



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

RESEARCH AND INTERNATIONALISATION OFFICE

SEPTEMBER 2022



Exploring Web 2.0 home libraries to improve children's reading habits

- GRANTS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
- UPCOMING EVENTS



MAIN THEME

*BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SCIENCE IN THE POST
COVID-19 ERA: LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE THROUGH
INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP*



2nd CALL FOR PAPERS

20-21 OCTOBER 2022

REGISTRATION FEE

*US\$30.00 Presenters
US\$25.00 Non-presenters*

SUB-THEMES

- Entrepreneurship in the post Covid-19 era.
- Human Resource Management in the post Covid-19 era.
- The impact of Covid-19 on managers, marketers, bankers, financiers as individuals and organisations on the way they carry out their duties and their adaptation to the whole pandemic as we face the future.
- Survival strategies used by different organisations during the Covid-19 pandemic and how they can be useful in the post Covid-19 era.
- New business practices introduced as adaptive responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and how they can be scaled up.
- The Post Covid-19 era and the 5th Industrial Revolution.
- Opportunities and challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequent lockdowns.
- Challenges of using the e-platforms and e-commerce during Covid-19 pandemic and the way forward post Covid-19 era.
- Possible ways of improving the use of technology in commerce in the post Covid-19 era.
- Post Covid-19 funding and recapitalising in the post Covid-19 era.
- Possible sources of business funding in the post Covid-19 era and how to access them.
- Boosting the informal economy in the post Covid-19 era.

Any other relevant paper which focuses on Post Covid-19 era and commerce shall be accepted based on the committee's decision

IMPORTANT DATES

- Deadline for Submission of Abstracts Extended to 15 September 2022.
- Notification of acceptance - 20 September 2022.
- Full paper submission - 13 October 2022.
- Deadline for registration - 7 October 2022.
- Registration opens as soon as acceptance letter has been received.

GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR ABSTRACTS

- Conceptual and empirical papers, covering the main theme and related sub-themes above are therefore accepted for presentation.
- An abstract of 250-300 words.
- Times New Roman font size 12.
- Single line spacing.
- Submitted as word file.
- English only.
- Articles which meet the required standard shall be published in an online NUST journal.

Abstracts should be submitted electronically via e-mail as an attachment to the scientific team at business.sciencecon@must.ac.zw

Length of article - 5000 to 8000 words.

Referencing Style - Harvard System of Referencing.

CONFERENCE VENUE NUST Delta Theatre & Virtual

*For more information on the international conference,
please contact the conference coordinators:*

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Rethinking literacy learning spaces

NUST joins the world in celebrating the International Literacy Day, which is being observed on the 8th of September, to remind people of the importance of literacy to individuals, communities and societies and the need for intensified efforts towards more literate societies. Literacy is critical for socio-economic development, as a literate nation makes positive contributions to the general development of a country.

This day is an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of literacy as a matter of human rights and dignity across the world. The theme for this year, as declared by UNESCO, “Transforming Literacy Learning Spaces” is an opportunity to rethink, refocus the fundamental importance of literacy learning spaces to build resilience and ensure quality, equitable, and inclusive education for all.

Educational institutions have a big role to play in devising innovative strategies to drive and maintain high literacy levels. In our September 2022 issue, we publish a story of an academic and researcher, Dr Sifundo Nkomo who, inspired by the findings of her PhD research on Adoption of Web 2.0 Technologies in Driving Reading Habits of Secondary School Learners in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe, she is spearheading the establishment of technology-driven home libraries within communities to promote literacy and reading habits.

Also, the researchers, together with her research team, has embarked on a 2-year project (2022-2024) to build community information centres in rural areas in Southern Africa. This will go a long way in promoting literacy and reading habits among the disadvantaged communities.

We take this opportunity to welcome young researchers,

our first year students who have just begun their transition from high school to university. As they enjoy the freedoms that come with leaving home for the first time, we challenge them to use the freedoms wisely. They should start applying their learning in a practical way and develop their research skills in addition to their studies. Research enables students to make better choices about career paths.

We call upon lecturers and researchers to work with students and create mentoring relationships. For many students, research experiences are their most memorable experiences. From the perspective of academics and researchers, students bring enthusiasm to research teams and often ask insightful questions, sometimes quite by accident, that can change the approach of a research.

Happy International Literacy Day!

Dr Thembekile Ncube

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Exploring Web 2.0 home libraries to improve children's reading habits

By Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa

A LECTURER in the Department of Publishing Studies at the National University of Technology (NUST), Dr Sifundo Nkomo is spearheading the establishment of technology-driven home libraries within communities to promote literacy and reading habits.

Dr Nkomo's project is significant as Zimbabwe joined the world in celebrating the International Literacy Day on the 8th of September 2022 running under the theme "Transforming Literacy Learning Spaces: Exploring Opportunities and Possibilities".

It is also a demonstration that researchers and academics at NUST across different fields have adopted the Heritage-based Education 5.0, which is built around teaching, research, community service, innovation and industrialisation. Lecturers are not just teaching, researching and performing community engagement but are coming up with innovations that are impacting on people's lives.

Dr Nkomo's project was inspired by her PhD research in Information Science with the University of South Africa, titled "Adoption of Web 2.0 Technologies in Driving Reading Habits of Secondary School Learners

in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe".

Web 2.0 tools enable the collaboration and interaction of people via websites or social networking platforms like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp.

"I was motivated to start the home library after witnessing that children in my home suburb of Pumula Old in Bulawayo do not have a municipality or a school library nearby," said Dr Nkomo.

She started the project with 10 children's books in August 2018 and has grown to more than 30 collections with a capacity to accommodate 20 children aged between 4 to 11 years.

"I grew up reading at a young age, so when I saw that children still faced the same challenges of accessing books to read, I then started a home library using book donations from friends, family, and my colleagues from the Department of Publishing Studies. I also purchased a few books," said Dr Nkomo.

The home library, a pilot project aimed at scaling up the use of Web 2.0 tools to improve reading habits, is fulfilment of one of Dr Nkomo's research recommendations that "future research must involve the parents and

guardians of the learners as well as the teachers in the use of Web 2.0 technologies in improving the reading habits of learners.”

Dr Nkomo’s Web 2.0 technologies driven home library came in handy for school children during the height of the Covid-19 lockdown and travel restrictions that saw schools, libraries and other facilities closed.

“During the Covid-19-induced lockdowns, reading was not considered a relevant leisure activity as some parents did not see how it forms part of children’s social interaction. However, the home library provided equal access to reading materials and information, as it was open to all children,” noted Dr Nkomo.

Through the home library, children were also taught how to write their own stories using the WhatsApp platform. 19 stories were written in English and IsiNdebele with an anthology already compiled for publication.

Parents and guardians have applauded Dr Nkomo for initiating the concept of home library.

Mr Judah Marowa, a parent from Pumula Old welcomed the initiative and called for more



training for parents and children on the use of Web 2.0 tools to improve reading habits.

“There should be training and guidance given to parents and learners on how to use these tools effectively, especially in homework groups,” he said.

Dr Esabel Maisiri, a senior lecturer at NUST’s Department of Library and Information Science said the home library model provides a conducive environment for students to read.

“I think home libraries provide a homely-like atmosphere which might encourage students to read. The other thing is that you might get some of the children helping each other to read,” she said.

Dr Maisiri noted that the home library model has the potential to

bring libraries closer to the people.

“Although a home library may not provide comprehensive reading material, I think it does help in getting libraries closer to where people live. And if they have the right gadgets, it can provide a relaxed learning atmosphere for the children. So in the true sense, a home library is like a community library,” she said.

Dr Nkomo’s initiative is in line with UNESCO, which encourages literacy learning outside of formal education spaces, as it is seen to be more effective in informal environments.

Also, a study conducted in Kenya found learners are motivated to read when their peers are reading, rather than when pushed by examinations, parents and the school system (Muthee, 2021).

Building community information centres in rural areas in Southern Africa

AS part of her post-doctoral research studies at the University of South Africa and with support from the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund, Dr Nkomo, together with her research team, has embarked on a 2-year project (2022-2024) to build community information centres in rural areas in Southern Africa.

Through this project, Dr Nkomo and her research team will provide computers, tablets, and books to selected rural schools in Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa.

The project will also see them

training teachers and learners on the use of ICTs to improve education in Southern Africa.

“It has been my dream to achieve such a milestone particularly to help the disadvantaged communities. I am happy to be making such a change to communities in Southern Africa,” she said.

The project, titled “Digital Transformation in Education for Rural Development in Southern Africa: Connecting Schools, Empowering Learners, and Communities”, is being implemented in Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa.

It will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly ending poverty (SDG 1), provision of quality education for all (SDG 4), provision of resilient infrastructure (SDG 9), and reducing inequality (SDG 10) among the disadvantaged communities in Southern Africa.

The project promotes digital transformation of education for rural development by improving secondary education services for rural children, and empowering learners, and communities.



WHO IS DR SIFUNDO NKOMO?

Dr Sifundo Nkomo studied undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Library and Information Science at NUST and PhD in Information Science with the University of South Africa (UNISA). Her research interests include Creative Writing, Communication Skills, Web 2.0/3.0 Publishing, Scholarly Publishing, Indigenous Languages Publishing, Reading Culture and Habits, Publishing for Children, and Digital Transformation in Education. She has published some articles in peer reviewed journals on how to improve the reading habits of learners. Dr Nkomo has received several research grants and presented at several conferences including the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) Africa Regional Conference, Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium and Communication and Information Science in the Digital Era. She is a senior lecturer in the Department of Publishing Studies under the Faculty of Communication and Information Science at NUST.

CALLS, CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Grants and funding opportunities

TWAS-Sida PhD Scholarships for Climate Research for Students from LDCs. The deadline for applications for this scholarship is October 5, 2022.

Paste and go to: <https://twas.org/opportunity/twas-sida-phd-scholarship-programme-climate-research-students-least-developed-countries>

Upcoming events

2nd International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (14-16 September 2022)

<https://www.nust.ac.zw/index.php/education-for-sustainable-development.html>

3rd World Data Congress, San Francisco, USA on (22-23 September 2022, with a theme “AI & Data Science- What’s Next” – The WDC conference series is where professionals meet the best and brightest innovators in AI and Data Science.

<https://www.worlddatacongress.com/>

17th Southern African Energy Efficiency Confederation (SAEEC) Conference, 28-30 September 2022

– **General conference enquiries: Motlatjo Ramaloko, Exhibition, sponsorship and speakers: Helen Couvaras,**

go2energy@saeconfed.org.za, membership@saeconfed.org.za. **Pre-conference training/workshops: Thieda Ferreira:**

training@saeconfed.org.za, secgen@saeconfed.org.za

New Scientist Live London (7-9 October 2022)

ExCeL London & Online

<https://live.newscientist.com>

International Conference on Business Management Science (ICBMS) in the Post COVID-19 Era (20-21 October

<https://www.nust.ac.zw/index.php/international-conference-on-business-management-science.html>

International Open Access Week will be held under theme “Open for Climate Justice” (October 24-30)

<https://www.openaccessweek.org/theme/en>