Organizational Knowledge and Administration Lessons From an ICT4D MOOC

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid acceleration of human-centered and technology-oriented advancements in a multitude of industries and fields means that most **organizations** could greatly benefit from an expansion of coverage into all aspects of **organizational** research, allowing for a greater breadth and range of content. In a chapter on transdisciplinary approaches to action research for Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D), Goosen (2018c, p. 97) further recommended that researchers "ought to try out the theories they propose together with practitioners in real-world situations and with real **organizations**, towards making academic research relevant."

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to offer insights into key topics, such as **organizational structure, strategic leadership, information technology management, and analytics**, among others, especially as applicable in the emerging areas of ICT4D and Massive(ly) Open Online Courses (MOOCs). This chapter will be comprised of content that highlights authoritative research results, directed at the proposed target audience of this book. "That is why students, professors, and universities" could be interested (Abbakumov, Desmet, & Van den Noortgate, 2019, p. 332), together with e-learners, teachers and managers at e-schools in South Africa (Goosen & Van der Merwe, 2015), as well as researchers, educators, students, professionals, and knowledge seekers from all around the world, as these pertain to all aspects of **organizational growth and development**, specifically discussed in the context of a MOOC entitled 'Ethical Information and Communication Technologies for Development Solutions'.

"With e-learning technologies evolving and expanding at high rates, organizations and institutions around the world are integrating" MOOCs and other Open Educational Resources (OERs) in order to address problems, especially for "Open Education in the Global South" (Zhang, Bonk, Reeves, & Reynolds, 2019). In their guest editorial on initiating the debate regarding perspectives on teaching, learning and assessment in Open Distance e-Learning (ODeL) contexts, Prinsloo and Coetzee (2013, p. 1355) indicated that there are many **problems** "facing higher education institutions, such as changes in funding regimes, the impact of technologies, changing student profiles and the impact of the economic downturn, to mention but a few." According to Subotzky and Prinsloo (2011), the **problems** and imperatives related to enhancing student support for retention and success at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in particularly South Africa are formidable, where success rates and retention are notoriously poor. Examples of conference papers, which detailed such issues include Goosen (2014), who aimed to investigate effective teaching and meaningful learning to address the **problems** of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) education in an Open and Distance e-Learning context, and Goosen

(2015c), on assessment to address the **problems** of effective teaching and meaningful learning in an ICT4D MOOC.

The chapter represents significant innovative work by closing gaps regarding research and "sharing of teaching practices that empower educators to benefit from the best ideas of their colleagues" (Cape Town Open Education Declaration, 2007). Further significance of the chapter lies in presenting an original piece of work contributing to academic debate under the theme of scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education (Subotzky & Prinsloo, 2011). Potentially useful content, with interest value for the intended audience, particularly facilitators, include examples of practice relating to the themes of student support in ODeL for increasing retention and success in courses with massive participation at higher institutions of learning (Firmin, Schiorring, Whitmer, Willett, Collins and Sujitparapitaya, 2014; Jona & Naidu, 2014; Subotzky & Prinsloo, 2011), the assessment of students and using Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to facilitate teaching and learning (Libbrecht & Goosen, 2015).

"In recent years there has been a significant growth in the number of online courses known as MOOCs available" (Liyanagunawardena, Lundqvist, Mitchell, Warburton, & Williams, 2019). According to Bates (2014), the **organization** and management of social learning on such a massive scale, without the loss of potential advantages related to collaborating at such a scale, is still a major **problem** remaining to be adequately addressed. Like that of Fischer (2014), this chapter not only reports on collected data regarding existing practices, but also investigates the advantages and disadvantages of different design choices, in order to help identify the e-learning practices worth preserving.

Although much can be deduced by relying more on student and/or lecturer feelings and perceptions, there is a need to represent "perspectives on MOOCs from outside Western contexts", based on actual cases (Bates, 2014, p. 147).

Baggaley (2014b) agreed that reporting on North American MOOC practices does not provide any evidence regarding the transferability of these to other regions, where some students are literally studying "in a village in Africa", as had somewhat contemplatively been expressed by Fischer (2014, p. 151). In a slightly earlier reflection for the Distance Education journal (Baggaley, 2013), regarding the rapid rise of MOOCs, Baggaley (2014a) also indicated that MOOC evaluations, which are now emerging, are finding that claims regarding courses, which are supposed to be appropriate for worldwide adoption, are groundless. Fischer (2014) agreed that the particular **problem**s related to courses that reach beyond individual countries' borders need to be carefully considered.

Although indications are that established constructivist or instructionist approaches to pedagogy are usually adopted in relation to the curriculum development, pedagogy and assessment of MOOCs, questions are also asked to make the underlying assumptions and theory informing the chapter evident (Knox, 2014).

A diversity of educational research methodologies implemented regarding MOOCs included heuristics, data and learning analytics, utilizing a case study (Firmin, et al., 2014), using user statistics and survey data to examine students' experiences, and reporting on studies investigating co-located MOOC study groups, using quasi-experimental comparisons (Li, et al., 2014).

This chapter discusses analysis results on survey data about the context of this MOOC, to discover lessons learned from the affordances and acceptance of established and emerging technologies when used regarding student support for retention and success (Diver & Martinez, 2015). Also included are results on how OERs made available online were used by educators, with the main aim of the MOOC having been growth in students' proficiency" in such areas (Abbakumov, et al., 2019, p. 332).

It is important to identify **problem**s such as those mentioned previously to the future of MOOCs (Fischer, 2014), faced regarding the scholarship of teaching and learning applied to large cohorts (Bag-

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