

https://dspace.org/

The idea of the 4th industrial revolution: attitudes of academic leaders at an urban South African University and its implications for university practice

Maisiri, Barbara Grace Cynthia

2020
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/30343

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

ABSTRACT

The 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) is the new buzzword in education circles, not least in South Africa. Political leaders, journalists, academic leaders, students and people in general are referring to the current period as the 4IR. This qualitative research sought to ascertain the attitudes of significant academic leaders (University management and lecturers) at an urban South African University to the idea of the 4th Industrial Revolution and its implications for university practice.

An industrial revolution is a period where there are technological inventions that cause a change in the way industry operates, transforming production, consumption and impacting on labour and society as a whole. The 1st Industrial Revolution (1IR) is said to have happened between 1750-1850 in Great Britain which caused a major shift in the way industry operated. This in turn had serious consequences for society. The analytic lenses of the 1IR then provided the conceptual framework to determine the nature of an industrial revolution. This allowed for an analysis of the 4IR which then constituted the conceptual part of the research. The second part of the research was the empirical part which sought to determine the attitudes of academic leaders (lecturers and management) on 4IR.

The research used qualitative methods and interviewed eight of the most influential academic leaders in the institution. The findings showed that the academic leaders had a clear interpretation of what an industrial revolution is. The conclusions reached were

- All participants were able to identify the components entailed in an industrial revolution and the 4IR in particular.
- As academic leaders, participants believe we are in the 4IR and the country has got to put measures in place so as to move the country forward despite the challenges it faces as a developing nation. They feared being left behind economically if the country does not move forward into 4IR.
- On education, the participants believe the university should put in place infrastructure capable of 4IR technologies, train lecturers, change the curriculum, implement blended methods and change how they teach and learn so as to move into the 4IR.