

# EDITORIAL: Psychology — a multi-layered reality

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This is the sixth issue of the *South African Journal of Psychology* since I became editor in February 2008, yet, for various reasons, this is my first editorial. I am well aware that any new editor will need great energy, enthusiasm, and dedication if he or she is to maintain the standard of previous volumes. This is indeed a daunting task in view of the outstanding work done by Martin Terre Blanche, previous editor, and his team. I would like to extend belated thanks to them for the way in which they handled all editorial activities, including giving empathic and timely feedback on submissions.

The past few months have been a demanding yet productive period: Issue 39(3) is almost ready to be moved to print. Our core editorial staff, including PsySSA president, Norman Duncan, president elect, Kopano Ratele, our consulting editor, Anthony Pillay, our consulting editor: statistics, Prof. Tyrone Pretorius, our copy editors, Willy Nel and Martin Strous, and our publishing editor, Erna Kinsey, meet regularly (be it electronically or in person) to discuss issues related to the smooth running of the journal.

I am delighted to announce that Prof. Mark Savickas, Editor: *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* (voted top journal in the Elsevier group from a total of 1,700 titles) visited the University of Pretoria from 18 to 24 April, during which time he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Pretoria. While in South Africa, Prof. Savickas offered invaluable advice on ways to improve our impact factor. He confirmed, for example, that articles that cover meta-analyses of previous research/theoretical considerations and that describe the standardisation of new assessment instruments are generally in great demand (such contributions will therefore be fast-tracked in the future). The *SAJP* should begin to reap the benefits of implementing his insights within the next 12–18 months.

As I page through the current issue of the *SAJP*, I feel honoured to be associated with such a stellar constellation of scholars. In this issue, the reader will encounter a wide range of contributions that reflect multi-faceted research endeavours in a number of psychological fields and that focus attention on current research developments across the spectrum of psychological inquiry. The list of contributions is diverse in terms of institution, gender and international profile. However, more contributions from black scholars would be appreciated, and I would therefore like again to invite established and emerging black researchers to use the *SAJP* as an outlet for their publications.

In the first article, *Exploring religion, race and gender as factors in the life satisfaction and religiosity of young South African adults*, Cynthia Patel, Sarojini Ramgoon and Zubeda Paruk (2009) explore differences in religious and existential well-being, religiosity and life satisfaction among university students across religion, race and gender. Not surprisingly, in line with past research, the correlations found between life satisfaction, religiosity and religious well-being were significant.

The philosophical premise underlying the second article is that theoretical ‘models’ for self-understanding will succeed only if subjectivity is approached as a complex phenomenon defined in terms of necessary internal conflict. In this contribution, aptly entitled “*Know thyself!*” a Lacanian model for understanding subjective complexity, Andrea Hurst (2009) outlines a Lacanian model for self-understanding as an articulation of registers, passions and styles.

Psychologists are well aware of the multiple challenges facing South Africa’s mental health services, which is why the third contribution will be of special interest to readers. Because of the serious mental health service deficits in (especially) non-urban communities, alternative approaches are needed to facilitate access to care. Anthony Pillay, Molelekoa Kometsi and Evy-Terressah

Siyothula (2009) accordingly describe an unusual approach to providing services in outlying areas and state that clinical psychologists should consider developing newer models for providing care and for working outside traditional approaches.

In the fourth contribution, *A qualitative study of the multiple impacts of external workplace violence in two Western Cape communities*, Brett Bowman, Gillian Eagle, Fatima Bhamjee and Anne Crafford (2009) explore the individual, organisational, and community impact of external workplace violence in a South African telecommunications company, as perceived and experienced by victims of such violence and the members of management mandated to manage and prevent the violence. The authors' findings call into question current understandings of the psychologist's role in managing violence in the workplace and suggest ways of re-conceptualising the role and requisite skill-set of psychologists working with or in organisations where violence is an everyday reality.

Articles that deal with the development of new assessment instruments are always popular, and there is therefore little doubt that the fifth contribution, *Measuring meaning in life in South Africa: validation of an instrument developed in the USA*, will be of interest to most *SAJP* readers. Jeremias de Klerk, Adré Boshoff and René van Wyk (2009) contend that investigations into the construct meaning in life is an important focus area of psychological research. Their study demonstrates that the Life Regard Index (LRI), which was developed in the USA for measuring meaning in life, cannot be transferred indiscriminately to a South African sample.

The sixth contribution, *Cognitive processing and narrative discourse production in children with ADHD*, by Sharon Moonsamy, Heila Jordaan and Kirston Greenop (2009), investigates the relationship between cognitive processing and oral narratives. The findings suggest that narrative measures are useful instruments for oral language evaluation in children with ADHD.

Sandra Hoffman's (2009) article, *Some implications of apartheid legacies in South African correctional centres*, stems from research done on the apparently intractable culture of violence in South Africa generally and specifically in South African correctional centres. Hoffman juxtaposes her own voice with the voices of clients, academics, society (as represented in the news media), and staff in the correctional system.

In the eighth article, *Defending a diagnostic pariah: validating the categorisation of dissociative identity disorder*, Craig Traub confirms that the phenomenon of multiple personalities, or dissociative identities, within a single individual has resulted in much debate and discord among mental health care professionals. Traub does not question the existence of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) *per se* but, rather, enquires whether this disorder can be reliably identified and validly categorised. He suggests, among other things, that, depending on the perceived ontology of the disorder, further study should be directed toward parental coping strategies to reduce child abuse.

Emotional intelligence is a widely discussed subject in postmodern society and it is therefore not surprising that *SAJP* contributors have joined in the debate on the relationship between emotional intelligence and other personality issues. In the penultimate contribution, *The relationship between thinking styles and emotional intelligence: an exploratory study*, Murphy and Janeke explore the association between thinking styles and emotional intelligence. They conclude that thinking styles are significant predictors of emotional intelligence and that persons who have high emotional intelligence prefer more complex and creative thinking styles.

In the final contribution, *Addressing career obstacles within a changing higher education work environment: the perspectives of academics*, Cobus Pienaar and Coen Bester contend that changes in higher education institutions (HEI) have contributed to high levels of work stress among academic staff members that impact on job satisfaction and job engagement. Academics at tertiary institutions are increasingly being confronted with specific career obstacles that undermine their job satisfaction and productivity. The authors found that these obstacles are related to remuneration, managing role overload effectively, more effective performance management, more training and development opportunities, more support in individual career management, more effective general management, more support regarding research outputs, the elimination of discriminatory practices, transformation

initiatives, the encouragement of entrepreneurship, the improvement of equipment and working conditions, the creation of job security, and the promotion of networking.

I urge colleagues to submit their contributions in order to stimulate the debate on psychology in South Africa and to help expand the existing network of scholars in South Africa, in the SADC region, and in the rest of the world. Colleagues with ideas for improving the *SAJP* are invited to contact me personally (kobus.maree@up.ac.za). Your feedback, as well as that of the editorial board, will help determine the future direction of the journal. Let us try to be innovative and creative and so keep abreast of the changing times we live in.

I undertake to respond promptly to all submitted manuscripts. In fact, I pledge to give feedback on submissions within 3–5 months.

The editorial board recently took the decision to allow one guest issue a year. Therefore, if you have any suggestions regarding special issues and/or guest editors, please forward them to me.

In conclusion: I wish to thank everybody involved in the editorial and publishing process for their sterling work. Our two associate editors, Willy Nel and Martin Strous, deserve a special word of thanks for their willingness to double as copy editors. A special word of thanks is also due to Ms Erna Kinsey, our publishing editor, for her role in changing the ‘face’ of the journal — not to mention ensuring that it is delivered on time! I would also like to thank Ms Temnotfo Nkambule, our editorial assistant, for her enthusiasm and dedication to the *SAJP*. Finally, I would like to thank all colleagues who have reviewed manuscripts over the past few months. Your willingness to work late into the evenings and over weekends does not go unnoticed.

We are aware that this is a selfless task, undertaken by those who have at heart the interests of colleagues, the journal, and the scholarly community at large. (We wish to remind colleagues that reviewers will receive three CPD points per article reviewed, one of which is for ethics.)

Enjoy reading this issue of the *SAJP* and remember to send in your manuscripts for future issues.

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