a Swiss context. This situated context enabled the author to explore his professional identity through an investigation of conducting research into his practice, to illuminate the implications of studying strategic management education using the LIM approach.

The use of the above model offered a fresh perspective from which to understand the implementation of learning and changes facilitated to understanding elements that supported the above conceptual model. Drawing from reflective practice [21], professionals engage in personal and professional reflection on their practice. In the professional practice reflections of the study, I share some insights that provided key learning for my inquiry.

My interest in this type of intervention emerged during my two years of teaching strategic management students when I realized the limitations of teaching students only theories of strategic management. It was also important to teach them strategic management analysis and diagnostic intervention tactics as practiced by strategic managers and consultants in real work life.

### **3.2 Instructional Design: Learning Intervention Model**

The purpose of this learning intervention project was to find an approach to teaching strategic management modules that enabled learners to act as problem solvers in the process of their studies. This enabled them to learn how to apply the theory and strategic intervention in practice. The study is significant because it provides actionable knowledge produced in professional contexts by practitioners [17]. Consequently, this study may help professional academics and educators to design learning communities and methods that prepare students to gain some insights into the use of strategic management tools and techniques. In so doing the study also builds on existing models and research as analysis and diagnostic intervention approaches that could be used in coaching strategic management learners in business schools. Stacey notes that thinking about strategy and organizational change includes tasks of examining patterns of interaction and interconnection of responsive processes of communication between human bodies [22]. He argues that strategic change managers or management consultants try to enact changes from objective observers or participative inquiries. Considerations of using the LIM methodological approach prioritized the participative inquiry in which I sought to advance strategic management knowledge created from highlighted sensibilities of 1) the analytical process of the position school; 2) the collective process of the cultural school; 3) the reactive process of the environmental school; 4) emerging process of the learning school. The relevance of the above four processes and implications for developing a LIM in educational practice are further outlined in the discussion sections of the study.

### **3.3 Theoretical Underpinnings of LIM**

LIM draws from various theories. Firstly, it draws from a coaching method. The coaching theory was used for this study because it allows professionals to act as coaches, offering advice and guidance [23] to improve the strategic management skills of learners. A theory of strategy development using a cultural perspective also shades understanding of managing strategic change and integrating strategy, culture, and actions [12]. Another perspective of the strategic management change approach explores the relationship between praxis, practices, and practitioners as an integrative framework to illuminate what managers do [14,24].

Therefore, the aim of the practice perspective is its contribution to the knowledge-building of strategy practitioners in different contexts. Secondly, the LIM draws from organizational consultation in school systems [25] where the emphasis is placed on creating learning and organizational changes that improve program enhancement using classroom-planned and implemented activities. Thirdly it draws from pedagogical theories of learning where the emphasis is placed on

educators creating strategies for conducting classroom research aimed at improving student learning and development [2,17]. Finally, it draws from the work of Maranville who argued that the strategic thinking process emerges from integrating the science and art paradigms processes created through analysis and synthesis of management education [7].

### **3.4 LIM Practice in a Strategic Management Educational Context**

While educational contexts will differ, the learning methods can also be adapted to meet various business training specializations. Since the Switzerland Business School specialized in hospitality education, the LIM was designed and tailored toward providing a strategic approach to analyzing and evaluating strategic management planning to improve hospitality organizational effectiveness. This approach draws similarities with the coalignment model underpinning strategic management in the hospitality industry including understanding the relationship between environmental events, strategy choice, firm strategy, and firm performance in the hospitality industry [13]. Taking the strategy as practice, the argument presented in the above model requires managers to diagnose and evaluate improvements contained within the coalignment model. Whittington also suggested that a practice perspective is an integrated approach that enables managers to analyze and evaluate units in both the intra-organizational and extra-organizational domains also referred to as strategy practice research highlighting the importance of evaluating praxis in terms of understanding prevailing practices [14]. It is also important to note that the evaluation of effective praxis is developed from identified strategic management outcomes [26].

### **3.5 Strategic Management: Characteristics of Learning Intervention Outcomes**

The learning intervention outcomes were outlined as enabling learners to learn to think strategically. Sloan noted that strategic thinking requires different types of learning methods in strategies such as situation learning, trans-situation learning, learning to learn, and transcendent learning [3]. The learning intervention model to strategic analysis reflects the above types of learning as activity learning, indeed what is commonly referred to as learning by doing. It is a practice-based approach in that it provides students of strategic management a taste of real life of what managers and consultants do as problem solvers. Most college-level students have limited managerial background knowledge in hospitality companies and real-life strategic decision experiences. However, most students would have participated in internship situations so the LIM approach made sense to them based on their previous internship experiences. The LIM approach enabled learners to experience strategic management as doing or practice by 1) providing opportunities to understand the challenges and opportunities of hospitality industries and suggested strategies for problem improvement; 2) developing assessment and diagnostic skills in analyzing internal and external hospitality industry companies; 3) assumed the role of managers or consultants rather than just learning about strategic management theories; 4) experienced working in teams with other learners and gained insights into the world of managers and



consultants; 5) enabled critical reflection in bridging the theory and practice of strategic management in real life situations.

It is important to emphasize that the LIM projects were participated by only BA program students of the strategic management classes who were fourth-semester finalists. From the start of the strategic management classes, the learners were introduced to strategic management theories and the LIM method. In this respect coaching the students as interventionist learners in strategic management, and practice provided timely preparation before the trainees launched into their professional careers within the hospitality industry. Harrison & Enz, outline understanding the hospitality industry as the need to assess the external and internal environments that impact hospitality business contexts [27]. Using the LIM practice two learning praxis methods were developed by the author which were used to assess and guide the learners towards the praxis and practice sensibilities of strategic management practice as outlined below.

### **3.5.1 LIM 1 assignment presentations**

This assignment was designed as a presentation where learners worked together in small group formats which focused on presentations of their learning projects. The purpose of the presentation required learners to diagnose and evaluate the external environment and internal impacts of a hospitality industry organization's business and management issues and identify the strategic choices suited to the business or organization context. The task was not just about describing strategic management theories, but the integration of theory and practice to demonstrate confidence use of strategic techniques. The task is justified through strategic management literature and the interventions proposed. The learners were encouraged to demonstrate critical and creative use of strategic theories to demonstrate how organizations within the hospitality and events industry were improved. The proposed structure of presentation guidelines recommended the need to outline: 1) the background of the chosen organization with clarity on challenges, and problems in need of improvement; 2) evaluation of the external and internal environment of the organization and choice of strategies adopted; 3) analysis of the problem, models outlined for improving goals; 4) proposed strategies illustrating types of change processes applied to demonstrate confident use of strategic techniques; 5) critical and creative use of strategy theory and practice outcomes leading towards clarity how diagnosis and management change was facilitated.

### **3.5.2 LIM 2 assignment report**

The LIM 2 assignment was designed as an individual report where learners were required to write a case report on the proposed intervention and illustrate the organization's implementation of its chosen strategy. The report required analysis and evaluation of the strategy suitability given the competitive environment of the hospitality industry challenges. The report also needed to address the consequential implications of change that occur as the strategy is implemented and suggest how organizations manage these changes. The report sought to

assess management learning as a reflection in action [28]. It also sought to expand learners' abilities to review how they employed strategic management theories, while also reflecting on their roles employed either as external consultants internal change agents' roles, or managers.

Overall, it is important to underscore that the effectiveness of the LIM method included multiple activities such as workshops, role-playing, working in small groups, case studies, class discussions, formative and summative evaluation, and critical reflection of individual and group presentation reports. Tutorial sessions were contextualized towards learners' focused areas of interest. This diversity reflected multiple areas of learners' career development in hospitality-related areas of interest. These were student-led to allow collaborative learning and independent thought on topics covered in strategic management as a practice. Latorre-Medina and Blanco-Encomienda emphasized that supporting strategic systems intervention practice requires coaching learners with skills in design processes, development, and monitoring actions taken [29].

#### **4. DISCUSSION OF LIM FRAMEWORK IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CLASS**

The case study was guided by the following research focus: 'Designing learning intervention experiences that promote discovery and innovation in a strategic management course. This section addresses this focus in particular with emphasis on how learning, discovery, and innovations emerge in facilitating the professional development of learners in strategic management education. The origins of the research study and methods used were presented in the background of studying and an attempt to understand ten schools of thought shaping strategic management education and practice [5]. In this discussion section, the findings and analysis highlight the knowledge creation impacts referred to as themes analysis of LIM, which includes analytical process, collective process, reactive process, and emerging process identified from the multiple tunic colors of strategic management schools of thought. The processes were identified as relevant in clarifying complexities and insightful learning to students and facilitative coaches as collaborative efforts that integrated LIM knowledge creation drawing from propositional knowledge, process knowledge, personal knowledge, and value-based knowledge [4]. The LIM process empowers educators to design strategic management modules that encourage discovery and innovation in improving student and adult learning.

Most recent conceptualizations of strategic management learning have shifted from the emphasis on strategy as long-term planning of goals towards the emphasis on strategy practice as praxis, practices, and practitioners [14,7]. As also argued by Eraut professional educators have primary responsibilities towards developing learning environments that identify: 1) types of professional knowledge and impact of contexts of use; 2) related problems of knowledge creation and facilitation of knowledge creation [30]. Therefore, the discussion of the LIM framework is also discussed from the above motivations. Using the above guidelines my role was to guide and support the learners' developmental

processes, and to facilitate understanding of the importance of intervention activity in organizational cliental contexts and systems of the hospitality domains of knowledge creation. The coaching advice rendered was not meant to give them absolute perspectives on strategic management interventions. The intervention activities and methods recommended sought to promote collaborative problem-solving created within the small group settings using educational and training activities and approaches towards facilitating strategic analysis and change as outlined in the methodology section. Consistent with the case study design [16] the description of the case highlights some identified themes or issues as challenges and prospects of professional knowledge that emerged from studying the case.

#### **4.1 Analytical Process**

Firstly, the LIM approach integrating the analytical process creates opportunities for learners to develop skills consistent with strategic management change agents or managers' ability to diagnose the external and internal assessment of business issues. Consequently, and as already stated the LIM enabled learners to build process knowledge by developing skills to analyze environmental forces and organizational capabilities. The role of process knowledge or process strategy is vital in understanding business systems and assessing and evaluating practices to improve alternative structures or revive old structures. Despite the prospects of the analytical process, the challenge encountered by learners was their inability to analyze the political processes which are also essential for understanding strategic management practices and only understood from the real world of managers.

#### **4.2 Collective Process**

Secondly, the LIM approach enabled learners to study and analyze organizational cultures which are also defined as collective cognition or cultural web in terms of understanding shared beliefs, stories, symbolisms, rituals, and routines impacting organizational structures [12] in the hospitality industry. By studying and analyzing collective interrelated systems of the cultural web processes, the learners were able to diagnose power structures, organizational structures, and communication structures of the hospitality industry. The role of propositional knowledge enabled learners to critically examine the theory and practice of studying collective processes that impacted organizational culture systems of the hospitality industry trends and dynamics. Moreover, due to the limited time, the learners had spent in professional hospitality environments, it was a challenge for learners to interpret the collective cultural web power systems in terms of how managers intervened or created knowledge within these systems. The role of management information systems in the hospitality industry demonstrates the strengths of managing operating systems, planning, and control, environmental scanning, evaluation of strategy, and human performance [27]. However, managers as analysts and interpreters of cultural web systems were less examined. This was due to the limitations of learners as cultural and political analysts. As noted by Johnson, the role of culture audit by managers is undertaken by managers to allow them to discover the nature of their organization in cultural terms [12].

### **4.3 Reactive Process**

Thirdly, the LIM approach enabled learners to study and examine strategic management learning as a rich description of environmental domain types. In this regard the learners' presentations and reports depicted an understanding that strategies originate in the environmental analysis, especially using the SWOT analysis which the learners found easier to apply and refer to. Moreover, the learners experienced challenges in going deeper into scanning the business environment. As noted by Sun, the goal of any environment scanning process is to identify the key forces driving change within the contextual environment of the organization [13]. While the learners' presentations and reports demonstrated multiple examples of contextual environment events in the hospitality industry, the learners were not competent in designing competitive methods that demonstrated the implementation of strategic short-term and long-term impacts of adopted strategies. Moreover, for the LIM projects, it was important for learners to select appropriate strategies that they thought suited their presentation or report projects, but also justify why selected strategies suited their projects. Mintzberg and Waters outlined different types of strategies such as planned, entrepreneurial, ideological, umbrella, process, unconnected, consensus, and imposed, and implications for strategic management at business and organizational levels [31]. Since the learners were taught a variety of strategic theories and models, they were able to make recommendations of the various selected strategies and justify how and why they applied them to their projects. Therefore, in these levels, the LIM case demonstrated that the reflection value-based knowledge of learners emerged from judgments about the strategies selected. The learners' value-based knowledge was seen as their intentions in selected strategies and justification in the confident use of strategic techniques.

### **4.4 Emerging Learning Process**

Fourthly, the LIM approach contributed to various dialogues, discussions, and complexities that emerged during the strategic management learning sessions. A variety of learning scenarios were employed during the learning sessions. Taking the role of a coach and tutor, I designed the outlined activities as indicated below which illustrated emerging processes of learning. Learners were asked to imagine taking roles such as external or internal consultants or managers as problem solvers, working in small groups, and sharing action learning interventions with the whole class during their tutorial sessions inclusive of formative and summative sessions. These types of activity-based learning combined with action-driven methods focused on developing the educational learning process as an experience of practice, which allows learners to work in groups and act as problem solvers in selected analyses of the contexts of their intervention projects. Moreover, action-driven methods take different forms. However, I shall only discuss the three action-driven methods that contributed insights into this praxis case and their implications for the learners' development. The case study captured the implementation of three methods such as action learning (AL); problem-based learning (PBL); and action research (AR).

#### **4.4.1 Action learning (AL)**

AL has become a commonly used method of teaching concepts of learning to students of business and management. While the AL methods differ the basic principle of learning skills focuses on the actions of learning sets to engage 1) action on the problem in the company; 2) learning from the experience of action; 3) reflection as a group and individually; 4) reframing revised ideas from plans implemented [32]. Using the LIM framework, the action learning interventionist the learners worked in small groups to identify and diagnose problem issues in the hospitality business areas of domains using the above learning cycles. Working from the AL model, the learners also analyzed internal and external factors affecting the hospitality industry, taking roles as team consultants or acting managers in business contexts. The proposed new solutions from learners reflected actions taken which is consistent with the assumption underpinning AL and experiential learning where learning emerges from some types of actions taken.

#### **4.4.2 Problem-based learning (PBL)**

A similar method to AL is problem-based learning which is based on the assumption that effective learning occurs when learners are involved with problem issues to be solved. They act as problem solvers instead of relying on teachers for answers or easily made solutions. An example of PBL was advocated by Schön who proposed that managers learn through conversations about the situation. Schön termed this process as reflection-in-action within organizational learning systems and suggested the role of the manager as an interpreter of business contexts to understand the behavior of the market, organizational problems, and the learning system of product development [28]. Using a problem-based learning method enabled the learners to diagnose and interpret internal and external factors relevant to the analysis of hospitality business issues.

#### **4.4.3 Action research (AR)**

Another action-driven methodology known as action research integrates processes of diagnosis, feedback, discussion, and actions taken to improve organizational and business problems [33]. Using the LIM framework, the action research learners engaged in 1) identifying problems in the hospitality industry; 2) analyzing the internal and external environments; 3) proposing and recommending changes to be implemented. For example, using action research intervention the learners were able to diagnose change interventions in various business levels of their hospitality projects. As outlined by Sun strategic management in the hospitality industry requires learners to understand the challenges facing hospitality managers [13]. Critical to the above is the view of the manager as adding value between the firm and the business environment. Another tool used to develop learners' diagnostic analysis and business evaluation of the hospitality trends was drawn from perspectives of strategic management using Porter's five forces to analyze industry competitors, potential entrants, buyers, and suppliers [32].

As illustrated from the above interactions' multiple varieties of processes and methods were employed in the emergent processes of the LIM interventions which impacted learners in two primary ways. First, it enabled learners to learn to think strategically by practicing reflection in three kinds of critical reflection:

- 1) Content reflection which clarified what they did within their learning activities
- 2) Process reflection which examined how they engaged their reports and collective group work and types of the strategic solution suggested; 3) premise reflection which justified why certain strategies were adopted in their conceptualized individual and collective interventionist projects [3]. Secondly, learners create new knowledge through activity theory and interactivity with others, consistent with expansive learning at work [34], when professionals engage with problem-solving in workplace settings. Thirdly, learners gained the skills of working in collaborative teams and designing solutions to problems which enabled them to diagnose business challenges and opportunities in hospitality education. One approach to understanding environmental scanning in the hospitality business is the ability to apply strategic management processes for identifying forces driving change and selection of competitive methods [27].

Despite the above successes, there were also challenges associated with applying the outlined action-driven methods of the LIM intervention. First of all, it requires the need to move from teacher or lecturer roles into coaching. Taking the coaching role, I supported the group members in managing their actions and learning processes. Moreover, the coach role demands a lot and it requires tutor availability to transfer knowledge to learners face to face rather than using lecture modes of delivery. However, some learners influenced by their cultural-educational background perspectives, detest group work projects and prefer the lecturer's style of delivery. Secondly, a learner's ability to succeed in small group learning requires the full participation of all participants. Some learners participate less in small group learning sessions. Moreover, given the coach and learner's reflective awareness of the above problems the action-driven methods such as AL; AR, and PBL integrated within the LIM framework enriched the learners and learning environment in a strategic management class context.

## **5. CRITICAL REFLECTION ANALYSIS: BENEFITS OF USING THE LIM APPROACH**

Educational practitioners need to be critical reflectors of the theories and methods they apply in practice. As illustrated from the above examples the success of the case story reflects the emerging process of learning strategic management and demonstrates varieties of interactive tools employed in coaching learners such as group discussions, case analysis, theory and practice reflections by learners, use of role plays either as consultants or managers in problem-solving. The benefits are further outlined below.

## **5.1 Learners Interactivity**

Reflecting on the above dynamics several observations were drawn. The strategy of using the LIM approach was to understand how learners interact with one another and also with the tutor using the outlined learning methods. Drawing from Thompson and Strickland, the aim was to support learners' skills in thinking strategically about a company and its business position [35]. As argued by Thompson and Strickland the importance of strategic management educators as knowledge creators that enable learners to develop managerial judgment skills that create results-oriented action plans. This correlates with the understanding of strategy as practice in work environments. Drawing from the LIM approach, learners benefited a lot from using the above varieties of learning activities and tools. However, there are limitations in the qualitative study using the LIM approach in all school contexts. The recommendations based on the model will require validation in other settings. Future research possibilities are encouraged that reflect different contexts of learners and demonstrate diverse intervention methods applied.

## **5.2 LIM Management Learning**

Using my knowledge and previous experiences in coaching groups and teams I supported learners with ways they could foster collaborative synergies by using learners' diverse personalities and cultural differences as strengths rather than as weaknesses. While the LIM enriches learning communities, it must be emphasized that it takes much effort to cultivate such a learning environment. It requires tutor availability both at individual and collective levels of supporting learners. This can be very demanding especially when tutoring responsibilities require managing larger classrooms and culturally diverse groups of learners. The challenges of managing larger classrooms became easier when learners worked in small groups, while also learning to manage their culturally diverse skills. This requires greater levels of attentiveness in designing learning intervention praxis that is culturally sensitive to different learning styles of learners. These contextual findings illustrated that the development of learners and implementation of organizational changes in the context of strategic management education required multiple sensibilities. Enhancing the knowledge creation of individuals and professional communities in higher education requires clarification of types of professional knowledge, application of that knowledge, and context use of the kind of learning that emerges [30].

Therefore, the outcomes of this study confirm similar findings based on previous research. Firstly, the study concurs with research on engaging and managing educational change using continuous improvement methods as expressions of four commitments: 1) grounding improvement efforts in local problems or needs; 2) empowering practitioners to take an active role in research and improvement; 3) engaging in iteration, which involves a cyclical process of action, assessment, reflection, and adjustment; 4) striving to promote change across schools, not just individual classrooms [36]. Secondly, the study also confirms the concept of strategizing research as the value that practitioner research draws from

learning that emerges from collaborated knowledge created from interactive discussion groups, self-report methods, and practitioner research [37] Thirdly the study findings share similarities with case-based research in strategic management instruction [7] where student teams are presented with teaching cases for analysis of business or corporate levels strategies. Moreover, Maranville argues that strategic management study approaches are dominated by the scientific paradigm that orients more toward the analysis approach. To integrate the synthesis approach, he proposes student teams use case-based analysis combined with oil paint to employ creativity as a process to understand the vision of the company. He argues that both analysis and synthesis are critically important tools in strategic thinking. While the artwork experience of learning is admired and illustrates another facet of strategic thinking as emergent, it can also be argued that real-life business situations require acting and thinking fast, rather than posing to paint.

On the contrary, the main emphasis of the LIM approach sought to orient the learners primarily with analysis techniques and the artistry knowledge that emerged while the learners were involved in the process of diagnosing their business and organizational interventions. Another point of difference was that in the LIM student learners selected real-life companies to diagnose, in contrast to the above model where student teams were assigned business cases for study. Whilst I value the importance of synthesis development in strategic management learning, in my case model the learners demonstrated its illumination in the evidence of how they applied critical and creative use of strategic theories in choices of implemented strategies in their projects [38]. Finally, reflecting on the above prospects, research in strategic educational management suggests developing three key ingredients: systemic strategic thinking, innovative learning processes, and pedagogical leadership [29].

### **5.3 Professional Practice Reflections**

Research has informed us about the different schools of thought that influence educational practitioners' and researchers' approaches to teaching strategic management education [5,39,40]. These approaches primarily use case study methods and strategic human resource management as methods in teaching strategic management education. My goal in this study is to provide some insight for those who might apply the LIM method in designing Strategic Management education. Learning and teaching strategic management education from the LIM approach transformed my teaching style by adopting strategy as theoretical actions and practices conducted in organizational contexts [9]. The LIM model as illustrated in the above diagram incorporates practical guidelines for implementation in coaching and training learners of strategic management education in Swiss contexts. It suggests content and contextual considerations are important key factors that better facilitate effective learning environments. Finally, I would say that before I incorporated the LIM approach my teaching style would have been more oriented toward a teacher-centered approach of teaching strategic management. Moreover, research suggests learning and performance are best fostered when students engage in practice as self-directed learners,



capable of assessing the demands of tasks and evaluating their knowledge and skills [41,42]. The author suggests the LIM approach was a useful tool for working with learners at the five contextually outlined levels of learning. The changes adopted in strategic management coursework greatly benefited the learners who viewed the strategic management course as useful in helping them act as problem solvers who described, diagnosed, and implemented solutions through the LIM projects.

Inspired by the above motivations I sought to advance these types of practices in coaching learners. Overall, this type of practitioner research method enabled me as a coach and facilitator to reflect on the impact of acting and knowing in domains of professional knowledge in practice [4,28]. The goal of the LIM approach was a project designed in response to meet the demands of my professional practice which included the challenges and opportunities to act as a learning intervention coach designed to advance intervention learning skills in strategic management education. The experience of creating LIM processes enabled the learners to acquire the knowledge base in the business and strategy analysis of the internal and external environments of the hospitality industry [27,32]. Therefore, this paper is of benefit to educators and professional consultants by emphasizing a new approach to contribute insights into the future coaching strategies in teaching strategic management learning and practice to business schools.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

From these findings, this study confirms that strategic management learning and practice draw several theoretical multi-perspectives. Therefore, it is important to further explore how educators and coaches collaborate with educational institutions and learners to enhance learning environments. This paper contributes towards strategic management education in higher education conceptualized from a learning intervention model (LIM) and implications for improving strategic management learning and practice are highlighted.

## **7. PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

From this paper, some practical significance is outlined on the value of the learning intervention model in designing strategic educational practice of the case study model. This paper has demonstrated the potential to design a strategic management learning and development of learners demonstrating its practical utility as an outcome of the efforts to sustain the intervention learning model. The practical significant implications are further discussed in the following sections below.

### **7.1 Integration of Theory and Practice**

This type of intervention learning suggests that learners learn to think strategically by integrating theory and practice in problem-solving. This was illuminated through discovery and innovation that highlighted learning processes that enhanced the use of critical reflection using content, process, and premise skills as learning

interventionists. These are matters that strategic management educators would need to elucidate.

## **7.2 Instructors or Educators as Coaches**

The role of the tutor in creating such learning environments requires moving away from being a lecturer to that of a coach and facilitator of designing learning experiences in collaboration with learners. It also requires continuous improvements of learning methods, designing methods that involve learners as active participants in learning rather than passive learners. Despite the challenges learners encountered in coordinating group presentations due to some learners lacking the motivation to participate, the LIM provided learners with active experiences and appreciation of problem-based learning, practice-based learning, and problem-solving skills in strategic management as a practice. Learners adopted fictional roles such as external or internal consultants, and managers. Additionally, these opportunities provided learners with intervention abilities, diverse presentations, and reports that resulted in multiple insights into analyzing real problem issues in strategic management domains of the hospitality industry.

## **7.3 Creating Learning Useful to Praxis and Practice**

Strategic management learning and practice represent a tunic of many colors, and consultants, management educators, and researchers can design intervention learning models that are useful to praxis and practice. Moreover, in designing such learning environments educators, management consultants, and researchers need to expand and critique the various schools of thought guiding their pedagogic approaches while being reflexive of challenges and potentials. The case illustrates the potential of LIM which enabled learners to gain personal and collective intervention learning competencies that draw from the outlined action-driven approaches. No single coaching methodology can serve every purpose. Therefore, this study suggests that the ideas outlined in the case example provide multiple perspectives by examining issues of learning challenges and prospects likely to be experienced by strategic management educators in a variety of school business contexts.

## **7.4 Strategic Learning as Knowledge for Action**

From my perspective, strategic management learning cannot be fully understood only from its theoretical propositions. Creative application of learning interventions drawn from a variety of schools of thought on the strategy needed to guide instructional curriculum designs. The four learning intervention processes discussed in the article provided classroom and professional knowledge that emerged while using the LIM approach in coaching learners. Drawing from Finlay reflective practice emerges from cultivating four areas of concern such as ethical, professional, pedagogic, and conceptual [21]. Using learning interventions theory and processes to create strategic management courses that link the above concerns offers educators vast learning and research possibilities for improving educational practices. The intervention activities illustrated in the case study may

be described as expanding and deepening understanding of strategic management learning as actionable ways of knowing.

### **7.5 Strategic Management as Problem-Solving**

The LIM approach described in this study was to prepare learners as better problem solvers using strategic management theories and learning intervention methods. The purpose of the case study was to understand processes and dynamics that enabled the tutor and learners to design strategic management learning environments using the LIM methodology. As already stated, the LIM assignment presentations enabled learners to analyze better the problem-related issues identified within the external and internal organizational analysis of their projects. Moreover, strategic management educational coaches and practitioners may promote different problem-learning skills from alternative angles such as case study analysis or organizational assessment using surveys. The central argument of this paper is that the existing research needs to provide learners with learning intervention skills for understanding strategic managing learning as processes involving the analysis and strategic management of the business industry. As outlined in the article, strategic management education represents multiple colors of foundational theoretical contributions, and future research opportunities await further exploration.

## **8. FUTURE RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

Practitioner research development is widely used by practitioners to examine their practice. Further work needs to address more educational contextual models drawn from the diversity of strategic management schools of thought. Future research could also further examine the role of educators as political entrepreneurs and as culture, and change agents [38], and as strategic systemic interventionists [29]. Finally, research on the specific role of strategic systemic intervention would be of value in creating classroom innovation models that capture creative learning environments while also enhancing problem-solving skills for learners. Further exploration of the above innovative approaches will provide insights to strategic management educators and researchers in understanding how learning intervention opportunities are created and negotiated in higher education.

Given the diverse views around practitioner researcher experiences, the evidence from this research suggests that qualitative case study methodology was useful in capturing research themes and patterns that emerged. Educational practitioners may also use grounded methodology or narrative methodology to be reflexive of their professional practice.

This study has some limitations like any other academic inquiry. The suggested approach advocates the idea of LIM as one of the many possibilities of approaches within the broader ten design schools shaping strategic management. While the case illustrated successful outcomes, some challenges would require further inquiry. Firstly, the LIM requires significant commitments from educators to invest enormous time commitments in working with learners using the listening roles of

coaches to design such interventions. This requires the need to develop facilitation process skills while also experimenting with learning and organizational change methods used to manage diverse educational practices. From the educational point of view, the processes can achieve productive results when there are collaborative learning opportunities created between educational coaches and learners. This demands significant effort and cooperation needed for such learning interventions to succeed. The case study analyzed demonstrated high motivation from learners who were keen to gain problem-solving skills associated with strategic management practice. However, this required significant time investments by both the educational coach and learners.

The second limitation concerns the challenges of managing learners' educational contexts where the LIM approach is implemented. As reflected in the features of the LIM example diverse group work activities and individual coaching are required. These methods may be challenging to implement where learners prefer traditional learning approaches that favor lecture-centered approaches. In the illustrated case, orienting the learners toward the value of LIM was seen as the benefits it brought towards a better way to help learners understand strategic management as an integration of theory and practice.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author thanks the reviewers of this article and their valuable input was greatly appreciated. He also thanks Professor Amr Essam Sukkar of LIGS University for his encouragement while writing this paper.

## **COMPETING INTERESTS**

The author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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This chapter is an extended version of the article published by the same author(s) in the following journal. Open Journal of Business and Management, 11: 2175-2197, 2023. Available: <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojbm.2023.115120>

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/7124E>

# **Factors Influencing Plagiarism amongst Students at an Institution of Higher Learning, KwaZulu-Natal**

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DOI: 10.9734/bpi/pller/v3/7203A

**Peer-Review History:**

This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/7203A>

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research study aimed to determine the factors influencing plagiarism amongst undergraduate students at an Institution of Higher Learning. A cross-sectional descriptive survey employing quantitative data collection methods, including questionnaires, was used. The study was conducted at the University of Technology, and the target population was undergraduate students from their first to their final year. The significant findings of this research paper show that accessibility, pride, and teaching factors influence plagiarism. In conclusion, there is a growing need for Institutions of Higher Learning in South Africa to create comprehensive frameworks for dealing with student plagiarism that is based on prevention and supported by effective detection and sanctioning systems that are transparent and consistently applied.

*Keywords: Access; plagiarism; teaching; technology.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 What is Plagiarism**

Plagiarism continues to be a leading concern in higher institutions. Plagiarism is highly discussed and considered a severe problem in Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) [1]. Past experiences indicate that if plagiarism is not addressed effectively; as a result, students continue to plagiarise, which can promote both laziness and academic dishonesty. Šprajc et al. reveal that students know plagiarism is wrong and unethical [2]. However, the academic community is aware

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of students plagiarising because they believe that no one will detect them. Training at IHL on how to reference and improve their academic writing skills are given, but unfortunately, plagiarism is still seen as a problem. Assignments and PowerPoint presentations are done in almost every module; hence, acknowledging the sources of information is not done correctly. It is known as plagiarism when work has not been recognised and referenced [3].

Plagiarising is duplicating another person's conceptions, words or work and pretending they are your own [4]. It is displaying another creator's thoughts or words as your own in a course report or potentially electronic posting [5] and taking credit for it. Plagiarism occurs in various aspects of our lives, and the ultimate aim of it is to secure high grades to pass at all costs. In media, piracy is a form of plagiarism; in schools, it can be in a written document, which may be known as literary theft [6]. Written falsification and literary theft in schools can be exceptionally demotivating for lecturers and students as they cannot work effectively and efficiently. This can be attributed to the intentional plagiarism committed by some awarded students, as there are no consequences. Students do not learn or gain anything from plagiarising, and this, unfortunately, has a lifelong impact on their academic writing skills. In addition, lecturers will not know how much their students know or have learnt.

## **1.2 Causes of Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the most reported type of research misconduct and academic dishonesty [7]. Further, it threatens our information and education system, as stealing someone's work is misconduct [8]. Many studies have indicated that attitude affects plagiarism intentions, for example, self-control, attitude, and perceived opportunity. Various factors may contribute to the tendency of plagiarism. These factors include student background, language, societal, demographic, and technological factors [9].

The practice of plagiarism may be traced back to high school assignments. Students were rewarded with excellent grades despite their teachers discovering that they had plagiarised from encyclopedias and other reference materials or used projects they had purchased [10]. Transitioning from high school to the tertiary level may cause students to encounter new and unfamiliar academic obstacles [11]. For instance, they cited and paraphrased different university value systems such as the student portal, writing centre and academic development [12]. Institutions of higher learning lack appropriate admission standards and admit students who lack the prerequisite knowledge for their courses. Most students do not understand what constitutes plagiarism and what it entails [10]. Even though more skill is needed to rephrase intense and complex text, this practice could be interpreted as plagiarism due to the absence of attribution [13]. The ineffective production of lecture notes, which might result in the lack of text references, is a frequent cause of literacy theft. Poor explanations and lousy teaching of course content can also drive students to plagiarise [14]. In the high school setting, it was discovered that a quarter of educators and almost half of the scholars did not realise that paraphrased text must be attributed [13]. It was found that some

undergraduates unintentionally plagiarise because there is a lack of familiarity with writing conventions when citing and rephrasing [13]. Furthermore, not understanding the policy may contribute to widespread ignorance of what behaviours cause plagiarism.

Ledesma found that grade level has a significant aspect. Still, on the other hand, they found that senior students had a significantly higher degree of plagiarism than junior students (Eret & Ok, 2014). Even though students know the proper usage of academic sources, they claim they still have a propensity to plagiarise while using internet sources. This result might be associated with students' knowledge of academic writing rules (Eret & Ok, 2014).

### **1.3 Research Objective**

To determine the factors that contribute to plagiarism.

### **1.4 Research Question**

What are the factors that contribute to plagiarism?

### **1.5 Population of the Study**

The target population were all students currently enrolled in an undergraduate program at the University of Technology. Simple random sampling was used as it was the most basic of probability sampling. It was achieved by randomly selecting elements from the sampling frame where participants had an equal chance of being selected. There was a total of 165 respondents. The inclusion criteria were all undergraduate students registered for an undergraduate programme. The exclusion criteria were non-registered students and students registered for a post-graduate programme.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

A quantitative descriptive, cross-sectional design was used for the research study. The study was approved by the Durban University of Technology Research Ethics Committee (no. 186\21). The researcher aimed to investigate factors that lead to plagiarism.

An informed consent form and participant information sheet were given to participants requesting consent to partake in the study. Once permission was obtained, the questionnaire was issued. The questionnaire was closed-ended and consisted of a 5-point Likert scale adopted from Germany, where consent was requested and approved by Dr E. Jereb [14]. It consisted of six (6) sections that assisted in answering the aim of the study, namely, ICT and Web, relations, academic skills, teaching factors, pressure, pride, and other reasons.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe and synthesise the data, expressed in frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations. Results were

represented in the form of graphs and pie charts. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 28 was used for data capturing and analysis with the expertise of a statistician. The utilisation of the research instrument cannot be separated from the concepts of validity and reliability. Content validity and reliability were examined utilizing a pilot study. A total of ten (10) participants took part in the pilot study. They did not form part of the main study. Based on the outcome of the pilot study, the questionnaire was subsequently found to be appropriate for the implementation in the main study.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Research Question**

What are the factors that contribute to plagiarize?

The study aimed to determine factors that contribute to plagiarism among undergraduate students. Factor analysis with Promax rotation was applied to these 54 items as seen in Table 1. Fourteen items were dropped because they either did not load strongly enough onto any factor or cross-loaded onto multiple factors. Eight factors were extracted, which account for 52.92% of the variance in the data. A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) of 0.79 and a significant Bartlett's test indicates that the data was adequate for successful and reliable extraction [15]. Rotation converged in 8 iterations. The extracted factors and individual item factor loadings showed that convergent and discriminant validity was achieved. Each factor was tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. An alpha value  $>0.70$  indicated reliability [16].

#### **3.2 Research Objective**

To determine the factors that contribute to plagiarism.

The reliability of all these factors was confirmed, with all alpha values exceeding the accepted minimum of 0.7 as seen in Table 2. Composite variables were formed by calculating the average agreement scores for all items included in a variable.

Table 1 shows that there was a significant agreement that pride affected plagiarism. Students felt proud and did not want to embarrass themselves. In addition, accessibility to the WEB/Internet information also contributed to plagiarism. These days, university students have daily internet exposure and the inclusion of the internet in the academic environment. This ease of access to the internet can therefore be seen as a catalyst for plagiarism (Hasan & Khan, 2018). Cognitive overload and overloaded teaching learning process contributed to plagiarism amongst students.

On the contrary, there was a significant disagreement that plagiarism regulations do not exist; they have difficulty communicating in English; they are under pressure to plagiarise; they lack academic skills, and they are disengaged and not interested in doing their studies.

**Table 1. Factor loadings**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
There are no penalties for plagiarising others' work	.718							
I will not get caught if I copy others' work								
There are no electronic systems of control to safeguard against The penalties for plagiarism are minor	.712							
There is no systematic tracking of violators of plagiarism	.707							
I do not understand the consequences if I am caught plagiarising others' I am not aware of the penalties if I copy others' work	.654							
I am not aware of a university regulation against plagiarism	.592							
There is no teacher control over plagiarism	.515							
I do not want to embarrass my family.		.929						
I do not want to look stupid in front of my lecturer. I do not want to embarrass myself.		.906						
I do not want to look stupid in front of my peers.		.905						
My English writing skills are weak.			.902					
My English reading comprehension skills are weak. I sometimes have difficulty expressing my ideas.			.872					
The requirements for assignments are not clearly explained. Too many assignments are given in a short amount of time. Too many modules are taught in a short space of time.				.737				
Some lecturers do not read students' assignments carefully enough to Plagiarism has not been clearly explained.				.656				
The assignments given are too difficult.				.599				
Due to stress, I find it easier to plagiarise than to do my own work. I am afraid to fail, so I plagiarise to ensure I pass.				.595		.832		
				.453		.740		
				.333				

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My fear of performing poorly motivates me to plagiarise					.683			
My peers pressure me to plagiarise					.349			
I do not know how to cite the work of others. I do not know how to find research materials.						.780		
I do not know how to cite electronic information.						.777		
I find it difficult to paraphrase someone else's ideas. I do not know how to write academically.						.540		
I have easy access to new technologies such as Facebook, and WhatsApp, I can easily access research material using the internet.							.499	
It is easy to share documents, information, and data with my peers.							.436	
I can easily combine information from multiple sources.								.808
I just want to pass my course even if I don't learn anything								.786
I am too lazy to read everything that I am expected to read.								.656
I do not want to work hard								.592
It is easier to copy someone else's work than to do it myself.								.417
I copy others' work to achieve high marks.								.408

**Table 2. Reliability of factors perceived to contribute to plagiarism**

Factor	Construct	Items included	Variance extracted	Cronbach's alpha
1	Lack of regulation (REG)	2.1; 2.3 – 2.10	20.3	.857
2	Pride (PRD)	6.1 – 6.4	9.8	.951
3	Communication skills (COM)	3.5 – 3.7	5.1	.817
4	Teaching (TEA)	4.1 – 4.6	4.7	.745
5	Pressure (PRE)	5.2 – 5.4; 6.8	4.4	.818
6	Lack of academic skills (ASK)	3.2 – 3.4; 3.8; 1.2	3.6	.747
7	Accessibility of WEB/ICT (ACC)	1.4 – 1.7	2.8	.786
8	Disengaged (DIS)	7.1 – 7.3; 7.5 – 7.6	2.2	.738

Another major factor that students agreed contributed to plagiarizing was pride, as shown in Table 1. For example, students did not want to look stupid in front of their peers, lecturer, or family, or be embarrassed. In addition, their fear of performing poorly motivated them to plagiarize as they were sure they would not be discovered. As mentioned, they knew there would be no consequences for plagiarizing. Pride is also a result of students fearing that they will fail, time pressure and competence in academic writing skills. Fatima et al. [17] conducted a qualitative study in China to explore Chinese students' perception of plagiarism. The results showed that personal pride significantly catalyses the decision to plagiarize [17].

Teaching factors were another factor that students partly agreed contributed to plagiarism. This included assignments being too hard or the requirements not clearly explained, too many modules being taught in a short time and some lecturers who do not read students' assignments carefully to detect plagiarism. Therefore, they find it easy to plagiarize. The reluctant behaviour of lecturers can result in losing academic integrity [18]. Not reading assignments affects students and inadvertently encourages them to engage in plagiarism during their university years.

**Table 3. Correlations of factors perceived to contribute to plagiarism**

	REG	PRD	COM	TEA	PRE	ASK	ACC	DIS
FREQ	.253**	.061	.061	.234*	.325*	.253*	-.092	.352**
Pearson Correlation								
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.435	.439	.003	.000	.001	.241	.000
N	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the  $p = 0.01$  level (2-tailed)

Lack of regulations, teaching factors, pressure, lack of academic skills and disengagement with one's work are all significantly correlated with a higher frequency of plagiarism, as shown in Table 3. If these factors are not controlled, plagiarism will be an ongoing issue for years to come.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In contrast to several preliminary studies, the significant findings of this research paper show that accessibility, pride, and teaching factors considerably influence plagiarism. In contrast, lack of academic skills, regulation and communication skills do not play important roles. However, personal pride is usually the result of students not being competent in academic writing, which might be due to less motivated and lethargic students resulting in plagiarism. The sharpening of academic writing skills, vigilant marking assignments, and "punishing" students for plagiarizing should be implemented. This, in turn, might result in a decline in plagiarism. Even though students strongly disagreed that pressure does not contribute to plagiarism one can deduce that the pressure to succeed has an influence on pride as students might want to appear successful at all costs.

#### **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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This chapter was reviewed by following the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. This chapter was thoroughly checked to prevent plagiarism. As per editorial policy, a minimum of two peer-reviewers reviewed the manuscript. After review and revision of the manuscript, the Book Editor approved the manuscript for final publication. Peer review comments, comments of the editor(s), etc. are available here: <https://peerreviewarchive.com/review-history/7203A>



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