

Editorial Note

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Description

This is the third issue of the African Journal of Information Science, Fine Arts, and Speech Studies (AJISFASS), which aims to showcase research in Information Science, Fine Arts, and Speech Studies. The journal strives to foster integration among these three distinct disciplines and promote ongoing multidisciplinary dialogue. This issue presents diverse perspectives from across Africa on topics related to these fields. Many manuscripts were submitted for consideration; however, not all could be included due to factors such as readiness and relevance. As usual, the journal follows a double-blind and open peer review process, resulting in the publication of five outstanding manuscripts in this issue.

The five articles in this collection offer a compelling, though seemingly diverse, glimpse into contemporary academic research. The first article investigates the cultural, functional, and symbolic significance of indigenous artifacts and foods among the Basotho ba Leboa, examining their value for community life and formal education. Using qualitative document analysis informed by Sociocultural Theory (SCT), the study shows that items such as clothing, utensils, and traditional foods function as mediational tools through which identity, social values, ecological knowledge, and communal responsibilities are transmitted. Their continued use reflects cultural practices that sustain social cohesion and promote a sense of belonging. Also, recommends strengthening

documentation, incorporating curricular inclusion, and enhancing teacher preparation to support cultural continuity.

The second article sought to explore the role of Indigenous African Knowledge Systems (IAKSs) in decolonizing education and promoting epistemic justice in Zimbabwe's tertiary education system. The study reveals that IAKSs have been marginalized in both the colonial and postcolonial eras. IAKSs are integral to the decolonization of education, the promotion of epistemic justice, and the fostering of innovation. There is a need to promote epistemic justice by granting IAKSs the same status as other global knowledge systems. By embracing IAKSs, educational institutions can create more inclusive, equitable, and innovative learning environments that reflect Africa's rich cultural heritage and intellectual traditions.

The third article demonstrates that the age of digital transformation is reconstituting community engagement in South African HEIs as a complex, data-intensive, networked, and reflexive praxis – one that simultaneously expands the possibilities for virtualized, evidence-based, and co-produced knowledge ecosystems, redefines monitoring, evaluation, and feedback regimes, and surfaces both enduring structural inequities and emergent digital constraints that HEIs and communities must critically negotiate to ensure inclusive, ethical, and socially responsive engagement. In recommendation, South African HEIs are encouraged to invest in digital infrastructure and platforms; implement capacity-building programs for digital literacy and innovation within HEIs and among community stakeholders involved in community engagement co-creative knowledge networks; adopt and implement community engagement-specific ICT and digitalization policies; fully utilize digital tools to integrate indigenous knowledge systems into community engagement initiatives to prevent epistemic marginalization; and build resilient and future-ready institutional cultures through continuous awareness programs on digital transformation.

Fourthly, this paper has demonstrated that Traditional Knowledge (TK) protection in Africa is marked by legislative fragmentation, conceptual misalignment between existing IP regimes and TK's communal nature, and inadequate information governance infrastructure. Nigeria's reliance on indirect IP instruments and regulatory bodies is insufficient; Zimbabwe's constitutional recognition has not been comprehensively operationalized; South Africa's 2019 Act is the regional benchmark but still faces implementation limitations. The paper has argued for a *sui generis* framework that is community-centered, knowledge-type-sensitive,

ethically documented, and continentally harmonized. Such a framework must go beyond asserting legal rights to establishing the information governance infrastructure, comprising community databases, consent protocols, tiered access systems, benefit-sharing mechanisms, and indigenous data sovereignty principles, that render those rights practically enforceable.

Lastly, this paper argues that South Africa's digital public sector reform agenda remains constrained by an overreliance on digital literacy as the dominant framing of capability development. Drawing on international and South African scholarship and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) reports, the analysis demonstrates that while digital literacy enables basic access to digital systems, it does not equip SOEs with the institutional capacity to design, govern, integrate, and sustain complex digital infrastructures. The persistence of underutilized platforms, manual workarounds, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and vendor dependence across South African SOEs reflects a deeper absence of applied digital capability rather than a lack of technology or awareness. This study advances a nuanced understanding of digital capability as a practice-embedded, governance-oriented, and culturally situated asset by emphasizing key concepts beyond digital craft literacy, including digital craft competence, fluency, and dexterity. In conclusion, the information science discipline further contributes to the discovery of indigenous knowledge artifacts, African indigenous knowledge systems, traditional knowledge, digital transformation, and digital literacy capabilities across different contexts.