

# The Experiences and Implications of Bourdieu's Theory on Academic Staff in Three South African Higher Education Institutions

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## **Abstract**

The massification of higher education has led to students entering higher education not only with differences in academic ability, but also with considerable social, economic and cultural differences (Fraser and Killen, 2005). Such differences account for what Bourdieu refers to as 'cultural capital' which students bring into the education arena. Cultural capital is described as knowledge, attitudes, experience etc. which students bring with them when they enter the education system (Bourdieu, 2012; Haralambos et. al., 1995; Robertson, 2013). Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the extent to which academic staff take into consideration the varied cultural capitals that students bring into their classes. The study will cover three Universities in the Eastern Cape Province. The population will comprise of representative samples of lecturers and students from all faculties of the three universities. They will be selected through stratified random sampling. The study will adopt mixed methods design to examine the research problem identified above. Data for the survey will be obtained through self-administered questionnaires to representatives from management, members of staff from ADCs, lecturers and students in the three institutions. Face to face interviews will be held with small samples of lecturers, students, ADCs staff members and university management from two of the four institutions. Observations of lectures will be held in selected classes in three institutions. The researcher will make use of statistical packages (SPSS) which is available within the University to analyse some of the data.

**Keywords:** Bourdieu's theory, dominant group, lecturers, students