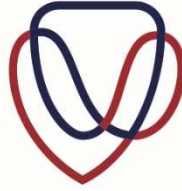


UNIVERSITY OF THE
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UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
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UFS·UV
THE HUMANITIES
GEESTESWETENSKAPPE

RESEARCH MENU

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

2020

The research interests of the staff members at the Department of Psychology (UFS) include a wide array of research topics. The utilisation of qualitative or quantitative approaches (or a combination of these) in pure or applied research, enables us to explore, describe, explain, and predict human phenomena; thus gaining insight into individuals and shaping society. In pursuit of the discovery of new knowledge, we use systematic ways of finding answers to questions such as:

- What are the socio-historical and psychological factors that shape the development and personality of individuals?
- How do individuals define themselves and find their place in the world?
- What are the antecedents and outcomes of optimal human functioning and well-being?
- What are the psychosocial risk and protective factors that influence the psychological well-being of individuals?
- How can cultural variables explain or account for well-being and how can well-being be promoted across the lifespan?
- How is mental illness conceptualised in various population groups and what are the various socio-demographic variables linked to well-being and mental health?
- Which constructs best predict the psychological well-being within the student population?
- How do community engagement activities facilitate development in students and community partners?
- What is the journey of becoming a professional within the field of psychology?
- Why does criminal behaviour develop and how do offender populations cope and adjust?
- How can measuring instruments be developed and validated for cross-cultural settings?
- How can research facilitate the development and evaluation of programmes?

Staff members in the Department of Psychology

PROF KAREL ESTERHUYSE

esterkg@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: PhD, 1997

Post level / rank: Full Professor

Registration category: Research Psychologist



Overarching research theme: Development of measuring instruments in the field of Psychology.

I will co-supervise any student who wants to investigate the following themes:

- The development of new measuring instruments/questionnaires.
- Assessing the reliability and/or validity and factor structures of existing questionnaires/instruments.
- The prediction of future behaviour (academic performance, etc.).
- The role of mediators/moderators in the relationship between variables.
- The investigation of differences between groups.

Research Approach		
Quantitative ✓	Qualitative	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students ✓

PROF PAUL FOUCHÉ

fouchejp@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: D Phil, 1999

Post level / rank: Full Professor

Registration category: Counselling Psychology



Overarching research theme: Psychobiographical and psychohistorical studies

My research involves the psychological study of deceased exemplary, extraordinary, iconic, and significant personalities within a socio-historical context. These personalities may be seen as outliers or persons of historical significance who had a lasting impact on society. It entails the psychohistorical study of exemplary and sometimes controversial South Africans, as well as international figures in the fields of politics, warfare, arts, music, literature, academia, science, and leadership. Most projects are studies from a longitudinal-developmental trajectory perspective.

The research question I am interested in answering: What are the significant socio-historical and psychological factors that shaped the development and the personality of the psychobiographical subject (personality) under study?

Research Approach		
Quantitative	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students ✓

PROF ITUMELENG KHUMALO

KhumaloIP@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: PhD (Psychology), 2011

Post level / rank: Associate Professor

Registration category: Clinical Psychology



Overarching research theme: Well-being studies in Africa

Scientific interest in the study and promotion of well-being has exponentially increased since the announcement of the positive psychology movement. Especially since positive psychology has longstanding historical and philosophical roots, particularly in Aristotelian philosophy and humanistic psychology. Recently, empirical studies of well-being have been made possible by the contemporary and multidisciplinary field of positive psychology. Constructs such as positive mental health, subjective well-being, meaning, hope, motivation, intentional personal growth, and social well-being, among others, have been explored in various ways. The socio-cultural context of those living in the global North has dominated knowledge generation in this field. Therefore, the need for knowledge generation from more diverse contexts is evident.

Cross-cultural and cultural studies of well-being in Africa form my primary focus. My main concern and interest is how we understand well-being and how we may promote it across a lifespan among African people. This research interest is operationalised through a number of ways and at different levels. Therefore, the following are some of the broad areas encompassing aims and research questions, which form my research agenda within Africa(n) centred positive psychology:

- Development and validation of measuring instruments: Responsible cross-cultural transportation and adaptation of measuring tools.
- Antecedents and outcomes of optimal human functioning and well-being.
- Cultural variables which explain or account for well-being and the relationships between well-being and its determinants and outcomes.
- Statistical data analysis approaches may include: confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis, variable-based correlational analyses, mediation and moderation analysis, latent class analysis, measurement invariance, and others.

Research Approach		
Quantitative ✓	Qualitative	Mixed-Methods ✓

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students ✓

PROF LUZELLE NAUDÉ

naudel@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: PhD (Psychology), 2008

Post level / rank: Full Professor

Registration category: Counselling Psychology



Overarching research theme: “Who am I?”: Identity Development during Adolescence and Emerging adulthood

Individuals follow various pathways in order to answer the pressing question: Who am I?. This process is filled with excitement and possibility, but also challenges and contradictions. I am interested in the ways in which individuals define themselves and find their place in the world.

From a lifespan developmental perspective, the journey towards an established sense of self is present throughout life, but especially prominent during the “third decade of life” when late adolescents and emerging adults have the opportunity to reflect on the past, present and future. My research agenda includes status and narrative perspectives and is focused on the interface among identity dimensions and socio-cultural contexts (such as family, romantic relationships, social media and education), with a strong appreciation for the dynamics of diversity in the multicultural milieu of South Africa. I follow mixed-methods, quantitative and qualitative approaches when exploring topics such as intersectionality and the integration of multiple identities, transformational journeys regarding self and society, and the challenges of forming an integrated identity in contexts of change and transition.

The research questions I am interested in answering....

- How do adolescents and emerging adults define themselves? Which identity domains (gender/sexual, ethnic, career/professional, spiritual) are salient in their lives?
- What processes do individuals follow in order to resolve what Erikson called the “identity crisis? How do they explore their “possible selves” and finally commit to an integrated, but multidimensional understanding of who they are?
- How is identity development informed by contextual aspects such as friends, families, romance, higher education studies, the workplace, and social media?
- What are the challenges that individuals experience in the process of finding a sense of self?

Research Approach		
Quantitative ✓	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods ✓

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor

Available to supervise	
Master’s Students ✓	PhD Students ✓

DR EDWIN DU PLESSIS

duplesed@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: PhD (Psychology), 2012

Post level / rank: Senior Lecturer

Registration category: Clinical Psychology

Overarching research themes:

- Trauma (both present and historical) and its aftermath on victims and mental health care providers
- The interplay between trauma and well-being from a developmental life span perspective
- The utility of cognitive and behavioural processes in the treatment of trauma and its aftermath

South Africa has a marked and tragic history of violence and trauma resulting from its racial past. Violence and injuries are the second leading cause of death and lost disability-adjusted life years in South Africa. The overall injury death rate of 157.8 per 100 000 population is nearly twice the global average, and the rate of homicide of women by intimate partners is six times the global average. However, South African research in traumatology often provides a narrow perspective with an emphasis on the negative (i.e. what is or has gone wrong). Then again focusing only on the resultant pathology leads to a view of trauma that does not address issues such as strength and virtue. My research focuses primarily on trauma from a well-being perspective and its interplay with aspects such as self-regulation, coping, resilience and post-traumatic growth across the developmental life span. I utilise both qualitative and quantitative approaches in understanding these aspects.

The research questions I am interested in answering....

- How do victims of historical trauma cope with its impact and its transgenerational repercussions?
- What processes do victims of trauma follow in order to deal with its psychological impact?
- What is the psychological impact on mental health care providers of victims of trauma? How do mental health care providers navigate the negative impact of trauma work?
- Which behavioural and cognitive processes are the most effective in the treatment of trauma?

Research Approach		
Quantitative	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students

DR JACQUES JORDAAN

Jordaanj1@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: PhD (Psychology), 2015

Post level / rank: Lecturer

Registration category (if applicable): Counselling Psychology



Overarching research themes:

- **Psychological well-being of university students**
- **Coping and adjustment of offender populations**

I am currently interested in the psychological well-being of university students and I wish to establish what constructs (e.g. coping, decision-making, aggression, morality, etc.) best predicts the psychological well-being within this population.

I am also interested in research topics such as coping and adjustment amongst offender populations.

A further interest of mine entails research on the development and evaluation of programmes.

The research questions I am interested in answering....

- What are the best predictors of psychological well-being amongst university students?
- What predictors significantly contribute to the variance of correctional adjustment in male incarcerated offenders?
- Which set of predictors describe the most significant percentage of variance in coping abilities of male incarcerated offenders?

Research Approach		
Quantitative ✓	Qualitative	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students ✓

DR PRAVANI NAIDOO

naidoop@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: PhD (Psychology), 2010

Post level / rank: Lecturer

Registration category: Not applicable



Overarching research themes:

- Positive psychology
- Psychohistorical research (co-supervision)
- Community engagement and service-learning

Research project: The value of community service-learning: Psychology Honours students' and community partners' perspectives

Specific focus areas:

- Student development and well-being
- Adolescent development and well-being
- Psychohistorical research
- The value of community engagement and service-learning

Research Approach		
Quantitative	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students ✓

DR LINDI NEL

nelli@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: PhD (Psychology), 2012

Post level / rank: Lecturer

Registration category: Clinical Psychology



Overarching research theme: Becoming a psychologist – the journey.

I am currently exploring various aspects as it relate to the journey of becoming a professional within the field of psychology. This includes undergraduate and postgraduate curricula and its teachings, as well as the specific road towards registration. Additional to this research area is attachment processes as it relates to parenting practices. I prefer to work from a psychofortigenic framework – suggesting that most of these topics are explored from a ‘what works well / meaning-making’ approach rather than a ‘what goes wrong’ stance.

The research questions I am interested in answering....

- Who becomes psychologists – why and how?
- What positives are embedded in the journey of becoming a psychologist?
- Which dynamics, processes, and experiences contribute to delivering a well-rounded psychologist who can serve the South African population?
- What contributes to positive coping despite challenges such as illness / violence / poor attachment / disability, etc.?
- In considering the development in the field of attachment theory and practice and some more unique South African familial trends, where are we standing?

Research Approach		
Quantitative	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students ✓

DR NEO PULE

pulent@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: Ph.D. (Consulting Psychology)

Post level / rank: Lecturer

Registration category: Counselling Psychologist

Overarching research theme:

My focus area of interest is in and around evolving current trends such as #Fees must fall movement, leadership and capacity building amongst previously disadvantaged members of society, and transformation of Higher Education in general including psychology teaching and training. Using social psychology especially systems psychodynamics and expressive research methods such as psychosocial tools particularly social dream drawing, I explore the student leadership experience to understand the diversity and diversity dynamics in Higher Education. I adopt a social constructionism approach to explore these psychosocial dynamics and encourage curiosity through theory and application, without diminishing the learning experience of the student. Thus, my focus is on the social setting where social experiences occur.

The research questions I am interested in answering:

- What are the socio-historical-cultural and psychological factors that shape the development and personality of individuals?
- How do individuals define themselves and find their place in the world?

The main question that I am currently interested in pertains the social construction of student leadership in a South African university

Research Approach		
Quantitative	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students ✓

DR NTSOAKI FLORENCE TADI

tadinf@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: PhD (Psychology), 2011

Post level / rank: Lecturer

Registration category: Clinical Psychology



Overarching research theme: Risk and protective factors influencing well-being amongst children (6 to 17yrs).

Studies with children enable us to learn more about their development and identify effective ways to help them develop as responsible citizens with a potential of contributing positively to our society. Research shows that exposure to violence can have psychosocial and health consequences and have lasting detrimental effects on the development of children and increase their risk of becoming violent and antisocial.

Specific focus areas:

- Applying the Biopsychosocial Model to identify various factors that influence South African children's wellbeing.
- To explore and identify health risk factors so as to promote healthy behaviour amongst South African Children.

Research Approach		
Quantitative ✓	Qualitative	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students ✓

DR AYANDA KHANYE

khanyeAP@ufs.ac.za

DR MOLELEKOA KOMETSI

kometsimj@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: PhD (Psychology), 2017

Post level/rank: Lecturer

Registration category: Clinical Psychology

Overarching research themes:

Indigenous communities have a certain way of conceptualising mental illness, which is different from professionals' biopsychosocial models that are informed by their worldview. Therefore, it becomes important to investigate cultural views and understandings of mental illness. I am interested in exploring indigenous communities' constructions of mental illness and their beliefs about the causes and treatment. This includes investigating sociocultural meanings and terminology of illness of indigenous people. Furthermore, while an effort is made to provide mental health services at primary care level through community health clinics (CHCs), implementation of this initiative has been slow and it is confronted by challenges in service delivery. Access to mental healthcare, especially for rural and indigenous communities, remains a concern. I am interested to supervise research investigating the following themes:

- Mental health literacy
- Culture and mental illness
- Community mental health

Specific focus areas:

- To investigate the conceptualisation of mental illness from various populations such as the general public, traditional healers, clergies, health professionals, educators, etc.
- Help-seeking and perceived access or barriers to mental healthcare for indigenous Africans.

Research Approach		
Quantitative	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods ✓

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students ✓

MS KAREN DE VILLIERS

devilliersK@ufs.ac.za

MS ISNA KRUGER

krugeris@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: MA Counselling Psychology, 2000

Post level / rank: Lecturer

Registration category: Counselling Psychology



Overarching research themes:

- Human development
- Student learning
- Therapeutic intervention

I am currently working towards submitting a PhD proposal in the area of Acceptance and Commitment therapy.

Research Approach		
Quantitative	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students

MS PEARL TONONO

mogatleop@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: Honours in Psychology

Post level / rank: Junior Lecturer



I am currently registered for my Master's Studies.

Research Approach		
Quantitative ✓	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students

MR HENRY TAYLOR

taylorhw@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: M.Sc. (Counselling Psychology), 2003

Post level / rank: Lecturer

Registration category: Counselling Psychology



Overarching research theme:

The relationship between different variables and psychological well-being/satisfaction with life/happiness.

I am also interested in creative art therapy/expressive art therapy interventions' health and wellbeing benefits.

The research questions I am interested in answering....

My particular interest is in which factors (variables) increase (and/or decrease) people's psychological well-being/satisfaction with life/happiness, since every person strive towards well-being and/or happiness.

- Is there a relationship between variables such as coping, locus of control, spirituality, relatedness to nature, and humour and life satisfaction amongst students/emerging adults?
- Is there a relationship between personality traits (e.g., the big five) and satisfaction with life/happiness?
- Different patient populations' (lived) experiences of the effectiveness of art therapy interventions.

Research Approach		
Quantitative ✓	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students

**UFS staff affiliated with the
Department of Psychology as
supervisors**

PROF STEPHEN WALKER

walkersp@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: PhD (Psychology), 2003

Post level / rank: Associate Professor

Registration category: Counselling Psychology



Overarching research themes:

- **Cognitive and behavioural processes in sport and performance psychology**
- **Cross-cultural utility of cognitive and behavioural processes and therapies**

I have two research projects running at present. One focuses on a Relational Frame Theory (RFT) – informed analysis of how symbolic networks impact athlete and coach conceptualisations of mental toughness and peak performance in combat sports. The other explores the predictive utility of various behavioural and cognitive processes in mental toughness, athlete coping, and exercise addiction. A project exploring the psychological determinants of concussion-related return-to-play attitudes amongst rugby union players should be rolled out by mid-2018.

The research questions I am interested in answering....

- How do high performance athletes symbolically conceptualise training and performance challenges?
- What personal and contextual factors cause concussed rugby union players to return to competition despite knowledge of the consequences of playing while concussed?
- Which behavioural and cognitive processes can be manipulated in order to provide the most time-effective improvement in athletic performance?

Research Approach		
Quantitative ✓	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor ✓	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students ✓

Dr Philippa Kerr

kerrpl@ufs.ac.za

Highest Qualification: PhD (Psychology, 2017)

Post level / rank: Post-doctoral Fellow

Registration category: Not applicable

Overarching research theme:

My discipline is the social psychology of intergroup relations and conflict, and my research interests lie within race, nationality and class, and their intersections in Southern Africa. It includes the following topics (which I would be interested to supervise projects on):

- Xenophobia and migrancy.
- The changing nature of work and labour organisation, including how employees and employers organise themselves and relate to one another (e.g. domestic labour, farm labour, academic labour).
- Race and racism.
- University institutional culture, transformation, and casualisation (among staff).
- University protest.

Theoretical frameworks I favour, include:

- Discursive and rhetorical psychology
- Social identity theory
- Critical psychology
- Historical social psychology

Research Approach		
Quantitative	Qualitative ✓	Mixed-Methods

Available to act as	
Supervisor	Co-Supervisor ✓

Available to supervise	
Master's Students ✓	PhD Students
