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| **Department** | | | Operations Management | |
| **Discipline** | | | Occupational Health and Safety/Safety Management | |
| **Broad Research Focus Area** | | | **Wellbeing/competitive advantage** | |
| **Total 2024 RFA Capacity** | | | **1 Master’s** | |
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| **Supervision Team details:** | **Academic Profile** | | | **Capacity** |
| **Mr John Mashala**  Office: Prof Simon Radipere, 4-47,  Muckleneuk Ridge  Main Campus, Pretoria  Email: [mashajj@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mashajj@unisa.ac.za)  ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0975-8948>  Research ID: <http://www.ResearcherID.com> | **John Mashala** worked for 3M South Africa for 13 years in various departments. He subsequently joined Afrox where he worked for 4 years as a transport distribution planner. He further joined (TUT) Tshwane University of Technology as a Lecturer for 17 years in the Department of Operations Management. He earned his National Diploma at the then Technikon Johannesburg, B Tech Degree at Technikon Pretoria and (MTech) master’s degree in technology at TUT. John taught Production Engineering: Industrial II & Production Planning and Control I at third year level for Logistics students and Operations Management I at TUT. He is serving as a co-supervisor for M Tech Degree student in Operations Management. He was a mentor lecturer to two part-time lecturers, lecturing at BTech level. John has presented a paper in the Proceedings of the 2015 International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management Dubai, UAE, March 3 – 5, 2015. In October 2016, he presented another paper at the local conference in South Africa at (SAIIE27) South African Institute of Industrial Engineering Conference.  John together with safety team, evacuated the Faculty Management at Tshwane University of Technology in 2012. His specialization is in Disaster Management, Supply Chain Management, Ergonomics, safety management, Operations Management. | | | 1Master’s  student with team |
| **Dr Preshodan Naidoo**  Office: NSR building 4-54, main campus, Pretoria.  Email: naidoop@unisa.ac.za  ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6605-7929> | **Preshodan Naidoo** is a lecturer in the department of Operations Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). Preshodan holds a Master’s degree in Business Leadership (University of South Africa) and Doctorate in Business administration from a university abroad. His Qualifications include Honours degree in Operations management.  Dr Naidoo worked as an operations manager for five years prior to lecturing operations management at the University of Johannesburg. He joined UNISA in 2010 and has been a supervisor for honours and master modules in operations and business management. He has presented papers at peer reviewed conferences, and regularly reviewed papers for conferences, journals and textbooks.  His research focus areas are, Safety Management, Occupational Health and safety management, Workplace safety, Ergonomics, Quality and safety and Wellbeing. | | | 1 Master’s |
| **Model of supervision** | Candidates will be allocated to a supervisor but will be required to work independently within the requirements of higher degree studies. Additionally, the candidate will have to present his/her work to a panel of academics at colloquia. | | | |
| **Selection criteria: Master’s/Doctorate** | Refer to the qualification website for selection criteria. | | | |
| **Selection Procedure** | Refer to the qualification website for selection procedure. | | | |
| **Research scope** | The purpose of a firm is to (a) deliver products and services needed and wanted by its customers, at a price they are willing to pay without jeopardising the firm’s profitability; (b) provide employment to members of society; and  (c) wealth creation, which is broader than profit maximization. The purpose of a firm is expressed in terms of goals, which are achieved by ‘strategy’. Strategy is a complex concept, given its multidimensional, multileveled nature, and draws on multiple disciplines, which is continuously shaped to adapt to the ever-changing environment.  To be successful, strategy should be founded on competitive advantage, a contested concept, referring to executing value-creating activities differently from or better than rivals in attracting customers on the basis of offering valued, whether economic, functional or psychological. Competitive advantage consists of three interrelated dimensions, viz. the arena where the organisation chooses to compete, customer value and access to resources (broad sense) to provide customer value in the chosen arenas. Resources are the most important of these dimensions, of which human resources are vital given their competence (knowledge, skills, attitudes, health and wellbeing), to implement strategy and thus achieve organisational goals.  Studies investigating the strategy-formulation-implementation-performance gap show that strategy implementation fails owing to the “unavailability” of resources, particularly human resources; mainly because businesses fail to unlock human competence, that result in or increase ill-being. Hence, the research theme is “shaping competitive advantage by unlocking human competence” which centres on the competitive advantage dimension resources, and particularly human resources (employees). Human resources include the availability of the number of employees with the necessary knowledge, skills, experience, attitudes, behaviours, health (physical and mental) and wellbeing across occupations and hierarchies to provide customer value in the chosen arenas, effectively and efficiently. The mechanism to unlock human competence is dimensions of organisation to implement strategy, which facilitate coordination and cooperation, and thus concurrently manage talent and activate employee engagement, and so ensuring employee wellbeing.  Leadership plays an important role in having employees available via talent management (recruitment, development and retention of employees via a range of interventions, including development and succession planning) as well as by creating an environment fostering employee engagement. Moreover, talent management, impacts employee engagement and thus health and wellbeing of employees. Consequently, health and wellbeing play a critical role in employees being “available” to implement strategy to ensure organisational performance (i.e. goal achievement). Moreover, employee engagement is anchored in wellbeing theories, that are enabled through dimensions of organisation.  A variety of theories can be used to explain wellbeing, including Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1962), Stress (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007; Hobfoll, 1989; Karasek & Theorell, 1990), Engagement (Kahn, 1990, 1992; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova & González-Romá, 2002), Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1988) and motivational theories, including, but not limited to, Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) [SDT] to mention a few.  This brief description of the research shows that the research covers multifaceted constructs, which are multidisciplinary in nature, making it complex. In addition, the research focus area is in line with Unisa’s research niche areas, national priorities, support Africa 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals.  Excluded: functional strategies like operations strategy and competitive advantage, unrelated to unlocking human competence. | | | |
| **Reading:**  **Subject Field** | **This is a selection of articles and/or recent books in this research focus area. ‎Further reading over and above these is essential:**   1. Goetsch, D.L. (2010). *Establishing a safety-first culture in your organisation: An integrated approach for safety professionals and safety committees*. Pearson Education, Inc.: Upper Saddle River. 2. Nienaber, H., & Martins, N. (2020). Exploratory study: Determine which dimensions enhance employee engagement to improve organisational effectiveness. *The TQM Journal*, 32(3), 475-495. <doi:10.1108/TQM-05-2019-0151>. 3. Nienaber, H. (2019). [Employee engagement: Driving strategy implementation through dimensions of organisation](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-management-and-organization/article/employee-engagement-driving-strategy-implementation-through-dimensions-of-organisation/1A4A524B9E789B7C0BE45050CE32509B). *Journal of Management and Organization*, doi:10.1017/jmo.2019.22, Online first. 4. Martins, N., & Nienaber, H. (2018). The influence of time on employee engagement in the SA business environment. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management,* 67(9), 1682 – 1702, doi:10.1108/IJPPM-11-2017-0299.   Nienaber, H. (2019). Reflecting on the contemporary relevance of the forgotten management pioneers: A creative auto/biography. *Methodological Innovations,* 12(2), 1-14, doi:0.1177/2059799119863282. | | | |
| **Reading:**  **Research Methodology** | **This is a selection books on methodology. Further reading over and above these is essential:**   1. Denicolo, P. & Becker, L. (2012). *Developing research proposals.* SAGE: London. 2. Hair, [J. F. Jr.](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&text=Joe+F.+Hair+Jr.&search-alias=books&field-author=Joe+F.+Hair+Jr.&sort=relevancerank), [Celsi](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_2?ie=UTF8&text=Mary+Celsi&search-alias=books&field-author=Mary+Celsi&sort=relevancerank), M., [Money](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_3?ie=UTF8&text=Arthur+Money&search-alias=books&field-author=Arthur+Money&sort=relevancerank), A.,  [Samouel](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_4?ie=UTF8&text=Phillip+Samouel&search-alias=books&field-author=Phillip+Samouel&sort=relevancerank), P., &   [Page](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_5?ie=UTF8&text=Michael+Page&search-alias=books&field-author=Michael+Page&sort=relevancerank)  M. (2016). *The Essentials of Business Research Methods.* 3rd Edition. Routhledge: New York, New York. 3. Henning, E., Gravett, S., & Van Rensburg, W. (2005). *Finding your way in academic writing*. 2nd ed. Van Schaik: Pretoria. 4. Mouton, J. (2001). *How to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies: A South African guide and resource book*. Van Schaik: Pretoria.   Layder, D. (2012). *Doing excellent small-scale research*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, Ca. | | | |
| **Resources: Scholar community** | BMI (Business Monitor International)  CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development)  EbscoHost  Emerald  ILO (International Labor Organization)  UN (United Nations)  Resbank (South African Reserve Bank)  Stassa (Statistics South Africa)  WEF (World Economic Forum)  WHO (World Health Organization)  Wiley  WTO (World Trade Organization) | | | |
| **Potential M&D research focus area for M&D research projects** | | | | |
| **Unit of Analysis** | | **Research Focus** | | |
| **In general** | | Individuals, teams, social organisations and institutions, collectives e.g. industries and countries; processes; human actions; social interventions; concepts and or notions; scientific theories and models; scientific methods and techniques; body of scientific knowledge/literature; scientific data or statistics; schools of thought, philosophies of worldviews. | | |
| **Very specific** | | Perceptions and experiences of individuals/groups about wellbeing and its attribution to competitive advantage and organizational success.  Was the employee engagement (or work engagement) or wellbeing interventions implemented as planned; and did it cover all intended participants as planned.  Did the employee engagement (work engagement) or wellbeing intervention had the desired outcome (as planned).  The level of wellbeing in an organization  Predictors of wellbeing | | |