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Chapter

Towards the Development of the Decolonized Pedagogy for Higher Education in South Africa: A Students' Perspective

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Abstract

This chapter presents views, opinions, and perceptions about the curriculum theories that propagate educational perspectives of social injustice, cultural exclusion, supremacy, socio-economic inequality, and inequity. The data collection method was question and answer and deductive reasoning conducted in small groups in education studies classes. Pieces of information recorded in video clips during the COVID-19 lockdown were analysed through qualitative procedures, transcribing verbal data, and sorting coded categories of data. First, the frequencies of statements indicating trends in thoughts form themes classified as convergent and divergent perspectives. The interpretation of themes identified during data analysis seeks to address the problem statement in this chapter, which is the paradigm shift for a conceptualised decolonised curriculum in South Africa. Thus, the research question asked in the study is "what principles should underpin pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of pre-service teacher education and training?" The source of data was interviews and document analysis. The synthesis of the results drawn from the raw data was based on the theoretical and conceptual framework established from the works of scholarship researchers on decolonised education. The interpretation of the findings addressing the problem statement and the research question was presented through convergent and divergent perspectives that characterise the beliefs and thoughts of students about curriculums for decolonised education in South Africa. The study highlights uncertainties about the concepts, divergent conceptual stances on decolonised education, and the lack of uniformity in the perceptions of philosophical principles or foundations of perspectives on decolonised education.

Keywords: conceptualising, pedagogy, decolonised, curriculum, content, higher education

1. Introduction

The implementation of this study's agenda is grounded in the alienation of education as a social activity. The researchers view education as a socio-cultural activity that should promote society's value systems, cultural beliefs, and social goals rather than imposing

the supreme culture's cultural values and beliefs alongside hegemonic attitudes. The no recognition of other cultures and historical backgrounds as insignificant and subordinate creates social instability in society. Karl Marx, an advocate of the social theory, asserts that inequality, discrimination, and oppression are the root causes of social strife and resistance in society. The "Fees Must Fall" campaign, which was the voice of the disgruntled and frustrated generation of students, in all its manifestations, indicated resistance to the philosophical beliefs that underpin the design and development of curricula in universities. In students' perceptions, the curricula display no recognition of other cultural backgrounds, portrays knowledge systems of the subordinate class and cultural groups as insignificant, and promotes the supremacy of a Eurocentric worldview at the expense of indigenous and minority groups. The terms decolonisation and decolonised education were at the core of the campaign, and for researchers this worldwide term became a cause for concern. The arguments and findings presented in this work are part of the emerging scholarship of decolonised education. Research highlights that the terms 'decolonisation' and 'decolonised education' have been interrogated from various dimensions; socio-cultural, socio-economic, and political perspectives have already been established. However, the perspective presented in this piece of work is based on a viewpoint centred around school curricula. This perspective is based on the belief that a curriculum, even in a policy, blueprint, or activity, is an agenda for social construction grounded on foundations of philosophy (world outlook). The theoretical principles underpinning the curriculum theory and its practices are generated from the world views of those in power [1, 2]. This research aims to discover decolonisation and decolonised education's philosophical principles, informing pre-service teachers' curriculum development and training.

Some educational researchers and theorists have developed a critical perspective to challenge the entrenchment of social injustices within educational theories and practices. The pioneers of this scholarship [1, 3–6] focus their criticism on the philosophical foundations of pedagogical approaches, which promote indoctrination and the maintenance of the socio-economic order [6] point to hegemony and exclusion as a philosophical agenda to demean other cultural and historical backgrounds and world outlooks.

2. Literature review

The conceptual knowledge of decolonisation and decolonised education in this study draws ideas from the premise of scholarship and research, which advocate discourse for the traditional philosophical foundation of education, and these ideas are pioneered in the works of many researchers [1, 2, 6, 7]. This study discovered that the discourse regarding the philosophical foundation of education contests the perennial view of knowledge and its disposition to enforce the reproduction of knowledge. Muller and Young [5] and Muller [6] argue that the reproduction of knowledge elevates a world outlook at the expense of other co-existing counterparts. Hence, knowledge for power and powerful knowledge overwhelm the pursuit of inclusive acknowledgment and the recognition of socio-cultural and historical perspectives in knowledge production. Furthermore, this chapter extends the view that philosophical ideas underpinning education and curricula in South Africa perpetuate conformity to the educational principles and the goals of the elitist supremacists and chauvinists who hold colonial and imperial world outlooks. Hence, the "Fees Must Fall campaign" instigators linked colonialism to educational principles and goals that dominate knowledge structures and knowledge production in South Africa. The realisation of the exclusion and the disregard of other

world outlooks in the knowledge structures and in knowledge production was the core of the movement's contention during the campaign.

According to psychological studies, the issues of identity, equity, social justice, and respect are embedded in recognising people's cultures and their contributions to advancing society's socio-economic environment and political systems. The argument about fundamental principles is that decolonising education and curricula cannot become reality without a carefully researched and conceptualised paradigm to frame pedagogy. Semetsky [7] argues that educational research should first challenge the absolutist view embedded in the hegemonic view of pedagogy. The view of pedagogical content knowledge that promotes the authority of teachers over knowledge and learning strategies deprives learners of the freedom to engage critically with diverse realities and perspectives.

Furthermore, Semetsky ([7], p. 13) contends that the ideas of Plato, Descartes, Kant, and Heidegger, which form part of content knowledge in educational studies, entrench traditional beliefs about teaching, learning, and content.

> *"The history of philosophy has always been the agent of power in philosophy, and even in thought. It has played the repressor role. As a result, an image of thought called philosophy has been formed historically, and it effectively stops people from thinking."*

The first perspective of decolonisation regards a paradigm shift for promoting social justice, social and cultural identities, and a redress of Eurocentric supremacy and imperial attitudes. This perspective advances the ideas of many researchers [5, 8–12] about decolonising education. Convergent views of scholars challenge the promotion of a narrow view of the perspectives of knowledge and the philosophical foundations of pedagogy to encourage a one-dimensional approach to the interpretation of reality and the interrelationships of world systems. For example, Bignall [11] contends that colonialism; cultural supremacy, and imperialism are intertwined, colonialism being the political attitude to subdue indigenous people under the supreme political power through conquest and cultural supremacy being the mechanism to maintain the socio-economic structure. Imperialism is an economic tool to finance the system that has been established. According to Bignall [11], cultural supremacy and imperialism were about oppressive attitudes and practices towards the indigenous people. However, imperialism and colonial pedagogy create perceptions of inequality, competition in class divisions, and the stratification of people of the same cultural group through education. Similarly, Semetsky [7] and Popkewitz [13] construe colonialism and education when stating:

> *"Formidable schools of intimidation which manufactures specialists in thought-but which also makes those who stay outside conform to all the more to specialism which they despise." ([1], p. 26).*

Muller [5] extends the narrative of conformity and the hegemony-oriented pedagogy when pointing out that knowledge production and knowledge structures promote the narrow world views of elite and supremacist groups in theory and practice. The narrow world view promoted by colonialist and imperialist pedagogy enforces exclusion and disregards indigenous peoples' cultural achievements and the experiences of subordinate cultures in what is considered knowledge for the powerful Muller [6]. Popkewitz [13] confirms that excluding indigenous cultures and their

socio-economic outlooks creates a perception of insignificance, subordination, and unworthiness in individuals identified with such communities. Psychosocial theories highlight that the social identities of the subordinate cultures are the sources of socio-political and economic instability in society [14, 15].

The second perspective of decolonisation promotes the reconstruction of pre-colonial traditional, indigenous lifestyles and acknowledges different world outlooks that co-exist with the Eurocentric worldview. These ideas drew from the studies and works of many researchers [16–19] who challenge the exclusion of Afro-centric perspectives in the study of the philosophy of education in universities. The above views include the recommendation of robust debates and discussions regarding the 'Africanisation' and 'decolonisation' of the content for the philosophical foundation of the pedagogy education to address the excluded perspectives of education in South Africa. The literature reveals that researchers consider decolonisation a pressing issue in the debates and discussions about curriculum development for higher education after the student uproar in 2015. The ideas and opinions elicited from notable publications [20–27] congruently point to the perpetuation of the bias and prejudice in the epistemological principles underlying the design and development of curricula in higher education and training. Kabela [20], Savo [26, 27] argue that decolonisation implies a change in the philosophical foundation of education and its curricula, and this change entails revisiting the epistemologies, theories, and principles that promote a Eurocentric world view. As perceived by other researchers, decolonisation is a challenge to the education and curriculum design and its development which intends to promote a Eurocentric world view and cultural chauvinism vour of cultural supremacists in South Africa [24, 25, 27–29].

The third perspective of decolonisation promotes modern cultures emerging from the co-existence of indigenous and Eurocentric cultures to construct a postmodern society. The culture of the colonised and colonisers exists in harmony. The advocates of this perspective advance the view that the colonised and colonisers' co-existence over centuries has resulted in the mangling of lifestyles and cultures [8–10]. The intercultural and cross-cultural viewpoints are undisputed realities; today, no pure cultural backgrounds could be maintained in colonial communities. As Bignall [11] contests, the conceptual understanding of decolonisation is that it is the rejection of aspects of knowledge that colonial societies have accumulated through their co-existence. According to the advocates of this perspective, the reviews of curricular and educational practices must be based on philosophical grounds that are free of bias, stereotypes, ethnocentric world views, and cultural chauvinism and supremacy. The social, political, and economic injustices justified by the philosophical views that underpinned the educational systems of the imperial and colonial powers should be carefully uprooted and replaced by the alternative paradigms agreeable and accepted by all sectors of the society.

In his work, Apple [1] supports a narrative that advocates for equity, social justice, and inclusion; "what knowledge and whose knowledge?" Similarly, Slattery [4] and Pinar et al. [2] envisage knowledge production mechanisms that address cultural chauvinism, cultural supremacy, and colonialism in curriculum development at all educational levels. The argument presented in this chapter extends a narrative that promotes the agenda of social reconstruction by including world outlooks and interpretations of human existence in teaching philosophical knowledge to university students.

The three perspectives of conceptualising decolonisation form the framework for analysing the ideas and views of the students who participated in the research discussions.

The narrative of colonial education pursued in the works of Bignall [11] and Patton [9] advance the view that academics and intellectuals that have been created or produced by the colonial education system are judged by their higher levels

and standards of conformity to philosophical knowledge that do not recognise or acknowledge their socio-cultural contributions to the creation and setting of those intellectual standards. The perspective highlighted by Bignall [11] is considered in this work as significant for the following reasons. First, over centuries colonialism created new breeds of societies, which created economies, new settlements, and cultures through co-existence. Second, the reality of change and progress cannot be reversed back to a period of pre-colonialism and traditional lifestyle. In the same trend of thought, Patton ([9], p. 121) argues that colonisation is a philosophy invented by imperialists. This philosophy is inherent in the perceptions of the supreme culture, supreme value systems, and Eurocentric world outlooks.

Furthermore, Patton [9] states that colonialism produced attitudes of dependency, timidity, subordination, helplessness, emptiness and defeat, insignificance, and submissiveness in colonised communities. Semetsky [10], in the same vein, argues that research in the field of philosophy and education should focus on the creation of new concepts and further proposes the reconceptualisation of concepts invented during colonial and imperial dispensation in the context of socio-economic and political transformation. In agreeing to the pedagogy of freedom and liberation, Semetsky [8] also suggests that problem-based, inquiry-based, and experiment-based learning are the tools to use to transform the colonial philosophical foundation of education; where students should be apprentices in their field and should learn to identify particular problems and how to approach them in a way that leads to solutions. In the perspective of Deleuze, the rhizomatic theory explains how students can develop sprouts of new images of thought from what is readily available Bignall [11]. The shift from 'what is' to 'what can be' in learning is also significant in adult education [9, 30].

3. Theoretical framework

This study utilises the ideas and principles of transformative learning theory, social theory, and identity theory as they have created a framework to guide the qualitative research, data collection, data analysis, and the synthesis of the results. According to Mezirow's transformative theory Mezirow [15], individuals with different cultures, religions, languages, and races develop a frame of reference based on society's perspectives of diversity. The rationale for transformative learning stems from ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and bias in social identification and self-identities in education. According to Calleja [30], Mezirow's transformative learning theory asserts that becoming aware of one's own and others' tacit assumptions and expectations and addressing their relevance for making interpretations as these are the core attributes of adult education. Mezirow's theory describes the transformation in the process of learning in two dimensions. The first dimension is about establishing a new world view or frame of reference, which results from a Critical Reflection of Assumptions (CRA). The CRA dimension is characterised by Habits of Mind (HoM), which are persisting, managing impulsivity, listening with understanding and empathy, thinking flexibly, meta-cognition, striving for accuracy, questioning and problem posing, thinking independently, openness to continuous learning, gathering data through all lenses, creating, imagining, innovating, and thinking independently [31, 32]. These habits in Mezirow's theory are based on logical, ethical, ideological, social, economic, political, and spiritual experiences. The second dimension is the Critical Subjective Reflective Assumptions (CSRA) frame, comprising the psychological and cultural limitations. Through CSRA, individuals can be freed from cultural distortions and constraints; such freedom allows for open

discourse. According to Calleja [30] and Taylor [33], the CRA and CSRA are the frames of reference for adult learners to develop a discourse leading to perspective transformation. According to Mezirow [15], these two lifetime frames of reference make it possible for adult learners to interpret others' world views and cultural/contextual experiences. Mezirow's theory suggests that self-reflection and empirical analytic discovery transform the stereotypical and ethnocentric perspectives individuals accumulate through various means of socialisation to their adult life.

4. Research paradigm and methodology

Interpretive, critical paradigms are utilised to frame this study. For example, according to Henning et al. ([34], p. 19), phenomena and events are understood through mental processes of interpretation which are influenced by and interact with social context. In the same vein, ideas of the critical paradigm were encapsulated in the framing of this research because the case study research design and methods of data collection used were based on participation, collaboration, and engagement with the participants in their designated workplaces, as per the recommendation of Creswell and Creswell [35]. This paradigm is also recommended for studies that seek to discover trends and patterns of thought about a phenomenon that could lead to discourse in the status quo.

The problem statement for this study was the perspective or frame of reference of pre-service teachers on the conceptual understanding of decolonisation and decolonised education, from a philosophical standpoint. This problem statement is based on the assumptions highlighted in the theoretical framework of this study; Critical Reflection Assumptions (CRA) and Critical Subjective Reflective Assumptions. The question emanated from this statement was, "does the teaching of philosophical knowledge influence pre-service teachers to conceptualise curricula for a decolonised education system?" The purpose of the study was to explore views, opinions, and ideas of pre-service teachers that could influence the development of an alternative paradigm for empowering teachers with the competence to promote a balanced worldview in teaching and learning in schools.

5. Research design and data collection procedures

Students in the final year of their undergraduate program, Bachelor of Education (B. Ed), were targeted for this study. 340 students in the educational studies course were asked to form groups of 12 individuals, and that numbering resulted in 34 small groups. Collaboration, engagement, and participation were encouraged and monitored during the process to ensure that all students received the opportunity to express their views. Ethical protocols were adhered to, as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher [36], in that participants should not be coerced, they have to be informed about the purpose of the research, confidentiality should be guaranteed, and anonymity is assured. These ethical issues were addressed before the project started.

6. Data collection procedures

The group discussion was organised with finalist students engaged in presenting their views and opinions about decolonised curriculum and pedagogy that students

aspired to in the 2018 'Fees Must Fall' protest. Students in the class of 100 participated in group discussions, and students formed their groups of 10 members. The groups were asked to create 20 min video clips and send them to the researcher. The videos were the sources of data that were analysed for the findings presented and discussed in this work. The groups were formed based on their interests and their common choices regarding philosophy and curricula paradigms.

The researcher provided the following question to guide students' discussions

- Views, ideas, and opinions from studying the philosophical foundations of education and curriculum can be the best for the decolonised curriculum.
- Teaching and learning methods appropriate for promoting all cultures (knowledge) in the former colonies.
- Views about methods used in universities to promote a balanced view of cultures.
- Reflect critically on ideas, opinions, and views the group presents to make recommendations.

The divergent arguments raised by students manifested in frames of reference concerning the philosophical foundation and the paradigms of curriculum theory for current academic curricula.

7. Data analysis process

The process of data analysis followed the qualitative methods and guidelines of the interpretivist and critical paradigms. The views of the students were coded based on their perspectives of decolonised curriculum and pedagogy; this includes (i) their ideas and views that advance a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy, and (ii) their Critical Reflective Assumptions on the limitations in the current university curriculum in the context of suitability for the decolonised education system. The statements were given labels or codes as a means of sorting data. For example, radical critical reflections, moderate critical reflections, and neutral critical reflections. Thereafter, the coded statements were classified under categories manifested in the coding process.

The next step was to sort the categories of data according to Convergent Views (CV) and Divergent Views (DV). The sorting was based on the frequency of statements highlighting related and similar perceptions of decolonised curriculum and pedagogy, teaching, and learning methods to advance decolonisation. The trends in the patterns of thought were identified and presented as themes.

8. Results

This section presents a summary of the data which was classified into categories. **Tables 1** and **2** present the descriptive statistics that summarise the data gathered on the biographical information provided by participants about their cultural backgrounds, race, and socio-economic backgrounds; **Table 3** presents the classified codes; and **Table 4** presents summary of data indicating the frequency of codes from the sample of thirty-four groupings of participants.

Cultural background	Number of participants
Muslims	120
Christians	150
Others	30

Table 1.
Demographics of participants in terms of cultural background, racial grouping, and socio-economic status.

Racial groupings and socio-economic status	Number of participants
Africans	167
Coloureds	107
Whites	26

Table 2.
Summary of biographical data showing the demographics in the grouping of participants.

Codes	Radical critical reflections (RCR)	Moderate critical reflections (MCR)	Neutral critical reflections (NCR)
	Views and opinions that promote the restoration and replacement of Eurocentric perspectives of philosophical foundation and related pedagogical approaches	Views and opinions advocating philosophical foundations that acknowledge and recognise diversity in unity	Views, ideas, and opinions that do not support Eurocentric perspectives on Education or Afrocentric ones.

Table 3.
Classified codes.

Frequency of Opinions and Ideas (=34) Coded and Classified data			
	Coded data		
	RCR	MCR	NCR
Question 1: philosophical foundations that support the total removal of Eurocentric and colonial perspectives and replace them with Afrocentric perspectives	26 (=34) groups	5 (=34) groups	3 (=34) groups
Question 2: teaching and learning methods appropriate for promoting all cultures (knowledge) in the former colonies	18 (=34) groups	12 (=34) groups	4 (=34) groups
Question 3: methods used in universities to promote a balanced view of cultures	16 (=34) groups	14 (=34) groups	4 (=34) groups

Table 4.
Summary of data indicating the frequency of codes from the sample of thirty-four groupings of participants.

9. Findings

The data reveals convergence and divergence in the trends of the thought expressed in the statements concerning the decolonisation of the curriculum in higher education. The following points of view were discovered from the categories of data

presented in **Table 2**. According to transformative learning theory, reflections are the product of systematic and logical thinking about ideological, political, and social systems in society Mezirow [15]. This principle of transformative theory was confirmed in the evaluation and examination of the injustices of the colonial system of education and the suggestions expressed by participants regarding solutions and changes in the curriculum and its philosophical foundations. However, critical reflection depicts three diverse perspectives, one being the radical critical reflection on the philosophical foundations for the decolonised curriculum and pedagogy. While the other two perspectives considered moderate and neutral solutions in addressing the supremacy of colonial perspectives of philosophical foundations of curriculum and pedagogy.

9.1 The Radical critical reflection perspective decolonises the philosophical foundation of education and pedagogy

This perspective proposes the idea of *Ubuntu* and other Afro-centric philosophies for the decolonised curriculum. The statements advocating a complete paradigm shift from the Eurocentric perspective conceptualise decolonisation in the light of the restoration of the indigenous African value systems and traditional cultural practices. In this perspective, a curriculum should be about reviving indigenous knowledge systems. A frequency of 26 statements was identified with opinions and views that pointed to the significance of the *Ubuntu* philosophy. The perception of Ubuntu or humanity in this perspective means the promotion of respect for all human beings regardless of socio-economic, racial, and cultural status. The views and proposed discourses of the participants, such as replacing Greek, Roman and other European Philosophies of curriculum for higher education, indicate the strong thirst for freedom of choice and liberation of the mind. The descriptive statistics in **Table 2** indicate a strong trend of thought in 26 groups (76%) that advocated for views of a complete shift from the colonial perspective of philosophical foundations and curriculum design in favour of the decolonised curriculum in Higher education. For example, participants commented that:

> *"Ubuntu ideas link people to the values and importance of equality and equity. Unlike colonialism, Ubuntu does not promote the supremacy of race and cultures."*

> *"Ubuntu philosophical ideas allow people to be proud of their cultural heritage and respect that."*

> *"We cannot be free when our education still oppresses us. The African philosophy of Ubuntu shares the same ideas that we learned about from socialist-realism philosophy."*

Reflections about pedagogy highlighted that strategies of teaching and learning are oppressive and constrain freedom of thought and reasoning. The participants expressed discontent about the exclusion of students' perspectives in curriculum designs and development. Participants comments alluded that:

> *"Some lecturers do not accept our thoughts. Knowledge is rigid, and we are taught about this of the hidden history in Science, Mathematics, and the Shakespeare of this world."*

> *"Students are not considered in the selection of themes and methods. Critical paradigms encourage debates, dialogues, and discussions, and these are the methods we enjoy the most than listening to one person telling us."*

9.2 The moderate perspective of philosophical foundations for a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy

The views classified under the Moderate Critical Reflections (MCR) highlighted a trend of thought that acknowledges the intercultural influences in the historical colonial society. The views expressed the significance of the recognition of all cultures and heritages of the people in the society. This perspective strives for a multicultural philosophical foundation for the curriculum and pedagogy as the participants insisted addresses issues of mutual respect between all cultures, heritages, and knowledge systems. According to the descriptive statistics, five groups (=34), accounting for 14.7% of participants, expressed views, thoughts and opinions that support a multicultural philosophical foundation to underpin the decolonised curriculum. The participants commented that:

> *"In our view as South African, we need to show mutual respect of all cultures, heritage and our indigenous knowledge, and religious beliefs."*
>
> *"Schools and universities should acknowledge the values of diverse heritages and cultural backgrounds. Colonialism developed this kind of attitude of exclusion, discrimination, and high class and lower class."*
>
> *"For example, South Africa is a multicultural society, but we are still learning about discoveries and inventions of other countries and cultures as if South Africans are ignorant. We chose Social constructivism ideas and critical paradigm because these ideas can encourage us all to admire and appreciate our knowledge and diverse cultural backgrounds."*

Statements concerning pedagogical issues identified with this perspective pointed to the danger of political interference in curriculum development and design and the participants alluded that:

> *"Education and curriculum should not be decided by the politicians and people of the elite class only. The education that is imposed from the top does not serve the needs of the poor and lower class."*
>
> *"Critical paradigm and social constructivism ideas promote critical thinking about real-life problems than textbook knowledge, which we do not even have interest in. We do not feel part of what we learn; we memorize facts for the sake of test and exam."*
>
> *"The curriculum should equip citizens with technical knowledge and skills to solve the issue of unemployment and poverty. Citizens can learn to be independent and work hard for their livelihood that seeking jobs."*

9.3 The neutral critical reflections perspective

The statistics in **Table 2** indicate a minority representation for the neutral perspective, which is three groups (=34) or 8.8%. However, in this work, this finding is critical because this number represents the views and perceptions that prevail in the colonial society. The neutral trend of thought exhibited in statements that fit neither radical nor moderate perspectives. The views that do not consider decolonisation as an important item in the agenda for transformation in the historical colonial society of South Africa. The participants stated that:

> *"Knowledge cannot be anything, but it should be from knowledgeable people because they conduct research and scientific processes to generate knowledge. Just imagine schools without books, what will teachers teach."*

> *"In democratic countries, they open schools to everyone, like here we are all competing for better results, but there is no question of who you are and from where you come. The main thing is that we should all learn from experts for us to become experts or intellectuals learn from other intellectuals."*

> *"We do not support the social re-constructionist ideas and critical paradigm because they promote freedom in the classroom, and individuals' learners' interests to us that means chaos, lack discipline, and lack of intellectual development. How can learners construct knowledge, and from where do they get intellectual expertise to produce ideas?"*

> *"The purpose of education and educating is to make citizens better. For people in society to know, they need to learn from those who are experts and intellectuals. Idealist philosophical ideas encourage people to think and to produce ideas."*

> *"Realist philosophical ideas are the best because they encourage creative thinking; citizens must think creatively to improve their economy and living standards. Realist philosophical ideas in our thinking can promote equal citizens."*

10. Discussion

This section presents a synthesis of the findings regarding the ideas, opinions, and views of the theorists presented in the theoretical and conceptual framework of this research. According to Mezirow [15] the principles of the transformative learning theory assert that adult learners can develop frames of reference from political, social, and economic experiences through various lenses. Thus, they create critical subjective assumptions about change and transformation. In the context of this study, the findings highlighted the trends of thought concerning the fundamental framework to conceptualise the philosophical foundations that ought to underpin a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy for higher education and training. The participants' perspectives identified in this research are based on the frames of reference of colonial socio-political ideological experiences. The three perspectives of the decolonised curriculum and pedagogy were the products of critical reflective thinking and assumptions about a discourse on the colonial curriculum. These are first, the restoration of the indigenous African philosophical foundation called *Ubuntu*; second, the multicultural philosophy to promote unity in diversity in the curriculum; and third, the neutral perspective that resists any interference with the status quo.

Furthermore, the findings allude to the significance of pedagogy that empowers students with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. The identified views and opinions were organised into themes in this discussion.

10.1 Theme 1: patterns of thought in support skills-based pedagogy

The trends of thought which conceptualised decolonisation as the restoration of the indigenous people's image and dignity criticised teaching practices that view learners as recipients of structured and formal knowledge. The argument about formal and

structured knowledge was perceived as a tool to prepare a certain kind of people who should think in a certain way. The learner and the outcomes for the structured knowledge are analysed and presented by the designers of knowledge. In the context of pedagogical content knowledge for educating and training teachers, the theories of Pavlov, Thorndike, and Skinner were cited by participants to support this argument about learning as a conditioning of the learners' behaviours and thinking patterns. The colonial and imperialist educationists and curriculum designers drew on principles of knowledge and pedagogy from these theories so that teachers could develop convictions that teaching and learning are tools to develop a particular type of people who should adopt and adapt to prescribed behavioural patterns. The antithesis of this perspective is that research in anthropology and archaeology attests that humankind, regardless of creed and origins, can develop and create meaningful and relevant knowledge to their existence in an environment.

Furthermore, studies on people's heritage and cultural backgrounds also prove humankind adheres and identifies with what they have created and developed; hence protecting and preserving the heritage and cultural achievements are significant. The statements further highlight that skills-based pedagogy is ideal for addressing one-sided or biased narratives about the cultural achievements of people in a former colonial society. The following reasons were provided to substantiate the importance of skills-based pedagogy to a decolonised curriculum:

- Skills such as analytical thinking encourage individuals to use their brain's capabilities to arrive at their truth without influence. Through analytic skills, learners in higher education can produce meaningful and relevant solutions to their society's socio-economic problems instead of structuring knowledge that they do not identify as relevant to the social, economic, and political realities in their country. The teaching and learning strategies proposed in this perspective are inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, and collaborative learning.

- The skill of empathy is significant to address prejudice and a one-sided narrative about the colonisers and the colonised. Empathy through deductive reasoning, in this perspective, can use terminologies, concepts, and facts established by researchers that present a skewed world outlook or exclude other sides of the story; for example, history of scientific studies, political development, agricultural practices, and trade and technology. The views expressed in the statements were that the knowledge structures for these courses in these fields exclude the achievements of the indigenous people, such as developments in farming, crop production, organic food production, knowledge of plant science and technology, and craftwork. In the entire world, people are known for their expertise and contributions in these fields. "The cultural chauvinism of the imperial and colonial mindset which was in pursuit of claiming contributions and achievement of indigenous people through conquest Bignall ([11], p. 49). The promotion of empathy through deductive and logic could turn a curriculum from being a top-down product to instead being a tool to develop great thinkers, problem solvers, and inventors. Moreover, this perspective promotes equality, equity, and mutual respect in society.

- Communication skills and comprehension skills were highlighted in the statements to advance the views about the importance of language in the decolonised curriculum. The concern about the dominance of European languages in Africa, such as French and English in northern, central, and southern countries, promotes hegemony and supremacy. Languages as the pride and essential resource

> for preserving culture and heritage should be prioritised in a decolonised curriculum. Promoting all languages is possible by allowing students to express opinions, ideas, and views in their language and through artefacts. Artefacts are languages in that in the designs and shapes and drawings hold meaning; people express their ideas, feelings, views, and interpretations of the universe, relationships in the physical world's systems, and world outlook through these artefacts.

The skills-based pedagogy established from the analysis of the decolonised curriculum in this discussion resonates with Deleuze's rhizomatic theory and its principles of identifying areas of interest from socio-economic and cultural environments and developing new concepts Patton [9]. The rhizome, in this literal sense, means a succulent rod, for example, sugar cane. The sugar cane rod has segments from which the sprouts of a new rod grow. In the context of the interpretation of the ideas and views provided by the study, the sprout could be new terminologies, concepts, principles, and innovations emerging from analytic skills, when students apply deductive reasoning and logic to discover the truth from different perspectives of reality.

Mezirow's theory of assumption advocates that adult learner can develop assumptions about discoveries; in this work, this implies that students in universities should apply analytic skills and skills of empathy to verify knowledge systems in the fields of choice. If this could be a paradigm for teaching, learning, and assessment, the principles of Schulman's theory about pedagogical content knowledge have to change. For instance, the lecture halls are venues of knowledge production rather than a place for students to listen to lecturers imparting themes and topics from the prescribed books and students memorising factual knowledge for tests and exams. The decolonised curriculum and pedagogy perspective promote a view of content that is selected and sequenced by lecturers and students in the classroom to allow diverse views and philosophical beliefs from different students' perspectives. The issue of the language used for communicating ideas is understood to be the tool used by colonisers and colonialists to enforce supremacy through education, which contributed to the subordination of other languages and their complete exclusion. In South Africa, for example, people of African descent have learned through foreign languages, and the disadvantages of this practice have influenced methods and learning styles and the programming of subject content. This research highlighted that learning a foreign language is the main contributor to the high failure rates in schools and universities. The mastery of English in South African universities is the criteria used to select suitable students in the qualification programs. Learning a foreign language was an area of contention in the discussion. However, the view about the seriousness of the negative impacts of enforcing learning through foreign languages to learners from indigenous communities was the most frequently observed. Imposing a foreign language is related to learning through memorisation of facts which add no value to the demands of the real-life experiences of students. Meaningless learning contributes to a high rate of learners dropping out in indigenous communities. The trend of dropping out from school, particularly among young citizens from indigenous communities, is that the education acquired does not improve communities' socio-economic situations. Education only prepares young citizens to be employees and not employers, which results in lifetime subordination.

10.2 Theme 2: decolonised curriculum and pedagogy from the liberation of the mind perspective

The statements identified from the discussion also indicate a trend of thought that viewed the colonisers' curriculum and pedagogy as a mechanism that was carefully

articulated from the philosophical beliefs of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Socrates which target the mind. The purpose of knowledge and learning is to create people who think and reason according to the value systems prescribed by intellectuals and inventors of knowledge. The statements condemned the ancient philosophies for preparing grounds for the oppression of the mind. This perspective argues that the colonised mind is built for timidity, subordination, dependence, and intellectual disability. An example of timidity is the mentality of submissiveness and extreme loyalty, while subordination allows individuals to be used like dogs in Pavlov's theory. The mindset of loyalty describes a situation where someone controls your thinking in terms of instructions and guidance because you cannot think, explore, or design anything. This dependence was insinuated in statements that freedom of thought and practice is witnessed in the way universities and the department of higher education structure content knowledge for their qualification programs. Students are not allowed the freedom to study courses that suit their interests and needs; as a result, the students find themselves in disadvantageous situations. Hence, the issue of unemployed graduates is becoming acceptable and makes a mockery of university qualifications. The strong view in this perspective is that universities are becoming manufacturers of intellectual disabilities. Instead of providing platforms of adventure and innovation, they create a community of young pensioners, meaning those who stay for many years depending on government grants for survival.

The following were the main qualities proposed for the decolonised curriculum for liberating the mind:

> *The curriculum should adopt ideas of a free-market ideology: universities should allow students to choose courses based on their aspirations and needs. The students should enjoy the freedom to state the knowledge and skills they require for self-reliance in terms of their job and artisan skills.*
>
> *Real-life situations and experiences of students should drive the curriculum.*
>
> *The liberation of the mind perspective advocates for a curriculum that does not force students to learn knowledge that does not make sense to the needs of their society, as the argument was that some courses should be removed because of the lack of relevance to the world of practice. The ideas articulated around worthless courses highlighted that most of the students who enrol in such courses are from indigenous communities and are the poorest of the poor. The restricted freedom in learning in universities in South Africa supports maintaining the socio-cultural status enshrined in the colonisers' imperialist views of colonialised society.*
>
> *The curriculum should promote equality and social cohesion.*
>
> *Liberation of the mind in this perspective brings in the notion of co-existence, acceptance, respect, and acknowledgment of equality. The notion of Ubuntu described in this perspective is philosophical because it should be the foundational aspiration of individuals and communities in institutions of higher learning. The example used was that ubu, the prefix, means 'being' and ntu, the suffix, means human. Therefore, being human refers to something beyond respect and the acknowledgment of co-existence. Instead, the concept defines nature and its characteristics. In the colonised curriculum, the term being human is context-based, meaning that it depends on who is referred to in terms of location, appearance, and behavioural patterns. These are the main criteria used to classify being human,*

and these criteria have created the beliefs of "us" and "them." According to the statements and arguments analysed, students in institutions of higher learning exhibit behaviours that defeat the purpose of social cohesion, equality, and equity in terms of Ubuntu. The divisions based on religious beliefs, race, and language indicate that a decolonised curriculum should target and address these behavioural patterns by opening platforms to debate and arguments about philosophical perspectives regarding 'being human'. The conceptual meaning of humanity advanced in the statements was that humans differ from primates, for example, chimpanzees, monkeys, and baboons because humans reason logically, think critically, evaluate, assess, make decisions, communicate ideas, and invent new knowledge and technologies according to the needs and demands of life. Being human means having qualities such as mutual respect, sharing space and resources with other people, showing sympathy, and demonstrating responsibility, care, and support.

Curriculum and pedagogy for self-reliance and freedom of choice.

The statements that highlighted the view of self-reliance critiqued the national curriculum of schools for promoting colonial social and economic goals. The elements cited from the national school curriculum were selecting subjects that do not articulate in education and training. The branding of education as "education and training" does not match the content knowledge taught from reception to the exit grade. The branding sounds as if a learner can exit the schooling system with skills and knowledge that learners require to adapt to the country's economic systems. The opposite is the mimicking and emulation of the content knowledge and pedagogic strategies enhancing the memorisation of facts from textbooks. The statements made by participants questioned the training component in the curriculum of the democratic dispensation because all subjects are classroom-based and tests and homework test fact recollection.

The proposals made from this perspective are as follows regarding the decolonised curriculum and pedagogical strategies.

The amalgamation of training to subject content knowledge

The statements indicated the importance of empowering learners in the school system with artisan skills required in their space of work. The view of self-reliance in a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy promotes the importance of differentiated interests and abilities that are entirely not in the scope and agenda of the democratic educational dispensation curriculum. The learners who fail to cope with the abstract textbook are mostly part of the indigenous communities and they continue to be neglected. As a result, the communities of street children, lost generations, and the poorest of the poor created by colonial imperialists grow. Furthermore, the lack of training to empower learners with adequate knowledge and skills creates a disadvantage for university students because they choose careers that require practical knowledge and skills. The experience of failure and the repeating of courses are the attributes seen in students from poor communities who drop out and struggle to survive.

The freedom of choice

The views and opinions classified under this category point to a lack of freedom of choice in the curriculum of the colonial and imperialist education dispensation mimicked by the democratic government. The imposed curriculum and subject content

deprive students in universities of their perspectives on the content and pedagogy. Course guides that present the scope of content are forced upon students without room to accommodate different opinions. The prescribed books, in some instances, are taught chapter by chapter, and students underline points which they memorise to pass exams. The content knowledge in some courses is outdated; for example, in accounting, how to fill out a cheque book is still taught in the dispensation of digital technology. The decolonised curriculum and pedagogy should be in favour of the students because knowledge is power and guides students towards freedom and emancipation. The analysis of the views and opinions expressed in the statements regarding the freedom of choice resonate with the profound ideas of Shor [3] on the pedagogy of the oppressed, for example, on the issue of providing a space for students to have a voice in the process of designing and developing program curricula, and the alignment of content with students' perspectives of the world, as well their needs and demands locally and globally.

Furthermore, the view of freedom of choice in the decolonised curriculum encapsulates the understanding of the rapid changes in the local and global socio-political and economic system. Thus, the importance of integrating international perspectives and achievement in the decolonised curriculum is emphasised. The sense of a global village was insinuated in the statements of participants; for example, scholarships should open gates for students to interact physically and remotely with various countries beyond European and American spheres of knowledge production. The criticism of American and European books filling up libraries in universities was highlighted to substantiate the importance of encouraging students to explore and navigate the space of knowledge according to their needs and aspirations. The examples cited in the context of knowledge were philosophical ideas generated by scholars of the liberation struggle in Africa, like Julius Nyerere, Lumumba, Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko, and others. The relevance of the philosophical ideas to the freedom of choice, as pointed out in the discussions, provides an informed framework for articulating scholarly principles for research and knowledge production to support African renaissance and Afro-centric views.

Furthermore, the perception of integrating indigenous pieces of knowledge in the curriculum for higher learning resonates with the ideas of the proponents of the rhizomatic theory, reterritorialising and de-territorialising [8–11], which advocates for the regeneration of new concepts and philosophical ideas relevant to the postcolonial societies' lifestyles and worldviews. Bignall [11] argues that the colonised and the colonisers had been in co-existence for centuries after the European imperial and colonial regimes. Therefore, from the co-existence enculturation-influence of one culture on the others is a reality. According to Bignall [11], the cultural chauvinism of the colonial powers of capturing indigenous people and their cultures and mingling them with European worldviews is socio-culturally and historically accurate. In the same vein, Muller [6] reiterates the importance of the socio-cultural and historical factors in knowledge production for equality and equity in decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy. Ideas and views provided support the argument that students demand decolonised education with a background stemmed from global and local research. The resonance of students' perspectives confirmed Mezirow's transformative learning theory on the abilities of adult learners to develop subjective critical reflective assumptions about issues of injustice in their environment. Students drew on ideas from various local and global perspectives to frame demands for decolonised education. Furthermore, the transformative theory and refection frameworks state that adult students have ideas about change to the decolonised curriculum and pedagogy.

11. Conclusion

The perspectives revealed by the study indicate the emergence of three trajectories that can be used by future educational and curriculum development researchers to embrace students' voices regarding decolonising education in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. The study concluded that experiences of university education and training from the participant's perspectives require fundamental reform. First, on the issue of curriculum design and development; second, the teaching and learning strategies; and third, the inclusion of students' voices in all the processes. Furthermore, the findings provided the basis for this study to claim that a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy must consider students' perspectives as being at the centre of all developments. The perspective of a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy is that it advocates for freedom of choice and liberation of the mind and expresses concern about the colonial curricular that is rigidly programmed and structured to constrain students' quests to inquire, undertake new adventures, and develop talents during education and training.

In a broader sense, the critique of the confinements and constraints in the current knowledge productions in higher education in the findings confirms the principle of the critical subject reflective assumption that adult learners apply logic and systemic thinking about knowledge. The issue of textbooks and knowledge content raised in the findings indicates an awareness of the promotion of colonial ideas and views that inculcate imperialist values of supremacy and the exclusion of other cultural values systems.

From the perceptions of a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy established from the synthesis of the finding within the framework of the philosophical perspectives of the global and local researchers, this work concluded that decolonisation has different connotations. The first connotation advances the notion of the restoration of the image of indigenous people by integrating their world outlooks, views, and cultural values in the curriculum and pedagogical practices. The proposed mechanism to resolve the exclusion problem is the promotion of pedagogical strategies like problem-based and inquiry-based learning.

However, the other perspectives revealed by the research depicted a trend of thought about decolonisation and decolonised curricula and pedagogy which was advanced by the proponents of *Ubuntu*. The views and ideas of replacing Eurocentric philosophical perspectives with Afro-centric ones were interpreted to align with philosophical ideas of political power and education. The historical lesson in colonial societies is that political power and education are intertwined. Political power gives the government authority to enforce the beliefs and aspirations of the dominant political power. The findings highlighted that the radical critical perspectives of a decolonised curriculum conceptualise the transformation of education to be the prerogative of the political power. This implies the assumption of political power by the indigenous liberation movement. Therefore, education should be a tool for promoting indigenous people's cultural dominance. In addition, such a perception expects those in political power to mimic the strategies and policies of the colonial rulers in the current democratic political dispensation. The conclusion from the concept of *Ubuntu* being emphasised in this perspective is that a decolonised curriculum should acknowledge and promote value systems of the indigenous people, which had for many years been excluded and degenerated. Thus, the image of the indigenous people has been fallaciously presented. The narrative of the indigenous people about their worldviews, beliefs and convictions, norms, and behavioural patterns was the subject of research of colonial powers. Thus, knowledge production through intentional cultural chauvinism dehumanises indigenous people. The

concept of the African renaissance, which is the African Union's agenda to regenerate and rebuild the indigenous value system and image of the people of African descent, was destroyed by imperial colonialism. The conclusion drawn from the findings was that there was alignment between the students' perspectives and the views and opinions gathered from the works of local researchers [16–18, 20, 21].

Lastly, the study revealed the patterns of thought held by university students about their role in the conceptualisation and development of the curriculum and knowledge production.

12. Recommendations

The findings of this study revealed the conceptual perspectives of philosophical foundations for the decolonised curriculum and pedagogy. The purpose of the study was to establish the ideas and views that influenced the student protests which featured the demand for free and decolonised education. The qualitative research design and methodology assisted this research to address the question about the ideas and theoretical perspectives that influence the demand for decolonised higher education in South Africa. However, the established perspective can be the background for further research into models which include students' perspectives on curriculum design and development in higher education.

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