EDITORIAL:

Business and Information Management in Realities in a World of Global Disruption and 4IR

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Editorial Note

In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving digital landscape, the crossroad of business management and information technology have become more critical than ever. This Special Issue of the African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies (AJIMS) features research papers presented at the 1st Biennial Interdisciplinary Conference of Business and Information Management contributing to the strategic fusion of traditional business principles with cutting-edge information management processes, systems and technologies, creating unprecedented opportunities for organisational transformation, opportunities presented by entrepreneurial ventures while creating a competitive edge, as well as dynamics presented to Higher Education globally. Under the theme Business and Information Management in Realities in a World of Global Disruption and 4IR" the selected articles examine the green Information Communications Technology amongst the South African SMEs; digitised workspaces post Covid-19 pandemic and risks associated with organisational digitalisation in the 4IR. The theme also cast a lens on both social and organisational implications within the business by examining leadership styles and job satisfaction in the public sector, while high impact practices responding to global disruption glances into the realm of Higher Education entrepreneurship initiatives aligning to the curriculum, and the adoption of project-based learning as well as learning management systems in the South African context.

The featured articles focus on critical areas, such as the adoption of Green Information Communication Technology (GICT) in South Africa with a special emphasis on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), digitised workspaces in the banking sector, risks associated with digitisation in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), technology adoption in promoting quality service delivery in call centres, incorporation of high-impact practices to foster smooth transition in higher education for academic success, the adoption of project-based learning in South African higher education, cultivation of student entrepreneurship through community engagement initiatives, sustainable entrepreneurship education in South Africa, an examination of learning management systems in South African higher education, motivation levels, leadership and motivation amongst employees in the public sector, the optimisation of administrative information management processes within the public sector. We commence by providing an overview of all papers that were presented at the 1st Biennial Interdisciplinary Conference of Business and Information Management.

In the first article in this issue, **Bok and Tolmay** identifies the most prominent drivers for enhancing the adoption of Green Information Communication Technology (GICT) adoption among SMEs especially in developing countries such as South Africa as it contributes to environmental management by minimising the adverse effects of ICTs on the environment. They identify drivers, drawn from existing literature, and incorporate into these drivers into a measurement tool. They recommend a proactive approach to be adopted by SMEs while integrating GICT initiatives into their business strategies. Through an electronic survey via a self-administered questionnaire, data was collected. The authors recommend collaborations of SMEs with other businesses, industry stakeholders, and policymakers, that will foster and lead the way in establishing robust environmental certification practices. The

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findings of the study advocates that formed partnerships will not only enhance sustainability efforts but also position SMEs as leaders in the transition to greener, more efficient operations.

Mubango, Ngirande, and Khashane hihligts the exigency of worklife balance in the wake of digitised workspace for Information Technology Staff in the Banking Sector. They are contending that workspaces have transformed the conventional workspace, and reshaped how work is designed, performed and managed in organisations. In its nature, they view technology to have infiltrated workspaces, such that it allows work to fit better around home and family responsibilities. While this arrangement has been advocated for as 'accommodating', the risk of infringing on employees' personal lives and negatively affecting their work-life balance (WLB) and performance remains, the manuscript examines the exigency of employee work-life balance and performance in digitalised workspaces in a Zimbabwean bank. Through qualitative methodology approach, while utilizing semi-structured interviews, data was collected to obtain in-depth insights into the phenomenon until the research reached data saturation on the 10th interview. Thematically, data analysis reveal that digitalisation of workspaces offers the flexibility of working from home, giving employees time to do their own personal activities. Digitalisation also enabled flexibility and autonomy, multitasking, and working from home, which were convenient in balancing employee work and personal lives, thus ensuring performance. Contrary, flexibility presented a challenge of blurry boundaries between work and personal lives caused by connectivity, polychronicity, health threats and lack of task prioritisation brought about by working from home. The study recommends a need for the establishment of boundaries and blocked time in pursuit to eliminating the risks of impeding work-life balance.

Scholtz surveys the integration of Fourth Industrial Revolution technology into organisational processes and functions. The research seeks to address the gap by developing a theoretical model that identifies the risks encountered during organisational digitalization. It contributes to literature and understanding of the digitalisation risks associated with 4IR. Through a systematic literature review, the paper highlights the leading risk types that organisations confront during the digitalisation of their operations. The paper emphasises on the importance of understanding and managing risks and adopting a comprehensive risk management approach, allowing organisations to ensure sustainable success in the digital era of the 4IR.

Reddy, Naidoo, and Ross, examines transition into Higher Education (HE) and view it as a problematic situation for students and academic institutions worldwide, even more apparent in the South African context. It meticulously points on issues such as family dynamics and obligations, cultural differences, and delve further into academic and social integration pressures, which ultimately present an unfamiliar environment within higher education. The research argue that successful integration is essential during the early stages of student integration into higher education. The study intently cast a lens on the challenges confronted by South African first-year students as they transition into higher education and the impact of peer mentorship on the successful progression of university students. The study's findings allude to engaging in high-impact practices inherent in first-year student experiences, while promoting student success. The authors propose interventions that supports a smooth transition of students into higher education, while it underscores the importance of the adoption of the strategies in High-Impact Practices (HIPs) applicable to undergraduate courses.

Luthuli, Mthalane, Moyane, Nkomo and Phokoye's research on the cultivation of student entrepreneurship skills argues that it is increasingly in demand. The authors highlight the importance of community engagement initiatives as being one of the initiatives that is a promising avenue for fostering student entrepreneurship by providing students with unique opportunities to apply theoretical class-taught content and their skills to real-world settings. Utilising a comprehensive literature review, the study establishes the key factors influencing student entrepreneurship efficacy through community engagement initiatives and understand the extent to which these initiatives contribute to cultivating students' entrepreneurial skills and mindsets. The study suggests that these community initiatives transcend individual student development, with far-reaching, positive community impact and improvement of the institution's image.

Bhuda and Harmse probe an urgent need for government departments to deliver high-quality services consistently. The study suggests that efficient and timely delivery of government services to citizens is largely dependent on the critical role played by administrative employees. It therefore assesses the motivation levels among administrative employees within a selected government department. Guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory framework explores the intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing employee motivation, by quantitatively assessing the motivation levels of administrative employees. The study's reliability scores, utilising Cronbach's alpha yielded an overall alpha range of 0.70 to 0.95, suggesting a strong internal consistency among the items

within each construct. As the study is ongoing, conclusions are not drawn solely from the preliminary study; instead, findings will be generalised to the entire population under investigation.

Zogli and Makalima's study investigates the extent to which social media has brought a paradigm shift in the way businesses interact with their customers, in particular post-COVID-19 era. It represents a promising channel for businesses to showcase their products and services to customers. To validate its effectiveness, the research aims to explore the perception of businesses regarding the effectiveness of social media in relation to business success in Pietermaritzburg's beauty Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), South Africa. Through a qualitative methodology approach, the study purposively sampled 22 businesses and conducted semi-structured interviews. Thematically, the study analyses data and reveal the importance and effectiveness of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp in beauty SME marketing initiatives. Additionally, audience targeting, and engagement are crucially important as components for building ties with customers and promoting brand loyalty. The study recommends that SMEs make use of all the functionalities of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp which offers SMEs opportunities to enhance online presence, engage target audiences and promote business success

Luthuli, Epizitone, Phokoye, Khumalo, Zondi and Moyane's study surveys the adoption of project-based learning in a South African higher education teaching, learning and assessment context in a literature review format. The authors hypothesise that the evolving demand of the 21st-century workforce prompts South African higher education institutions to increasingly explore novel pedagogical approaches to equip students for success in the dynamic global economy. The research further suggests that the journey towards embracing PBL in higher education pedagogies is burdened by multitude challenges. Utilising a comprehensive review, PBL is investigated to facilitate the effective incorporation of this concept within the South African higher education institutions' teaching, learning and assessments, while considering contextual challenges. The findings reveal the benefits of PBL, its adoption, as well as the institutions. It also uncovers that its practical adoption is still at infancy stages. The study's results present a solid basis for empirical studies in institutions to correlate with decision-making and strategies aiming to enhance PBL adoption

Modjela and Mkhomazi investigates the role played by a contact centre as a central key to any organisation and a tool for managing customer service in any private and public organisation. The study is alluding to technology playing a significant role in the contact centre environment. For the organisation to provide effective customer service, a contact centre allows the organisation to build, maintain, and manage customer relationships. A quantitative research approach and a survey design guided the study. The findings suggest that contact centre agents found technology to be both easy to use and valuable in providing effective customer service. It therefore recommends that call centre agents need to accept technology as an essential element of providing excellent customer service

Ndaba, Naidoo and Bwalya's, study highlights the rise in client expectations and demands for high-quality services as it suggests that client engagement strategy is critical towards understanding their expectations for improving service delivery processes such as administrative information management (AIM) processes. The study qualitatively collected data and reviewed relevant official documents. Thematically, data was analysed using both inductive and deductive logic in sequential order. The study's findings suggest multiple interpretations of the client engagement construct within the public service department. The study proposes an intensive intervention to elucidate the complexities and inconsistencies surrounding understanding the client engagement construct.

Maluleke and Maake, examine the role of Learning Management Systems (LMSs) in an African Higher education. The study suggests an increased prevalence in higher education of its usage, and the alteration of the educational landscape. It further suggests that, despite the growing importance of LMSs adoption, there remains a dearth of comprehensive research exploring its implications across various African educational settings. The study utilizes the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) methodology, through a systematic review via Web of Science (WoS). The findings offer practical guidance for African universities seeking to optimise LMSs implementation strategies. They also enhance the overall educational experiences for both students and educators.

Sathyanand, Bhulaye-Moodley, Nhleko and Msomi's study delves into South African sustainable entrepreneurship education as it has become an indispensable element in tackling the current environmental and socioeconomic issues. Through a systematic review of research articles premised on sustainable entrepreneurship education in South Africa was utilized to guide the study. The study selects and analyses fifteen articles as its basis

criteria. The study's findings suggest that sustainable entrepreneurship education in South Africa is gaining traction as a key component of socio-economic development, while it points out that there is still a lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of such education programs and their impact on entrepreneurial behaviour and practices. The review also highlights a need for more interdisciplinary research approaches and collaboration between academia, government and industry to foster a culture of sustainable entrepreneurship education practices, exploring different pedagogical approaches and investigating barriers and facilitators to the implementation of sustainable entrepreneurship practices in the South African context.

Makhwiting and Bruhns's study evaluates the relationship between that exists between a transactional leadership style, communication and job satisfaction of administrative employees in the South African Public Sector. A descriptive cross-sectional survey was utilized as the basis of the study, consisting of one-hundred and eighty-four administrative personnel. The study took a quantitative research approach. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) were used to assess the contributions of each item based on its loading. Structural equation modelling (SEM) and bootstrapping using r2 were used to test the validity and some of the patterns indicating how the transactional leadership style, communication and job satisfaction are related. The study's findings suggest that there is a substantial link between transactional leadership and employee job satisfaction and a significant link between transactional leadership and communication. Furthermore, the researchers argue that this research has the potential to assist managers in South Africa's public sector comprehend the relationship between leadership styles, communication, and job satisfaction. Additionally, it significantly contributes in broadening the understanding of transactional leaders, emphasising on the importance of using rewards as a basis for employee satisfaction, and raising awareness of the potential consequences of direct and transparent communication.

Together, these studies, from SMEs to higher education context, demonstrate how 4IR disruptions require adaptive, innovative, and sustainable responses across diverse sectors. This Special Issue calls for a collaborative effort for businesses both private and public, and higher education to embrace Management in Realities in a World of Global Disruption and 4IR. Together, these contributions stimulate a dialogue about future business engagements in pursuit to meeting global trends, and responsive strategies to new technologies, given the transitioning from 4IR to 5IR. This Special Issue invites academics, researchers and students to engage actively in this dialogue and to rethink and reshape the business and education landscapes. Our collective responsibility is to ensure that business and higher education in particular are not only responding to technological disruptions, but they stay relevant with the current trends in the market to thrive in a successful global market. As we transition from 4IR into 5IR, these contributions underscore the urgent need for human-technology synergy, sustainable innovation, and adaptive higher education frameworks.

We as guest editors, Trisha Ramsuraj (Durban University of Technology, South Africa), Cornelia Harmse (Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa), and Peggy Mthalane (Durban University of Technology, South Africa) are deeply grateful, to all our authors for their valuable contributions and to the peer reviewers who graciously dedicated their time for the review process. Also, we appreciate the conference organising committee for their role in facilitating this Special Issue. A special thank you goes out to our editorial and production teams at AJIMS for their continued support through the process. We hope that the contributions in this issue evoke critical conversations towards a truly technological adaptive business environment and a transformed higher education sector that we strive for.