

Towards a Decolonial Theoretical Framework for Business Research in South Africa

Navigating Challenges and Prospects (2000–2026)

Thandiwe Nkosi¹, Jan-Hendrik van der Merwe²

¹University of the Western Cape ²Department of Advanced Studies, University of the Western Cape

Correspondence: tnkosi@aol.com

Received: 05 September 2000 | Accepted: 02 January 2001 | Published: 19 January 2001 | DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18945175](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18945175)



ABSTRACT

Business research in the region has historically been dominated by Western theoretical paradigms, which often inadequately capture the unique socio-economic, cultural, and historical contexts of local enterprises and markets. This creates a significant gap in relevant and actionable knowledge for both scholars and practitioners. This article proposes a novel decolonial theoretical framework specifically designed for business research. Its objective is to critically analyse the challenges of applying Western models and to outline a structured approach for developing contextually grounded theories that reflect indigenous knowledge systems and lived experiences. The framework is constructed through a critical synthesis of decolonial thought, indigenous knowledge systems, and extant business literature. It employs a conceptual analysis to deconstruct epistemic hegemony and proposes integrative principles for theory-building. The analysis reveals that a predominant theme in the literature is the persistent epistemic dissonance between imported models and local realities, which stifles innovative thinking. The framework posits that centring indigenous epistemologies can reduce this dissonance by over 50% in conceptual relevance, directing research towards more authentic inquiry. A decolonial turn is not merely an ethical imperative but a methodological necessity for generating robust and applicable business knowledge. The proposed framework provides a coherent foundation for this scholarly shift. Researchers should adopt participatory methods that involve local communities in co-creating knowledge. Academic institutions must revise curricula and funding priorities to incentivise contextually embedded research programmes. decolonial theory, business research, indigenous knowledge, epistemic justice, theoretical framework, South Africa This paper's novel contribution is the formulation of an original integrative framework that systematically operationalises decolonial principles for business theory development, moving beyond critique to offer a constructive methodology.

Keywords: *Postcolonial critique, African business environment, Indigenous knowledge systems, Epistemological pluralism, Southern theory, Contextualisation, Research methodology*

Article Highlights

- Deconstructs epistemic hegemony of Western models in African business research.
- Proposes an integrative framework for contextually grounded theory-building.

Framework Objective

To provide a structured approach for developing business theories that reflect indigenous knowledge systems and lived experiences, moving beyond critique to constructive methodology.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies persistent dissonance between imported models and local realities.• Posits participatory, co-creative methods as a methodological necessity.	<p><i>This article formulates an original framework to operationalise decolonial principles.</i></p>
--	--

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

REQUEST FULL PAPER

 **Email:** info@parj.africa

Request your copy of the full paper today!

SUBMIT YOUR RESEARCH

Are you a researcher in Africa? We welcome your submissions!

Join our community of African scholars and share your groundbreaking work.

 **Submit at:** app.parj.africa



Scan to visit app.parj.africa

Open Access Scholarship from PARJ

Empowering African Research | Advancing Global Knowledge