ERSC
Volume 15 No.2 September 2026
Pp 69-78- ersc@mandela.ac.za
ISSN: 2221-4070
DOI: https://doi.org/10.17159/2221-4070/2026/v15i0a6
Educational Research for Social Change (ERSC)

Reframing Graduate Unemployment in Zimbabwe: Epistemic Injustice, Academicisation, and the Marginalisation of Informal Sector Knowledge

Rosemary Farayi Masaire
ORCID No: 0009-0009-2605-9266
University of Zimbabwe
rmasaire@bmse.uz.ac.zw

Joseph Mesuwini
ORCID No: 0000-0001-8137-7333
University of the Witwatersrand
joseph.mesuwini@wits.ac.za

Abstract

Graduate unemployment remains a persistent challenge in Zimbabwe despite the increasing emphasis on employability in higher education. Dominant explanations have largely attributed this problem to a skills mismatch between graduates and labour market demands. This paper challenges such interpretations by arguing that the crisis is rooted in deeper epistemic and structural dynamics. Drawing on decolonial theory, the concept of epistemic injustice, and critical pedagogy, the study examined how Eurocentric epistemologies, reinforced through processes of academicisation and the marketisation of higher education, continue to shape knowledge production and validation. The paper demonstrates that formal education systems privilege institutionalised and abstract forms of knowledge while marginalising Indigenous knowledge systems and informal-sector practices, which remain central to Zimbabwe's socioeconomic landscape. This epistemic hierarchy produces a misalignment between higher education and lived economic realities, limiting graduates' capacity to engage meaningfully with diverse livelihood pathways. By reconceptualising the informal sector as a legitimate site of knowledge and innovation, the paper advances the notion of epistemic pluralism as a framework for rethinking higher education. It concludes that addressing graduate unemployment requires not only policy and curricular reform, but a fundamental reorientation of the epistemic foundations of the university towards inclusivity, contextual relevance, and social justice.

Keywords: Academicisation; Decoloniality; Epistemic Injustice; Graduate Unemployment; Indigenous Knowledge; Informal Sector; Higher Education; Zimbabwe

Copyright: **© Masaire & Mesuwini**

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License, which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Introduction

Graduate unemployment remains one of the most persistent and widely debated challenges confronting higher education systems in Zimbabwe (Chimbunde & Brown, 2025) and across the Global South. In response, we note that universities have increasingly embraced the discourse of employability, restructuring curricula and pedagogical practices to align with labour market demands. This shift has been further reinforced by policy frameworks such as Heritage-Based Education 5.0, which emphasise innovation, industrialisation, and the production of job-ready graduates (Sunzuma et al., 2025a). However, despite these reforms, it appears that the anticipated outcomes have not materialised. Large numbers of graduates continue to experience unemployment, underemployment, or precarious engagement in the informal sector (Mangena, 2024). This raises a critical question: "Why does an education system explicitly oriented towards employability continue to produce graduates who struggle to secure meaningful livelihoods?" Dominant explanations have largely framed this problem as a skills mismatch, suggesting that graduates lack the competencies required by employers (Dube, 2019). While this perspective has informed numerous policy interventions, it remains analytically limited. It assumes that employability is a neutral and technical issue, thereby overlooking the deeper epistemic and structural conditions that shape both education and labour markets (Garwe & Thondhlana, 2023). This paper argues that the crisis of graduate unemployment in Zimbabwe cannot be fully understood without interrogating the epistemic foundations of higher education. We contend that the continued dominance of Eurocentric epistemologies, reinforced through processes of academisation and the marketisation of knowledge, has produced a misalignment between formal education and the socioeconomic realities of the majority. In this context, Indigenous knowledge systems and informal-sector practices are systematically marginalised, despite their centrality to everyday economic life.

Drawing on decolonial theory, the concept of epistemic injustice, and critical pedagogy, this paper reframes graduate unemployment as an epistemic and structural problem rather than merely an economic one (Ncube, 2025). It highlights how the privileging of formal, institutionalised knowledge excludes alternative ways of knowing, thereby limiting both the relevance of education and the capacity of graduates to navigate diverse economic environments. Centring the informal sector as a legitimate site of knowledge production guides the paper in challenging dominant assumptions about what constitutes valuable knowledge, and proposes a more inclusive, pluralistic framework for higher education. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing debates on decolonisation, curriculum reform, and the role of universities in postcolonial societies. Despite increasing attention to decolonial approaches in African higher education, existing studies often overlook how epistemic injustices shape student experiences and curriculum design (Hwami & Bedeker, 2025; Motala et al., 2021; Ncube, 2025). This paper argues that embedding African Indigenous epistemologies and critical pedagogy in university systems is essential not only for promoting epistemic justice but also for fostering authentic learning that addresses social and employment challenges in postcolonial contexts.

TVET, Employability, and Graduate Transitions

Building on dominant employability-oriented perspectives, a growing body of literature has examined the persistent challenges faced by university graduates in transitioning from education to work (Bhusal, 2026; Zaabi, 2025). Yahui and Henry Dagogo (2025) provide a comprehensive synthesis of these challenges, arguing that graduate unemployment is shaped by a complex interplay of structural and individual factors, including limited practical experience, weak career guidance systems, and rapidly evolving labour market demands driven by digital transformation. Their analysis highlights the increasing limitations of educational credentials as reliable signals of productivity, noting that degrees often function as imperfect proxies in crowded labour markets, thereby contributing to credential inflation without guaranteeing job readiness.

This insight is significant because it challenges the assumption that expanding access to higher education will necessarily improve employment outcomes. Instead, it suggests that the proliferation of credentials may dilute their signalling value, intensifying competition among graduates while leaving underlying structural constraints unaddressed. In response, the literature increasingly advocates for demand-linked and experiential learning models such as work-integrated learning (Mesuwini, 2021), internships, and apprenticeship systems, which are seen to be enhancing job readiness and facilitating smoother school-to-work transitions.

However, while these interventions represent important pedagogical innovations, they remain largely embedded in the same employability paradigm that prioritises labour market insertion as the primary objective of education. As such, they tend to focus on improving the alignment between graduates and existing labour market structures, rather than interrogating the adequacy or inclusivity of those structures themselves. This limitation becomes evident in contexts where formal employment opportunities are structurally constrained.

Empirical studies from the African context reinforce these concerns. For instance, Ncube et al. (2018), in their study of unemployed graduates in South Africa, identify skills mismatch, mass enrolment, and limited employment opportunities as key drivers of graduate unemployment. Importantly, their findings also highlight the socioeconomic and psychological consequences of unemployment, as well as the adaptive strategies employed by graduates, including self-employment, informal work, and continued education. Similarly, Mokibelo and Seru (2020) demonstrate that students often experience a disjuncture between theoretical instruction and practical application, compounded by limited exposure to real-world work environments and inadequate institutional support.

Taken together, these studies reveal a persistent pattern; while higher education systems emphasise employability, they frequently fail to provide learners with meaningful pathways into sustainable livelihoods. Moreover, the solutions proposed, such as curriculum reform, increased industry engagement, and expanded experiential learning, remain largely oriented towards improving performance in a formal labour market that is itself exclusionary and limited in capacity. This suggests that the problem extends beyond issues of skills mismatch or curriculum design. Rather, it points to a deeper structural and epistemic tension in education systems, where certain forms of knowledge and pathways to economic participation are privileged over others. In this regard, the focus on employability may inadvertently obscure alternative forms of livelihood generation, especially those rooted in informal economies and community-based knowledge systems.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative, interpretive approach grounded in conceptual and critical analysis of secondary data (Andrews et al., 2012). Rather than generating primary empirical data, the paper drew on a wide range of scholarly literature, policy documents, and existing research on higher education, employability, decolonial theory (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018), and Indigenous knowledge systems in Zimbabwe and comparable contexts. The analytical approach is informed by decolonial and critical theoretical frameworks, which guide the interrogation of power relations embedded in knowledge production and educational structures. Through thematic analysis, key patterns and debates in the literature are identified and synthesised regarding epistemic hierarchies, the marginalisation of informal-sector knowledge, and the limitations of employability-driven education.

This methodology is appropriate given the paper's objective to develop a theoretically grounded and contextually informed critique of higher education. It enables the study to move beyond descriptive accounts and engage in deeper conceptual exploration of the epistemic dimensions of graduate unemployment. While the study does not claim empirical generalisability, it offers analytical insights relevant for policy, practice, and future research in Zimbabwe and other postcolonial contexts.

Academisation, Epistemic Hierarchies and the Political Economy of Knowledge

The marginalisation of informal-sector knowledge and the persistence of graduate unemployment must be situated in a broader critique of higher education as both an epistemic and political project (Mhlanga et al., 2025). While earlier discussion has highlighted the dominance of Eurocentric epistemologies, it is equally important to recognise that these epistemic hierarchies are embedded in historically specific forms of colonialism and contemporary processes of marketisation and commodification.

Decolonial scholarship has been instrumental in foregrounding the concept of coloniality, which emphasises the enduring structures of power that outlive formal colonial rule. However, as Pillay (2021) argues, there is a risk in treating colonialism as a uniform or abstract phenomenon. Drawing on comparative analysis, Pillay demonstrates that colonial experiences were not homogeneous; while some contexts emphasised assimilation, others, such as apartheid education, were structured around enforced difference. This distinction is critical for the Zimbabwean context, where colonial education systems simultaneously imposed Eurocentric epistemologies while differentiating and stratifying African populations. Understanding this dual logic complicates simplistic narratives of epistemic domination and calls for context-sensitive approaches to decolonisation. This insight reinforces the argument that epistemic hierarchies in higher education are not merely intellectual, but institutional and material.

As Serrano et al. (2018) and Lambert et al. (2007) illustrate, contemporary universities are increasingly shaped by processes of marketisation and commodification, in which knowledge is valued primarily for its economic utility. In such frameworks, learning is often reduced to measurable outcomes, employability metrics, and credential acquisition. This instrumental orientation reinforces academisation by privileging formal, standardised knowledge while marginalising experiential (Smith-Tolken, 2010), community-based (Aneke et al., 2025; Kalmin, 2025), and informal forms of knowing. The rise of employability discourse must therefore be understood not only as a response to labour market demands, but also as part of a broader transformation of higher education into a market-oriented institution. This creates a paradox; while universities claim to prepare students for employment, they simultaneously devalue the very forms of knowledge that are most relevant to local economic realities in the informal sector.

Critical pedagogy offers an important counterpoint to these trends by reasserting the transformative and emancipatory potential of education. Giroux (2009) argues that higher education should play a central role in fostering critical citizenship and democratic engagement, rather than merely producing market-ready graduates. Similarly, McArthur (2010) emphasises that education must be oriented towards social justice, requiring critique and also collective and multi-level transformation. In this framework, knowledge is not neutral, but deeply entangled with power, identity, and social relations. However, as Serrano et al. (2018) note, the implementation of critical pedagogy in contemporary universities is fraught with tensions in relation to assessment and student expectations. The demand for measurable academic success often conflicts with efforts to promote authentic, contextually grounded learning. This tension is pronounced in postcolonial contexts, where students navigate competing pressures to succeed in Eurocentric academic systems while remaining connected to local realities. At the same time, critiques from decolonial scholarship caution against uncritical adoption of its frameworks. As highlighted in earlier discussion, Naicker (2024) warns that decolonial theory can sometimes reproduce reductive binaries and essentialist assumptions. Similarly, broader debates in global decolonial thought, including those associated with scholars such as Cooper (2005), reveal tensions between different genealogies of colonialism and differing emphases on historical specificity versus structural continuity. These debates underscore the importance of adopting a reflexive and pluralistic approach to epistemic transformation. Extending these concerns into contemporary knowledge systems, Mohamed et al. (2020) demonstrate how even emerging fields such as artificial

intelligence reproduce colonial patterns of power unless deliberately reoriented. Their emphasis on reverse pedagogies and the inclusion of marginalised epistemologies highlights the continued relevance of decolonial thinking beyond traditional educational domains.

These perspectives suggest that the crisis of employability in Zimbabwe cannot be reduced to a mismatch between skills and jobs. Rather, it reflects a deeper contradiction in higher education: the coexistence of Eurocentric epistemic dominance, market-driven educational reforms, and the marginalisation of locally grounded knowledge systems (Woldegiorgis, 2025). Academisation, in this sense, operates as both an epistemic and economic mechanism that privileges certain forms of knowledge while excluding others. Crucially, this exclusion has material consequences. By delegitimising informal-sector knowledge, higher education systems contribute to a disconnect between formal education and the lived economic practices that sustain most of the population. Informal economic activities, far from being peripheral, constitute complex, adaptive, and knowledge-intensive systems (Solaja et al., 2026). Yet, their exclusion from formal curricula reinforces their marginal status and limits opportunities for innovation, recognition, and development.

Discussion

The Employability Paradox in Zimbabwean Higher Education

The preceding analysis reveals a fundamental contradiction at the heart of Zimbabwean higher education while universities increasingly orient themselves towards employability, graduates continue to experience persistent unemployment and underemployment. This paradox cannot be sufficiently explained by a simple skills mismatch narrative. Rather, it reflects a deeper structural misalignment between the epistemic foundations of higher education and the socioeconomic realities in which graduates are expected to operate (Boughey & McKenna, 2021).

Existing literature indicates that higher education systems privilege formal, standardised, and theoretically oriented knowledge, often detached from the lived economic contexts of the majority (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). In Zimbabwe, where the informal sector constitutes a dominant component of the economy, this disconnect becomes pronounced (Moyo & Gumbo, 2021). The emphasis on formal employment pathways marginalises alternative economic trajectories, leaving graduates ill-prepared to navigate or innovate in informal economic spaces. This suggests that employability, as currently framed, is not a neutral or objective goal, but a socially constructed outcome shaped by historically rooted epistemic hierarchies. Consequently, the failure of graduates to secure employment may be less a reflection of individual deficiency and more an indication of systemic misalignment.

The Informal Sector as a Site of Knowledge and Innovation

A critical insight emerging from the literature is the reconceptualisation of the informal sector, not as a residual or survivalist space, but as a dynamic site of knowledge production. Informal economic practices such as carpentry, welding, tailoring, and small-scale entrepreneurship embody complex skill sets, adaptive strategies, and context-specific innovations (Tereza & Jiri, 2026). These practices challenge dominant assumptions in formal education systems that equate knowledge with codified, institutionalised forms. Instead, they highlight the existence of embodied, experiential, and socially embedded knowledge systems that are highly responsive to local needs and constraints. However, despite their sophistication, these knowledge systems remain largely excluded from formal recognition. This exclusion is rooted in the epistemic hierarchies discussed earlier, which privilege abstract, decontextualised knowledge over practical and contextually grounded forms of knowing (Sunzuma et al., 2025b). As a result, the informal sector is simultaneously relied upon for economic survival and dismissed as epistemically inferior by established industry and the elite. This contradiction

reinforces the argument that addressing graduate unemployment requires not only economic reform, but also a fundamental rethinking of what counts as knowledge in higher education.

Epistemic Disjuncture and Graduate Identity

The marginalisation of Indigenous and informal knowledge systems has significant implications for graduate identity and self-perception. Students are socialised in university environments that valorise Eurocentric epistemologies, often internalising the notion that legitimate knowledge is external, formal, and detached from their lived experiences. This creates an epistemic disjuncture in which graduates find themselves caught between two worlds:

- A formal education system that prepares them for limited and often inaccessible employment opportunities.
- A socioeconomic reality in which informal and locally grounded knowledge systems are more immediately relevant (Motala, 2025).

The result is, in our view, economic frustration and a form of epistemic alienation, where graduates may perceive engagement with the informal sector as a failure rather than a viable and legitimate pathway. This aligns with broader arguments on epistemic injustice, where certain forms of knowledge and by extension, certain identities, are systematically devalued (Bacevic, 2023). Importantly, this disjuncture is reinforced by institutional practices that prioritise certification, standardisation, and academic performance over creativity, adaptability, and contextual relevance. In this sense, the crisis of employability is also a crisis of meaning, in which education fails to affirm the value of diverse ways of knowing and being

Reframing Employability Through Epistemic Pluralism

Addressing these challenges requires a shift from a narrow focus on employability towards a broader framework of epistemic pluralism. Such an approach recognises the legitimacy of multiple knowledge systems and seeks to create meaningful intersections between them. In practical terms, this involves:

- Integrating Indigenous knowledge systems into curricula in substantive, rather than symbolic, ways.
- Recognising the informal sector as a legitimate site of learning and innovation.
- Developing pedagogical approaches that value experiential and community-based knowledge.
- Rethinking assessment practices to accommodate diverse forms of knowledge expression (Chipindi, 2026; Mandikonza, 2019).

Importantly, this does not imply a rejection of Western epistemologies, but rather a move towards a more inclusive and dialogical framework in which different knowledge systems can coexist and inform one another. This aligns with calls for decolonial and critical pedagogical approaches that emphasise reflexivity, inclusivity, and social relevance.

Towards a Contextually Grounded Model of Higher Education

The discussion points towards the need for a contextually grounded model of higher education in Zimbabwe, one that is responsive to local realities while remaining globally engaged. Such a model would move beyond the binary of formal versus informal; instead, fostering hybrid forms of knowledge that draw on both institutional and community-based practices. Frameworks such as Heritage-Based Education 5.0 provide a potential starting point in their emphasis on innovation, community engagement, and the integration of local knowledge systems (Gudyanga & Nyoni, 2025; Mutale, 2025; Mutseekwa, 2024). However, as earlier analysis suggests, the success of such initiatives depends on their ability to move beyond policy rhetoric and effect meaningful epistemic transformation in institutions. This requires not only curricular reform but also a shift in institutional culture, resource

allocation, and pedagogical practice. Without such changes, efforts to address graduate unemployment risk remain superficial, addressing symptoms rather than underlying causes.

Recommendations

This paper set out to interrogate the paradox of graduate unemployment in Zimbabwe in the context of an increasingly employability-oriented higher education system. Moving beyond dominant skills mismatch narratives, the analysis has demonstrated that this paradox is rooted in deeper epistemic, institutional, and structural contradictions embedded within the academy. At its core, the study has argued that higher education in Zimbabwe remains shaped by enduring forms of Eurocentric epistemic dominance, reinforced through processes of academisation and the marketisation of knowledge. These processes privilege formal, standardised, and abstract knowledge systems while marginalising Indigenous, experiential, and informal-sector knowledges. As a result, universities continue to produce graduates who are aligned with narrow and often unattainable formal employment pathways, while simultaneously being distanced from the economic realities that define the majority of livelihoods.

The findings of this paper suggest that the crisis of graduate unemployment is not merely an economic issue, but fundamentally an epistemic crisis. It reflects a misalignment between what is taught, how it is taught, and the contexts in which graduates must operate. The persistent devaluation of informal-sector knowledge not only limits economic opportunities but also contributes to forms of epistemic injustice that undermine student identity, agency, and capacity for innovation. By foregrounding the informal sector as a legitimate and dynamic site of knowledge production, this study challenges deficit-oriented perspectives that frame it as marginal or underdeveloped. Instead, it positions informal economic practices as repositories of complex, adaptive, and contextually relevant knowledge systems that remain largely excluded from formal recognition. Bridging this divide requires more than incremental reform; it necessitates a fundamental rethinking of the epistemic foundations of higher education. In light of these insights, the paper advances the following recommendations:

Epistemic Reorientation of the Curriculum

Higher education institutions should move beyond tokenistic inclusion of Indigenous knowledge systems towards their substantive integration into curricula. This requires rethinking what counts as valid knowledge and creating space for multiple epistemologies to coexist in teaching and learning processes.

Recognition of the Informal Sector as a Knowledge Economy

Policymakers and universities must formally recognise the informal sector as a legitimate site of knowledge, innovation, and skills development. This could include:

- Structured partnerships between universities and informal-sector practitioners.
- Work-integrated learning models rooted in community contexts.
- Certification frameworks that validate experiential learning.

Pedagogical Transformation

There is a need to adopt pedagogical approaches informed by critical pedagogy and decolonial theory, which emphasise contextual relevance, student agency, community engagement, and reflexive and dialogical learning. Such approaches would enable students to engage critically with multiple knowledge systems and better navigate complex socioeconomic environments.

Reform of Assessment Practices

Assessment systems should be redesigned to accommodate diverse forms of knowledge expression, including practical, experiential, and community-based outputs. This would challenge the dominance of purely theoretical evaluation and create more inclusive measures of competence.

Strengthening Policy Implementation (Education 5.0)

While frameworks such as Heritage-Based Education 5.0 provide a promising foundation, their impact depends on effective implementation. This requires adequate funding, institutional commitment, capacity building for educators, and development of Afrocentric academic resources.

Embracing Epistemic Pluralism

Finally, higher education must embrace an epistemologically plural framework that avoids both Eurocentric dominance and reductive binaries. A dialogical approach that allows for the coexistence and interaction of multiple knowledge systems offers the most viable pathway towards relevance, inclusivity, and sustainability.

Conclusion

The transformation of higher education in Zimbabwe, and in similar postcolonial contexts, cannot be achieved through technical adjustments alone. It requires confronting the historical and structural conditions that continue to shape knowledge production and validation. By re-centring marginalised epistemologies and recognising the value of locally grounded knowledge systems, universities can move towards a more inclusive and contextually responsive model of education. Such a transformation holds the potential not only to address graduate unemployment but also to cultivate graduates who are critically engaged, socially grounded, and capable of contributing meaningfully to the reconstruction and development of their societies.

References

Andrews, L., Higgins, A., Andrews, M. W., & Lalor, J. G. (2012). Classic grounded theory to analyse secondary data: Reality and reflections. *Grounded Theory Review*, *11*(1), 12–26. https://groundedtheoryreview.org/index.php/gtr/article/view/150

Aneke, M. N., Ewurum, N. I., & Owoh, A. T. (2025, June 17). *Reviving Indigenous knowledge through apprenticeship: The role of cultural heritage in the decolonization of education and skills training*. [Paper presentation]. Faculty of Education Staff Workshop: Research Project Supervision, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, Nigeria. https://eprints.gouni.edu.ng/5191/

Bacevic, J. (2023). Epistemic injustice and epistemic positioning: Towards an intersectional political economy. *Current Sociology, 71*(6), 1122–1140. https://doi.org/10.1177/00113921211057609

Bhusal, R. (2026). Applied professional formation: A conceptual framework for rethinking accounting education in the digital age. *Accounting Education*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/09639284.2026.2672134

Boughey, C., & McKenna, S. (2021). *Understanding higher education. Alternative Perspectives*. African Minds.

Chimbunde, P., & Brown, B. (2025). Rethinking the value of education amid the economic crisis: The experiences of university graduates. *Education Sciences*, *15*(12), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15121661

Chipindi, F. M. (2026). Pluriversal ecologies of knowledge: An African agenda for higher education. *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*, *10*(1), 24–49. https://journals.unza.zm/index.php/jlt/article/view/1768

Cooper, F. (2005). *Colonialism in question: Theory, knowledge, history*. University of California Press.

Dube, S. P. (2019). *Examining relations between educational policy and higher education students' access to industry in Zimbabwe* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Stellenbosch University.

Garwe, E. C., & Thondhlana, J. (2023). Trajectory towards developing skills for the future: A decolonial perspective from Zimbabwe's higher education sector. In M. Khare (Ed.), *Sustainable and dynamic graduate employability* (pp. 204–222). Routledge.

Giroux, H. A. (2009). The attack on higher education and the necessity of critical pedagogy. In: S. L. Macrine (Ed.), *Critical pedagogy in uncertain times: Education, politics, and public life* (pp. 11–26). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230100893_2

Gudyanga, E., & Nyoni, E. (2025). Heritage-based education and what it means to private universities in Zimbabwe. *Eureka: Journal of Educational Research, 4*(1), 49–60. https://doi.org/10.56773/ejer.v4i1.89

Hwami, M., & Bedeker, M. (2025). Reimagining representation and recognition of the "other" in international higher education (IHE): Towards epistemic justice. In I. Bogotch, J. Brooks, & F. English (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational leadership and social (in)justice: Critical perspectives* (pp. 1–28). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-56275-4_104-1

Kalmin, A. (2025). *Championing pedagogical innovators: Supporting and empowering informal leaders in higher education teaching & learning spaces* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Western Ontario.

Lambert, C., Parker, A., & Neary, M. (2007). Entrepreneurialism and critical pedagogy: Reinventing the higher education curriculum. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *12*(4), 525–537. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510701415672

Mandikonza, C. (2019). Integrating Indigenous knowledge practices as context and concepts for the learning of curriculum science: A methodological exploration. *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education, 35*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.4314/sajee.v35i1.13

Mangena, T. (2024). Precarity of the (employed and unemployed) educated in Zimbabwe in Valerie Tagwira's *Trapped* (2020). *Scrutiny2, 28*(1), 20–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/18125441.2024.2320891

McArthur, J. (2010). Achieving social justice within and through higher education: The challenge for critical pedagogy. *Teaching in Higher Education, 15*(5), 493–504. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2010.491906

Mesuwini, J. (2021). *Technical and vocational education and training lecturer learning through work-integrated learning: A study of three colleges in Kwazulu-Natal* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Durban University of Technology.

Mhlanga, N., Juan, A., & Cooper, A. (2025). Complex entanglements: Graduate transitions in Africa's knowledge economy and beyond. In M.-C. Pantea, K. Roberts, & D.-C. Dabija (Eds.), *Higher education and work in the knowledge economy: Power, prestige and precarity* (pp. 155–174). Springer.

Mohamed, S., Png, M. T., & Isaac, W. (2020). Decolonial AI: Decolonial theory as sociotechnical foresight in artificial intelligence. *Philosophy & Technology*, *33*(4), 659–684. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-020-00405-8

Mokibelo, E., & Seru, L. (2020). Learning for employment: Challenges encountered by students. *Open Access Library Journal*, *7*, e6549. https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1106549

Motala, S. (2025). Beyond decolonisation: Joining the dots—between the material and the epistemic in higher education in South Africa. *Comparative Education, 61*(3), 407–424. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2025.2463808

Motala, S., Sayed, Y., & de Kock, T. (2021). Epistemic decolonisation in reconstituting higher education pedagogy in South Africa: The student perspective. *Teaching in Higher Education, 26*(7/8), 1002–1018. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1947225

Moyo, I., & Gumbo, T. (2021). *Urban informality in South Africa and Zimbabwe*. Springer. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-030-65485-6.pdf

Mutale, J. (2025). Post-COVID-19 Review: Challenges and determinants of e-learning adoption with a focus on heritage-based curriculum in Victoria Falls Cluster, Hwange District Secondary Schools,

Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 9*, 130–150. https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.903SEDU0011

Mutseekwa, C. (2024). Epistemic (in)justice in science teacher education: A gaze through Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Education 5.0. *The Dyke*, *18*(1), 1–24. https://journals.co.za/doi/full/10.10520/ejc-dyke_v18_n1_a10

Naicker, V. (2024). The problem of epistemological critique in contemporary decolonial theory. In G. Hull (Ed.), *Intellectual decolonisation: Critical perspectives* (pp. 36–57). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003517849

Ncube, M. E. (2025). Towards a decolonial higher education: Praxis and theoretical foundations. *African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies, 7*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.51415/ajims.v7i1.1278

Ncube, D., Mudau, T. J., & Kgotlhane, B. E. (2018). An exploration of challenges faced by unemployed university graduate students: A case of a rural university in the Limpopo Province. *Gender and Behaviour*, *16*(2), 11465–11484. https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/EJC-131e6ea038

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2018). The dynamics of epistemological decolonisation in the 21st century: Towards epistemic freedom. *The Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, *40*(1), 16–45. https://doi.org/10.35293/srsa.v40i1.268

Pillay, S. (2021). The problem of colonialism: Assimilation, difference, and decolonial theory in Africa. *Critical Times*, *4*(3), 389–416. https://doi.org/10.1215/26410478-9355201

Serrano, M. M., O'Brien, M., Roberts, K., & Whyte, D. (2018). Critical pedagogy and assessment in higher education: The ideal of "authenticity" in learning. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, *19*(1), 9–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787417723244

Smith-Tolken, A. R. (2010). *Community engagement at a higher education institution: Exploring a theoretical grounding for scholarly-based service-related process* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Stellenbosch.

Solaja, O. M., Osifo, O. K., Obasan, T. O., & Ferreira, M. M. (2026). Decolonising business strategy in the circular economy: Knowledge asymmetry, informal sector integration and firm-level outcomes. *Knowledge and Process Management*. https://doi.org/10.1002/kpm.70103

Sunzuma, G., Mutseekwa, C., Zezekwa, N., & Chikerema, T. (2025a). *Empowering transformation through STEAM: Equity, justice, and community innovation*. Deep Science Publishing.

Sunzuma, G., Zezekwa, N., Mudzamiri, E., & Chikuvadze, P. (2025b). Indigenous knowledge systems integration into STEM education: A Zimbabwean perspective. Deep Science Publishing.

Tereza, H., & Jiri, R. (2026). Implicit circularity in the city: How makerspaces enable everyday repair, reuse, and learning. *Sustainability, 18*(10), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.3390/su18105175

Woldegiorgis, E. T. (2025). Hybrid knowledge systems: An alternative pathway to decolonising higher education in Africa. *Comparative Education, 61*(3), 354–372. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2025.2463805

Yahui, S., & Henry Dagogo, B. (2025). University graduates and employment challenges: Causes, impacts, and countermeasures. *Peta International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, *4*(3), 63–78. https://doi.org/10.59088/pij.v4i3.81

Zaabi, Y. M. S. (2025). *Linking student assessment and graduate employability: A study in the Omani higher education context* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Birmingham.