

# **Wholesale & Retail**

## **LEADERSHIP CHAIR**



Cape Peninsula  
University of Technology



*"Collaboration opens the window  
to a world of opportunities."*

**Project 2019/24:  
Decolonization  
and its application to  
existing RBM programs: the  
power of indigenous  
knowledge**

APPLIED RESEARCH  
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT  
SERVICE TO RETAIL COMMUNITY

# **Project 2019/24:**

## **Decolonization and its application to the existing RBM programs: the power of indigenous knowledge**

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Prepared by:

Lead Researcher: Professor Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, UNISA

Research Team: Dr Virimai Victor Mugobo, CPUT

Prof R B Mason, WRLC, CPUT

Wholesale and Retail Leadership Chair  
Cape Peninsula University of Technology  
Cape Town



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this study was to explore how the curriculum for retail business management offered in the South African higher education sector could be decolonised so that it reflects the values, culture, beliefs, aspirations and expectations of the recipients of the curriculum who are in the main, black people of African origin. A comprehensive analysis of published literature revealed that the curriculum that is currently being used for teaching and learning in local institutions is largely based on Western epistemologies which are primarily the works of American and European academics and philosophers. In order to collect primary data to answer the research questions and fulfil the research objectives, the study used an exploratory qualitative approach which involved conducting telephonic interviews with a sample of 20 respondents who were purposively selected because of their expertise on the phenomenon under study. The study found that the majority of the curriculum recipients do not identify with the current curriculum as it is divorced from their lived experiences including their culture, language, values and beliefs. The study also founded that indigenous knowledge systems were largely overlooked in the process of developing the current curriculum. The study therefore recommends that for the current curriculum to be effectively decolonised, there is need to involve all key stakeholders in the curriculum development process, especially the students. The other recommendations are that preference should be given to indigenous knowledge systems and the use of African writers and African languages in teaching and learning.

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## **CHAPTER 1: THE NEED FOR DECOLONISATION OF THE CURRICULUM**

### **1.1 Introduction and Background**

The issue of the decolonisation of the South African higher education curriculum remains highly contested. This cross-cutting issue has evoked emotions from both its supporters and its opponents. However, research focused on how the curriculum in the higher education sector should be decolonised is inadequate. The purpose of this proposed exploratory study was to unpack the concept of the “decolonisation of the curriculum” and investigate practical and realistic ways in which the curriculum of Retail Business Management (RBM) could be decolonised.

There have been strong moves by students to “decolonise” education since the advent of the “Rhodes Must Fall Movement” in 2015. Furthermore, two decades into the new South Africa, the RBM curriculum is still based primarily on Western knowledge and thinking, mainly from retail theory and practices developed in the United States and taught from American textbooks. This raises a number of questions: Is this relevant in the South Africa of today? Are the theories, examples and structures of retailing in American textbooks applicable in South Africa? Is research and knowledge developed in South Africa included in curricula? To what extent is what we are teaching relevant when students enter the workplace?

There is therefore a need to fundamentally rethink and reframe the retail curriculum and bring South Africa and Africa to the centre of retail teaching, learning and research. Decolonisation needs to encompass more than just changing the curriculum. How things are taught and academics’ attitudes to this process matter just as much. What are the academics’ attitudes, and what are the retailers’ attitudes? And what needs to be done to change them.



## **1.2 The Research Problem**

The current RBM curriculum is entirely based on the Western or Eurocentric notions, values and systems of retail business management. The curriculum and the practices that are observed in the retail industry were introduced to Africa during the period of colonisation and have been in place since then. However, this curriculum and the practices observed in the retail industry do not take into consideration the culture, values, systems and indigenous knowledge of the majority of the native population, which is largely African. The purpose of this study was therefore to unpack the concept of decolonisation and investigate how the RBM curriculum and the operations and practices that are observed in the industry could be decolonised so that they reflect the values, culture, beliefs and practices of the indigenous people, who are the majority in the population of the country.

## **1.3 The Research Questions**

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- What is meant by the term “decolonisation of curriculum” from a RBM point of view?
- What needs to be “decolonised” in the RBM curriculum?
- What example “decolonised” RBM curriculum can be offered to the South African higher education sector?

## **1.4 The Research Objectives**

In line with the research questions highlighted above, this study was underpinned by the quest to answer the following objectives:

- To explain what is meant by the term “decolonisation of curriculum” from a RBM point of view?
- To determine what needs to be “decolonised” in the RBM curriculum?
- To provide a sample of “decolonised” curriculum for the RBM qualification that can be offered to the South African higher education sector?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study have implications on both academia and the retail industry. Firstly, they highlight what needs to be done in order to decolonise the RBM curriculum and this is critical for development of the relevant curriculum for the higher education sector. Secondly, the findings provide relevant and up-to-date information to the retail industry in terms of how practices in the industry could be decolonised. Lastly, the findings make a contribution to the body of knowledge by providing a deeper understanding of the concept of decolonisation and how it applies to the field of RBM.

### **1.6 Organisation of the Study**

This study is organised into five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction and contextual background to the study. This chapter also explains the purpose of the study, the research questions and the study's research objectives. The second chapter provides a detailed literature review on the concept of decolonisation and how it applies to curriculum development. The third chapter highlights the research methodology that was followed in the study. The fourth chapter provides an analysis and discussion of the data that was collected during the study whilst the fifth chapter provides a conclusion and recommendations emanating from the study.

## **CHAPTER 2: DECOLONIZING EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE AND CURRICULUM**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter provided an introduction and contextual background to the study. The chapter also explained the purpose and significance of the study. This chapter provides a detailed literature review on the subject of decolonization of education, knowledge, and curriculum in Africa. In the process the chapter explains what the concept of decolonization means with reference to education, knowledge and curriculum, while also laying out the historical trajectories of decolonization initiatives, from the 1860s to the present. The chapter ends with five general ways usable for any decolonization of education, knowledge and curriculum.

### **2.2 The earliest agitation for decolonized education, knowledge and curriculum**

While it is difficult to precisely date the unfolding of initiatives aimed at decolonization of education, knowledge and curriculum; the agitations of such figures as Edward Wilmot Blyden and James Africanus Beale Horton of Sierra Leone in the 1860s as well as J. E. Casely Hayford of the Gold Coast (Ghana) for higher education who became active in the period from 1911 to 1920, were among the earliest demands for 'indigenous'/ 'African' universities. Their agitation for 'indigenous'/ 'African' universities entailed constant reflection on the type of knowledge, education, and curriculum for Africa.

Their ideas are contained in Eric Ashby's *African Universities and Western Tradition: The Godkin Lectures on the Essentials of Free Government and the Duties of the Citizen* (1964). Blyden, Horton, and Hayford were among the earliest African/black educated elite. They also formed a group of the earliest Africa/black nationalists and pan-Africanists. Thus, while they saw value in modern Western education, they were worried about what Blyden termed the 'despotic Europeanizing influences which had warped and crushed the Negro mind' and the 'race poison' (Ashby 1964: 13). However, Horton who studied medicine in Britain was less ideological than Blyden and Hayford. He agitated for 'undiluted Western education' for Africans (Ashby 1964: 12). Perhaps this was due to the

influence of his field of study—medicine which is taught from the context of ‘natural sciences’ which claim neutrality, objectivity, and universal truthfulness.

Blyden and Hayford were very ideological and very political in their agitations for African higher education. Blyden wanted a curriculum that promoted African languages, African songs, African tradition, and a form of Christianity which was adapted to the African condition. While Blyden wanted a higher education and a curriculum that promoted what he coined as the ‘African personality,’ Hayford wrote of an African higher education and curriculum which advanced what he termed ‘African nationality’ (Ashby 1964: 12-13). Blyden and Hayford even proposed that in ‘indigenous’/ ‘African’ universities, teaching has to be done in the ‘vernacular’ (using African languages). Hayford went further to posit that existing books and other reading materials had to be translated into African languages.

The Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone is one of the fruits of the agitations and struggles of Blyden for African higher education. However, Fourah Bay College emerged as an ‘overseas college’ of the University of Durham in the United Kingdom. The fruit of Hayford’s struggles was Achimota College located near Accra in Ghana, which was an overseas extension of the University of London in the United Kingdom. So, these were never ‘indigenous’/ ‘African’ colleges/universities, which were envisioned by Blyden and Hayford, rather they were ‘universities’ in Africa, with curriculum coming from the United Kingdom.

Ashby (1964: 19) captured the colonial parochial thinking behind the setting up of these colleges: ‘its assumption was that a university system appropriate for Europeans brought up in London and Manchester and Hull was also appropriate for Africans brought up in Lagos and Kumasi and Kampala.’ The reality is that colonial governments were generally reluctant to provide higher education to Africans and they relegated the education of Africans largely to the missionaries with their mission schools. It was only after 1945 that new institutions of higher education were introduced in Africa.

### **2.3 African nationalism and decolonization of education, knowledge and curriculum**

The intensification of the drive for decolonization of education, knowledge and curriculum emerged in the 1960s on the eve of attainment of political independence by colonies in Africa. The term 'Africanization' rather than decolonization was commonly used. The texts on decolonization included Aime Cesaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950), Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968); and Kwame Nkrumah's *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965). While these canonical texts were not directly about the subject of decolonization of education, knowledge, and curriculum they had important implications as they contributed to the understanding of the limits of reducing decolonization to the attainment of what Nkrumah termed the 'political kingdom' as well as the problems of conflating decolonization with 'Africanization.'

Cesaire's book became a manifesto for understanding the existential colonial condition of being classified as black and the deeper meaning and implications of colonialism beyond physical domination and exploitation. Fanon is the author to go to gain a deeper understanding of decolonization. Firstly, to Fanon, decolonization was a profound process of self-creation and self-ownership, taking back what was taken away by enslavement and colonialism. Secondly, decolonization was meant to enable a creation of new forms of life—invention of new humanism. Thirdly, there was a clear epistemic aspect in decolonization of working out and creating 'new concepts' as the liberated people turned over a new leaf from colonialism to freedom. Fourthly, decolonization entailed turning those who had been reduced to subjects (sub-humans) into citizens (new human beings) who become 'craftsmen' and 'craftswomen' with genius and agency to create their own futures. Fifthly, at the centre of decolonization has to be radical rejection of imitation, mimicry (negation of colonial time of closure, elimination of the chasm between 'image' and 'essence,' and subversion of colonial law of repetition without change), and indeed abandon the European 'game,' 'technique,' and 'style' so as to enter a new terrain of possibilities (Fanon 1968: 252).

It was also Fanon who offered the most elaborate critique of 'Africanization,' distinguishing it from 'decolonization.' To Fanon, Africanization was an African 'national bourgeois' ideology used to justify 'racketeering' with a tendency to degenerate into other detestable forms such as xenophobia (Fanon 1968). But as will be seen later, 'Africanization' became one of the key terms used to justify attempts at transformation of education, knowledge and curriculum in the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, the work of Cheikh Anta Diop particularly his early book *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality* (1955) and his later works such as *Civilization or Barbarism: A Authentic Anthropology* (1981) mounted a strong critique of Eurocentric knowledge and underscored the importance of Egyptian civilization as an African creation. Diop dedicated his entire life of scholarship to 'recovery of African peoples' heritage' so as to set afoot 'Afrocentric epistemology as a liberating process' (Nabudere 2007: 8).

Nkrumah's concept of neo-colonialism was quickly embraced by mostly left-leaning scholars and governments to mount a strong critique of imperialism. The concept was used alongside that of 'dependency' and 'underdevelopment.' Samir Amin's *Accumulation on a World Scale* (1970) and Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1973) became canonical texts of the African dependency school. These Marxist and political economy interventions had deep implications for education, knowledge and curriculum especially at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania—a country led by Julius Nyerere who pushed for African socialism. Marxist scholars turned universities into spaces of activism and a national institution that had to reflect national priorities, defined scholarship in terms of its social engagement and revolutionary transformative power, and articulated curriculum as carrier of social justice and to do so disciplinary boundaries of knowledge had to collapse (Mamdani, 2018). The adoption of *The Arusha Declaration* in 1967 at the state level had direct implications the role of the University of Dar es Salaam to the extent that from 11-13 March 1967, the institution held a conference themed *The Role of the University College, Dar es Salaam in a Socialist Tanzania*.

The outcome of the conference was that what was taught did not fully take into account the national (African national socialist programme), regional, and continental contexts; and as such continuous curriculum review had to be adopted so as to attain relevance of education, knowledge and curriculum (Mamdani 2016: 74). However, as expected academics at the University of Dar es Salaam became divided ideologically into ‘radicals’ who wanted immediate and wholesale transformation resulting in abolition of ‘discipline-based departments,’ the moderates who accepted the call for transformation but not abolition of departments; and conservatives who defended the status quo (Mamdani 2016: 74). Such transdisciplinary programmes of study as ‘Development Studies’ emerged from the initiatives to transform education, knowledge and curriculum at the University of Dar es Salaam.

What must be said is that the 1960s to the 1970s marked the ‘golden age’ of African higher education. Having a national university was just like having a national anthem a sign of being sovereign nation-state. As noted by Toyin Falola in *Nationalism and African Intellectuals* (2001) higher education became a priority of all the independent African states. At least five key issues influenced the thinking on the university and education: (i) increased access by Africans to higher education; (ii) complementarity between political elites driving state project (African national project) and university intellectual and academic agenda; (iii) promotion of African national consciousness as well as pan-Africanism; (iv) production of desperately needed skilled human personnel; and (vi) active participation of the university in enabling Africa to catch-up on development. The African leaders were thinking of an African developmental university because developmentalism was part of nationalist ideology (see Yesufu 1973; Mkandawire 2005; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018).

Throughout the African continent there was consensus that an African university had to be created. At its formation in 1967, the Association of African Universities (AAU) made it its mission to contribute towards creating an African developmental university. At its 1972 ‘Workshop: Creating the African University: Emerging Issues in the 1970s’ held in Ghana, 10-15 July, AAU provided the following definition of the African university: ‘The

truly African university must be one that draws its inspiration from its environment, not a transplanted tree, but growing from a seed that is planted and nurtured in the African soil' (Yesufu 1973: 40).

What is emerging clearly is that the issue of changing the idea of the university, the knowledge systems, philosophy of education, and curriculum was always a struggle. The Nairobi Memo (1968-1969) sparked debates over the curriculum in the English Department at the University of Nairobi in Kenya, whereby Ngugi wa Thiong'o and two of his colleagues made a strong decolonial proposition that: 'Why can't Africa be at the centre so that we can view other cultures in relationship to it?' (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986: 250) The Department of History at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria became an active site of changing curriculum spearheaded by such scholars as Kenneth O. Dike and Jacob Ade Ajayi. They were inspired by nationalism and Africanization and they created a respected Nationalist School of History which directly challenged imperial colonial historiography. Among their achievements were the centering of the 'African factor' / 'African agency' in human history, the development of an acceptable new research methodology called oral history to recover African pre-colonial history, and they successfully Africanized the history curriculum (Falola 2001). What they failed to do was to change the very idea and philosophy of history. During the 1960s and 1970s, it would seem the intention was not really to 'abandon the European game' as called for by Frantz Fanon, rather the demands were to be included in the 'game.'

Generally speaking, the efforts to decolonize universities, education, knowledge and curriculum; as noted by Nyamnjoh (2019: 8), was never clearly defined and 'have historically been articulated variously under labels such as Africanization, de-corporatization, and academic freedom.' Such political figures as Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire also tried to contribute to the meaning of decolonization and introduced such concepts as 'Authenticite' (African authenticity) as a remedy to colonial/western education. What the initiatives of the 1960s and 1970s achieved was changing the demographics of students, professors and leadership of universities to reflect the majority African population. By the late 1970s, African higher education had entered its phase of



decline due to a number of factors: (i) declining African economies, (ii) rising African authoritarian politics symbolized by one party-state and military dictatorships, (iii) Cold War polemics, and (iv) the interventions of neo-liberalism, Washington Consensus and corporatization (Mazrui 2003; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018).

Consequently, universities increasingly became what Mamdani (2007) termed 'the market place' where students were re-defined as customers, where premium on research outputs became on quantity not quality, where at leadership level, business managerialism and corporatism became the order of life, and knowledge and education became a commodity accessible by those with money (see also Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). Decolonization and indigenization of universities, education, knowledge and curriculum took a back burner as issues of commercialization, internationalization and entrepreneurship kicked in. In view of the crisis in higher education the premier pan-African research institution the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) published two influential books on universities in Africa namely *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century: Volume 1: Liberalization and Internationalization* (2004) and *African Universities in the Twenty-First Century: Knowledge and Society* (2004), both edited by Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Adebayo Olukoshi. In volume 1, Zeleza and Olukoshi (2004: 3) perfectly summarized the dilemmas of redefining the mission of the university, purpose of education, and knowledge systems:

*How to balance autonomy and viability, expansion and excellence, equity and efficiency, access and quality, authority and accountability, representation and responsibility, diversification and differentiation, internationalization and indigenization, global presence/visibility and local anchorage, academic freedom and professional ethics, privatization and the public purpose, teaching and research, community service/social responsibility and consultancy, diversity and uniformity, the preservation of local knowledge systems and the adoption of global knowledge systems, knowledge production and knowledge dissemination, the knowledge economy and the knowledge society?*

The situation of crisis is compounded by the apparent 'decomposition of the old social contract between the university, the state and society' (Zezeza and Olukoshi 2004: 3). Consequently, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, universities worldwide became hit by a triple crisis of hegemony, legitimacy, and institutional character (Santos 2007b). At the hegemonic level, the university is finding it difficult to rearticulate its mission in such a way that it accommodates new demands of relevance, social justice and empowerment of the ordinary people. At the legitimacy level, the university has been exposed as having been complicit in racism, slavery, colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy. At the institutional level, the university can no longer sustain ideas of being an ivory tower ring-fenced by notions of autonomy and academic freedom.

#### **2.4 South Africa: The resurgence and insurgence of decolonization**

South Africa has been conceived in imperial/colonial imaginary as a 'Little Europe' located at the southern tip of the African continent. As such it has some of the oldest universities in Africa going as far back as the 1820s. South African colonial modernity unfolded as a racialized violent 'frontier' moving from the Cape Colony into the interior, destroying African societies, dispossessing and displacing African people, and re-making them into peasants and workers (Magubane 2007). Race and racial segregation have been gradually institutionalized since the arrival of the Dutch colonists in 1652. Consequently, education, knowledge, and curriculum did not escape the racialization and segregation ethos of both the British and Afrikaner imperial/colonial interventions.

In his *Education for Barbarism: Bantu (Apartheid) Education in South Africa* Tabata (1959: 16-17) explained that 'apartheid education is not simply a matter of separating the races at universities' rather 'It is an end result' and 'the Apartheid university is its capping stone.' Tabata (1959: 15) described what was termed 'Bantu Education' as 'a new monstrosity' 'by means of which they aim to arrest the development of the African people.' In *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest*, Majeke (1986) examined how such missionaries as John Philip created mission schools that provided what became known as 'native education' deliberately non-intellectual but aimed at producing providers of cheap labour after eradicating what was considered to be 'native indolence.'

What is emerging poignantly at the centre of South Africa is how the 'paradigm of difference' concretized the notion of 'impossibility of co-presence' as it shaped the complex politics of 'cobbling' identities and drawing boundaries around them (see Mudimbe 1994; Santos 2007b; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). The result was the making of institutions of higher education that were divided into those for the English, Afrikaners, and the Bantu/blacks, as well as the emergence of student political formations, which were cut-through by race. Inevitably, black consciousness politics cascaded from long history and experiences of official racism which was only institutionalised in 1948 as 'apartheid' (ideology of separate development.' More's (2017) *Biko: Philosophy, Identity and Liberation* and Heffernan's (2019) *Limpopo's Legacy: Student Politics and Democracy in South Africa* provide details on the formation and politics of the black consciousness movement as well as how it culminated in the famous Soweto Student Uprising of 1976 opposed to the use of Afrikaans in schools.

It was mainly the slow pace of post-apartheid transformation of education and embracement of corporatization and commercialization which sparked the Rhodes Must Fall movements in 2015 and 2016. Not surprising, the insurgence and resurgence of decolonization spearheaded by students ideologically claimed a combination of Fanonian and Black consciousness as key ideological resources. Nyamnjoh's (2016) *Rhodes Must Fall: Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa* explored the resilience of a racial motif that has sustained inequalities and social exclusions even within the now multi-racial and multi-ethnic institutions of higher education. What is distinctive about what has become known as the Rhodes Must Fall movements are the complex challenges they have put on the public agenda. They range from the demands to change the very idea of the university from being 'universities in Africa' into 'African universities;' decommissioning of offensive colonial/apartheid iconographies including statues; the funding of education so as to make it accessible even to those without money (free, accessible and relevant education); use of African indigenous languages in research, teaching and learning; changing of institutional cultures of racism, patriarchy, and sexism; change of curriculum (de-Europeanization & Africanization); and finally rehumanization

of the casualized and outsourced black labour through insourcing (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018).

South African higher education sector is currently grappling with the possible ways of fulfilling the demands of the Rhodes Must Fall movements. The movement has provoked the emergence of a particular literature focused on the idea of the university, student politics, university management and the meanings and implications of decolonization. Some of the key literatures read like memoirs of those who led the universities during the time of intensified student uprisings, examples being Jansen's (2017) *As By Fire: The End of the South African University* and Habib's (2019) *Rebels and Rage: Reflecting on Fees Must Fall*. Jansen and Habib led the University of the Free State (UFS) and University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) respectively and their reflections do not touch much on the curriculum transformation question than on their leadership and management interventions. Jansen at least offered a well-reasoned critique of decolonization as it is applied to curriculum distinguishing between what he termed 'sense' and 'nonsense' of the decolonization demands.

The other literature such as Booysen's (2016) *Fees Must Fall: Student Revolt, Decolonization and Governance in South Africa*, Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Zondi's (2016) *Decolonizing the University, Knowledge Systems and Disciplines in Africa* and Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2018) recent book *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization* make a deeper sense of the meaning of decolonization in relation to the very idea of the university, knowledge systems, research, methodology, agency, disciplines, curriculum, epistemology as well as governance and institutional cultures. The student demands are embraced as legitimate and requiring urgent attention. Voices of students are privileged as well as the ideas of ordinary academics who are involved in research and teaching. This literature review takes us to the practical implications of decolonization to curriculum transformation in general. In *Epistemic Freedom*, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) distilled five ways of doing practical decolonization of knowledge and curriculum:

## **2.5 Rethinking thinking itself**

The task of decolonization of curriculum demands in the first instance the painstaking process of 'rethinking thinking' itself as articulated by Hoppers and Richards (2012) in their slim volume *Rethinking Thinking: Modernity's 'Other' and the Transformation of the University*. The process of rethinking thinking entails recognition of exclusion of other knowledges by the present hegemonic Eurocentric epistemologies, recognition of the exhaustion of existing knowledge, and a commitment to recover knowledge of the subjugated peoples.

## **2.6 Reprovincializing Europe and deprovincializing Africa**

This decolonization task deals with the overrepresentation of knowledge from Europe and North America and the underrepresentation of knowledge from Africa. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993: xvi-xvii), in *Moving the Centre: The Struggles for Cultural Freedoms*, introduced and explained the concept of 'moving the centre' of knowledge from Europe and North America to 'a multiplicity of spheres in all cultures of the world' and also within modern nation-states from 'a Eurocentric bourgeois, male and racial minority' to the rest of the people including women. The Caribbean Philosophical Association (CPA) introduced the concept of 'shifting geography and biography of knowledge' again from Europe and North America and expanding the shoulders of giants from which knowledge is drawn to take into account genders, races, and generations.

## **2.7 Reviewing our disciplines**

Disciplinary organization and packaging of knowledge has never been a natural process. As noted by the French historian of science Michel Foucault (1970: 344) in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences*, 'the historical emergence of each one of the human sciences was occasioned by a problem, a requirement, an obstacle of a theoretical or practical order.' Therefore, regarding the decolonization of disciplines, it is important to go deeper into their constitutive formation, fitness for purpose, relevance, and value for money as we review, reorganize or even abolish disciplinary boundaries.

## **2.8 Decolonial critique of dominant knowledge**

The best way to deal with existing dominant knowledge is not to try and jettison it from the academy partly because while it is exhausted it is still useful and partly due to the fact that decolonizing knowledge should not be about nationalist revenge taking the form of removing and replacing. What has to change is our critical decolonial attitude towards dominant knowledge so as to be consistently critical of it rather than simply absorption and acquisition. There are practical moves that can be taken including diversification of syllabus and curriculum including subversion of the canon, devaluing the hierarchies in knowledge and privileging and magnifying voices and ideas of those who have been marginalized and subalternized.

## **2.9 Decolonizing normative foundations of theory**

The Cartesian and Enlightenment reason continue to underpin dominant critical theory and the norms of civilization, salvation, progress, social evolution, emancipation, and development continue to guide theory building. Allen (2016) in her *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* reveal that the celebrated Frankfurt School and its claims to critical theory was blind to such inimical processes as imperialism and colonialism because it failed to be critical about its normative foundational Euro-progressivism linear thinking.

To realize all these decolonization tasks there is need to embark on the painstaking process of learning to unlearn in order to re-learn, indeed, to set afoot a radical paradigmatic shift from what was meant for colonization to what is meant for liberation and freedom. In the end what is envisioned is what Santos (2007a) termed 'ecologies of knowledges' within the academies reflective of the various ways through which human beings make sense of the world. At the end of the day decolonization entails developing a liberation perspective which allows those who were colonized to see themselves clearly once more and to take themselves seriously as a people with history and knowledge (see Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986).

## **2.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of the literature on decolonization in general and the decolonization of curriculum in higher education in particular. The next chapter will provide a description of the research methodology and research design that was adopted in this study.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter unpacked the historical origins of the concept of decolonization and how it applies to curriculum development. This chapter explains the research methodology and design for this study.

### **3.2. Research Philosophy and Approach**

This study was exploratory in nature and as such was grounded in the interpretivist philosophy which primarily focuses on the interpretation of the phenomenon (Pham, 2018). In this regard, a qualitative approach was adopted in order to collect and analyse the research data. Archer (2018) underscores that qualitative data is characterised by the need to analyse and understand the values and beliefs of the respondents in order for the researcher to be able to understand the phenomenon under investigation, and to describe relationships, discrepancies and links.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The study used both secondary and primary data. The secondary data was collected from various sources such as journal articles, textbooks, industry publications and government reports. The primary data was collected through telephone interviews (that were conducted by the researchers with various experts ranging from academics (specializing in decolonisation, retailing business management, political science, economics and history), retailers, students in the higher education sector, government officials and curriculum development practitioners. A total of 20 in-depth interviews were carried out during the month of February 2020. The participants were purposively selected by the researchers based on their expertise or experience on the phenomenon under study.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The data that was collected during this study was analysed using content analysis. In support of this analysis method, Hashemnezhad (2015) argues that one of the best



methods for analysis and interpretation of qualitative data is by means of qualitative content analysis. The process thus involved the creation of themes and categories from the data in order to identify patterns and trends, which enabled the researchers to interpret the data and report on the findings.

### **3.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter highlighted the methodology that was adopted for this study. The chapter also articulated the methods that were used to collect and analyse the research data. The next chapter provides an analysis and interpretation of the research data. The chapter will also provide the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter highlighted the research methodology that was adapted for this study. The chapter highlighted the research philosophy that underpinned the study and the methods and techniques that were used to collect and analyse the data. This chapter provides a summation and analysis of the data that was collected. The chapter will also provide the findings of the study.

### **4.2 The current situation**

An exploration of the South African landscape revealed that out of the 29 higher education institutions that are classified as universities, the following institutions are the only ones offering qualifications in RBM:

- Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)
- Durban University of Technology (DUT)
- Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)
- Vaal University of Technology (VUT)
- Walter Sisulu University (WSU)
- Sol Plaatje University (SPU)
- Nelson Mandela University (NMU)
- Central University of Technology (CUT)

There are also a number of technical and vocational educational and training colleges (TVETs) around the country that have started offering RBM as a subject in their marketing or business management qualifications.

An analysis of the various prescribed and recommended textbooks at the above institutions revealed that there are almost no textbooks written by African writers. Furthermore, these prescribed and recommended textbooks are primarily written by American or European writers whose background is in the Western epistemology. It was

also important to realise that much as some of the books were written by South Africans, mainly white South Africans, their focus still remained on the Western epistemology. None of the books that the researchers surveyed were produced using indigenous knowledge principle, values and beliefs. However, in very limited cases, some of the textbooks utilized local case studies and this is a practice that must be strongly encouraged during the process of decolonisation of the curriculum.

It is also significant that most of the textbooks were written in English and only a handful were written in Afrikaans. This is despite the fact that more than three quarters of the students in South Africa do not regard these two languages as their mother tongue. It is therefore clear from the interviews that the issue of the language of learning is critical in the process of decolonising the curriculum. Most of the students who participated in the study avowed that they could have performed better had the language of instruction been their home language.

#### **4.3 Decolonising the RBM curriculum: the practical realities**

From the literature review, telephone interviews and discussions with key stakeholders, the definition of “decolonising the curriculum” remains a grey area. There is also no clarity about whose responsibility it is to undertake this process. It is therefore crucial to develop shared understandings and ideas of the meaning of both curriculum and decolonization. An American theorist William Pinar (2012) defines curriculum theory as the interdisciplinary study of educational experience. Educational experience implies more than just the topics covered in a course. It encompasses the attitudes, values, dispositions and world views that get learned, un-learned, re-learned, re-formed, deconstructed and reconstructed while studying towards a degree (Pinar 2012).

Most of the academics who were interviewed seemed to believe that when it comes to university curricula, decolonisation involves replacing works from Europe or the global North with local theorists and African authors. This is meant to prevent African universities from becoming mere extensions of former colonisers (Kaya 2019). However, decolonising the curriculum is far more nuanced than replacing theorists and authors. If “curriculum”

encompasses a broader educational experience, universities first need to define how they approach the development and dissemination of curricula so as to move forward with the process of decolonising the curriculum.

One practitioner noted that universities need to introduce well theorised scholarship emerging from, and underpinned by, the African local experience. This must happen across disciplines. All of this work will encourage the growth of truly African universities. This corroborates what Charles Eliot, a former Harvard University President, once described the characteristics of an American university:

*“A university must grow from seed. It cannot be transplanted from England or Germany in full leaf and bearing. When the American university appears, it will not be a copy of foreign institutions, but the slow and natural growth of American social and political habits”* (Ingram 2016).

Therefore, the definition of a decolonised curriculum foregrounds African identities and world views. But this does not exempt it from critique. Universities need to keep encouraging critique and problematisation of what is considered to be knowledge and the processes involved in generating it. One respondent noted that a decolonised curriculum needs to exist in dialogue and contestation with the Greek, Arab and European worlds. It cannot be seen to be everything about all things. The definition of decolonization should therefore initiate genuine, sincere and progressive decolonisation of South Africa’s higher education curriculum (Mgqwashu 2016).

#### **4.4 Approaches to Curriculum Theory**

So, what approach to curriculum theory and practice do South African universities subscribe to? From the responses given by the respondents, there is no single answer. But this question is particularly crucial in any post-conflict society. The consolidation of the responses received from the respondents indicate that there are probably four ways of approaching curriculum theory and practice. These are:

- curriculum as product: certain skills to master and facts to know;
- curriculum as process: the interaction of teachers, students, and knowledge;
- curriculum as context: contextually shaped; and,
- curriculum as praxis: practice should not focus exclusively on individuals alone or the group alone. It must explore how both create understandings and practices (Mgqwashu 2016).

The approaches of curriculum as context and as praxis seem to align well with the definition of “decolonising the curriculum”. A contextual approach opens the door for universities to critique how curriculum – and therefore education – reproduces unequal social relations after graduation. This viewpoint corroborates the assertion that praxis creates conditions to democratise learning spaces (Mgqwashu 2016). It makes room for both individual and group identities within the teaching and learning context. This creates shared and negotiated understandings and practices while knowledge is being generated and disseminated. Therefore, universities that wish to decolonise their curricula could benefit from understanding these approaches. This might also help people to stop conflating transformation – another imperative at universities and in South Africa more broadly – with decolonisation.

One respondent underscored that white South African academics are as vital in driving genuine curriculum decolonisation as their black peers. This will involve conscious, deliberate, non-hypocritical and diligent interest by both black and white academics in indigenous knowledge systems, cultures, peoples and languages (Mgqwashu 2016). Theories must be generated that are informed by life as it is lived, experienced and understood by local inhabitants.

There are two different interpretations on the issue of “Africanising” the business management curriculum for students. The one implies that one should “cut yourself off from the rest of the world”, but Watson is not in favour of this approach. Smith (2018) noted that,

*“...there is no need to delink ourselves from the rest of the world; rather look at how the rest of the world thinks about management but look at it from our perspective from over here. It is very important to continue to read texts from scholars from the ‘global North’ and the ‘global South’, but with concerns about our different challenges on the continent”.*

Business managers in South Africa should ask what their vision is and what could be lacking from the vision of retail business management.

#### **4.5 Strategies to "decolonise" RBM education in South Africa**

An in-depth analysis of the data that was collected during the study revealed that there is no one size fits all strategy to decolonize the RBM curriculum in South Africa. There are therefore a number of strategies that could be adopted in order to build a decolonized curriculum for the retail industry and the section below highlights some of these strategies.

##### ***4.5.1 Rethink how retail business management is taught***

Some of the respondents underscored the need to rethink how retail business management theories are taught. In this regard, they noted that it must be clearly explained to the students how colonial and apartheid history has shaped the curriculum.

##### ***4.5.2 Question parochial bias***

Other respondents noted that questions must be asked about parochial bias. In this regard, the respondents noted that it is imperative to recognise how the “global North” continues to dominate in retail business management ideas in the “global South” – not just in Africa. This continues to often give rise to inappropriate solutions. It is therefore important for academics in their research, teaching and learning to draw in local sources wherever possible. It does not imply disregarding international expertise in retail business management issues. It is about approaching them from a deconstructed perspective.

#### ***4.5.3 Importance of the retail situated knowledge***

The responses from the interviews also revealed the unanimous view that the curriculum should be grounded in “situated knowledge” of the context in which the students will end up working. Simply applying a global best practice approach is often disastrous. The recommendation was therefore for university teachers to rather draw on local case studies as much as possible when they deliver the RBM curriculum. In this case, it is imperative for curriculum developers and the educators to maintain contact and collaborate with industry so that they remain abreast of developments on the ground. This is the only way to ensure that the curriculum is well-grounded in current realities.

#### ***4.5.4 Mutual learning***

One of the strategies that also emerged from the interviews was the need to encourage mutual learning in poor communities. It is critical for academics to create dialogues so that students can begin to enhance their inter-personal skills. In this regard, university educators should adopt an openness to the experiences of many diverse residents in different parts of the country to nurture an empathetic attitude to knowledge and learning outside the classroom.

#### ***4.5.5 Values***

A number of respondents also noted that decolonization should encompass a change in the self-reflection of values. In this regard, academic staff should encourage students to evaluate their own values and to respect those of others. In this regard, the values of the students should therefore be inculcated in the ultimate curriculum that emerges from the decolonised curriculum.

#### ***4.5.6 Inter-cultural learning***

This is important especially in student group work. Tensions can arise among students because of unhealed wounds from the past and a misinformed understanding of where other students come from. Sometimes mediation might even be needed among the students.

#### **4.5.7 Diversity**

One issue that was noted by some of the respondents during the interviews was the need for a diverse pool of academic staff at higher education institutions so that students are exposed to "different voices" and also for students to be exposed to educators who share similar socio-cultural attributes with them.

#### **4.5.8 Retail business management lecturers' identities at work**

The findings from the interviews also revealed that there is a need to understand the ways in which lecturers construct their identities as retail business management studies academics. This finding concurs with the work by Moosmayer (2012) and Grey et al. (2016) which suggests that management studies academics are powerful transmitters of values to their students, even when those values may be the values of disciplinary knowledge rather than personal value systems. This often creates tension in the ways in which lecturers construct and perceive their identities. This is because:

- Knowledge is neutral
- Separation between personal and discipline knowledge value systems
- Values as concern for 'other disciplines'

These are also in line with what was noted by Ruggunan (2016) that there is a need for value-orientated management studies.

#### **4.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a detailed description of the findings from this study. The chapter revealed that there is no unanimity with regards to the definition and meaning of decolonization, but that academics and practitioners alike concur that the decolonization of the RBM is a necessity. The next chapter provides conclusions and recommendations of the study.



## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter provided an analysis and discussion of the data that was collected during the study. The chapter also highlights the key findings from the study. This chapter concludes the study and provides recommendation for both academics and practitioners in the field of retail business management.

### **5.2 Conclusion**

It is more than apparent that the current curriculum for RBM in South Africa falls short of identifying with the values, beliefs and other socio-cultural expectations of the majority of its stakeholders, thereby providing a strong impetus for the need for decolonization. To a large extent, the recipients of the curriculum, that is, the students, do not identify with the curriculum content as it is far removed from their lived realities. For the decolonised curriculum to be accepted by the students and other key stakeholders, it therefore needs to be situated in the lived realities of the curriculum players such as the students, their parents, lecturers, industry and other curriculum beneficiaries.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The literature review and the findings from the data analysis suggest a number of strategies that can be implemented in order to decolonize the RBM curriculum of the higher education sector in South Africa. The study therefore came up with the following key recommendations:

#### ***5.3.1 Multi-stakeholder approach***

The decolonization of the RBM curriculum, for it to be effective, must take a multi-stakeholder approach. The development of the curriculum should not be the preserve of academics only but must involve stakeholders as diverse as the students themselves, parents, the retail industry, experts in the field, cultural and community actors, the government and many other stakeholders. This approach will ensure that as many voices

as possible contribute to the process and that the output reflects the multiplicity and consolidation of viewpoints.

### ***5.3.2 Adoption of indigenous knowledge system***

The study recommends that curriculum developers should not only focus on the Western, Arabic and Chinese knowledge systems as the only sources of knowledge. In order to decolonize the RBM curriculum, there is a need to give cognisance and due consideration to African or local indigenous knowledge systems. The acknowledgement and adoption of the indigenous knowledge system will thus ensure that students identify with the knowledge, values and practices that are embedded in the decolonised curriculum.

### ***5.3.3 Situated knowledge***

The study, in line with the finding alluded to in Chapter 4, recommends that academics should use knowledge that is situated in the local context so that the students are able to identify with it. For example, the use of local case studies, use of local language, and values and beliefs in the process of knowledge generation and transfer.

### ***5.3.4 Production and adoption of books by African writers***

The study found that there are very few African writers who have produced books on RBM and most of the authors are of American or European origin. The study therefore recommends that the relevant authorities should come up with mechanisms to encourage more African writers to produce RBM books and other publications. In the same vein, academics should also give priority to African writers when they select prescribed or recommended textbooks for their students.

### ***5.3.5 The incorporation of the students' voice***

The research study also found that the voice of the student was to a large extent ignored during the process of developing the current curriculum. The study therefore recommends that the process to develop a decolonised curriculum for RBM must be student-centered. In this regard, it is imperative that students become active participants in the curriculum development process and that their aspirations, values, beliefs and expectations are

incorporated into the ultimate curriculum. Doing this will ensure that the students identify with and take ownership of the curriculum.

### ***5.3.6 The adoption of local languages in teaching and learning***

The findings revealed that all the prescribed and recommended textbooks used across the higher education sector in South Africa are primarily written in the English language with a sizeable number written in Afrikaans. In addition to that, the English language is the language of learning at most of the higher education institutions. As alluded to earlier, about 80% of the South African population is of black African origin and do not therefore regard English or Afrikaans as their home language. The use of a 'foreign' language as a language of instruction presents its own challenges with regard to issues around whether the students understand the language and whether they identify with the language, and all these are therefore key issues that must be considered in the process of decolonising the RBM curriculum.

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## **APPENDICES**



## Appendix A – Draft Interview Guide/Schedule



### Introduction

This research study is being undertaken in order to investigate how the Retail Business Management curriculum offered by higher education institutions in South Africa can be decolonised to ensure that it is aligned to the values, beliefs, cultural practices, aspirations and expectations of the curriculum recipients and beneficiaries who are predominantly black Africans. The research study is funded by the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education Authority (W&R SETA) through the Wholesale and Retail Leadership Academy (WRLA) at CPUT.

You have been purposively identified to participate in this study based on either your expertise as a Retail Business Management academic, experience in curriculum development, knowledge of decolonisation or practical experience in the wholesale and retail industry.

The questions that will be asked in this telephone interview will relate to the current state of the Retail Business Management curriculum in South Africa and how it can be decolonised. The interview will last approximately a maximum of 20 minutes and you have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time during the interviewing process. You are also under no obligation to answer all the questions.

Everything discussed in this interview will only be used for this research study and will not be shared with anyone outside the research team. In addition, your name will not be used, to ensure that no one can identify you with any of the answers. This interview will only proceed after you have given your full consent and approval for it to be conducted.

### Background Information

Date	
Interview Number	
Stakeholder	
Number of Years' Experience	

## Interview Questions

1. What is your understanding of the concept of decolonisation?
2. Do you think the current curriculum for Retail Business Management meets the values, beliefs, cultural practices, aspirations and expectations of the majority of the students studying retail business management? **(provide reasons for your answers)**.
3. What exactly needs to be decolonised in the Retail Business Management curriculum?
4. What strategies can be used to decolonise the curriculum?
5. What pitfalls do you envisage in the process to decolonise the curriculum and how can these pitfalls be avoided?
6. What kind of content do you prefer to see in the decolonised curriculum for Retail Business Management in South Africa?
7. Do you have anything else that you would like to add, contribute and/or propose to the process of decolonising the Retail Business Management curriculum in South Africa?

**Close the interview and thank the participant for his or her participation.**

## Appendix B – Ethics clearance certificate



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P.O. Box 1906 • Bellville 7535 South Africa • Tel: +27 21 4603291 • Email: fbmsethics@cput.ac.za  
Symphony Road Bellville 7535

Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	Faculty: <b>BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES</b>
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At a meeting of the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee on **11 June 2019**, Ethics Approval was granted to Prof **Sabelo Ndlovu** for research activities at Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Title of dissertation/thesis/project:	DECOLONIZATION AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE EXISTING RBM PROGRAMS: THE POWER OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE  Lead Researcher: Prof Sabelo Ndlovu/Prof R Mason
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Comments:

Decision: **Approved**

 Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	<b>12 June 2019</b> Date
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Clearance Certificate No | FOBREC668

## Appendix C – Turnitin similarity report

Document Viewer

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i Project 2019/24: Decolonization and its application to the existing RBM programs: the power of indigenous knowledge 23 March 2019 Prepared by: Lead Researcher: Professor Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, UNISA Research Team: Dr Virimai Victor Mugobo, CPUT Prof R B Mason, WRLC, CPUT [Wholesale and Retail Leadership Chair Cape Peninsula University of Technology Cape Town](#) "Collaboration opens the window to a world of opportunities" ii Copyright, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2014. Copyright for this report is held by Cape Peninsula University of Technology. No part of this report may be published in part or in whole, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, unless permission has been obtained from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. All reasonable care has been taken in collecting data and in the resultant interpretation of this data. Cape Peninsula University of Technology, the Wholesale & Retail Leadership Chair, and the author(s)/editor cannot accept any liability for any direct or indirect loss that might result because of unintentional errors or omissions in the data and interpretation thereof. The opinions and conclusions in this report are those of the author/s and the W&R Leadership Chair, and are not necessarily those of Cape Peninsula University of Technology. ISBN: This report is available online at: [www.wrhc.org.za](http://www.wrhc.org.za) iii Executive Summary The purpose of this study was to explore

## Appendix D – W&RSETA Introduction Letter



27 August 2019

Dear Stakeholder

Re: Decolonization and its application to the existing Retail Business Management programmes: the power of indigenous knowledge

The W&RSETA established the Wholesale and Retail Leadership Chair at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in November 2012. One of the purposes of the Chair is to undertake extensive research in the sector in collaboration with the W&RSETA, the retail industry and other identified partners.


The Wholesale and Retail Leadership Chair has subsequently commissioned Professor Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni to conduct research on Decolonization and its application to the existing Retail Business Management programmes: the power of indigenous knowledge.

We would like to appeal for your participation in contributing towards the successful completion of this study and urge you to kindly avail yourself for further engagement with the Researcher.

Should you require more detail about this study, or should you have any enquiries, please don't hesitate to contact me.

We look forward to your positive participation. Thank you.

Kind Regards,  
Mxolisi Maphakela  
Acting Manager: Skills Planning and Research



03/09/19

**Board:** Yvonne Mbane (Chairperson), Zinhe Tyikwe, Reggie Sibiya, Lwazi Koyana, Praise God Ndaba, Mogomotsi Masoabi, Themba Mthembu, David Makuwa, Fachmy Abrahams, Sibusiso Busane, Margaret Bango.



Hennops House, Riverside Office Park, 1303 Heurweel Avenue, Cnr Lenchen and Heurweel Avenues, Centurion, 015  
Private Bag X106, Centurion, 0046 | Tel: 012 622 9500 | Fax: 012 663 9585  
Email: [wrseta@wrseta.org.za](mailto:wrseta@wrseta.org.za) | Website: [www.wrseta.org.za](http://www.wrseta.org.za)

**Tom Mkhwanazi**, Chief Executive Officer