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| **Department** | | | Industrial and Organisational Psychology | | |
| **Discipline** | | | Industrial Psychology | | |
| **Research Focus Area** | | | Psychological measurement | | |
| **Supervision Team** | | | Prof Sonja Grobler  Prof Hartmut von der Ohe  Dr Portia Maphala | | |
| **Industrial and Organisational Psychology Departmental link:** [IOP Research Focus Areas](https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Economic-and-Management-Sciences/Schools,-departments,-bureau,-centres-&-institutes/School-of-Management-Sciences/Department-of-Industrial-and-Organisational-Psychology/IOP-Research-Focus-Areas) | | | | | |
| **Application procedure** | | | | Apply for a space in this focus area using the **formal UNISA online application procedure** outlined at <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default>.  Remember you must first apply for a **student number**. | |
| **Prof S Grobler**  Office: SR3-76  Phone: +27124298272  E-mail: [grobls@unisa.ac.za](mailto:grobls@unisa.ac.za)  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7640-9326> | **Academic Profile**  Sonja Grobleris an associate professor in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology at the University of South Africa (UNISA).  She has a Doctoral Degree in Industrial and Organisational Psychology from Unisa. She is a registered Industrial Psychologist with the HPCSA, PS **0071684.** She is lecturing postgraduate modules. She is acting as supervisor for Master and Doctorate students’ research projects. In addition, she has worked in a government organisation as an Industrial psychologist for 20 years. She has consulting experience for various organisations (public and private sectors), focussing on the fields of organisational development, psychological assessment, and assessment centres. | | | | **Capacity**  Up to 2 Master’s  Up to 1 Doctorate |
| **Prof H von der Ohe**  Email : [Vdoheh@unisa.ac.za](file:///C:\Users\maphabpm.UNISA\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\SE8RKKZ2\Vdoheh@unisa.ac.za)  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6583-5215> | Hartmut von der Ohe is an associate professor in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology. His teaching focus is on personnel psychology and ergonomics; however, his research focuses on organisational trust relationships in the context of the industrially developing world (Southern Africa). Linked to this is his research on expatriate questions in organisations and alternative models of work such as hybrid-, flexible- and venue independent work. He is also interested in the application of AI in assessment (not limited to psychological assessment). | | | | Up to 1 Masters  and 1 Doctorate. |
| **Dr BP Maphala**  Office: AJH 3-110  Tel: +27124298355  Email: maphabpm@unisa.ac.za  http://orchid.org/0000-00002-1343-1307 | Dr Maphala is a Counselling Psychologist, lecturers and supervises in the fields of managerial and organisation psychology, coaching and leadership, workforce diversity, change management and psychological assessments. She also has consulting experience for various organisations in the public and private sectors, focussing on the fields of Leadership Development, Psychological Assessments and Assessment Centres. | | | | Up to 1 Masters |
| **Model of supervision** | Students will be allocated to a supervisor for guidance but will be required to work independently within the requirements of higher degree studies. Additionally, students will be guided through online tutoring regarding:   1. Research methodology 2. Literature review 3. How to write a research proposal 4. Ethical research 5. Referencing   As part of the qualification, students will be expected to write and present a full research proposal to a panel of academics for approval, and obtain ethics clearance from the institutional ethics committee, before continuing with the actual research project. | | | | |
| **Selection criteria:**  **Masters and Doctorate** | Refer to the UNISA application website for general M&D qualification admission criteria. In addition to the admission criteria contained in the *my*Choice brochure, applicants are required to prepare:  **Masters students:** a research outline (max 5 pages) describing the following:   1. A proposed topic and motivation for the study 2. Research problem and objectives 3. A brief review of relevant literature 4. Research design: Motivation for a quantitative or qualitative study 5. Ethics considerations and access to the research context 6. List of references (use APA 7 edition referencing guidelines)   **Doctorate students:**a research outline (max 20 pages) describing the following:   1. A proposed topic and motivation for the study 2. Problem statement and research aims 3. A brief review of relevant literature 4. Research design: Motivation for:    1. a qualitative/ mixed-method choice of study    2. Research participants: Population and sampling strategy    3. Measuring instruments    4. Research procedure    5. Qualitative data analysis 5. Ethics and access to the research context 6. Envisaged contribution of the study 7. List of references (use APA 7 edition referencing guidelines)   🖝 To prepare your research outline as required above, **GO TO** the IO Psychology departmental website to **download a research outline guide**:     * **Masters students**: [IOP Department Masters degree](https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Economic-and-Management-Sciences/Schools,-departments,-bureau,-centres-&-institutes/School-of-Management-Sciences/Department-of-Industrial-and-Organisational-Psychology/Masters-degrees) * **Doctorate students:** [IOP Department Doctorate degree](https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Economic-and-Management-Sciences/Schools,-departments,-bureau,-centres-&-institutes/School-of-Management-Sciences/Department-of-Industrial-and-Organisational-Psychology/Doctoral-degrees)   🖝 On the front page indicate the relevant Research Focus Area (RFA) that you are applying for. It must be clear **HOW** your proposed study aligns with the topic and methodological focus of this RFA. | | | | |
| **Selection procedure** | In addition, minimum academic requirements, the following criteria will be applied to assess your research outline:   1. **Relevance to the Research focus area** 2. **Academic merit of the research topic**: Quality in terms of originality and impact of the topic’s reach and significance toward adults in the African/South African-located work context. Applicants must justify the research problem (in practice and in terms of existing research gaps) and the contribution of the study to advance knowledge in the field. 3. Demonstrate clarity about the **core constructs** and a fair knowledge base of the most recent research. 4. Evidence of **critical thinking**: The candidate’s skills and abilities in analysing, applying, and evaluating information. 5. **Academic writing skills:** The extent to which the research outline conveys coherent and well-developed arguments that are supported with relevant evidence; the logical sequence of paragraphs; the use of appropriate diction and sentence structures, and the use of correct grammar, punctuation, spelling and syntax. 6. **Access** to the research context and research participants | | | | |
| **Documents to support the application** | 1. **Academic Record** 2. **Proposed research outline** (max 5 pages [masters] or max 20 pages [PhD]) 3. **One-page** abbreviated **CV** including:  * Academic qualification * Work experience * Contact detail * Personal motivation for the study * Previous research completed (if any) | | | | |
| **Research scope:**  **Measurement of individual characteristics** | **The Psychological assessment research agenda focuses on addressing methodological, practice and literature gaps in the following areas:**  **Development and validation of psychometric instruments**  To adhere to the Employment Equity act (EEA) (Act 55 of 1998 amended 2014) requirements psychological assessment instruments need to be proven valid and reliable. Therefore, any newly developed psychological instrument needs to be critically analysed in this regard. Reliability, validity, bias, and equivalence studies.  **Multicultural assessment**  South Africa comprises a socially diverse society and the wide implications of cultural dynamics for psychological assessments warrant further research into the bias and fairness for various groups. Researchers need to identify significant differences cross-culturally on different psychological instruments. This has implications for the unconditional use of psychological assessments with the multicultural workforce in South Africa. Even though acceptable reliability and validity of the cross-cultural application may be reported the bias analysis in terms of cultures should also be included to ensure adherence to the EEA. Retief (1992) argues that different cultures attribute different meanings to events and situations and participants could therefore be expected to respond differently to psychological assessment measures. He believes that consistent differences that could be explained in terms of cultural factors are acceptable, especially in the personality domain. All psychological assessment instruments should have 'basic psychometric integrity' for the population(s) in which it is used. Frank (1992) also refers to the uniqueness of the psychological functioning of different socio-cultural groups.  **CTT and IRT research methodology**  Classical test theory is mostly concerned with the reliability of a test and assumes that the items within the test are sampled at random from a domain of relevant items. Items are treated as random replicates of each other and their characteristics, if examined at all, are expressed as correlations with a total test score or as factor loadings on the putative latent variable(s) of interest. Characteristics of their properties are not analysed in detail. This led to the distinction between theories of tests (Lord and Novick, 1968) and theories of items (Lord, 1952; Rasch, 1960). The so-called “New Psychometrics” (Embretson & Hershberger, 1999; Embretson & Reise, 2000; Van der Linden & Hambleton, 1997) (Item Response Theory or IRT) analyses how people respond to items.  **The use, design, and feedback processes in Developmental Assessment Centres (DAC)**  There is a huge lack of studies showing that a DAC induces/ promotes development. Some studies have focussed on feedback perceptions – the main finding being that positive feedback is accepted well, and negative feedback is met with resistance (Francis-Smythe & Smith, 1997; Woo et al., 2008). This may seem obvious, but what can we do in our DAC feedback design and training of assessors to give feedback in such a way that it is better accepted and engaged with... so that development can happen. Anseel et al. (2011) for example studies the differential effects of comparative vs criterion related feedback. There are also potential research questions relating to how the personality type of assessors and/or assessees may impact on ratings and results.  **Using e-technology in Assessment Centre**  Some research questions raised here pertain most to whether e-Assessment Centres really improve the predictive validity of Assessment Centres. No differences in results have been found with video recording role plays or telephone interviews than in conventional simulations and interviews. Yet Lievens, Van Keer and Volckaert (2010) as well as Gowing, Morris, Adler and Gold (2008) found that computer-based exercises have improved predictive validity above cognitive validity.  Other research questions raised:   * Do people respond differently to e-based Assessment Centres than to conventional Assessment Centres? * Is there potential adverse impact/ bias in e-Assessment Centres regarding age, race etc – because of different proficiency levels with technology? Any generational differences in the ability to perform in e-Assessment Centres? * The depersonalisation of e-Assessment Centres vs conventional Assessment Centres – how authentic is an e-Assessment Centre that is supposed to elicit interactive behaviour? * Do the norms of behaviour and communication differ in e-based communication versus conventional face-to-face interaction in the workplace – and what implications does this have for Assessment Centre design?   **Cultural influences in the design and practice of Assessment Centres**  Multicultural Assessment Centres seem to become more and more pertinent because of the fact that Assessment Centres operate across countries due to multinational firms’ selection and development procedures. There seem to be several theoretical publications about how culture may affect Assessment Centre results (Berthnal & Lanik, 2010). Two empirical studies by Melchers & Annon (2010) and Lievens and Van Keer (2005) do not compare well to the South African context because they are based on very subtle cultural differences in their samples. Some interesting questions include potential generational differences (especially in terms of technology use) that permeate across cultures. There is also the interesting issue of how the interaction effect of assessors’ vs assessees’ culture/ race/ language/ generation, impacts on Assessment Centre results. Nisbett & Miyamoto (2005) and Norenzayon et al. (2007) have studied how thinking style differences affect assessor judgement processes. Assessors clearly observe, analyse, and interpret behaviour differently – what are the causes of these differences?  **Assessment centre validation studies**  Assessment Centre construct validity debates gave rise to two camps task-based vs exercise-based Assessment Centres. This has now led to a more integrative view by some proposing a mixed-method approach in which data from both exercises and dimensions are used to better understand behaviour. The mixed method approach is still difficult to operationalise and no South African research regarding this has yet been published. | | | | |
| **Reading:**  **Subject Field** | **This is a selection of open-access articles in this research focus area that you can access online on Google Scholar.**  Amen U (2010). Assessment centre as an effective tool to select the potential candidate for future management needs of an organisation. Interdis. J. Contemp. Res. Bus. 2(2): 134-143.  Arthur, W., Day, E.A. & Woehr, D.J. (2008). Mend it, don’t end it: an alternate view of assessment center construct-related validity evidence. *Industrial and Organisational Psychology, 1*(1), 105-111.  Cooper-Thomas, H.D., Van Vianen, A.E.M., and Anderson, N. (2004), ‘Changes in Person-Organization Fit: The Impact of Socialization Tactics on Perceived and Actual P-O Fit,’ *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 13, 52–78.  Cullen, J., Victor, J.B. & Bronson, J.W. (1993). The Ethical Climate Questionnaire: An Assessment of its Development and Validity. *Psychological Reports*, 73, 667–674.  Dean MA, Roth PL, Bobko P (2008). Ethnic and gender subgroup differences in assessment centre ratings: A meta-analysis. J. Appl. Psychol. 93(3): 685-691.  Fleenor JW (1996). Constructs and developmental assessment centres: Further troubling empirical findings. J. Bus. Psychol. 10(3): 319-334.  Grobler, S. & De Beer, M. (2015). Psychometric evaluation of the Basic Traits Inventory in the multilingual South African environment. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 25 (1), 50-55.  Hanges, P. J. & Dickson, M. W. (2004). *The development and validation of the GLOBE culture and leadership scales*. In R. J. House P. J. Hanges M. Javidan P. W.  Dorfman, & V. Gupta (Eds.), Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies, 1, 205−218. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage  Howard, A. (2008). Making assessment centres work the way they are supposed to. *Industrial and Organisational Psychology, 1*(1), 98-104.  Jones RG, Born M (2008). Assessor constructs in use as the missing component in validation of assessment center dimensions: a critique and directions for research. Int. J. Select. Assess. 16(3): 229-238.  Kleinmann M, Ingold PV, Lievens F, Jansen A, Melchers KG, Konig CJ (2011). A different look at why selection procedures work: the role of candidates’ ability to identify criteria. Organis. Psychol. Rev. 1(2): 128-146.  Lance, C.E. (2008). Why assessment centers do not work the way they are supposed to. *Industrial and Organisational Psychology, 1*, 84-97.  Lievens, F. (2008). What does exercise-based assessment really mean? *Industrial and Organisational Psychology, 1*(1), 112-115.  Manetjie, O & Martins, N. (2009). The relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment. *South African Business Review* 13(10): 87–111.  Martins, N. and von der Ohe, H. (2006). Detecting sub-cultures in an organisation, *South African Business Review*, 10 (2), pp. 130-149.  Naidoo, P., & Martins, N. (2014). Investigating the relationship between organisational culture and work engagement. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, Volume 12, Issue 4  Nienaber, H., & Martins, N. (2014). An Employee Engagement Instrument and Framework Building on Existing Research. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences,* Vol 5 No 20,September. Doi:10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n20p485  Nienaber, H., & Martins, N. (2015). Validating a scale measuring engagement in a South African context. *Journal of Contemporary Management.* Article JCM 12-08*.*  Paterson, H. & Uys, K. (2005). Critical issues in psychological test use in the South African workplace. SA *Journal of Industrial Psychology, 31*(3), 12-22.  Rupp, D.E. & Thornton, G.C. & Gibbons, A.M. (2008). The construct validity of the assessment center method and usefulness of dimensions as focal constructs. *Industrial and Organisational Psychology, 1*(1), 116-120.  Schwepker, C. H. (2001). Ethical climate's relationship to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention in the sales force. *Journal of Business Research*, 54(1), 39-52.  Smith, A., Organ D. W. & Near J. (1983). Organizational citizenship behavior: Its nature and antecedents. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68(4), 653-663.  Thornton GC, Krause DE (2009). Selection versus development assessment centers: an international survey of design, execution, and evaluation. Int. J. Hum. Res. Manage. 20(2): 478-498.  Victor, J.B. & Cullen, J. (1988). ‘The Organizational Bases of Ethical Work Climates’, *Administrative Science Quarterly* 33, 101–125. | | | | |
| **Reading:**  **Research Methodology** | Arthur W, Woehr DJ (2003). The construct-related validity of assessment centre ratings: A review and meta-analysis of methodological factors. J. Manage. 29(2): 231-258.  Arthur W, Woehr DJ, Maldegen R (2000). Convergent and discrimination validity of assessment centre dimensions: A conceptual and empirical re-examination of the assessment centre construct-related validity paradox. J. Manage. 26(4): 813-835.  Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2009). *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University.  Campbell DT, Fiske DW (1959). Convergent and discriminant validation by the multitrait-multimethod matrix. Psychol. Bulletin. 56(2): 81-105.  Gaugler BB, Rosenthal DB, Thornton GC, Bentson C (1987). Meta-analysis of assessment centre validity. J. Appl. Psychol. 72(3): 493-51.  Greyling, L., Visser, D. & Fourie, L. (2003). Construct validity of competency dimensions in a team leader assessment centre. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology, 29*(2), 10-19. | | | | |
| **Resources: Scholar community** | Assessment Centre Study Group (ACSG): [www.ascg.co.za](http://www.ascg.co.za)  International Test Commission (ITC): [www.intestcom.org](file:///C:\Users\barnaha\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\6K8V70J0\www.intestcom.org)  People Assessment in Industry (PAI): [www.pai.org.za](file:///C:\Users\barnaha\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\6K8V70J0\www.pai.org.za)  Journal of Psychology in Africa: [www.ajol.info/index.php/jp](file:///C:\Users\barnaha\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\6K8V70J0\www.ajol.info\index.php\jp)  South African Journal of Industrial Psychology: [www.sajip.co.za](http://www.sajip.co.za)  South African Journal of Human Resources Management: [www.sajhrm.co.za](http://www.sajhrm.co.za)  Society of Industrial and Organisational Psychology South Africa (SIOPSA): [www.siopsa.org.za](http://www.siopsa.org.za) | | | | |
| **Potential M&D research focus areas or research projects**  To be directed by sound literature review as well as availability of research context, participants and data. | | | | | |
| **Unit of Analysis** | | **Research Focus** | | | |
| **Individual characteristics** | | Enhancing psychological assessment as an ethical practice in South Africa | | | |
| Analysing moderating factors to psychological assessment e.g. multiculturalism | | | |