

## **SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **Report by the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee**

Tracy Geraldine Beck (Nelson Mandela University)

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#### **Section A: Brief overview of review process and accepted papers per institution**

Overall, 69 submissions have been accepted for presentation at the conference of which 19 are full papers that will be included in the conference proceedings (Peer Reviewed Track) and 50 are Work-in-Progress Track submissions (extended structured abstract).

#### **Peer-Reviewed Track (PRT): Refereed category**

Out of the 41 papers submitted to the ‘refereed category’ (Peer Reviewed Track), 19 papers have been accepted for inclusion in the conference proceedings (representing 46% acceptance). The authors of those papers that were rejected were given the opportunity to present their papers in the ‘non-refereed category’ submission section (Work-in-Progress Track, extended structured abstract) to gain further valuable input at the conference from their peers in order to improve their papers. This is in line with the SAAA’s mission to foster a strong research culture and to create research opportunities. Three papers were transferred to the Work-in-Progress Track, 11 papers were withdrawn by the authors, two papers were withdrawn by the subject representatives for various reasons and a total of six papers were rejected.

All papers submitted for the ‘refereed category’ (Peer Reviewed Track) were subjected to a rigorous process of double-blind peer review. The papers were submitted to two reviewers for review for each submission. Overall, the review process was facilitated by 11 Subject Representatives (SAAA Extended Executive Committee) and 118 reviewers (Peer Reviewed Track and Work-in-Progress Track). The accepted papers were contributed by academics representing several universities. The details of the 19 accepted ‘refereed track’ papers are as follows (weighted according to author affiliation):

| <b>SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES/ENTITIES</b> |              |                |
|--|--------------|----------------|
| Cape Peninsula University of Technology    | 1.83         | 9.63%          |
| Central University of Technology           | 0.50         | 2.63%          |
| North-West University                      | 0.25         | 1.32%          |
| University of Cape Town                    | 1.50         | 7.89%          |
| University of Johannesburg                 | 2.00         | 10.53%         |
| University of Pretoria                     | 1.67         | 8.79%          |
| University of the Free State               | 1.25         | 6.58%          |
| University of the Witwatersrand            | 7.17         | 37.74%         |
| University of the Western Cape             | 1.00         | 5.26%          |
| <b>OTHER UNIVERSITIES/ENTITIES</b>         |              |                |
| Leeds University                           | 0.33         | 1.74%          |
| Universidade de São Paulo                  | 1.00         | 5.26%          |
| University of Western Australia            | 0.50         | 2.63%          |
| <b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PAPERS</b>              | <b>19.00</b> | <b>100.00%</b> |

The table below summarises the 19 accepted peer review track according to the subject area:

| <b>SUBJECT</b>                   | <b>LABEL</b> | <b>NUMBER OF PRESENTATIONS</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Financial Accounting & Reporting | FAR          | 3                              |
| Auditing (including Governance)  | AUD          | 6                              |
| Accounting Education             | EDU          | 3                              |
| Management Accounting & Finance  | MAF          | 3                              |
| Taxation                         | TAX          | 4                              |
| <b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PAPERS</b>    |              | <b>19.00</b>                   |

### **Work-in-Progress Track (WIP)**

Out of the 68 extended abstracts submitted to the ‘non-refereed category’ section (Work-in-Progress Track), 47 of these submissions will be presented at the conference as Work-in-Progress papers. Seven papers in this category were rejected, five authors withdrew their submission, and nine papers were withdrawn by the subject representatives for several reasons. In addition, three papers were transferred from the Peer Review Track; thus, a total of 50 papers will be presented on the Work-in-Progress Track. All papers submitted in this category were blind reviewed. It is worth noting that only the extended abstracts were reviewed for this category.

The accepted Work-in-Progress submissions were contributed by academics representing several universities/entities. The details on the 50 accepted submissions are as follows (weighted according to author affiliation):

| <b>SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES/ENTITIES</b>                               |      |
|--|------|
| Mangosuthu University of Technology                                      | 1.00 |
| Nelson Mandela University  | 2.00 |
| North-West University  | 2.80 |
| Stellenbosch University  | 2.33 |
| Tshwane University of Technology   | 0.50 |
| University of Cape Town  | 9.31 |
| University of Johannesburg   | 2.00 |
| University of KwaZulu-Natal  | 1.00 |
| University of Limpopo  | 4.00 |
| University of Pretoria   | 8.59 |
| University of South Africa   | 1.67 |
| University of the Free State   | 1.00 |
| University of the Western Cape   | 0.58 |
| University of the Witwatersrand  | 1.50 |
| University of Zululand   | 1.00 |
| Varsity College  | 1.00 |
| Walter Sisulu University   | 1.00 |
| <b>OTHER UNIVERSITIES/ENTITIES</b>                                       |      |
| Canisius College (United States)   | 0.25 |
| Covenant University (Nigeria)  | 0.06 |
| Ghent University (Belgium)   | 0.13 |
| IESEG School of Management (France)                                      | 0.06 |
| International Medical University (Malaysia)                              | 0.06 |
| Krakow University of Economics (Poland)                                  | 0.50 |
| Lakehead University (Cayman Islands)                                     | 0.06 |
| Monash University (Australia)  | 0.06 |
| Northeastern University D'Amore-McKim School of Business (United States) | 0.99 |
| Northern Illinois University (United States)                             | 0.06 |
| Sri Sri University (India)   | 0.06 |
| Tampere University (Finland)   | 0.67 |
| Temple University (United States)  | 0.06 |
| Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil)                                       | 1.00 |
| University of Auckland (New Zealand)                                     | 0.66 |
| University of Cape Coast (Ghana)   | 0.06 |
| University of Edinburgh (Scotland)                                       | 1.00 |
| University of Greenwich (United Kingdom)                                 | 0.06 |
| University of Konstanz (Germany)   | 0.33 |
| University of Lincoln (United Kingdom)                                   | 0.06 |
| University of Lodz (Poland)  | 0.50 |
| University of Montpellier (France)                                       | 0.25 |
| University of Oklahoma (United States)                                   | 0.25 |

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <b>OTHER UNIVERSITIES/ENTITIES</b>          |              |
| University of Western Australia (Australia) | 1.00         |
| University of York (United Kingdom)         | 0.50         |
| <b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PAPERS</b>               | <b>50.00</b> |

The table below summarises the 50 accepted abstracts according to the subject area:

| <b>SUBJECT</b>                                     | <b>LABEL</b> | <b>NUMBER OF PRESENTATIONS</b> |
|--|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Accounting Education                               | EDU          | 19                             |
| Auditing (including Governance)                    | AUD          | 4                              |
| Financial Accounting & Reporting                   | FAR          | 11                             |
| Management Accounting and Finance                  | MAF          | 6                              |
| Public Sector Accounting and Non-Profit Accounting | PSN          | 3                              |
| Taxation   | TAX          | 7                              |
| <b>TOTAL NUMBER OF WIP SUBMISSIONS</b>             |              | <b>50</b>                      |

## Section B: Executive Committee Subject Representatives and Reviewers (All Tracks)

The review process was facilitated by 11 Subject Representatives (SAAA Extended Executive Committee) and 118 reviewers. This section acknowledges the aforementioned.

| <b>ACCOUNTING EDUCATION SUBJECT REPRESENTATIVE:</b> |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Prof Gretha Steenkamp (Stellenbosch University)     |                                  |
| Mr Tarish Jagwanth (Nelson Mandela University)      |                                  |
| <b>Reviewer</b>                                     | <b>Institution</b>               |
| Alet Terblanche                                     | University of Pretoria           |
| Andrea Govender                                     | Nelson Mandela University        |
| Anne Soldat   | University of Zululand           |
| Annelien Van Rooyen                                 | University of South Africa       |
| Carley Chetty                                       | University of Johannesburg       |
| Clarissa Grondt                                     | Nelson Mandela University        |
| Cobus Rossouw                                       | University of the Free State     |
| Elmarie Papageorgiou                                | University of the Witwatersrand  |
| Farmidah Khan                                       | Nelson Mandela University        |
| Gary Marques  | University of the Witwatersrand  |
| Hamman Schoonwinkel                                 | Stellenbosch University          |
| Herman Viviers                                      | North-West University            |
| Ilse Lubbe  | University of Cape Town          |
| Jacqui Kew  | University of Cape Town          |
| Janet West  | University of Johannesburg       |
| Jayde Van Staden                                    | Institute of Accounting Sciences |
| Juan Ontong   | Stellenbosch University          |
| Kudzai Matiashe                                     | University of the Witwatersrand  |
| Lee-Anne Macpherson                                 | Nelson Mandela University        |
| Lilian Nwosu  | North-West University            |
| Lorelle De Villiers                                 | Nelson Mandela University        |
| Lungelo Ngobese                                     | Stellenbosch University          |
| Lynn Schoeman                                       | Nelson Mandela University        |
| Magon Gajewski                                      | University of Cape Town          |
| Mareli Rossouw                                      | Stellenbosch University          |
| Mari Patterson                                      | Stellenbosch University          |
| Mariam Bardien                                      | University of Cape Town          |
| Michelle de Bruyn                                   | Stellenbosch University          |
| Mojalefa Mosala                                     | University of the Witwatersrand  |
| Nikki Schonfeldt                                    | University of Western Australia  |
| Riley Carpenter                                     | University of Cape Town          |
| Segopotje Malatji                                   | University of Johannesburg       |
| Shagaran Rathnasamy                                 | University of KwaZulu-Natal      |
| Sher Fourie   | Stellenbosch University          |
| Sophia Brink  | Stellenbosch University          |
| Sybil Smit  | Stellenbosch University          |

**ACCOUNTING EDUCATION SUBJECT REPRESENTATIVE:**

Prof Gretha Steenkamp (Stellenbosch University)

Mr Tarish Jagwanth (Nelson Mandela University)

| Reviewer          | Institution            |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Thandekile Koza   | University of Limpopo  |
| Theresa Van Oordt | University of Pretoria |

**AUDITING SUBJECT REPRESENTATIVES:**

Dr Léandi Steenkamp (Central University of Technology)

Mr Mvelo Siyaya (Cape Peninsula University of Technology)

| Reviewer             | Institution                             |
|----------------------|---|
| Amos Zungu           | Durban University of Technology         |
| Anthony Ezeonwuka    | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Beatah Sibanda       | North-West University                   |
| Blanche Steyn        | University of Pretoria                  |
| Brenda Poee          | University of Pretoria                  |
| Charmaine Lathleiff  | University of KwaZulu Natal             |
| Deroul Chauke        | Nelson Mandela University               |
| Ezelda Swanepoel     | University of Cape Town                 |
| Inga Sityata         | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Janine Christian     | Nelson Mandela University               |
| Juan-Pierré Bruwer   | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Kato Plant           | University of Pretoria                  |
| Lanise van der Burgh | University of Pretoria                  |
| Lise Botha           | University of Western Cape              |
| Mario Labuschagne    | Nelson Mandela University               |
| Mojalefa Mosala      | University of the Witwatersrand         |
| Nirupa Padia         | University of the Witwatersrand         |
| Taurayi Nyagope      | Nelson Mandela University               |
| Warren Maroun        | University of the Witwatersrand         |
| Wendy Terblanche     | University of Fort Hare                 |

**FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING & REPORTING SUBJECT REPRESENTATIVES:**

Dr Elaine Rabin (Institute of Accounting Science)

Prof Joseph Akande (Walter Sisulu University)

| Reviewer         | Institution                     |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Adebiyi Adeyanju | Walter Sisulu University        |
| Ahmed Adekunle   | Kwara State University          |
| Anna-Retha Smit  | University of Pretoria          |
| Carley Chetty    | University of Johannesburg      |
| Denice Pretorius | University of Pretoria          |
| Elsabé Kilian    | Nelson Mandela University       |
| Frank Matenda    | University of KwaZulu-Natal     |
| Gretha Steenkamp | Stellenbosch University         |
| Haruna Maama     | Durban University of Technology |
| Jade Jansen      | University of the Western Cape  |

**FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING & REPORTING SUBJECT REPRESENTATIVES:**

Dr Elaine Rabin (Institute of Accounting Science)

Prof Joseph Akande (Walter Sisulu University)

| <b>Reviewer</b>                      | <b>Institution</b>              |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Karen Odendaal                       | University of the Witwatersrand |
| Kayleigh Greenslade                  | University of the Witwatersrand |
| Laryssa Cristhina Batista De Freitas | Universidade de São Paulo       |
| Mandie Adriaanse                     | Nelson Mandela University       |
| Mao Li                               | University of Edinburgh         |
| Maryka Henning                       | University of Pretoria          |
| Michael Moswatsi                     | University of Limpopo           |
| Mpulana Lamola                       | University of Limpopo           |
| Sapho Gwadiso                        | University of Cape Town         |
| Vanessa Gregory                      | University of KwaZulu Natal     |
| Wayne van Zyl                        | University of the Witwatersrand |

**MANAGERIAL ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE SUBJECT REPRESENTATIVES:**

Ms Andrea Govender (Nelson Mandela University)

Prof Reon Matemane (University of Pretoria)

| <b>Reviewer</b>                 | <b>Institution</b>              |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Elda Du Toit                    | University of Pretoria          |
| Alastair Marais                 | University of KwaZulu-Natal     |
| Ferina Marimuthu                | Durban University of Technology |
| George Nel                      | Stellenbosch University         |
| Rayghana Abrahams               | Nelson Mandela University       |
| Taurayi Nyagope                 | Nelson Mandela University       |
| Ewayne Le Roux                  | Nelson Mandela University       |
| Avani Sebastian                 | University of the Witwatersrand |
| Francois Torien                 | University of Cape Town         |
| Carlos de Jesus                 | University of Cape Town         |
| Shaun Watson                    | University of the Free State    |
| Carla Serfontein                | University of the Free State    |
| Nomanyano Primrose Mnyaka-Rulwa | Walter Sisulu University        |
| Godfrey Marozva                 | University of South Africa      |
| Sanlie Middelberg               | North-West University           |

**PUBLIC SECTOR SUBJECT REPRESENTATIVES:**

Prof Onesmus Ayaya (University of Limpopo)

| <b>Reviewer</b>     | <b>Institution</b>              |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Andries Swanepoel   | University of South Africa      |
| Ewayne Le Roux      | Nelson Mandela University       |
| Gibson Nyirenda     | University of Limpopo           |
| Hamman Schoonwinkel | Stellenbosch University         |
| Jan van Romburgh    | North-West University           |
| Kayleigh Burnham    | University of the Witwatersrand |

**TAXATION SUBJECT REPRESENTATIVES:**

Ms Tsireledzo Nemudzudzanyi (University of the Witwatersrand)

Ms Lizel Bester (Nelson Mandela University)

| <b>Reviewer</b>      | <b>Institution</b>              |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Amanda Singleton     | Nelson Mandela University       |
| Andrea van der Merwe | Stellenbosch University         |
| Annette Becker       | University of South Africa      |
| Ayesha Le Roux       | Boston City Campus              |
| Boela Swanepoel      | University of South Africa      |
| Danie Schutte        | North-West University           |
| Edward Horn          | Rhodes University               |
| Elizabeth Stack      | Rhodes University               |
| Farmidah Khan        | Nelson Mandela University       |
| Herman Viviers       | North-West University           |
| Jane Ndlovu          | University of the Witwatersrand |
| Jennifer Roeleveld   | University of South Africa      |
| Kemira Esterhuizen   | University of Johannesburg      |
| Khodani Sengwane     | University of Pretoria          |
| Lindiwe Mangisa      | Nelson Mandela University       |
| Mike Masia           | University of South Africa      |
| Muneer Hassan        | University of Johannesburg      |
| Naledi Nkhi          | University of the Witwatersrand |
| Phatsimo Moroeng     | University of the Witwatersrand |
| Phillip de Jager     | University of Cape Town         |
| Richard Poole        | Rhodes University               |
| Riley Carpenter      | University of Cape Town         |
| Shaun Parsons        | University of Cape Town         |
| Siphamandla Makhaya  | University of Johannesburg      |
| Taryn Adams          | University of Cape Town         |
| Wavhudi Ndou         | Rhodes University               |



## **Section C: Best Paper Awards**

Authors competed for best paper awards in all three the tracks of the conference, namely:

- **Peer Reviewed Track: Refereed** (included in the conference proceedings)
- **Work-in-progress Track: Non-refereed** (not included in the conference proceedings)

For both track submissions, best paper awards were nominated by reviewers, the final decisions were made by independent members.

Section D:

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS – DETAILED PROGRAMME**

| <b>Concurrent Session 1 (Wednesday, 25 June 2025)</b> |   |   |  |  |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Venue</b>  | <b>Hall A &amp; B</b>   | <b>Venue 7</b>  | <b>Venue 8</b>   | <b>Venue 9</b>   | <b>Venue 10</b>   | <b>Venue 11</b>  |
| <b>Session Chair</b>                                  | Tarish Jagwanth (NMU)   | Juan Ontong (SU)  | Andrea Govender (NMU)  | Lizel Bester (NMU)   | Onesmus Ayaya (UL)  | Mvelo Siyaya (CPUT)  |
| <b>Track / Theme</b>                                  | <b>Peer Review Track: Accounting Education</b>  | <b>Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education</b>   | <b>Work-in-Progress: Financial Management</b>  | <b>Peer Review Track: Taxation</b>   | <b>Work-in-Progress: Public Sector Accounting and Non-Profit Accounting</b>   | <b>Peer Review Track: Auditing</b>   |
| 13h30-14h00   | Ilse Lubbe and Nikki Schönfeldt.<br><b>The effectiveness of ChatGPT to support threshold concepts knowledge in financial accounting – An exploratory study [27]</b> | Riley Carpenter and Lily Roos.<br><b>The relationship between financial aid and on-time degree completion for accounting students at the University of Cape Town [84]</b> | Itumeleng Molala and Gibson Nyirenda.<br><b>The influence of sustainability capital on firm profitability: evidence from selected JSE-listed mining and manufacturing Firms [50]</b> | Siphesihle Monyatsi and Phatsimo Moroeng.<br><b>Unpacking the South African carbon tax: Is the carbon tax achieving its desired goals and outcomes? [52]</b> | Shelly Herbert and Ewayne Le Roux.<br><b>How green is the Cape? Assessing sustainability reporting among Western Cape Municipalities [67]</b> | Jannie Pieters, Marina Kirstein and Juan-Pierré Bruwer.<br><b>Conceptualising “Added Value” and its association with the internal audit value proposition [33]</b>   |
| <b>Session Chair</b>                                  | Tarish Jagwanth (NMU)   | Juan Ontong (SU)  | Andrea Govender (NMU)  | Lizel Bester (NMU)   | Joseph Akande (WSU)   | Mvelo Siyaya (CPUT)  |
| <b>Track / Theme</b>                                  | <b>Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education</b>   | <b>Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education</b>   | <b>Peer Review Track: Financial Management</b>   | <b>Work-in-Progress: Taxation</b>  | <b>Work-in-Progress: Financial Accounting</b>   | <b>Work-in-Progress: Auditing</b>  |
| 14h00-14h30   | Bernice Beukes, Ana Tome Klock and Juho Hamari.<br><b>The learning resources conundrum, does more mean better? [64]</b>   | Magon Gajewski and Jacqueline Dean.<br><b>Academic eligibility requirements in accounting courses: Are we honouring their intended purpose? [74]</b>                      | Carlos De Jesus, Duran Reddy and Gizelle Willows.<br><b>Does CFO age and management ownership affect the leverage of industrial JSE listed firms? [109]</b>                          | Herman Viviers.<br><b>Are No and Nil values the same? A search for tax treatment certainty and simplicity [102]</b>  | Mao Li, Wenxuan Hou and Woon Sau Leung.<br><b>Cultural narratives and corporate misconduct: Evidence from folklores [51]</b>                  | Joanna Krasodomska and Ewelina Zarzycka.<br><b>Statutory auditors as providers of mandatory sustainability reporting assurance under the corporate sustainability reporting directive: Insights from institutional logics [26]</b> |

| Concurrent Session 1 (Wednesday, 25 June 2025) |  |  |   |   |  |  |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| Venue  | Hall A & B   | Venue 7  | Venue 8   | Venue 9   | Venue 10   | Venue 11   |
| Session Chair                                  | Veruschka Pelser-Carstens (NWU)  | Rolien Kunz (UP)   | Andrea Govender (NMU)   | Madeleine Stiglingh (UP)  | Lourens Erasmus (UNISA)  | JP Bruwer (CPUT)   |
| Track / Theme                                  | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education   | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education   | Work-in-Progress: Financial Management  | Peer Review Track: Taxation   | Work-in-Progress: Financial Accounting   | Peer Review Track: Auditing  |
| 14h30-15h00                                    | Janét West.<br><b>Accounting education for an uncertain world: The importance of powerful knowledge</b> [91]   | Alet Terblanche, Annelien Van Rooyen and Prince Enwereji.<br><b>Distance learning accounting students' attitudes and perceptions toward academic misconduct in online assessments</b> [37] | Shaun Watson.<br><b>When the numbers change: Medium to long-term share price performance of JSE-listed companies</b> [30] | Muneer Hassan and Siphamandla Makhaya.<br><b>A comparative analysis of capital allowances for foundations and structures of permanent nature for plant and machinery for small business corporations</b> [25] | Eduardo da Silva Flores, Douglas Augusto de Paula and Raquel Wille Sarquis.<br><b>The adoption of IFRS 9 and the effect on cash flow hedge accounting: An international perspective</b> [49] | Alfred Möller, Blanche Steyn and Brenda Poee.<br><b>The assurance role of internal auditors in environmental, social, governance and sustainability reporting</b> [81] |
| Session Chair                                  | Veruschka Pelser-Carstens (NWU)  | Rolien Kunz (UP)   | Joseph Akande (WSU)   | Madeleine Stiglingh (UP)  | Lourens Erasmus (UNISA)  |  |
| Track / Theme                                  | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education   | Work-in-Progress: Financial Accounting   | Peer Review Track: Financial Accounting   | Work-in-Progress: Taxation  | Work-in-Progress: Financial Accounting   |  |
| 15h00-15h30                                    | Madelyn Cloete, Astrid Schmulian and Stephen Coetzee.<br><b>The potential of a student loyalty programme to enhance student motivation, participation and active engagement</b> [43] | Vanessa Gregory.<br><b>Uncovering integrated reporting protocols for JSE listed companies</b> [62]   | Nonhlanhla Kunene, Kayleigh Greenslade and Gary Marques.<br><b>A post-implementation review of IFRS 16: leases</b> [68]   | Taryn Adams and Shaun Parsons.<br><b>Alternatives to the proposed taxation of retirement fund interests on emigration from South Africa</b> [34]  | Denice Pretorius and Tim Rupert.<br><b>Capital allocation decisions using integrated reports instead of financial reports – An eye-tracking study</b> [38]                                   |  |

| Concurrent Session 2 (Thursday, 26 June 2025) |  |  |   |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| Venue   | Hall A & B   | Venue 7  | Venue 8   | Venue 9   | Venue 10   | Venue 11   |
| Session Chair                                 | Riley Carpenter (UCT)  | Alet Terblanche (UP)   | Shaun Watson (UFS)  | Herman Viviers (NWU)  | Onesmus Ayaya (UL)   | Lise Botha (UWC)   |
| Track / Theme                                 | Peer Review Track: Accounting Education  | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education   | Work-in-Progress: Financial Management  | Peer Review Track: Taxation   | Work-in-Progress: Public Sector Accounting and Non-Profit Accounting   | Peer Review Track: Auditing  |
| 11h0-11h30                                    | Precious Nkosi and Monique Keevy. <b>Thuthuka students' online learning experiences</b> [56]   | Nikki Schönfeldt, Phil Hancock, Debbie Jordan and Ryan Lopez. <b>The reflection assignment in the face of Gen AI</b> [42]  | Kudzai Matiashe, Tatenda Nharo and Avani Sebastian. <b>Equity analysts versus ChatGPT: A comparative analysis of commissioned research reports produced for companies on the JSE</b> [75] | Brendon Smith. <b>Free education for some: An examination as to whether amendments to sections 10(1)(q) &amp; 10(1)(qa) are enough to remove inherent inequalities relating to the taxation of bursaries</b> [70] | Philna Coetzee and Lourens Erasmus. <b>Differentiated corporate governance drivers for respective spheres of government in South Africa</b> [36] | Juan-Pierré Bruwer, Danie Schutte, Jana Lamprecht and Mvelo Siyaya. <b>The relationship(s) between key managerial attributes, managerial operating styles and the internal control activities in South African fast-moving consumer goods SMMEs</b> [35] |
| Session Chair                                 | Riley Carpenter (UCT)  | Alet Terblanche (UP)   | Andrea Govender (NMU)   | Herman Viviers (NWU)  | Lourens Erasmus (UNISA)  | Lise Botha (UWC)   |
| Track / Theme                                 | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education   | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education   | Peer Review Track: Financial Management   | Work-in-Progress: Taxation  | Work-in-Progress: Financial Accounting   | Work-in-Progress: Auditing   |
| 11h30-12h00                                   | Kim Krause and Ilse Lubbe. <b>Communication skills: A consolidated framework of teaching interventions and assessment tools</b> [41] | Theresa Van Oordt, Madeleine Stiglingh and Tim Rupert. <b>Assessing the impact of time limits on accounting students' higher-order thinking skills: An experimental study</b> [78] | Shaun Watson. <b>When the numbers change: The impact of financial restatements on information asymmetry of JSE-listed companies</b> [29]  | Johan Van Rhyn, Shaun Parsons and Taryn Adams. <b>An analysis of the tax effects of the two-pot retirement system in South Africa</b> [53]  | Maryke Henning, Wessel Badenhorst and Tim Rupert. <b>The effect of judgement and discretion on earnings management behaviour</b> [40]            | Lanise van der Burgh, Elmar Venter and Steven Cahan. <b>The benefits associated with combined assurance on integrated reports</b> [39]   |

| Concurrent Session 2 (Thursday, 26 June 2025) |   |   |  |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| Venue   | Hall A & B  | Venue 7   | Venue 8  | Venue 9   | Venue 10   | Venue 11  |
| Session Chair                                 | Juan Ontong (SU)  | Madeleine Stiglingh (UP)  | Shaun Watson (UFS)   | Lizel Bester (NMU)  | Lourens Erasmus (UNISA)  | JP Bruwer (CPUT)  |
| Track / Theme                                 | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education  | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education  | Work-in-Progress: Financial Management   | Work-in-Progress: Taxation  | Work-in-Progress: Financial Accounting   | Peer Review Track: Auditing   |
| 12h00-12h30                                   | Magon Gajewski.<br><b>Contradictions in the situational logic: A social realist examination of institutional barriers to research</b> [59]  | Anne Soldat and Cristina Weyers.<br><b>Developing digital acumen in accounting curricula</b> [71]   | Nasif Bergstedt and Francois Toerien.<br><b>Corporate social performance as a determinant of firm financial distress: insights from the Johannesburg Stock Exchange</b> [76] | Michelle Kirsten and Jackie Francis.<br><b>South Africa's National Health Insurance: Projected impact of the removal of medical tax credits on Taxpayers</b> [69] | Oren Mooneeapen and Phillip de Jager.<br><b>A global snapshot on the cyclicity of provisions: Unveiling IFRS 9's impact</b> [93]                     | Dhanush Raj Jayakumar, Warren Maroun and Nirupa Padia.<br><b>Key audit matters in Indian companies</b> [45] |
| Session Chair                                 | Juan Ontong (SU)  | Madeleine Stiglingh (UP)  | Rolien Kunz (UP)   | Vanessa Gregory (UKZN)  | Joseph Akande (WSU)  |   |
| Track / Theme                                 | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education  | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education  | Peer Review Track: Financial Accounting  | Work-in-Progress: Financial Accounting  | Work-in-Progress: Financial Accounting   |   |
| 12h30-13h00                                   | Gary Marques and Malek El-Diri.<br><b>Partial flipped learning: A balanced alternative to traditional and fully flipped approaches</b> [60] | Tarish Jagwanth, Houdini Fourie and Tracy Beck.<br><b>Beneficial guidelines or unnecessary red tape? Academic staff perceptions of classmark requirements in first-year accounting</b> [86] | Karen Odendaal.<br><b>A comparison of accounting disclosures by companies offering customer loyalty programmes under IFRIC 13 vs IFRS 15</b> [85]                            | Anna-Retha Smit, Elmar Venter and Charl De Villiers.<br><b>Responsible investors, integrated report quality, and ESG performance</b> [101]                        | Cheyney Travis, Carley Chetty and Akona Gazi-Babana.<br><b>The impact of social media on sustainability performance of JSE listed entities</b> [118] |   |

| Concurrent Session 3 (Thursday, 26 June 2025) |   |  |  |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| Venue   | Hall A & B  | Venue 7  | Venue 8  | Venue 9  | Venue 10  | Venue 11   |
| Session Chair                                 | Anne Soldat<br>(UNIZULU)  | Veruschka Pelsers-Carstens (NWU)   | Shaun Watson (UFS)   | Shaun Parsons (UCT)  | Joseph Akande (WSU)   | Mvelo Siyaya (CPUT)  |
| Track / Theme                                 | Peer Review Track: Accounting Education   | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education   | Work-in-Progress: Financial Management   | Peer Review Track: Taxation  | Work-in-Progress: Financial Accounting  | Peer Review Track: Auditing  |
| 14h00-14h30                                   | Kudzai Matiashe, Liandi van Wyk and Elmarie Papageorgiou.<br><b>Are first-year accounting students' perceived values aligned with professional ethics?</b> [48]                   | Dineo Movundlela, Alet Terblanche and Blanche Steyn.<br><b>Assessing communication skills of accounting students</b> [87]  | Suzette Viviers, Zandile Zondani, Moses Jachi and George Nel.<br><b>The effect of public say-on-pay activism on executive remuneration in South Africa</b> [104]   | Jonty Mer and Asheer Jaywant Ram.<br><b>Lessons from Nigeria, Kenya, and Rwanda for the improvement of energy tax incentives</b> [14]                                      | Mandie Adriaanse, Rikus de Villiers and Elsabé Kilian.<br><b>The impact of COVID-19 on remuneration structures of South African JSE-listed transportation companies</b> [113] | Mojalefa Mosala and Léandi Steenkamp.<br><b>Transparency, media, and public trust: Disciplinary mechanisms in South Africa's auditing profession</b> [79]      |
| Session Chair                                 | Anne Soldat<br>(UNIZULU)  | Veruschka Pelsers-Carstens (NWU)   | Shaun Watson (UFS)   | Shaun Parsons (UCT)  | Joseph Akande (WSU)   | Mvelo Siyaya (CPUT)  |
| Track / Theme                                 | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education  | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education   | Peer Review Track: Financial Accounting  | Work-in-Progress: Taxation   | Work-in-Progress: Financial Accounting  | Work-in-Progress: Auditing   |
| 14h30-15h00                                   | Clarissa Grondt and Odette Swart.<br><b>Beyond the numbers: A semi-systematic review conceptualising work readiness of non-accounting business graduates in South Africa</b> [77] | Thandekile Koza and Fortunate Bvuma.<br><b>Evaluating the impact of the flipped classroom approach on student performance in an internal control module</b> [66] | Laryssa Cristhina Batista De Freitas, Vitória Santos Amorim, João Vinícius de França Carvalho and Raquel Wille Sarquis.<br><b>Pension funds and their sponsors: A tale of disclosure, actuarial fairness, and surprising similarities</b> [46] | Andrew Cuccia, Shannon Jemiolo, Cécile Bazart and Madeleine Stiglingh.<br><b>The effect of corporate tax planning on stakeholders' CSR perceptions and behaviours</b> [82] | Siyabonga Ngwenya and Christiaan Lamprecht.<br><b>A matrix-based approach to assess the risks of machine learning on IFRS 9 expected credit loss</b> [116]                    | Lise Botha, Phillip De Jager, Francois Toerien and Ezelda Swanepoel.<br><b>More than meets the eye: Evaluating audit reporting quality on a continuum</b> [83] |

| Concurrent Session 3 (Thursday, 26 June 2025) |   |  |  |  |   |   |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| Venue   | Hall A & B  | Venue 7  | Venue 8  | Venue 9  | Venue 10  | Venue 11  |
| Session Chair                                 | Tarish Jagwanth (NMU)   | Riley Carpenter (UCT)  | Andrea Govender (NMU)  | Lindiwe Mangisa (NMU)  | Vanessa Gregory (UKZN)  | Lise Botha (UWC)  |
| Track / Theme                                 | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education  | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education   | Work-in-Progress: Financial Management   | Work-in-Progress: Taxation   | Work-in-Progress: Financial Accounting  | Peer Review Track: Auditing   |
| 15h00-15h30                                   | Mareli Rossouw, Herman Viviers and Surika van Rooyen.<br><b>Are postgraduate accountancy students ready for e-written assessments?</b> [103]  | Marina Kirstein and Rolien Kunz.<br><b>Food for thought: lessons learned from an audit simulation regarding the development of decision-making</b> [108]                           | Nomanyano Primrose Mnyaka-Rulwa and Joseph Akande.<br><b>Do remuneration governance and financial leverage impact pay-performance link?</b> [115]  | Murendi Audrey Mudau and Makofe Lepheana.<br><b>Evaluating the effectiveness of the South African Revenue Services' anti-avoidance rules in curbing aggressive corporate tax planning</b> [98] | Elmar Venter, Ulrike Stefani and Jade Jansen.<br><b>Fair value accounting for liabilities and own credit risk: The role of asset recognition and measurement in assisting investor understanding</b> [58] | Ashwin Petersen and Juan-Pierré Bruwer.<br><b>Exploring the association between occupational fraud risk and the financial sustainability of South African small medium micro enterprises</b> [17] |
| Session Chair                                 | Tarish Jagwanth (NMU)   | Riley Carpenter (UCT)  | Andrea Govender (NMU)  | Lindiwe Mangisa (NMU)  |   | Lise Botha (UWC)  |
| Track / Theme                                 | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education  | Work-in-Progress: Accounting Education   | Peer Review Track: Financial Management  | Work-in-Progress: Taxation   |   | Work-in-Progress: Auditing  |
| 15h30-16h00                                   | Nadia Gulko, Eva Blondeel, Lies Bouten, Natalie Churyk, Lorraine Derbyshire, Patricia Everaert, Elizabeth Gordon, Seyram Kawor, Camillo Lento, Nicholas McGuigan, Susanna Middelberg, Saravanan Muthaiyah, Merwe Oberholzer, Suresh Sahoo, Olubukunola Uwuigbe and Nadeeka Withanage.<br><b>Listening to the student's voice: Reshaping teaching excellence in accounting and business education</b> [21] | Khulile Mathe.<br><b>Factors affecting accounting students' behavioural to use learning management system in the post-pandemic era at Mangosuthu University of Technology</b> [32] | Avani Sebastian and Thabang Mokoaleli-Mokoteli.<br><b>Talking about sustainability: An exploratory content analysis of earnings conference call transcripts of JSE-listed companies</b> [24] | Confidence Malatsi and Makofe Lepheana.<br><b>Exploring the complexity of the Value Added Tax on luxury goods in advancing the tax fairness principle</b> [106]                                |   | Siqi Li, Blanche Steyn and Alet Terblanche.<br><b>Data analytics for fraud prevention</b> [111]   |

## Section E: Session Chairs

Session chairs play an important role in any conference, not only to introduce presenters and to ensure that the programme stays on track in terms of timekeeping, but also to facilitate and encourage robust discussions.

| SESSION CHAIRS            |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Chair                     | Institution                             |
| Alet Terblanche           | University of Pretoria                  |
| Andrea Govender           | Nelson Mandela University               |
| Anne Soldat               | University of Zululand                  |
| Herman Viviers            | North-West University                   |
| Joseph Akande             | Walter Sisulu University                |
| Juan Ontong               | Stellenbosch University                 |
| Juan-Pierré Bruwer        | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Lise Botha                | University of Western Cape              |
| Lindiwe Mangisa           | Nelson Mandela University               |
| Lizel Bester              | Nelson Mandela University               |
| Lourens Erasmus           | University of South Africa              |
| Madeleine Stiglingh       | University of Pretoria                  |
| Mvelo Siyaya              | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Onesmus Ayaya             | University of Limpopo                   |
| Riley Carpenter           | University of Cape Town                 |
| Rolien Kunz               | University of Pretoria                  |
| Shaun Parsons             | University of Cape Town                 |
| Shaun Watson              | University of the Free State            |
| Tarish Jagwanth           | Nelson Mandela University               |
| Vanessa Gregory           | University of KwaZulu-Natal             |
| Veruschka Pelser-Carstens | North-West University                   |



## Section F: Abstract Book: Peer Reviewed Track

Only abstracts from the 19 accepted Peer Reviewed Track submissions are included in the Scientific Report. Full papers of all 19 accepted submissions will form part of the conference proceedings.

### ***[14] Lessons from Nigeria, Kenya, and Rwanda for the improvement of energy tax incentives***

Jonty Mer (University of the Witwatersrand) and Asheer Jaywant Ram (University of the Witwatersrand)

**Purpose:** This study examines the tax incentives and measures for promotion of renewable energy and energy saving practices in Nigeria, Kenya, and Rwanda. These countries share similar challenges to South Africa and have implemented innovative tax incentives to transition to renewable energy and promote energy saving. The aim is to provide actionable recommendations for South Africa.

**Design/methodologies:** This study is qualitative and interpretive and applies a doctrinal method along with a comparative analysis. By comparing the tax incentive frameworks and policies of these countries, this research identifies successful strategies that could be adapted to South Africa.

**Findings:** Key findings include the potential benefits of introducing VAT exemptions, import duty waivers, tax holidays, and reduced corporate income tax rates. The recommendations propose integrating these measures into South Africa's policy framework to enhance its renewable energy sector and drive sustainable development.

**Original/contribution:** This is one of the first studies to consider the tax incentives of other African countries for the promotion of energy saving practices and renewable energy adoption.

### ***[17] Exploring the association between occupational fraud risk and the financial sustainability of South African small medium micro enterprises***

Ashwin Petersen (Cape Peninsula University of Technology) and Juan-Pierré Bruwer (Cape Peninsula University of Technology)

**Purpose:** To explore the association between specific occupational fraud risk and the financial sustainability, represented by profitability, liquidity, and solvency, of South African SMMEs.

**Design/methodologies:** For this exploratory research study, data were obtained from 120 South African SMMEs owners and/or managers operating in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry using a survey. All respondents adhered to strict delineation criteria.

**Findings:** Chi-square tests of independence were performed. Of the 78 tested associations, ten were statistically significant (12.82%) of which eight were very strongly associated with profitability, liquidity and solvency.

**Original/contribution:** Though the number of statistically significant association was small, the probability exists that certain occupational fraud risk may be responsible for adversely affecting specific aspects of South African SMMEs' financial sustainability more than others, which may warrant further research.

***[24] Talking about sustainability: An exploratory content analysis of earnings conference call transcripts of JSE-listed companies***

Avani Sebastian (University of the Witwatersrand) and Thabang Mokoaleli-Mokoteli (University of the Witwatersrand)

**Purpose:** The effects of climate change and social issues have resulted in an enhanced focus on sustainable value creation by companies. Equity analysts are able to interact with management and are therefore well-placed to monitor corporate sustainability initiatives in conference calls where management can be questioned, and responses are unlikely to be scripted. This study aims to explore the sustainability topics discussed by managers and analysts in earnings conference calls.

**Method:** We adopt a mixed methods approach, given the exploratory nature of this study and its practical focus. Sixteen conference call transcripts from JSE-listed companies were analysed using a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) dictionary and text analysis package in the R programming language. In addition, the transcripts were coded manually.

**Results:** Management's discussion on sustainability topics is mostly positive and focuses on progress made and external recognition received. Analysts' questions focus on concerns regarding the environmental and social impacts of the company and do not appear to be driven by the topics presented by management. Overall, there is a lack of discussion on the interdependencies of financial and non-financial capitals.

**Originality:** We exploit the spontaneity in unscripted, dialogic communication to assess sustainability priorities and the potential for analysts to monitor sustainable value-creation efforts.

**Contributions:** We contribute simultaneously to the literature on sustainable value creation, investor relations, and analysts. Our focus on dialogic communication about sustainability deliberately deviates from the established research on sustainability disclosure in monologic corporate reports. In doing so, we offer an alternate way of assessing management's sustainability priorities and how these interact with other organisational goals.

***[25] A comparative analysis of capital allowances for foundations and structures of permanent nature for plant and machinery for small business corporations***

Muneer Hassan (University of Johannesburg) and Siphamandla Makhaya (University of Johannesburg)

**Purpose:** Section 12E of the Income Tax Act No. 58 of 1962 (the Income Tax Act), which provides for deductions of small business corporations (SBCs), does not have a provision that deems foundations or supporting structures to be part of the asset under section 12E(1). This therefore creates uncertainty as to whether SBCs can claim a deduction in respect of foundations or supporting structures on which the asset is mounted. The purpose of the study was therefore to provide a comparative analysis of the various capital allowance sections that deal with plant or machinery and to highlight the anomaly in section 12E and the implications thereof.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** An interpretative paradigm and a qualitative mode of enquiry were used. The doctrinal research method was selected for this study.

**Findings:** Various sections of the Income Tax Act, such as sections 11(e), 12B, 12BA and 12C, provide for a deduction in respect of the foundations or supporting structures by deeming foundations or supporting structures to be part of the machinery or plant, provided certain requirements are met. However, section 12E(1), which deals with manufacturing plant or machinery of SBCs, does not have the same provision; by implication, SBCs cannot claim a deduction on foundations or supporting structures that are attached to the plant or machinery. Consequently, section 12E is inconsistent with other capital allowance provisions, leading to ambiguity and inequity for SBCs.

**Originality/Contribution:** The study recommends that section 12E be amended to include a provision that deems foundations or supporting structures to be part of plant or machinery.

**[27] The effectiveness of ChatGPT to support threshold concepts knowledge in financial accounting – An exploratory study**

Ilse Lubbe (University of Cape Town) and Nikki Schönfeldt (University of Western Australia)

**Purpose:** This paper explores the effectiveness of using ChatGPT (an artificial intelligence text generator (AITG)) as a reliable source for accounting knowledge and skills.

**Design/methodology/approach:** This study follows a descriptive-interpretive approach to explore and evaluate the effectiveness of ChatGPT in explaining threshold concepts in Business Combinations and Consolidations and their application. ChatGPT text outputs are critically analysed in a descriptive-interpretive manner in relation to epistemic knowledge that supports disciplinary understanding (“*knowing that*”) and procedural knowledge (“*knowing how*”).

**Findings:** Our analysis revealed that ChatGPT effectively provides epistemic knowledge (“*knowing that*”) using accessible, human-like language, which can benefit students with language barriers. However, responses lacked depth and specificity. For procedural knowledge (“*knowing how*”), ChatGPT offered general steps but included irrelevant or misleading information, with significant errors and omissions in practical tasks like preparing consolidated financial statements. Educators can leverage these shortcomings to foster critical thinking and develop comparative learning exercises.

**Originality/value:** The use of AITG in education is a rapidly evolving field. Educators must continuously develop their understanding of these tools to reflect on how they may affect students' engagement. This study adds value by helping educators understand the effectiveness of AITG in correctly responding to questions related to accounting knowledge. The study highlights the beneficial explanation of challenging accounting concepts in easy-to-understand language and its limitations in application without supervision.

**[29] When the numbers change: The impact of financial restatements on information asymmetry of JSE-listed companies**

Shaun Watson (University of the Free State)

**Purpose:** This study investigates the impact of retrospective financial statement restatements on information asymmetry among JSE-listed companies, focusing on four distinct restatement categories: errors, changes in accounting policies, new accounting standards, and Financial Reporting Investigation Panel (FRIP).

**Methodology:** Using abnormal bid-ask spreads (ANBAS) and abnormal trading volumes (AVOL) as proxies for information asymmetry, the study applies an event study methodology to analyse market reactions over a 21-day event window.

**Findings:** The findings reveal significant increases in information asymmetry on days around restatement announcements, with errors and changes in accounting policies exhibiting the highest and most persistent impacts. These categories are associated with heightened market uncertainty as investors react to unexpected information disclosures and reassess the implications thereof for the restating companies. Conversely, restatements related to new accounting standards and FRIP actions show more moderate and transient effects, reflecting lower information asymmetry likely due to regulatory oversight and market anticipation.

**Contribution:** The study provides empirical insights into how financial restatements influence market dynamics and investor behaviour within an emerging market context. It emphasises the importance of transparent financial reporting and regulatory oversight in mitigating information asymmetry, enhancing investor confidence, and promoting market stability. These findings have practical implications for investors, companies, and regulators aiming to improve stock market stability and efficiency.

### ***[33] Conceptualising “Added Value” and its association with the internal audit value proposition***

Jannie Pieters (University of Pretoria), Marina Kirstein (University of Pretoria) and Juan-Pierré Bruwer (Cape Peninsula University of Technology)

**Purpose:** To conceptualise the term “added value” in accordance with the Institute of Internal Auditors’ value proposition, with the main intent to clarify its association with the discipline of Internal Auditing (IA) and its relevance in an organisation’s Internal Audit Function (IAF).

**Design/Methodology:** Non-empirical, qualitative research was conducted in the form of a narrative literature review. A total of 102 sources were identified from a variety of academic repositories, of which 69 (68%) were used for the narrative literature review.

**Findings:** The IAF adds value by actively integrating into strategic decision-making, fostering risk intelligence, engaging stakeholders, and driving continuous organisational improvement. Through strategic integration and leadership, internal audit aligns with organisational goals, promoting ethical leadership and transparency. The IAF goes beyond traditional risk mitigation to identify emerging opportunities by advancing risk intelligence and opportunity management. Stakeholder engagement ensures audit insights are tailored to specific needs, enhancing value. Continuous organisational learning strengthens governance, risk management, and control environments, fostering ongoing improvements. This conceptual model demonstrates how internal audit drives organisational success, sustainability, and strategic alignment.

**Originality/Value:** The study provides a fresh perspective on the term “added value” which can be explored through further research endeavours.

### ***[35] The relationship(s) between key managerial attributes, managerial operating styles and the internal control activities in South African fast-moving consumer goods SMMEs***

Juan-Pierré Bruwer (Cape Peninsula University of Technology), Danie Schutte (North-West University), Jana Lamprecht (University of the Free State) and Mvelo Siyaya (Cape Peninsula University of Technology)

**Purpose:** This study aimed to investigate the relationships between key managerial attributes, managerial operating styles, and internal control activities within South African Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs).

**Design/methodology/approach:** An empirical, quantitative study was conducted using a survey research design. Data were collected from 115 SMME owners/managers through self-administered questionnaires. A mixture of purposive sampling and convenience sampling were employed, and data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS.

**Findings:** The study revealed significant relationships between key managerial attributes and managerial operating styles in the sampled SMMEs. Surprisingly, no statistically significant relationships were found between managerial operating styles and internal control activities.

**Originality/contribution:** This research contributes to the understanding of internal control systems evident in South African FMCG SMMEs. Considering that a business is a vivid and clear reflection of its management, the lack of statistically significant relationships between managerial operating styles and internal control activities suggest that internal control activities may stem from “copy-and-paste exercises”. This study paves the way for further research to be conducted on SMME-specific internal control frameworks.

#### **[45] Key audit matters in Indian companies**

Dhanush Raj Jayakumar (Leeds University), Warren Maroun (University of the Witwatersrand) and Nirupa Padia (University of the Witwatersrand)

**Purpose:** This study focuses on Key Audit Matters (KAMs) in audit reporting for Indian-listed companies for the years 2021 to 2023. Since the issuance of ISA 701, KAMs have gained significant importance in increasing audit transparency and increasing stakeholders' understanding of issues that affect the financial statements. This study seeks to fill this research gap that relates to KAM reporting in developing economies such as India considering current corporate governance issues and recent financial scams.

**Methodology:** The data was collected from the audit reports of the selected 40 firms from their annual reports or websites. The study adopted thematic analysis to determine the common themes in KAM disclosures, including visionary leadership, innovation culture, and compliance monitoring. The agency theory can be used to explain how KAMs mitigate the problem of the principal agent by improving the flow of information between the shareholders and the managers on the risks and judgments involved in the financial reporting process. The signalling theory was used to support the functioning of KAMs as they serve as a signal of the audit firm's dedication to identify matters and perceived quality of financial statements.

**Findings:** The study results indicated that there was a variation in the type and incidence of KAMs across different industries, thereby showing that regulatory requirements and conditions influence audit practices. It also showed the usefulness of KAM reporting for investors, regulators, and auditors, suggesting that KAM enhances audit quality and boosts transparency.

**Contribution:** This study extends the present knowledge on KAMs in the context of India and provides useful information to policymakers, practitioners, and scholars who want to improve the corporate governance and financial reporting environment in India.

#### **[46] Pension funds and their sponsors: A tale of disclosure, actuarial fairness, and surprising similarities**

Laryssa Cristhina Batista De Freitas (Universidade de São Paulo), Vitória Santos Amorim (Universidade de São Paulo), João Vinícius de França Carvalho (Universidade de São Paulo) and Raquel Wille Sarquis (Universidade de São Paulo)

**Purpose:** In this study, we aim to analyze the level of similarity between the information disclosed by pension funds and sponsoring firms and the disclosure requirements of IAS19 (*Employee Benefits*). Additionally, we assess whether the degree of similarity is influenced by the financial status of the sponsored plans (deficit/surplus/balance).

**Design:** Using cosine similarity analysis, an automated textual analysis, we examine the financial statements of sponsoring firms and the annual reports disclosed by the pension funds between 2012 and 2023. We estimate panel data regression models separately for the sponsors and pension funds.

**Findings:** Our findings reveal that pension funds disclose information more closely aligned with IAS19 requirements than sponsors, which is unexpected, given that pension funds do not formally apply IAS19. However, we find significant differences in similarity across different types of information required by IAS19. We also provide evidence that sponsors with pension plans closer to actuarial fairness exhibit higher similarity levels, suggesting that an optimal funding ratio maximizes the similarity between the information disclosed by sponsors and IAS19 requirements. This relation is not observed for pension funds. Lastly, larger pension funds tend to have lower disclosure similarity.

**Contribution:** We provide important evidence about pension disclosures, highlighting that this disclosure depends on the financial status of the sponsored plans and that sponsoring companies and pension funds disclose different pension information that could interest regulators, investors, plan participants, and the broader market.

***[48] Are first-year accounting students' perceived values aligned with professional ethics?***

Kudzai Matiashe (University of the Witwatersrand), Liandi van Wyk (University of the Witwatersrand) and Elmarie Papageorgiou (University of the Witwatersrand)

**Purpose:** The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) Code of Professional Conduct sets out the fundamental principles of professional ethics which form the foundation of ethical behaviour by professional accountants. The study's purpose was to identify first-year accounting students' perceived values, personal and professional values, and their alignment with the fundamental principles of the Code of Professional Conduct of the SAICA (the Code), also referred to as professional ethics.

**Method:** The study used a mixed method. Firstly, two questionnaires were deployed to students (N=546) to identify accounting students' perceived values (personal and professional values). Secondly, a qualitative approach was used, conducting focus groups to obtain students' feedback on perceived values and reasons why they ranked their value as the most important value.

**Findings:** Students indicated that their perceived values are aligned with the fundamental principles of the Code. The student values 'Integrity' 'Disciplined' 'Ambitious' and 'Broad-minded' were ranked as the top four values of which 'Integrity', 'Disciplined' and 'Broad-minded' aligned with the Code: integrity to be honest and disciplined to behave in a professional and disciplined manner.

**Contribution:** The study contributes to the student-profession (S-P) fit which resembles students' perceived values and professional ethics and can enhance undergraduate students' awareness of ethical issues to prepare students for the workplace. This paper further contributes to knowledge in understanding the relationship between students perceived values versus and professional ethics in accounting.

**Limitations:** The study is limited to first-year accounting students, at one South African university, and for a single discipline.

***[52] Unpacking the South African carbon tax: Is the carbon tax achieving its desired goals and outcomes?***

Siphesihle Monyatsi (University of the Witwatersrand) and Phatsimo Moroeng (University of the Witwatersrand)

**Purpose:** Introduced in 2019, the South African carbon tax aims to mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, stimulate green innovation, and transition South Africa towards a more sustainable economic model. This paper explores whether the South African carbon tax is achieving its desired goals and outcomes. It examines inefficiencies and highlights the potential unintended economic consequences of implementing the tax.

**Design/methodology/approach:** A qualitative research approach supported by the review of journal articles, the Carbon Tax Act, working papers, and discussion papers was used in this study.

**Findings:** The findings from the study revealed that the carbon tax is not performing as intended due to factors like the delay of phase two and the generous tax-free allowances being granted.

**Originality/value:** The carbon tax is an excellent tool in attempting to curb carbon emissions, however, if implemented incorrectly, it may not meet its desired goals and outcomes. Thus, this study aims to identify and address any factors working against the intended outcomes of the carbon tax, which will contribute to improving the design and implementation of the tax, ensuring it achieves its intended goals of reducing carbon emissions without causing unintended economic consequences.

### ***[56] Thuthuka students' online learning experiences***

Precious Nkosi (University of Johannesburg) and Monique Keevy (University of Johannesburg)

**Purpose:** The purpose of the study was to explore the online learning experiences of Thuthuka students at the University of Johannesburg (UJ), with a particular focus on identifying differences between first-generation university entrants (FGUE) and non-FGUE within the Thuthuka cohort.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Data was collected using a questionnaire that included both Likert scale items and open-ended questions.

**Findings:** The findings indicate that Thuthuka students, both FGUE and non-FGUE, generally had positive experiences with online learning, benefiting from its flexibility and accessibility. However, they faced significant barriers, including load shedding and unstable internet connectivity. Additionally, many students experienced difficulties with self-discipline, leading to procrastination in managing their academic responsibilities. Notably, no significant statistical differences were identified in the online learning experiences of Thuthuka FGUE and non-FGUE students.

**Originality/contribution:** This study contributes to understanding how structural, cultural, and agency factors in the socio-ecological framework shape the online learning experiences of Thuthuka students. It offers targeted recommendations to address online learning barriers such as load shedding, high data costs, and self-discipline, providing a pathway to reduce the digital divide in higher education.

### ***[68] A post-implementation review of IFRS 16: leases***

Nonhlanhla Kunene (University of the Witwatersrand), Kayleigh Greenslade (University of the Witwatersrand) and Gary Marques (University of the Witwatersrand)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to conduct a post-implementation review of IFRS 16. In doing so, the study provides insights into IFRS 16 users' perceptions of the usefulness of IFRS 16 compared to IAS 17 and whether these perceptions differ depending on the role and industry of the respondent.

**Design:** To achieve the study's objective, data was collected from 46 CA(SA) respondents using surveys where responses were captured on a 5-point Likert scale. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

**Findings:** The findings of this study reveal that most respondents perceive IFRS 16 to provide more useful information than IAS 17. Although respondents agreed that IFRS 16 had met the goals and objectives of the IASB, it was noted that IFRS 16 was more difficult to apply than its predecessor. Differences were noted in the perceptions of preparers of financial statements compared to other respondent groups when it came to perceptions of the understandability and ease of interpretation of financial statements, with preparers favouring the use of IAS 17.

**Contribution:** IFRS 16 research has focused on ratio analysis and the quantitative effects of the implementation of IFRS 16. Limited research has been conducted to obtain qualitative evidence of the effects of the implementation of IFRS 16. This study contributes to the IASB's post-implementation review project for IFRS 16 which was initiated in June 2024.

### ***[70] Free education for some: An examination as to whether amendments to sections 10(1)(q) & 10(1)(qa) are enough to remove inherent inequalities relating to the taxation of bursaries***

Brendon Smith (University of the Western Cape)

**Purpose:** Following amendments to section 10(1)(q) in January 2021, uncertainty persists regarding the eligibility of scholarship and bursary schemes for tax exemption in subsequent assessment years. This paper aims to critically analyse the requirements outlined in the relevant legislative provision and, in turn,

suggests the removal of the section in its entirety owing to the broader economic and social externalities resulting from the legislative modifications and the resulting application of the legislation.

Furthermore, the study will explore the challenges inherent in applying the revised legislative criteria, particularly in relation to the classification and treatment of both publicly accessible and restricted bursary and scholarship schemes. The analysis will also consider the balance between ensuring equitable tax treatment for taxpayers, including a brief international comparison of treatments in other countries.

**Approach:** This research is to be done using doctrinal research methodologies to investigate the proposed research questions.

**Findings:** The overarching themes identified in the findings encompass the uncertainty surrounding the practical application of the revised legislative requirements, as well as potential challenges to the principle of taxation structuring. Additionally, concerns are noted regarding the equitable treatment of taxpayers who derive income through informal methods, highlighting broader implications for equity amongst taxpayers.

**Originality/Contribution:** This research seeks to examine a subject that diverges from established principles of fairness and equity within taxation systems, allowing for further refinement towards improving the South African tax base. By addressing this deficiency, the research aims to contribute valuable insights for taxpayers in optimising taxation structuring while also informing taxation legislators regarding potential future amendments to enhance policy effectiveness and equity, while addressing the need to balance retaining the tax base while still advancing access to education.

***[79] Transparency, media, and public trust: Disciplinary mechanisms in South Africa's auditing profession***

Mojalefa Mosala (University of the Witwatersrand) and Léandi Steenkamp (Central University of Technology)

**Purpose:** To explore the role of transparency and media coverage in shaping public trust through the disciplinary processes of South Africa's auditing profession, focusing on SAICA.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Utilising qualitative content analysis, this study examines media-reported cases and unpublished SAICA data to identify patterns in transparency and their impact on public perception. Parker's Private Interest Model is adapted to evaluate public and private interest violations in media-visible cases.

**Findings:** Transparency in SAICA's disciplinary processes significantly influences public trust. Media-visible cases often receive harsher penalties but show inconsistencies in sanction rates. Transparency gaps in unpublished cases highlight the need for more robust reporting mechanisms to balance public accountability and professional preservation.

**Originality/Contribution:** This study contributes to understanding the interplay between media, transparency, and disciplinary processes in restoring trust in the auditing profession. It offers unique insights into the South African context, advancing the application of Parker's model to transparency and media dynamics.

**Research Limitations/Implications:** The study focuses on South Africa, SAICA and excludes IRBA disciplinary cases, limiting the scope of the findings.

**Practical Implications:** Recommends enhanced transparency in reporting disciplinary outcomes and equitable treatment of media-visible and non-visible cases.

**Social Implications:** Highlights the need for media to serve as a constructive mechanism for professional accountability while balancing societal expectations.



### ***[81] The assurance role of internal auditors in environmental, social, governance and sustainability reporting***

Alfred Möller (University of Pretoria), Blanche Steyn (University of Pretoria) and Brenda Pooe (University of Pretoria)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to unpack the factors shaping the assurance role of internal auditors in environmental, social, governance and sustainability reporting.

**Research context:** The internal auditors' role was considered in the context of multiple environmental, social, governance and sustainability reporting frameworks and standards in the context of the definition of internal auditing and combined assurance. The guidance of the Institute of Internal Auditors informed the normative assurance role of internal auditors in a context where sustainability-related assurance roles follow various practices with different levels of assurance.

**Research method:** A structured search was performed in Scopus and Google Scholar using a systematic review process that centres on research articles and conference papers across all years. The advantage of a structured search is that it helps to uncover areas of future research and enables the identification of factors shaping the assurance role of internal auditors.

**Results:** The results highlight a mix of internal and external factors shaping the internal auditors' assurance role in environmental, social, governance and sustainability reporting. The internal factors include expectations from the audit committee and management, the level of resourcing of the internal audit function the size of the function, its charter and involvement in risk management. The industry type and sustainability-related regulations are external factors.

**Contribution:** This study shows that the emerging sustainability-related assurance role of internal auditors is shaped by several role-defining, role-enabling and role-limiting factors originating internally and from the entity's industry. Considering these factors may be valuable for boards, audit committees and management when unpacking the assurance role of internal auditors in environmental, social, governance disclosures, specifically in the context of a combined assurance arrangement. While role-enabling factors could be leveraged, the role-limiting factors could be supported and enhanced by other assurance providers. The study also highlights a need for further research on the assurance role of internal audit in supporting the credibility of environmental, social, governance and sustainability reporting.

### ***[85] A comparison of accounting disclosures by companies offering customer loyalty programmes under IFRIC 13 vs IFRS 15***

Karen Odendaal (University of the Witwatersrand)

**Purpose:** This study compares accounting treatment related to customer loyalty programs (CLPs) under relevant accounting standards before and after the adoption of IFRS 15, specifically contrasting IFRIC 13 with the current guidance. The study investigates the practical application of the requirements by examining the annual financial statements (AFS) of South African retail entities that offer the most popular and widely used CLP programmes.

**Design/methodology:** A content analysis was conducted on the AFS of entities offering CLPs. It predominantly focused on how these entities recognised revenue, measured deferred revenue liabilities, and presented/disclosed CLP information under both IFRIC 13 and IFRS 15.

**Findings:** Although the fundamental principles of CLP accounting (i.e., separating the transaction into two components and deferring revenue relating to the CLP component) remained consistent, the investigation highlighted a potential difference in measuring the CLP award, previously based on fair value under IFRIC 13 and now based on the allocation of stand-alone selling prices under IFRS 15, which is in line with prior theoretical predictions from literature.

**Originality:** This research delves into the practical application of CLP accounting requirements, contributing to limited existing literature on this topic. It further highlights a potential difference in the application of the measurement guidance, specifically under IFRS 15, which may result in divergent accounting practices by two similar entities operating similar CLPs. This finding underscores the need for future research to explore the potential financial implications.

***[109] Does CFO age and management ownership affect the leverage of industrial JSE listed firms?***

Carlos De Jesus (University of Cape Town), Duran Reddy (University of Cape Town) and Gizelle Willows (University of Cape Town)

**Purpose:** The capital structure debate has been ongoing for decades. While relying on rationality assumptions, it often ignores the emotive nature of individuals and their impact on financial decisions. Managerial considerations, like CFO age or board ownership in capital structure decisions, must be investigated.

**Methodology:** A two-step system generalised method of moments regression and model robustness tests were applied to examine the relationship between capital structure, the control variables, and the variables of interest: CFO age and board ownership.

**Findings:** Board ownership and CFO age were statistically significant determinants of capital structure. The positive coefficient between CFO age and leverage indicates the willingness of older individuals to take on debt. The negative relationship between board ownership and leverage highlights the influence of the level of shareholding on reducing leverage. There is possibly a trade-off between entrenching management and reducing agency costs using share ownership.

**Originality:** The scarcity of capital structure models incorporating managerial characteristics in South Africa allows this study to provide a much-needed viewpoint on the capital structure puzzle. CFO age and board ownership have been shown to have significant impacts and implications. Understanding the relationship between these variables can improve governance and decision-making within firms. Reassessing the control variables, using different testing and data, adds to the debate on the traditional capital structure theories.

## Section F: Purpose of the study: Work-in-Progress Track

The Purpose of the study for each of the 50 accepted WIP Track submissions are included in the Scientific Report. The extended abstracts as well as the full reference list can be requested from authors.

### **[21] *Listening to the student's voice: Reshaping teaching excellence in accounting and business education***

Nadia Gulko (University of Lincoln), Eva Blondeel (Ghent University), Lies Bouten (IESEG School of Management), Natalie Churyk (Northern Illinois University), Lorraine Derbyshire (University of Cape Town), Patricia Everaert (Ghent University), Elizabeth Gordon (Temple University), Seyram Kawor (University of Cape Coast), Camillo Lento (Lakehead University), Nicholas McGuigan (Monash University), Susanna Middelberg (North-West University), Saravanan Muthaiyah (International Medical University), Merwe Oberholzer (North-West University), Suresh Sahoo (Sri Sri University), Olubukunola Uwuigbe (Covenant University) and Nadeeka Withanage (University of Greenwich)

**Purpose:** In universities globally, academics are increasingly encouraged to facilitate excellent education (Beech & Anseel, 2020). Teaching excellence (TE) contributes to facilitating business students' development in becoming professionals and trusted value creators in business and society more broadly. To achieve this, business schools need to be pro-active in reimagining education models in line with business needs to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary skill sets and behavioural traits fostered through TE (Tang, 2020; Ilgan *et al.*, 2022; Lundberg, 2022). However, current definitions of TE across business schools offer different explanations and interpretations (Bradley *et al.*, 2015; Madriaga & Morley, 2016).

TE is measured and enacted across global business schools in disparate ways (Shao *et al.*, 2007; Smimou & Dahl, 2012; Smith, 2009). This study's literature review revealed that TE is centred around three dimensions: teacher personal qualities (e.g. Tucker *et al.*, 2013; Dawson, 2020), classroom characteristics (e.g. Chan, 2018; Mangione & Norton, 2023) and competencies and attributes (e.g. Tang, 2020; Lundberg, 2022). A voice that remains underrepresented in how TE is positioned within accounting and business education is that of students (Siddiqui & Lento, 2022). This research aims to prioritise the student voice by comprehensively exploring whether accounting and business student views on TE vary between countries and across this study's three key identified dimensions.

### **[26] *Statutory auditors as providers of mandatory sustainability reporting assurance under the corporate sustainability reporting directive: Insights from institutional logics***

Joanna Krasodomska (Krakow University of Economics) and Ewelina Zarzycka (University of Lodz)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to determine whether statutory auditors currently provide or intend to provide sustainability reporting assurance, identifying the motivations driving these decisions and evaluating how challenges and perceived benefits for companies impact their choices. By focusing on Poland, which is subject to the European Union's regulatory shift introduced by the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), the study contributes to understanding how auditors are adapting to these changes.

**[30] When the numbers change: Medium to long-term share price performance of JSE-listed companies**

Shaun Watson (University of the Free State)

**Purpose:** Financial restatements hold profound implications for investors, market efficiency, and corporate governance. While Market Efficiency Theory (Fama, 1970: 383) suggests that share prices should immediately and unbiasedly incorporate new information, evidence from high-profile financial restatements, such as those of Steinhoff (2017) and Tongaat Hulett (2019), contradicts this assumption. Steinhoff's restatement led to a staggering R216 billion loss in market value (Motsoeneng & Rumney, 2019, para. 8), and Tongaat Hulett's restatement erased R5 billion (Njobeni, 2019; Motsoeneng & Rumney, 2019). These extreme market reactions raise questions about the efficiency of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) in processing restatement-related information and suggest that investor reactions to financial restatements may not always be rational, as psychological biases may result in an overreaction or underreaction (De Bondt & Thaler, 1985).

It is, however, noted that not all restatements stem from fraud, unethical or intentional misrepresentations. International Accounting Standard 8 (IAS 8) – Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors (IASB, 2021) explicitly acknowledges that the retrospective restatement of financial statements may result from mathematical mistakes, mistakes in applying accounting policies, oversights or misinterpretations of facts (IASB, 2021a:1017).

The objective of this study is thus to examine the medium- to long-term share price reactions of Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE)-listed companies in response to four distinct restatement categories: the adoption of new accounting standards (NEWAS), changes in accounting policy (CHANGE-AP), correction of errors (L-ERROR), and regulatory enforcement by the JSE Financial Reporting Investigation Panel (FRIP).

**[32] Factors affecting accounting students' behavioural to use learning management system in the post-pandemic era at Mangosuthu University of Technology**

Khulile Mathe (Mangosuthu University of Technology)

**Purpose:** There is a substantial increase in the use of learning management systems (LMSs) to support teaching and learning activities in higher education institutions. Despite their benefits, students use them to a limited extent due to a number of factors influencing behaviours. ELearning platforms have made it possible to continue learning in universities and other educational institutions during the Covid pandemic. Students' acceptance of eLearning is important because it is associated with their engagement in the online teaching-learning environment.

**[34] Alternatives to the proposed taxation of retirement fund interests on emigration from South Africa**

Taryn Adams (University of Cape Town) and Shaun Parsons (University of Cape Town)

**Purpose:** The section 11F retirement fund contributions deduction is the largest tax expenditure for the South African fiscus within the personal income tax system (Maboshe & Woolard, 2018). A taxpayer is allowed to claim these deductions for contributions made to retirement funds, as any subsequent receipt or accrual from these funds will be taxed in South Africa (Income Tax Act, 1962). However, where a taxpayer ceases to be tax resident in South Africa prior to retirement, this could be overridden by the relevant articles contained in double tax agreements (DTAs) between South Africa and other countries, resulting in South Africa losing its taxing rights on any subsequent receipt or accrual from these funds to non-resident individuals (OECD Model, 2017; Brown, 2017).

The 2021 Budget Speech, as well as the 2021 draft Taxation Laws Amendment Bill, included a proposal from National Treasury (NT) to implement an "exit tax" on retirement fund interests for individuals who

emigrate from South Africa (National Treasury Budget Review, 2021; Draft Taxation Laws Amendment Bill, 2021). However, industry experts raised numerous concerns, which led to its withdrawal in November 2021 (Draft Response Document on the 2021 Draft Taxation Laws Amendment Bill, 2021). While NT indicated its intention to re-design the proposal (Draft Response Document on the 2021 Draft Taxation Laws Amendment Bill, 2021), there has been no update since that time. This study aims to address how the approach to retirement fund participation might be re-designed within the South African tax system by considering feasible alternatives that would achieve the objectives of the initial proposal without its shortcomings.

**[36] Differentiated corporate governance drivers for respective spheres of government in South Africa**

Philna Coetzee (Tshwane University of Technology) and Lourens Erasmus (University of South Africa)

**Purpose:** Despite challenges, public sectors worldwide are actively pursuing reforms, including efforts to enhance good corporate governance. This research aimed to determine whether differences exist in the factors driving favourable audit outcomes as a proxy for corporate governance within the public sector spheres of South Africa. Countries identifying with the South African situation can repeat the study to identify areas for improvement in their own environments.

**[37] Distance learning accounting students' attitudes and perceptions toward academic misconduct in online assessments**

Alet Terblanche (University of Pretoria), Annelien Van Rooyen (University of South Africa) and Prince Enwereji (University of South Africa)

**Purpose:** Serious concerns have been raised in recent years about the role of accountants and auditors in major corporate and accounting scandals (Ballantine, McCourt & Mulgrew, 2019; Low, Howard & Cooper, 2008; Meng, Othman, D'Silva & Omar, 2014). Academic misconduct is regrettably often seen as a precursor to unethical behaviour in the workplace (Ballantine, et al., 2019; Meng et al., 2014; Stone, Jawahar & Kisamore, 2009).

Hosny and Fatima (2014) assert that academic misconduct, which is seen as illegal activities such as cheating, plagiarism and collusion performed for the purposes of obtaining undue advantages over peers, is a common practice among university students across all ages and fields. Unfortunately, rapid advances in technology have created even further opportunities for students to access illegal information online and collaborate or share information on mobile devices illegally. This has placed additional pressure on higher educational institutions (HEIs) globally to find innovative ways of preventing and discovering academic misconduct (Hosny & Fatima, 2014).

Meng et al. (2014) assert that it is crucial to obtain an understanding of students' attitudes and intentions when faced with ethical dilemmas as it would seem that current educational practices and approaches to combat academic misconduct have limited effect on students' attitudes and behaviour. The purpose of this study is to address the research question: *What are the attitudes and perceptions of distance learning accounting students toward academic misconduct in online assessments?*

**[38] Capital allocation decisions using integrated reports instead of financial reports – An eye-tracking study**

Denice Pretorius (University of Pretoria) and Tim Rupert (Northeastern University D'Amore-McKim School of Business)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to determine whether the integrated reporting presentation format can reduce the cognitive effort exerted by non-professional investors in making a willingness to invest decision. One of the benefits of the Integrated Reporting format is to simplify the process for investors to form a clear and integrated view of a firm's value creation ability. Cognitive effort, consisting of time and attention, is limited for all humans. Allocating time and attention to one task may require that less or no

attention is paid to another. Time can be measured directly by recording the time spent in minutes and seconds, but the allocation of attention cannot be observed directly since it is a function of the neurophysiological activity of the human brain. Visual attention is the allocation of attention in judgement and decision-making. Visual attention can be observed through eye-tracking technology. Literature has suggested that presentation format of financial and sustainability information can affect the way investors process information. Information processing in this study is split into two phases, (1) acquisition and (2) evaluation and weighting. The format of the Integrated Report, providing interconnected financial and sustainability information as opposed to disconnected information contained in traditional financial report and separate sustainability reports has the potential to increase the usefulness of the information for investors and may aid them in making investment decisions. Furthermore, by linking financial and sustainability information and adding a financially material label to the information could reduce the total cognitive effort spent by non-professional investors to process the information in an investment decision task.

### **[39] *The benefits associated with combined assurance on integrated reports***

Lanise van der Burgh (University of Pretoria), Elmar Venter (University of Pretoria) and Steven Cahan (University of Auckland)

**Purpose:** Over the past decade, there have been significant developments in corporate reporting to meet the demand of capital providers for value-relevant information beyond what is disclosed in traditional financial reports. Separate financial and sustainability information disclosed in standalone reports lacks connectivity, complicating capital providers' ability to assess firm performance holistically. Integrated reporting attempts to resolve this shortcoming by combining financial and sustainability information in a single report providing a holistic, integrated, and concise representation of a firm's performance and value creation. The evolution of new forms of extended external reports (EERs), like integrated reports, is accompanied by a need for mechanisms to enhance their quality and credibility. A tool that is used to enhance the quality and credibility of information is assurance. While traditional external assurance is suitable for standalone financial reports, several challenges have been identified in using traditional external assurance and assurance frameworks in the EER context. Given these challenges, a need for alternative non-traditional assurance mechanisms for EERs exists. Although prior literature documents a positive association among traditional assurance, traditional report quality, and economic outcomes, it remains an empirical question whether alternative non-traditional assurance is associated with similar benefits for EERs. Therefore, this study examines whether the alternative non-traditional assurance of publicly disclosed information in extended external reports is associated with certain benefits. The study focuses on the South African context where combined assurance has been identified as an alternative non-traditional assurance mechanism for the assurance of integrated reports. The study first examines the association between the disclosure of the existence of combined assurance in the integrated report and four outcomes, namely, integrated report quality, firm value, stock liquidity, and expected future cash flows. The study then examines whether these associations are affected by the *actual* combined assurance quality.

### **[40] *The effect of judgement and discretion on earnings management behaviour***

Maryke Henning (University of Pretoria), Wessel Badenhorst (University of Pretoria) and Tim Rupert (Northeastern University D'Amore-McKim School of Business)

**Purpose:** This study provides evidence of the effect of greater measurement judgement and discretion on earnings management (EM) behaviour of junior staff in the context of loan loss provisions (LLPs). The accounting literature has debated whether incorporating accounting standards that permit increased judgement in financial reporting allows for greater earnings management (Zhou et al. 2016, Fomina et al. 2022). We investigate whether decision-making behaviour of junior staff changes when permitted judgement in reporting for LLPs increases and EM is incentivised.

#### **[41] Communication skills: A consolidated framework of teaching interventions and assessment tools**

Kim Krause (University of Cape Town) and Ilse Lubbe (University of Cape Town)

**Purpose:** The main objective of this study is to provide a consolidated framework of the most effective and useful teaching interventions and assessment tools to develop accounting students' communication skills. Communication skills are becoming increasingly important for accounting graduates to possess, emphasised by both professional bodies (SAICA, 2021; AICPA, 2022), and employers (Tan & Laswad, 2018; Dolce, Emanuel, Cisi & Ghislieri, 2020; Mhlongo, 2020). However, recently qualified professional accountants have been found to be lacking in this regard (Barac, 2009; Boyle, Carpenter & Mahoney, 2017; Coady, Byrne & Casey, 2018; Lansdell, Marx & Mohammadali-Haji, 2020), resulting in a need for a more focused development of communication skills at a higher education level.

Several barriers to merely adding communication skills into the accounting curriculum exist. The current curriculum is already time-intensive (Rebele & St. Pierre, 2019), and accounting educators do not feel equipped to teach professional skills (Keevy, 2013; Rebele & St. Pierre, 2019). Accounting students have not felt well-equipped enough in communication skills after their studies (Kavanagh & Drennan, 2008; Berry & Routon, 2020; Marx, Mohammadali-Haji & Lansdell, 2020), or they simply do not recognise the importance thereof (Aryanti & Adhariani, 2020; Dolce et al., 2020). Lastly, very little content is available to aid the teaching of communication skills to accounting students. Although several interventions such as case studies (Reyneke & Shuttleworth, 2018; Samkin & Keevy, 2019), active learning (Gioiosa & Kinkela, 2019) and flipped classroom approaches (Ibrahim, Khairudin & Salleh, 2018) have been developed, there is no consolidated framework of effective and useful teaching interventions and assessment tools that accounting educators can use as a guide when developing their students' communication skills. This study seeks to fill that gap through answering the following research question: **What teaching interventions and assessment tools could be effective and useful in developing accounting students' communication skills, as indicated in recent accounting and engineering literature?**

#### **[42] The reflection assignment in the face of Gen AI**

Nikki Schönfeldt (University of Western Australia), Phil Hancock (University of Western Australia), Debbie Jordan (University of Western Australia) and Ryan Lopez (University of Western Australia)

**Purpose:** Deriving meaning out of experiences is part of human nature (Rodgers, 2002). But learning from experiences require a particular way of thinking which is more than just unstructured pondering (Rodgers, 2002). Dewey (1938, as cited in Rodgers, 2002) states that reflection requires "[a]ctive, persistent and careful consideration".

Reflective practice is widely adopted in science-based professions such as medicine (Lim et al., 2023), physical therapy (Ziebart & MacDermid, 2019), nursing (Scheel et al., 2021) and allied health (Gilheaney & Quigley, 2021). Schön (1991) refer to practitioners in these professions being "technical problem solvers", where technical problem solving and reflection-in-action are required to solve a professional problem. Reflection-in-action is required to guide decision making during an experience (Gerlick et al., 2010). Reflection-on-action, on the other hand, refers to looking back on an experience in order to learn from it (Gerlick et al., 2010). This type of reflection is used more broadly in education, e.g., in teacher education (Dinham et al., 2021), social work (Reid et al., 2023), and in engineering (Miranda et al., 2020). Also in accounting education, the importance of reflective practice has been recognised for ongoing personal and professional development. Academics include reflective assignments to support the process of converting experiences into learning and to develop graduate skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving (Bisman, 2011; Brown & McCartney, 1998; Dellaportas et al., 2023; Mcguigan & Kern, 2009; Mintz, 2006; Turner & Tyler, 2023).

As educators increasingly recognise the importance of reflective practice, reflection essays or assignments have become a popular assessment tool. However, due to their language-based nature, reflective tasks are particularly susceptible to misuse through generative AI or large language models (LLMs). Research on the impact of large language models like ChatGPT on student learning is still

emerging. In a study integrating ChatGPT in medical education, it was concluded that LLMs have the potential to benefit critical thinking skills (Almazrou et al., 2024). Other benefits of using ChatGPT in higher education include the potential to provide feedback, support data analysis, and aid in developing innovative assessments (Rasul et al., 2023). This study aims to address the issue of potential misuse of LLMs by students in reflective assignments.

**[43] *The potential of a student loyalty programme to enhance student motivation, participation and active engagement***

Madelyn Cloete (University of Pretoria), Astrid Schmulian (University of Pretoria) and Stephen Coetzee (University of Pretoria)

**Purpose:** Many novice students are not self-directed learners and exhibit low motivation and poor engagement levels (Kyewski & Krämer, 2018), contributing to poor academic performance (Joynt, 2023). These students require support to change their behaviours and establish more effective learning habits, and the current higher education system's approach often falls short.

This paper introduces a novel Student Loyalty Programme (SLP), inspired by customer loyalty initiatives, to enhance students' sustained commitment to their studies. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasises motivation for effective academic engagement, this paper highlights the importance of extrinsic motivation in initially aiding students. It explores the application of gamification in aligning motivation with effective learning behaviours to assist students to form habits for consistent engagement, towards self-directedness.

**[49] *The adoption of IFRS 9 and the effect on cash flow hedge accounting: An international perspective***

Eduardo da Silva Flores (Universidade de São Paulo), Douglas Augusto de Paula (Universidade de São Paulo) and Raquel Wille Sarquis (Universidade de São Paulo)

**Purpose:** The primary purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of IFRS 9 – Financial Instruments on firms' adoption of cash flow hedge accounting and the informativeness of their financial reporting. Specifically, we investigate whether the implementation of IFRS 9 in 2018 led to companies' greater use of cash flow hedges and enhanced the value relevance of cash flow hedge information for users of financial statements.

**[50] *The influence of sustainability capital on firm profitability: evidence from selected JSE-listed mining and manufacturing firms***

Itumeleng Molala (University of Limpopo) and Gibson Nyirenda (University of Limpopo)

**Purpose:** Sustainability has become an important part of organisations on a global scale. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) have also stoked interest from academia, governments, organisations and other stakeholders in sustainability. From an economic perspective, companies worldwide employ capital to establish, expand, maintain, and predict the company's loss risk and growth (Nuryani, Satrawan, Gorda, & Martini, 2018).

Studies on the influence of sustainability capital (human capital, financial capital, social capital, manufacturing capital and natural capital) and firm performance have largely been conducted internationally, with little evidence of such studies from a South African context (Nuryani, Satrawan, Gorda and Martini, 2018; Nguyen, 2020; Sahasranamam and Nandakumar, 2020; Ame, Lambe and Dzugwahi, 2023; Haddad, Albawab and Al-Qudah, 2023). On this premise, the study seeks to determine if sustainability capital influences firm profitability in selected JSE-listed South African firms. The study aims to determine the relationship between sustainability capital and companies' return on assets (RoA) listed on JSE.



### **[51] Cultural narratives and corporate misconduct: Evidence from folklores**

Mao Li (University of Edinburgh), Wenxuan Hou (University of Edinburgh) and Woon Sau Leung (University of Edinburgh)

**Purpose:** Culture plays a crucial role in shaping corporate behavior and policy (Zingales et al., 2011). While prior research has demonstrated that regional preferences—such as social capital, religiosity, corruption tolerance, and ethical norms—significantly influence financial misconduct (Guan et al., 2020; McGuire et al., 2012), most studies focus on contemporary cultural manifestations rather than deeper historical origins. This overlooks the long-term moral frameworks that shape ethical decision-making.

Folklore, a fundamental component of cultural heritage, encapsulates intergenerational beliefs, values, and social norms through stories and myths (Barnett, 1995). Despite its prominence in shaping societal morality, folklore has been largely overlooked in corporate finance research. Our study investigates how deeply ingrained folklore narratives influence corporate financial misconduct, positioning folklore as an informal institution that shapes corporate ethical standards over time.

Using a global dataset covering 1,245 pre-industrial ethnic groups across 136 countries, we examine the prevalence of trickster and challenger folklore motifs and their correlation with corporate misconduct. Tricksters, characterized by deception and rule-breaking, and challengers, known for risk-taking and defying authority, provide a cultural lens into regional attitudes toward opportunism and fraud. Our research integrates folklore into the literature on economic narratives (Shiller, 2017, 2020) and accounting narratives (Akerlof & Snower, 2016), establishing folklore as a persistent cultural script that influences corporate governance and financial integrity.

### **[53] An analysis of the tax effects of the two-pot retirement system in South Africa**

Johan Van Rhyn (University of Cape Town), Shaun Parsons (University of Cape Town) and Taryn Adams (University of Cape Town)

**Purpose:** This study evaluated the new “two-pot” retirement system in South Africa against its intended policy objectives and analysed the income tax effects of the new system.

### **[58] Fair value accounting for liabilities and own credit risk: The role of asset recognition and measurement in assisting investor understanding**

Elmar Venter (University of Pretoria), Ulrike Stefani (University of Konstanz) and Jade Jansen (University of the Western Cape)

**Purpose:** The objective of this study is to identify whether individual users’ assessments of fair value changes in liabilities emanating from changes in a firm’s own credit risk are affected by (i) the extent to which assets are recognised and (ii) the extent to which recognised assets are measured at fair value.

Central to the debate about measuring financial liabilities at fair value, is how to deal with changes in the measurement of the borrowing firm’s own credit risk (Fontes, Panaretou & Peasnell, 2018). Own credit risk refers to the possibility that the firm cannot pay its debts in full and on time (Blankespoor, Linsmeier, Petroni & Shakespeare, 2013).

When accounting for financial liabilities at fair value, its decrease results in a fair value gain. Therefore, the worsening (improving) of a firm’s financial condition leads to higher (lower) income in its performance statement, being counterintuitive (Lachmann, Stefani & Wöhrmann, 2015).

Experimental research finds that individual users misinterpret the accounting treatment to a large extent (Gaynor, McDaniel & Yohn, 2011; Lachman et al., 2015). The main driver of the change in the firm’s credit risk is often the expected performance of the firm’s assets. These assets are expected to generate cash flows to be used, among others, to settle the firm’s debt. When the expected performance of these assets decreases, it should result in impairment losses. However, the full recognition of these impairment losses is only true to the extent that accounting standards require that (i) all assets are recognised and (ii) their

changes in fair value are recognised in the financial statements. If these conditions are not met, asset recognition and measurement are described as incomplete (Fontes *et al.* 2018).

In terms of International Accounting Standard (IAS) No. 38 (IASB, 2001), not all internally generated intangible assets are recognised, even if those items satisfy the definition of assets as given in the Conceptual Framework. This means that not all subsequent movements in these assets' values are recognised.

The accounting standards issued by the IASB and FASB use a mixed measurement model (Barth, 2014). If an asset measured at depreciated historical cost has an increase in its economic value above its carrying amount, this increase will remain unrecognised. Consequently, any decrease in the unrecognised economic value above its carrying amount will also remain unrecognised. This implies that not all economic changes affecting the assets of a firm are recognised in profit or loss.

The result is that users might misinterpret the recognised gain from the increase in the firm's own credit risk as a positive economic event because the causal loss on the assets remains unrecognised.

**[59] Contradictions in the situational logic: A social realist examination of institutional barriers to research**

Magon Gajewski (University of Cape Town)

**Purpose:** Professional accounting education is highly demanding due to the stringent academic standards set by accrediting bodies. Consequently, accounting academics often bear a significantly heavier teaching load compared to their counterparts in other disciplines. In certain circumstances, academics are required to engage in less research and, more broadly, in scholarship. However, given the broader shift in the academic culture of professional accounting, academics find themselves increasingly involved in traditional research. This cultural shift has not necessarily been accompanied by an equivalent change in the structural factors that constrain or enable research engagement. As a result, there exists a tension between teaching and research.

This study aims to identify whether academics understand the distinction between research and scholarship as it pertains to their performance criteria. Additionally, the study seeks to identify broader structural themes that explain the tensions experienced by accounting academics. Furthermore, it endeavours to identify the underlying causal mechanisms that drive these changes and employs Archer's morphogenetic approach to predict whether the structural system will undergo transformation or remain unchanged.

**[60] Partial flipped learning: A balanced alternative to traditional and fully flipped approaches**

Gary Marques (University of the Witwatersrand) and Malek El-Diri (University of York)

**Purpose:** The learning and teaching of business cycles is particularly onerous on academic staff to engage students in a productive and effective manner (Barac, Kirstein, Munz and Beukes, 2016). The Auditing II course at Wits University has adopted the approach of teaching business cycles using a fully flipped and partially flipped model. This is to allow students to decide on which model they would like to follow to promote independent learning (Hockings, Thomas, Ottaway and Jones, 2022). In this process, students are also more effectively engaged at a cognitive and behavioural level (Jopp & Cohen, 2022; Sahni, 2019).

## **[62] Uncovering integrated reporting protocols for JSE listed companies**

Vanessa Gregory (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

**Purpose:** The reporting landscape has been subject to intense development over the last two decades. Public companies, in particular, have progressed from purely publishing financial information aimed at shareholders to the publication of an entire financial reporting suite that provides relevant information to a number of stakeholders. Such reporting includes financial, sustainability and governance information. This shift in reporting has been accompanied by the establishment of a number of standards, guidelines and frameworks covering sustainability, governance and integrated reporting (Diwan and Amarayil Sreeraman, 2024). Given the multitude of options available, companies have become plagued by the decision of which guidelines to utilise when preparing their reporting suite (Manley, 2024).

In many jurisdictions relevant authorities have assisted in this difficult decision by mandating the application of standards. Some jurisdictions have created their own all-encompassing guidelines. For example, the European Union requires large companies to report in accordance with the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (KPMG, 2025). Others have mandated specific frameworks, such as the United Kingdom's implementation of mandatory climate-related financial disclosures aligned to the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2022). However, some jurisdictions merely provide guidelines, leaving the application thereof as voluntary. Given these complexities, it is apt that a global standard was created by the International Sustainability Standards Board in June 2023, effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024. This development has generated a prospect for companies "to consolidate the alphabet soup of voluntary ESG reporting frameworks" and report effectively (Manley, 2024: 3). As of March 2024, 16 jurisdictions were either planning or had adopted these standards on a voluntary or mandatory basis (Laidlaw, 2024).

Whilst South Africa was seen as one of the pioneering countries for integrated reporting after mandating the application King III (updated to King IV in 2016) (Malola and Maroun, 2019), the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) has not mandated guidelines for sustainability reporting and integrated reporting. As such, South African companies still need to navigate which guidelines to use for these purposes. The main aim of this study is therefore to examine the reporting suites of JSE Listed Companies to understand what guidelines have been followed when preparing these suites. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What reports are contained in the reporting suite of JSE Listed companies?
2. How has the composition of the reporting suite changed over time for JSE Listed companies?
3. What standards, guidelines and frameworks have been utilised by JSE Listed companies and how has this changed over time?

## **[64] The learning resources conundrum, does more mean better?**

Bernice Beukes (University of Pretoria), Ana Tome Klock (Tampere University) and Juho Hamari (Tampere University)

**Purpose:** Educators aim for students to succeed in their learning journey by mastering content and transferring that mastery to unfamiliar contexts (Laurillard, 2002). This is achieved through direct instruction, supported by resources to scaffold students' learning path from novice to mastery (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Scaffolding requires careful planning to anticipate and distribute where and when support will be needed, tailored to each student's needs (Walqui, 2006).

Distributed scaffolds include conceptual (what to consider), metacognitive (ways to think), procedural (how to use), strategic (how to approach) or motivational guidance (Belland, Kim & Hannafin, 2013; Hannafin, Land & Oliver, 1999). Educators achieve this by adding resources such as videos, documents, and practice questions after direct instruction (Lento, 2018). Research shows that students prefer direct instruction but enjoy the flexibility of online resources (Doo, Bonk & Heo, 2020). Investigation of students' utilisation behaviour showed that self-study resources are associated with cramming, whilst those linked to grading are utilised more continuously (Lento, 2018). Furthermore, Khoza and Van der Merwe (2022) found that most students access only half of the available resources. On top of that, high-attending

students utilise resources more consistently than low-attending ones (Grabe & Christopherson, 2008). Whereas high-achieving students exhibit consistency and have better developed study strategies compared to underachieving students (Nguyen, Huptych & Rienties, 2018). Despite these insights, it remains unclear whether adding multiple modes of support and resources leads to the anticipated benefit envisioned by educators or what design aspects students perceive as valuable to their learning experience. It is also unknown whether students exhibiting differing study habits, measured as academic achievement, perceive resources' benefits similarly and utilise the scaffolds embedded in this offering in the same manner.

To answer these questions, this study explores which resources students use and find beneficial to their learning, uncovering design considerations that could optimise their learning experience and examining whether students' preferences differ according to their study habits, based on their academic achievement levels.

### ***[66] Evaluating the impact of the flipped classroom approach on student performance in an internal control module***

Thandekile Koza (University of Limpopo) and Fortunate Bvuma (University of Limpopo)

**Purpose:** To address the historically poor performance in the internal controls module, innovative, and engaging teaching and learning strategies had to be developed to improve performance and student engagement. The poor performance with internal controls was mainly due to a lack of engagement with the learning materials and the volume of work to be covered. The flipped classroom approach, incorporating presentations, role-play/simulations, and peer review, was implemented for the Bachelor of Accountancy (Chartered Accountancy stream- BAcc) and the Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) third-year internal controls auditing module. This article evaluates the use of this approach as an alternative teaching and learning strategy for third-year accounting students at the University of Limpopo.

The research questions, informed by the main purpose of this article, are:

1. To describe the process and activities incorporated in implementing the flipped classroom approach.
2. To investigate the impact of this method on student performance and participation, measured by year-on-year success rates and lecturer reflections.
3. To report students role playing experiences, together with the advantages and challenges of using this approach with accounting students.

### ***[67] How green is the Cape? Assessing sustainability reporting among Western Cape Municipalities***

Shelly Herbert (University of Cape Town) and Ewayne Le Roux (Nelson Mandela University)

**Purpose:** The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seeks to turn aspirations for prosperity, equality, and sustainability into concrete realities for both people and the planet. It envisions a world that is just, rights-based, equitable, and inclusive (United Nations South Africa, 2024).

South Africa, known for its diverse economy and robust infrastructure, is the second most preferred investment destination in Africa (United Nations South Africa, 2022). However, it faces significant challenges, particularly regarding gender inequality and poverty. Despite its rich natural heritage, mineral resources, biodiversity, solar power potential, and beautiful landscapes, South Africa is threatened by unsustainable urban development and growing inequality (United Nations South Africa, 2022).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) aim to eradicate poverty, protect the environment, and ensure universal prosperity and peace by 2030, aligning with South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP focuses on poverty reduction, investment, employment, economic growth, responsibility, and good governance (National Business Initiative, 2016).

The 2023 SDG Summit highlighted the slow global progress towards achieving the SDGs (United Nations South Africa, 2024). Although South Africa has prioritised the SDG agenda in its development plans,

enhancing its visibility at local government levels is crucial for effective implementation (United Nations South Africa, 2024).

Local governments in South Africa play a crucial role in providing essential services and addressing sustainability issues (Croese, 2019). The UN supports the District Development Model to localise SDGs that impact daily lives, emphasising key transitions in areas such as food system strengthening, digital connectivity, energy access, job creation, and social protection (United Nations South Africa, 2024). This study assesses the extent and nature of sustainability reporting from the viewpoint of Western Cape municipalities, highlighting the crucial role of local government in shaping a sustainable future.

**[69] South Africa's National Health Insurance: Projected impact of the removal of medical tax credits on Taxpayers**

Michelle Kirsten (Varsity College) and Jackie Francis (Varsity College)

**Purpose:** The National Health Insurance (NHI), signed into law on 15 May 2024, aims to grant South Africans universal access to quality healthcare in accordance with section 27 of the Constitution and to ensure equitable, effective, and efficient utilisation of the Fund's resources to meet the population's health needs (Republic of South Africa, 2024:2). A major point of contention of the NHI bill is the methods the government intends to fund it.

Section 49(2)(a)(ii) of the National Health Insurance Act, 2023 states that the Fund is entitled to money appropriated from the reallocation of funding for medical scheme tax credits paid to various medical schemes towards the funding of NHI. These medical tax credits (MTC) are a vital tax incentive for private medical aid members, in terms of section 6A and section 6B of the Income Tax Act, 58 of 1962.

This study aims to examine the potential financial impact of the proposed removal of MTC on the individual taxpayer and the South African tax base.

**[71] Developing digital acumen in accounting curricula**

Anne Soldat (University of Zululand) and Cristina Weyers (University of Zululand)

**Purpose:** Generation Z students, as digital natives, are well-versed in using technology for social and entertainment purposes. However, these skills do not automatically translate into effective academic or professional use of digital tools (Astuti et al., 2021), especially for accounting students. This study aims to identify studies on learning activities that develop digital acumen in undergraduate accounting students. This will help bridge the gap between ineffective and effective learning activities (to optimize learning) using digital tools for accounting students. The method employed by this study is a review of recent research on learning activities designed to develop digital acumen in undergraduate accounting students. As the demand for digital skills increases within the accounting profession, students need to be equipped with the tools necessary for success (Azis et al., 2023). While students may be comfortable using technology, many struggle to apply it effectively within academic or professional contexts. Therefore, accounting educators need to design interactive, technology-driven learning activities that enhance students' digital capabilities. This review seeks to answer three research questions: What research has been conducted in the past five years on learning activities that develop digital acumen in undergraduate accounting students? What gaps exist in the current literature on this topic, and what areas should future research address?

***[74] Academic eligibility requirements in accounting courses: Are we honouring their intended purpose?***

Magon Gajewski (University of Cape Town) and Jacqueline Dean (University of Cape Town)

**Purpose:** This study examines the effectiveness of Duly Performed requirements<sup>1</sup> (DP) in accounting courses at a South African university. We interviewed accounting academics to understand the perspectives on DP requirements, whether they serve their intended purpose, and the challenges faced when applying them. Given evolving educational practices, are they still valuable, or have they become outdated? We aimed to determine whether the practical application of DP undermines their consistency and fairness. We also identified concerns about whether the original objectives of DP are being met in practice and whether any changes are required to guarantee that they continue to fulfil their purpose.

***[75] Equity analysts versus ChatGPT: A comparative analysis of commissioned research reports produced for companies on the JSE***

Kudzai Matiashe (Kudzai Matiashe), Tatenda Nharo (University of the Witwatersrand) and Avani Sebastian (University of the Witwatersrand)

**Purpose:** Preliminary research suggests that ChatGPT is adept at providing insights similar to those produced by sell-side equity analysts (Wigglesworth, 2022). Within the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), analyst coverage exhibits disproportionate concentration toward large capitalisation firms (Kirk, 2011; Sebastian & Seetharam, 2024). The lack of coverage of smaller companies has implications for their liquidity and visibility. These smaller companies therefore pay for analyst research on their company to improve their companies' visibility to investors (Kirk, 2011). The purpose of this study is to explore the potential for ChatGPT to produce equity research reports.

***[76] Corporate social performance as a determinant of firm financial distress: insights from the Johannesburg Stock Exchange***

Nasif Bergstedt (University of Cape Town) and Francois Toerien (University of Cape Town)

**Purpose:** According to stakeholder theory firms can improve their financial results (hence reducing financial distress risk) by engaging in Corporate Social Performance (CSP) efforts. Shareholder theory, however, postulates that dedicating resources to CSP incur agency costs, potentially negatively affecting financial performance and heightening financial distress risk. Many academic studies address the relationship between CSP and firm financial performance, but very few (mostly for Anglo-Saxon developed countries - see e.g., Farooq and Noor, 2021, and Habermann and Fischer, 2021) explore the link between CSP and the risk of financial distress. Further, most of these focus on economic downturns. To the best of the authors' knowledge, only Habermann and Fischer (2021) explored the link between CSP and firm bankruptcy likelihood during an economic upswing (in their case the US). Firms in emerging markets have distinct risk profiles (e.g. higher volatility, regulatory ambiguities, and less established institutional frameworks) and hence using South Africa as a representative emerging market, this study investigates the following:

1. Do the positive effects of firms' involvement in CSP initiatives and the probability of facing financial distress during economic downturns, as noted in established markets, also apply to an emerging market such as South Africa?
2. Moreover, does this relationship remain valid across periods of economic expansion in an emerging market context?

**[77] *Beyond the numbers: A semi-systematic review conceptualising work readiness of non-accounting business graduates in South Africa***

Clarissa Grondt (Nelson Mandela University) and Odette Swart (University of South Africa)

**Purpose:** This study aims to conceptualise themes through a semi-systematic literature review that emerge from the greater understanding of the work readiness of non-accounting business graduates in South Africa.

**[78] *Assessing the impact of time limits on accounting students' higher-order thinking skills: An experimental study***

Theresa van Oordt (University of Pretoria), Madeleine Stiglingh (University of Pretoria) and Tim Rupert (Northeastern University D'Amore-McKim School of Business)

**Purpose:** Reliable and valid assessments are essential for university stakeholders to make informed decisions about student competence, progression, and teaching effectiveness. In accounting assessments, we may want to measure technical competence, being the integration of technical accounting knowledge with higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). However, time constraints in assessments may introduce an unintended secondary construct—performing under speeded conditions—that influences performance outcomes. This study investigates the impact of assessment time limits on students' ability to demonstrate technical accounting competence, with a specific focus on the application of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS).

Beyond analysing the impact of time constraints, this study also provides validated question examples for an accounting assessment, where accounting education experts externally validated thinking skill classifications using Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. There is a lack of empirical examples of validated HOTS and lower-order thinking skills (LOTS) questions in accounting assessments, making this study a valuable contribution in both assessment design and evaluating time-limited testing environments.

**[82] *The effect of corporate tax planning on stakeholders' CSR perceptions and behaviours***

Andrew Cuccia (University of Oklahoma), Shannon Jemiolo (Canisius College), Cécile Bazart (University of Montpellier) and Madeleine Stiglingh (University of Pretoria)

**Purpose:** This study aims to contribute to the understanding of the reputational effects tax avoidance may have on firms. We specifically examine whether stakeholders' knowledge of legal tax avoidance impacts their CSR perceptions and, if so, the resulting consequences of that impact on stakeholders' valuation assessments and their willingness to invest in and patronize the firm.

**[83] *More than meets the eye: Evaluating audit reporting quality on a continuum***

Lise Botha (University of the Western Cape), Phillip de Jager (University of Cape Town), Francois Toerien (University of Cape Town) and Ezelda Swanepoel (University of Cape Town)

**Purpose:** Globally, the value of audits and the reliability and quality of audit reports have been questioned (Humphrey, Sonnerfeldt, Komori & Curtis, 2021; Knechel, 2024). Historically, external stakeholders have found it challenging to evaluate audit quality due to limited information available in the standard template-based audit reports (Holm & Zaman, 2012) (Holm & Zaman, 2012). Auditing is a credence good, and audit quality is a latent and multi-dimensional construct that is difficult to evaluate in absolute terms. Since 2017, the International Standards on Auditing (ISA) 700 (revised) and 701 require auditors to issue an extended audit report to enhance stakeholder understanding of the audit process. However, whether the extended audit report has improved the quality of information available to external stakeholders remains uncertain. This paper explores how external stakeholders can form a perception of audit quality from the information provided in the audit and audit committee reports. For this purpose, the paper considers three

aspects: which information provided in audit reports is important for strengthening the audit quality perception; whether this information can be used to differentiate between audit reporting quality levels on a continuum; and whether the extended audit report has led to improved information or knowledge to external stakeholders.

**[84] *The relationship between financial aid and on-time degree completion for accounting students at the University of Cape Town***

Riley Carpenter (University of Cape Town) and Lily Roos (University of Cape Town)

**Purpose:** Understanding students' success is complicated and exacerbated by its multifaceted nature (Granito & Santana, 2016; Morris, 2016). York et al. (2015) described academic success as "inclusive of academic achievement, attainment of learning objectives, acquisition of desired skills and competencies, satisfaction, persistence, and post-college performance". This practice ensures accurate outcome measurement and allows Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to measure and understand factors that influence students' ability to succeed on time.

The South African Higher Education Sector (HESA) inherited low participation of Black South African (SA) students when the country became a democracy in 1994 (Council on Higher Education (CHE), 2017). Since then, HEIs have strived to equalise students' access and refine the quality of academic success based on the change in students' social composition and demographic profile (Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), 2015). While Black SA students' enrolments improved (CHE, 2022), regrettably there was no paralleled increase in these Black students' success as measured by on-time graduation (CHE, 2022)(completing a three-year bachelor's degree programme in three years). Improving SA students' success is still a significant challenge for HESA, particularly with increased enrolments (Badat, 2010; DHET, 2016b).

The vision for HESAs is to increase throughput, graduation and participation rates (CHE, 2013; DHET, 2013; Ministry of Education, 2001). Research has implied that SA's undergraduate students have high dropout and low graduation rates, and completion of degrees exceeds the prescribed time (Cloete, 2016; Council on Higher Education (CHE), 2022; Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), 2015; van Broekhuizen et al., 2016). DHET (2017) noted a remarkable increase in students' access to HE and directed that HEIs should pay serious attention to improving students' success. In SA, research about financial aid's influence focuses on improving higher education (HE) access but not how it contributes to degree completion. Therefore, HEIs must gain insight into the factors that enhance or impede on-time graduation to provide the necessary support for academic success (CHE, 2016b; USAf, 2016).

Bhorat and Pillay (2017) investigated The National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) beneficiaries' performance from 2000 to 2012 by demographics and subject pass rates, finding a positive relationship between the award size and subject pass rate. However, the researchers did not compare the NSFAS data with Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) data to examine the dropout or graduation rates (Bhorat & Pillay, 2017). Note that the University of Cape Town (UCT) offers a GAP funding programme to provide financial assistance to students not eligible for NSFAS funding but who require some contribution towards their tuition costs (UCT, 2022).

Internationally, recent research in Italy has indicated that increased financial aid lengthens time to graduation but does not affect probability of graduation (Rattini, 2023). Financial aid has been found to not impact graduation in Venezuela (Hernández-Medina & Ramírez-Torres, 2023). In the United States, a meta-analysis estimated that grant aid increases the probability of degree completion by between 2 and 3 percentage points (Nguyen et al., 2019), although there is conflicting results on the impact on underrepresented minorities in comparison to white students (Myers & Myers, 2020).

While the SA national undergraduate graduation rate is low, UCT reported improving this area for the 2012 cohort. In the 2016 Teaching and Learning Report (UCT, 2017), UCT informed DHET that it exceeded its 2011 targeted cohort completion rates for all undergraduate programmes. There was a potential graduation rate of 80% against its planned pace of 75%, with 72% graduating on time. UCT acknowledged that "the factors leading to the improvements were varied and required further investigation" (UCT, 2017,



p 8). Close inspection of the demographics revealed that for students with low National Senior Certificate (NSC) and Academic and Quantitative Literacy scores, the performance gap between Black and White students was more significant in the first year. However, the same groups' success rates improved for the third and fourth-year levels. The institution voiced “the need for further investigation into the experiences of Black students and the range of obstacles that impede their capacity to thrive academically” (UCT, 2017, p 9). Carpenter and Roos (2020) indicated the need for quantitative research on financial aid and time to completion in South Africa.

To conclude, financial aid contributes significantly to higher education participation in South Africa. However, while research focused on how financial aid improved access to university, little is known about its effect on ‘on-time’ degree completion. Therefore, this research aimed to investigate to what extent financial aid affected the likelihood of on-time graduation as a function of selected student input and higher educational factors for students’ success in studying towards a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

***[86] Beneficial guidelines or unnecessary red tape? Academic staff perceptions of classmark requirements in first-year accounting***

Tarish Jagwanth (Nelson Mandela University), Houdini Fourie (Nelson Mandela University) and Tracy Beck (Nelson Mandela University)

**Purpose:** Low throughput rates of accounting students are described as one of the factors contributing to the current problem of a critical shortage of accountants in South Africa (BusinessTech, 2024). These low throughput rates in first-year accounting modules at South African universities are of a particular concern, which ultimately impacts the overall throughput rates of students undertaking the qualification (Erasmus & Fourie, 2018). Module and programme coordinators at universities offering accounting qualification programmes therefore continually strive to optimally design their curricula, including assessment practices, in the attempt to increase the throughput rate of accounting students (Lansdell, Mohammadali-Haji & Marx, 2020).

A critical aspect of programme design, for which regular consideration is rendered by module and programme coordinators, is the assessment practice of determining the minimum classmark requirement that students must achieve to gain access to final assessments for a particular module (Coyne & Woodruff, 2022). There is, however, limited published empirical research that considers assessment practices with reference to classmark requirements for students to gain access to final assessments, and the contribution thereof to module throughput rates and students' academic success (Latif & Miles, 2020).

Furthermore, a preliminary analysis of published module material from selected South African universities revealed that differences exist in the assessment practices with reference to classmark requirements for first-year accounting modules. For example, minimum classmark requirements vary from no requirement to 35%, 40% or 50% when considering first-year accounting modules at various universities (Nelson Mandela University (NMU), 2022; University of Cape Town (UCT), 2024; University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN), 2024; University of Pretoria (UP), 2023).

Based on this information, the development of a guidance framework for assessment practices with reference to classmark requirements in first-year accounting modules at South African universities could thus be useful. An important contributing factor to the development of the overall guidance framework are the perceptions of accounting qualification module and programme coordinators on the matter, as these individuals are responsible for the design of the relevant assessment practices, which this research is based upon.

### ***[87] Assessing communication skills of accounting students***

Dineo Movundlela (University of Pretoria), Alet Terblanche (University of Pretoria) and Blanche Steyn (University of Pretoria)

**Purpose:** Over the years, the accounting curriculum has been criticised for inadequately equipping accounting students with effective communication skills (Kavanagh & Drennan, 2008:279). Despite the importance of accounting students having good and effective communication skills to the level required by professional bodies and the expectations of employers, accounting educators still find it challenging to effectively assess the communication skills of accounting students (Samuels, Huston & Pasewark, 2023:23).

The purpose of this study is to identify effective ways in which communication skills of accounting students can be assessed, with a specific focus on written communication skills.

### ***[91] Accounting education for an uncertain world: The importance of powerful knowledge***

Janét West (University of Johannesburg)

**Purpose:** Students enter universities to obtain a qualification that they believe will enhance their chances of employment and thereby a better future. But the world of work is changing so fast that 75% of companies are not prepared for the pace at which their industries are changing (Carvalho & Woeffray, 2023). The field of accounting and accounting education in particular is facing significant challenges as accountants change from being ‘number crunchers’ to engaging business partners (Carnegie, 2022; Carnegie et al., 2021). There is also a decrease in the demand for accountants at the same time as complaints that accounting graduates are unprepared for their work (Boyce et al., 2019; Herbert et al., 2020).

These contextual challenges raise the question of ‘What can higher education institutions do to prepare students for a future of rapid change and uncertainty, specifically within the field of accounting?’ This study argues that epistemological access to powerful knowledge is essential for creating lifelong learners that can adapt to change. Powerful knowledge is defined as knowledge that gives students access to concepts, practices, aptitudes, behaviours, values and procedures valued by the discipline. And in the case of accounting, its related professional field of practice.

### ***[93] A global snapshot on the cyclicalities of provisions: Unveiling IFRS 9’s impact***

Oren Mooneepapen (University of Cape Town) and Phillip de Jager (University of Cape Town)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of IFRS 9 adoption on the cyclicalities of bank loan loss provisions (LLPs) for a global sample of banks from both advanced economies (AEs) and emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs).

### ***[98] Evaluating the effectiveness of the South African Revenue Services’ anti-avoidance rules in curbing aggressive corporate tax planning***

Murendi Audrey Mudau (University of Limpopo) and Makofe Lepheana (University of Limpopo)

**Purpose:** This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the South African Revenue Services’ “SARS” anti-avoidance rules in combating aggressive corporate tax avoidance in South Africa. The Commissioner of SARS stated that South Africa is faced with tax collection shortages resulting from illegal economic activities, tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance (SARS, 2025). In attempt to address tax collection shortage, the Commissioner of SARS aims to focus on technologies, such as data science, machine learning and artificial intelligence (SARS, 2025). However, no mention is made by the Commissioner of SARS to assess the effectiveness of anti-avoidance rules in combating aggressive tax avoidance. As such, this study envisages to examine the real-world effectiveness of anti-avoidance rules on corporate tax planning in curbing aggressive tax avoidance (Joubert & Kruger, 2021). Where there is aggressive tax avoidance, the country will seldom have the ability to provide needed social goods and services such as

education, healthcare and infrastructure (Khan & Nuryanah, 2023). This study will also evaluate the need for recommending tax reforms that may combat shortcomings in the existing anti-avoidance rule. International tax regimes, such as those in Australia and Canada, provide comparative insights for identifying best practices, which could assist in curbing shortcomings in the anti-avoidance rules (Klopper, 2021).

***[101] Responsible investors, integrated report quality, and ESG performance***

Anna-Retha Smit (University of Pretoria), Elmar Venter (University of Pretoria) and Charl de Villiers (University of Auckland)

**Purpose:** Corporate sustainability risks and opportunities are increasingly affecting investors' resource allocation decisions. Investors who sign the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) commit to considering firms' environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance in their investment decisions. Standard setters and regulators are interested in the dynamic among ESG performance, responsible investors, and reporting quality. Along with the renewed focus on sustainability reporting, we investigate the interrelation between responsible investors and ESG performance as determinants of integrated report quality (IRQ).

***[102] Are No and Nil values the same? A search for tax treatment certainty and simplicity***

Herman Viviers (North-West University)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to qualitatively explore and analyse the difference between "no" and "nil" values (if any) in a search for tax certainty and simplicity. Identified differences based on different approaches of interpretation is considered as different meanings of these terms impact the tax treatment outcomes as regulated in terms of other provisions of the Act which causes tax treatment uncertainty amongst taxpayers. Ultimately, tax treatment uncertainty results in unintended tax non-compliance, unnecessary financial loss to taxpayers, a loss of revenue to the fiscus and/or inflated tax compliance cost.

***[103] Are postgraduate accountancy students ready for e-written assessments?***

Mareli Rossouw (Stellenbosch University), Herman Viviers (North-West University) and Surika van Rooyen (North-West University)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to determine the digital competence level of postgraduate accountancy students in South Africa and whether these skills are sufficient, based on the feedback from academic providers, to complete an accountancy assessment electronically.

***[104] The effect of public say-on-pay activism on executive remuneration in South Africa***

Suzette Viviers (Stellenbosch University), Zandile Zondani (Stellenbosch University), Moses Jachi (Stellenbosch University) and George Nel (Stellenbosch University)

**Purpose:** Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has grappled with extreme economic disparities. The disparity is exacerbated by the wage distribution between executives and lower-tier employees. Despite efforts to reform executive remuneration practices, the wage gap in the country continues to widen, prompting increased scrutiny from shareholders and other stakeholders. The practice of public say-on-pay activism has emerged as a critical tool for shareholders seeking to influence executive remuneration policies in companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). This study examined the effectiveness of public say-on-pay activism in influencing executive remuneration in South Africa from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2023.

***[106] Exploring the complexity of the Value Added Tax on luxury goods in advancing the tax fairness principle***

Confidence Malatsi (University of Limpopo) and Makofe Lepheana (University of Limpopo)

**Purpose:** The Value Added Tax (VAT) Act 89 of 1991 is filled with complexities which include choosing between applying the zero versus standard rate, the exemptions of certain transactions, denying a deduction for some inputs, deeming certain transactions to have VAT or no VAT implications, and the enforcement of laws. Hassan, Bornman and Sawyer (2024) recorded that the current incoherent structure of the VAT Act contributes to its complexity, making it difficult to teach, apply in practice and administer. According to Stiller (2020) generally tax complexity is viewed negatively, although complexities arise due to extensive government targets, such as income redistribution and prevention of foreign tax planning. An example of a complex VAT transactions is the treatment of luxury goods.

The VAT Act does not define luxury goods. Thus, for purposes of this research, reliance is drawn on the Oxford English Dictionary for a definition. Luxury goods are defined as “high-end products characterized by premium quality, exclusivity and high price points, such as designer clothing, luxury vehicles, and high-end jewellery” (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). Kapferer and Valette-Florence (2021) argued that luxury is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses three distinct realities. First, the idea of luxury, followed by luxury as an industry and last luxury as a strategy (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2021). This study does not attempt to define luxury but assesses whether VAT is used as an instrument to unnecessarily increase the price of goods, while ignoring the tax fairness principle.

Tax fairness is one of the maxims grounding the rule of law contained in the VAT Act. According to Wei (2024), tax fairness plays a vital role in the development of modern economies and societies. Thus, a fair tax is crucial to the development and advancement of a society and its’ economy, driving the country’s self-sufficiency. As an example, SARS (2024) holds that the key function of SARS is collect taxes and duties in a fair and efficient way. Whether the statement cast by SARS is true is a question of interest, warranting inquisitiveness on the tax treatment of transactions involving luxury goods. For this reason, this study aims to explore the complexity of VAT on luxury goods and its implications on advancing the tax fairness principle in South Africa.

***[108] Food for thought: lessons learned from an audit simulation regarding the development of decision-making***

Marina Kirstein (University of Pretoria) and Rolien Kunz (University of Pretoria)

**Purpose:** The Fourth Industrial Revolution, referred to as the digital revolution, changed the business environment in which organisations are operating as a result of the incorporation of digital technology in their business processes and operations (Appelbaum & Nehmer, 2017; Birt, Wells, Kavanagh, Robb, & Bir, 2018; Landsberg & van den Berg, 2023). These changes have consequently affected the skills required from accounting graduates when entering the workplace (Landsberg & van den Berg, 2023). The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) developed the 2025 Competency Framework addressing the changed skillset required from accounting graduates and included competency requirements for a range of acumens, i.e. business acumen, relational acumen, digital acumen and decision-making acumen<sup>1</sup> (SAICA, 2023). It was reported that, amongst others, the decision-making acumen was inadequately addressed in universities’ curriculums (Landsberg & van den Berg, 2023). However, there are no clear guidelines on developing decision-making acumen. Simulations have been found to be effective in the development of decision-making acumen (De Villiers, 2016). This study applied a framework developed for management education by Tiwari, Nafees, and Krishnan (2014) using a simulation; they identified the learning process, instructor role and team dynamics as factors influencing the development of decision-making acumen. The purpose of this study is to determine the relationships between the factors previously identified by Tiwari et al. (2014), namely the learning process, instructor role and team dynamics and the development of the decision-making acumen in the subject field of Auditing through the use of a simulation as illustrated in Figure 1.

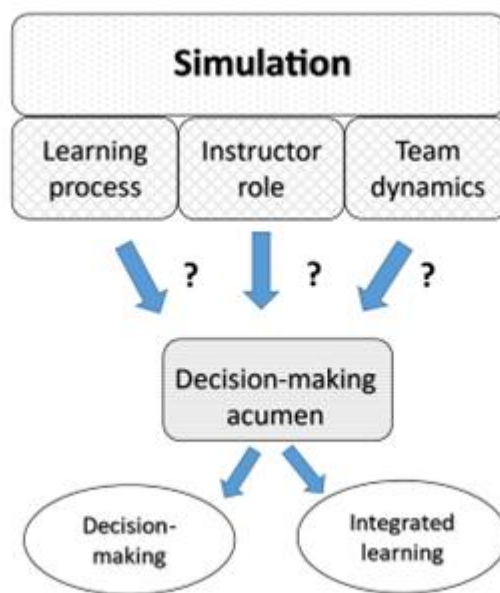


Figure 1: Purpose of the study (Authors' own design)

The simulation used in this study was developed by a university in England to assist in practically applying auditing theory in a business environment through the performance of audit tasks. The students worked in groups of 6 students per group to complete the necessary tasks.

#### **[111] Data analytics for fraud prevention**

Siqi Li (University of Pretoria), Blanche Steyn (University of Pretoria) and Alet Terblanche (University of Pretoria)

**Purpose:** The purpose of the study is to review the literature on how data analytics can be used to identify, detect and prevent fraud in organisations.

#### **[113] The impact of COVID-19 on remuneration structures of South African JSE-listed transportation companies**

Mandie Adriaanse (North-West University), Rikus de Villiers (North-West University) and Elsabé Kilian (North-West University)

**Purpose:** The Black Swan event, COVID-19, had a profound and detrimental impact on the already challenged South African economy, its people and their daily lives. The regulations associated with the nationwide lockdowns crippled most of the sectors and industries, with emphasis on the transportation sector. Travel restrictions, social distancing requirements and bans on the sale of certain items had a severe impact on the performance and operations of companies in this sector. The repercussions of declining financial performance among these companies were transferred to employees through measures such as salary reductions, retrenchments and reduced work for reduced pay. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered how business is conducted, how the economy operates and how work and the remuneration of employees are approached. The question then follows as to what degree and in which manner remuneration was impacted.

This study aimed to analyse the impact of the pandemic, if any, on the executive remuneration structures of South African JSE-listed transportation companies. Additionally, it seeks to identify changes to the intangible remuneration components offered to employees within these companies.

***[115] Do remuneration governance and financial leverage impact pay-performance link?***

Nomanyano Primrose Mnyaka-Rulwa (Walter Sisulu University) and Joseph Akande (Walter Sisulu University)

**Purpose:** This study used pay-performance lenses to examine whether leverage and remuneration governance, as monitoring tools of executives' opportunistic conduct, mitigate managerial power issues, which manifest in the form of excessive executive pay. Agency and managerial power theories backed up this study.

***[116] A matrix-based approach to assess the risks of machine learning on IFRS 9 expected credit loss***

Siyabonga Ngwenya (Stellenbosch University) and Christiaan Lamprecht (Stellenbosch University)

**Purpose:** The evolution of technology continues to pose a challenge for businesses, particularly in the financial sector (Mbizi, 2022). Despite the challenges, the banking industry has been taking advantage of technological advancements since the 2008 global financial crisis, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The introduction of technology, such as machine learning (ML), in the accounting space, as mentioned in the SAICA 2025 vision, aligns with the 4th Industrial Revolution and automation, as machines steadily replace humans in certain functions (Emekaponuzo, 2017).

Technological advancements include ML in measuring financial statement items such as loans and advances. ML is a sub-section of computer science that uses data and algorithms to enable artificial intelligence to perform functions, simulate how humans learn, and gradually improve the accuracy of its results (Sami, 2002).

The study was motivated by the introduction of the IFRS 9 accounting standard, which replaced IAS 39, as well as the evolution of technology in recent years. IFRS 9 is forward-looking in its measurement of the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) of loans and advances and is ideally suited to the use of ML technology. Moreover, the banking industry is facing large volumes of data, and the introduction of machine learning automation increases these risks (Li, 2018). However, introducing ML and ML algorithms to assess customer credit risk will come with benefits and associated risks (Thiel and Raaij, 2019). This study, therefore, aims to develop a matrix that can be deployed to assess the risks of introducing machine learning in IFRS 9 ECL measurement.

***[118] The impact of social media on sustainability performance of JSE listed entities***

Cheyney Travis (University of Johannesburg), Carley Chetty (University of Johannesburg) and Akona Gazi-Babana (University of Johannesburg)

**Purpose:** The objective of this research is to determine how social media platforms, particularly Instagram, impact South African listed entities' sustainability performance, using environmental, social and governance (ESG) scores.