

Workplace counselling in the changing world of work: An industrial psychology perspective

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FOR THE READER'S ATTENTION

The reader is reminded of the following:

- This mini-dissertation was submitted in the form of a research article. This mini-dissertation consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction, Chapter 2 contains the research article and in Chapter 3, the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations are discussed.
- The compilation of the mini-dissertation was completed following the guidelines prescribed by the School of Industrial Psychology and Human Resource Management at North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). The referencing guidelines of the Publication Manual (7th ed.) of the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed.
- Each chapter of this mini-dissertation has its own reference list.

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DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER

I, Sendry Moralo, hereby declare that ‘Workplace counselling in the changing world of work: An industrial psychology perspective’ is my own work and that the views and opinions expressed in this study are those of the author and relevant literature references as shown in the references.

I further declare that the content of this research will not be submitted for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sendry Moralo', with a small dot at the end.

Sendry Moralo

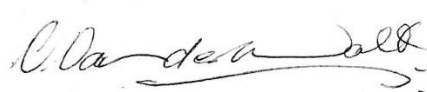
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DECLARATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR



30 March 2021

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SUMMARY

Title: Workplace counselling in the changing world of work: An industrial psychology perspective

Key words: Automation, changing world of work, digitisation, fourth industrial revolution, industrial psychology practitioners, workplace counselling

Workplace counselling is psychological support provided by the employers to the employees who are experiencing psychological and social problems. The changing world of work, highlighted by the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), introduces many changes such as digitalisation and automation in all sectors of work, which may influence employees' wellbeing. Organisations and employees are confronted with the challenges of continuously adjusting and adapting to the changes introduced by the changing world of work. The onset of COVID-19 has exacerbated the implementation of these changes in all industries – for instance, the manner in which people live and connect, and how work is done, and these changes alter what work means to individuals. However, the main threat of the 4IR is job loss, which will exacerbate the inequity. Many employees experience fear and anxiety that these new technologies, such as digitalisation and automation, will eventually replace them in organisations. Thus, organisations should provide workplace counselling, which is the most appropriate support to provide to employees who are distressed. Within organisations, workplace counselling is mostly rendered by industrial psychology practitioners in their role as workplace counsellors.

The objective of the present study was to explore workplace counselling in the changing world of work as viewed from an industrial psychology perspective. A qualitative research design was employed in this study based on social constructivism. The researcher used a qualitative descriptive research strategy to provide a vehicle for the narratives of industrial psychology practitioners concerning rendering workplace counselling in the changing world of work. For data-collection, a homogeneous sampling technique was applied. The target population were industrial psychology practitioners (N=22) registered as psychologists and intern psychologists in the category of industrial psychology. The researcher used semi- structured interviews,

which were conducted online through teleconferencing applications such as Zoom and Microsoft teams; and content analysis was employed to analyse the data.

The participants indicated that employees find it difficult to adjust to the 4IR because change is taking place at an increasing pace. Such employees are finding it challenging to keep up with it. The participants also indicated that in the changing world of work, technology is essential for optimal functioning. Most participants believed that the onset of COVID-19 led to change accelerating in the workplaces and some participants indicated that COVID-19 drove the 4IR. The findings of this study also highlighted that an industrial psychology practitioner's role in the changing world of work is to enable the organisations to be prepared for the changes presented by the 4IR, by providing counselling, coaching, training, and development initiatives. Furthermore, the results of this study highlighted that organisation should implement an agile approach during change management. This study also recommended that organisations should implement proactive and reactive workplace counselling to facilitate support for the employees in their attempt to deal with transition in the new world of work.

OPSOMMING

Titel: *Workplace counselling in the changing world of work: An industrial psychology perspective* (Werkplekberading in die veranderende werkomgewing: 'n bedryfsielkunde-perspektief)

Sleutelwoorde: Outomatisering, veranderende werkomgewing, digitalisering, vierde industriële revolusie, bedryfsielkunde-praktisyns, werkplekberading

Werkplekberading is sielkundige ondersteuning wat deur die werkgewers aan die werknemers wat sielkundige en sosiale probleme ondervind, gegee word. Die veranderende werkomgewing, beklemtoon deur die vierde industriële revolusie (4IR), het talle veranderinge meegebring soos digitalisering en outomatisering, en hierdie veranderinge vind deurlopend in alle sektore plaas. Die aanvang van COVID-19 het die implementering van hierdie veranderinge in alle industrieë vererger – byvoorbeeld die wyse waarop mense lewe en met mekaar in verbinding tree, en hoe werk uitgevoer word, en hierdie verandering verander dít wat werk vir individue beteken. Organisasies en werknemers word gevolglik gekonfronteer met die uitdagings om voortdurend by die veranderinge, wat deur die veranderende werkomgewing meegebring word, aan te pas en daaraan gewoond te raak. Die hoofbedreiging van die 4IR is egter werksverlies, wat die ongelykheid sal vererger. Talle werknemers ondervind vrees en angs dat hierdie nuwe tegnologieë, soos digitalisering en outomatisering, hulle op die langduur in organisasies sal vervang. Organisasies behoort dus werkplekberading te gee, wat ook die mees toepaslike ondersteuning is om te gee aan werknemers wat stres ondervind. In organisasies word werkplekberading gegee deur bedryfsielkunde-praktisyns in hul rol as werkplekberading.

Die doel van die huidige studie was om werkplekberading in die veranderende werkomgewing te gee, soos gesien vanuit 'n bedryfsielkunde-perspektief. 'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp, gebaseer op sosiale konstruktivisme, is in hierdie studie benut. Die navorser het 'n kwalitatief beskrywende navorsingstrategie gevolg om 'n medium te voorsien vir die narratiewe van bedryfsielkundiges met betrekking tot die bied van werkplekberading in die veranderende werkomgewing. Vir data-insameling is 'n homogene steekproeftegniek aangewend. Die teikenpopulasie was bedryfsielkundiges en interns (N=22). Die navorser het semi-

gestruktureerde onderhoude, via aanlyn, telekonferensie-toepassings soos Zoom en Microsoft-Teams, en inhoudsanalise is aangewend om die data te analiseer.

Die deelnemers het aangedui dat werknemers dit moeilik vind om by die 4IR aan te pas omdat verandering teen 'n toenemende spoed plaasvind. Sodanige werknemers vind dit uitdagend om daarby by te hou. Die deelnemers het ook aangedui dat tegnologie in die veranderende werkomgewing onontbeerlik is vir optimale funksionering. Die resultate het uitgewys dat die mees deelnemers geglo het dat die aanvang van COVID-19 gelei het tot die toename in verandering in die werkomgewing. Sommige van die deelnemers het aangedui dat COVID-19 die 4IR aangedryf het. Die bevindinge van hierdie studie het ook uitgelig dat bedryfsielkundiges se rol in die veranderende werkomgewing behels dat hulle die organisasie in staat moet stel om voorbereid te wees op die veranderinge wat die 4IR meebring deur middel van voorligting, afrigting en opleiding, en ontwikkelingsinisiatiewe. Voorts het die resultate van hierdie studie beklemtoon dat organisasies 'n behendige benadering tydens veranderingsbestuur moet volg. Hierdie studie bevel ook aan dat organisasies proaktiewe en reaktiewe werkplekberading moet implementeer om ondersteuning vir die werknemers te fasiliteer in hul poging om oorgang in die nuwe werkomgewing te kan hanteer.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This mini-dissertation focuses on exploring workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective. The problem statement and discussion of the research goals are included in the first chapter, along with an explanation of the research design. A chapter summary is included.

1.1 Problem statement

Mwenzé Ngina (2018) states that workplace counselling plays a pertinent role in assisting employees in addressing social and psychological issues. These typically include navigating changes in the ever-changing world of work since organisations are confronted by the challenge of adjusting and adapting to the changing world of work which is currently evident from the changes introduced by the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) (Armstrong et al., 2018). Bonilla-Molina (2020) emphasises that these changes have since been accelerated as a result of the global pandemic which was necessitated by the onset of covid-19. As such, Arntz et al., (2016) urge that 4IR be recognised globally as an important societal and economic trend, which is influencing many organisations to strive toward digitalising their processes and operations. However, organisations tend to disregard human capabilities in this process of digitalisation (Holmlund et al., 2017). Hence Schwabe and Castellacci (2020) state that the changes introduced by the 4IR may cause the employees to experience stress and anxiety due to their fear of perhaps being replaced by machines and robots in the workplace.

Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2012) state that one of the biggest issues is that employees' existing skills are not capable of dealing with the demands of the new technologies. As the 4IR develops, the inequality will continue to rise in the workforce as fewer jobs can be filled from traditional processes (World Economic Forum, WEF, 2016). Xu et al. (2018) assert that automation and artificial intelligence will be used to replace a large number of job tasks, and the displacement of workers by machines will widen the gap between capital and labour returns. WEF (2017) concurs with Xu et al. (2018) regarding these claims, indicating that 47% of jobs may be replaced by computers in the future. Hattingh (2018) points out that the changes

introduced by the 4IR are transforming the world of work. These changes are not only limited to the workplace; they are changing the way in which we live and how we work, and it is also altering the meaning of work (Schwab, 2017). World Bank (2018) states that the 4IR is introducing changes to work, and it has accelerated the rate at which the employees are required to reskill within the organisations. It is evident that the employees are not prepared to share the workplace with robots and machines. Organisations are required to support them psychologically and emotionally so as to assist them in accepting changes introduced by the 4IR (Lazanyi, 2018).

Changing world of work

The changing world of work has been influenced by four different industrial revolutions with the fifth one making its way. Bonciu (2017) uses the term "industrial revolution" to describe a period of great change and industrialisation. Schwab (2018) states that these business and sectoral changes will affect the economy as a whole. This is due to its dynamic existence and movement across many industries and sectors; an industrial revolution cannot be traced to a single year or a single location (Schwab, 2018). As put forward by Baygin et al., (2016), the world has undergone three industrial revolutions since the 18th century: the first was the implementation of mechanical production; the second was mass production; and the third was personal computers and the internet in the previous century. The 4IR is evident from advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and biotechnology advances, as well as the prevalence of nanotechnology (Schwab, 2017). The government of Germany has coined the term 4IR to mean technology-based human-machine interface, automation, and the internet of things (Thoben et al., 2017). Lazanyi (2018) argues that the current revolution holds the potential of replacing human cognition rather than assisting with it (to perform tasks better). It is believed that technological developments are spreading at an astonishing pace and are not limited to a particular industry or sector (Schwab, 2017).

Anderson et al., (2019) is of the opinion that organisations that apply forward-thinking strategies informed by macro-environment analysis and that can deal with these changes will

have an advantage. The implementation of said strategies may pose a threat to organisational culture and morale; change is often considered to be a bad thing (Philbeck & Davis, 2018). The 4IR is fundamentally altering the manner in which people live their lives and how businesses operate (Sutherland, 2020). As a result, it is a globally significant social and economic theme that is changing the nature of work considerably (Eberhard et al., 2017; Schwab, 2017). As a result, globalisation is becoming more prevalent (Jacobs & Pretorius, 2020). The South African government has developed a commission that is primarily focused on dealing with issues related to the fourth industrial revolution. The chairperson of this commission is the country's president (The Presidency, 2019). The Presidency further states that this commission is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that South Africa remains competitive in the global market by implementing the following interventions: continuously developing and reviewing policies, strategies, and action plans around the 4IR.

Job losses, as mentioned by Hattingh (2018), poses a significant challenge for workers during the 4IR era. The WEF (2017) estimated that in the future, 47 percent of jobs will be automated. To put it differently, it is clear that some jobs will be lost, while others will be transformed (Shava & Hofisi, 2017). However, new job opportunities will arise (Postelnicu & Câlea, 2019), for which the majority of workers will be unqualified (Hirschi, 2018). Bessen (2019) emphasises that these employees will also lack the skills necessary for performing the remaining jobs, which will be drastically altered. Already in 2017, there were 40 million workers with a tertiary education shortage and 95 million low-skilled workers in the world economy (McClelland et al., 2017). As noted by McClelland et al. (2017), 65 percent of primary school students in 2018 will eventually work in jobs that do not yet exist. Schwarzmüller et al. (2018) and Bayazit et al. (2019) further state that the use of technology for work tasks and information sharing inside organisations may lead to feelings of inadequacy and lack of autonomy, leading to people engaging in ineffective behaviours. As a result, the 4IR may have a negative impact on workers' mental health and well-being by causing them stress (Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2020). The 4IR reshapes the relationship between employees and employers (Corfe, 2018). For this reason, organisations are being asked to help employees address the challenges posed by the changing world of work by providing them with the support; the employees need to deal with challenges positively and constructively (Armstrong

et al., 2018). Supporting employees with these challenges is typically a role fulfilled by industrial psychology practitioners.

The role of the industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work

It is evident that the 4IR is changing the lives of individuals and the way in which organisations do business. The way people work, live, and communicate with one another is changed by the 4IR (Schwab, 2017). With these changes, such as gig economy, application of digital technology to manufacturing and artificial intelligence, organisations are challenged to provide solutions for employees who are experiencing stress and anxiety. Even though the changing world of work presents several opportunities that may enable organisations to succeed, it will be impossible to realise these opportunities without humans (Brynjolfsson et al., 2014). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, governments worldwide were forced to impose regulations such as lockdowns in order to ensure social distancing (Nicola et al., 2020). During the onset of this study, most employees in South Africa have already been working from home for several months. Most companies used technology for employees to engage with their line managers and co-workers and to perform their work using new ways of working, such as teleworking Zoom meetings and Microsoft Team meetings, amongst others (International Labour Organisation, 2020). The effect of working remotely can be seen in employees feeling isolated and lonely (Toscano & Zappalà, 2020). Moreover, some of the employees experienced zoom fatigue and depression (Majumdar et al., 2020). Nevertheless, working from home, which is capacitated by advanced technologies, is causing the employees problems as it blurs the line between working time and family time (Chawla et al., 2020).

Bisen (2010) proposes that an important resource that should be offered to employees who are stressed and are experiencing negative emotions, is psychological support. In this regard, the role of the industrial psychology practitioner as workplace counsellor becomes evident. The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA, 2011, p. 1) indicates that “industrial psychologists plan, develop and apply paradigms, theories, models, constructs and principles of psychology to issues related to the world of work in order to understand, modify and enhance

individual, group and organisational behaviour well-being and effectiveness”. As such Bal et al. (2019) state that industrial psychology practitioners bear this responsibility when it comes to ensuring the wellbeing of the employee, as this task forms the cornerstone of their profession. This is because the use of psychological models to alter behaviour in organisations with the goal of improving work, form part of the profession of industrial psychology (Schultz et al., 2020). In this respect Jex and Britt (2014) describe the goal of industrial psychology as being that of resolving issues at work. Moreover, industrial psychology practitioners conduct psychometric and other assessments with the goal of improving individual and group functioning so as to ensure effective organisational functioning (Van Zyl et al., 2016). In the following section the industrial psychology practitioner’s role as the workplace counsellor will be discussed.

The industrial psychology practitioner as the workplace counsellor

Graupner and Watson (2020) explain that the responsibility of addressing psychological issues that arise within organisations lies with industrial psychology practitioners. Graupner and Watson further state that industrial psychology practitioners within organisations assist line managements by providing counselling to employees that are experiencing social and psychological problems. The document providing guidelines for universities, internship training institutions and intern psychologists (category: industrial) state that it is the industrial psychology practitioner’s responsibility to diagnose workplace-related psychopathology and to possess skills to be able to identify that the employees need further treatment and psychological intervention (HPCSA, 2019b). The industrial psychology practitioner can refer employees to other specialised professionals, and he/she may work with them to ensure that the employee is reasonably accommodated in and/or integrated into the workplace (HPCSA, 2019a).

Employees who experience stress should receive psychological assistance (Bisen, 2010); consequently, as pointed out by Elder et al. (2018), psychological support is often provided through workplace counselling within the workplace. Workplace counselling, as explained by

McLeod (2010), aids employers in reducing their stress, anxiety, and depression. Counselling will help workers overcome stress and anxiety timeously (Lazar et al., 2018). Workplace counselling, as defined by Lazar et al. (2018), is a solution-focused psychological treatment given to workers within a company for a limited time at no cost for the employer. Workplace counselling, as described by Ajila and Adetayo (2013), is concerned with empowering workers to find their own solutions, which may include embracing a lifelong learning attitude in response to the 4IR (Vestberg, 2018). Workplace counselling has thus far included a variety of methods and models such as, amongst others, cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), reality therapy and solution-focused therapy, existential therapy, person-centred therapy, and gestalt therapy (Shoai, 2014). Employees can be helped to deal with stress and negative emotions brought on by the changing world of work (Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2020). These emotions can be addressed and dealt with promptly by providing counselling services (Lazar et al., 2018).

Schultz et al. (2020) note that industrial psychology practitioners' responsibilities include providing psychological interventions to businesses, such as workplace counselling, to address psychological problems. Basically, through workplace counselling, an industrial psychology practitioner assists workers in working optimally (Graupner & Watson, 2020). Workplace counselling from an industrial psychology perspective focuses on supporting workers in their personal development while also addressing stress-related problems. Furthermore, the practitioner demonstrates competencies such as intra- and interpersonal awareness, as well as interpersonal skills as a counsellor, which will enable the practitioners to support workers to cope better with stressors brought on by the changing workplace (Graupner & Watson, 2020).

From the aforementioned, the following research questions are presented.

1.2 Research Questions

- How are 4IR and workplace counselling conceptualised within literature?
- What is the influence of the fourth industrial revolution on organisations and employees?
- What is the role of the industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work?

- What are the experiences of the industrial psychology practitioner as a workplace counsellor in the changing world of work?
- Which recommendations can be made for future research and practice?

1.3 Expected contribution of the study

For the individual

This study highlighted the importance of addressing the influence of the 4IR on individuals' mental health and wellbeing. Meacham et al. (2019) emphasise that good mental health and wellbeing may lead an individual to survive and thrive in the changing world of work, and thus especially in the new world of work, studying ways to support the employee is important.

For the organisation

This study aimed to contribute to organisations by highlighting the importance of addressing challenges presented by the 4IR by making workplace counselling applied by industrial psychology practitioners available. There are benefits for organisations that use workplace counselling to address anxieties and insecurities among employees in the time of the 4IR (Corfe, 2018). Also, it enables the organisation to easily transit as required by the 4IR and that it will lessen or minimise resistance from employees (Horváth & Szabó, 2019).

For literature

Exploring the concept of workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective will generate new insight and knowledge that will be fundamental to addressing the challenges presented by the 4IR.

1.4 Research objectives

The research objectives were subdivided into a general objective and specific objectives.

1.4.1 General objective

The general objective of the present study was to explore workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- To explore how the 4IR and workplace counselling are conceptualised in literature.
- To explore the influence of the 4IR on organisations and employees.
- To explore the role of industrial psychology practitioners in the changing world of work.
- To explore the experiences of the industrial psychology practitioner as a workplace counsellor in the changing world of work.
- To make recommendation for future research and practice.

1.5 Research design

1.5.1 Research approach

The present study was explorative in nature. Hence a qualitative research approach was utilised. The primary goal of qualitative research is to describe and/or explore human experiences and perspectives (Silverman, 2020). As such, it helps researchers to learn more about people's feelings and thoughts (Tuffou, 2017) by making use of interviews and observation (Saunders et al., 2019). For this reason, Hennink et al. (2020) maintain that it is suitable to adopt a

qualitative research approach in instances where the researcher is confronted with a research topic that is unique and/or unfamiliar. Qualitative research approach enables the researcher to collect rich, detailed data that provide clear context of the participants (Levitt et al., 2018). The main focus of this study was to explore workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective. By pursuing a qualitative research approach, the researcher stands to understand the phenomenon being studied in an in-depth manner (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

The social constructivism approach was utilised in this study. Walker (2015) notes that individuals want to comprehend the world they live in. As such, this forms the foundation of social constructivism. The realities that the participants experience hold meanings to them, and these meanings most often are subjective (Creswell, 2014). The subjective nature of social constructivism was instrumental in understanding the workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective. This is because the definition participants attach to their experiences or lives was used to understand their perceptions and realities.

1.5.2 Research strategy

In the present study a qualitative descriptive research strategy was followed. Colorafi and Evans (2016) state that the general principles of naturalistic inquiry form the foundation of qualitative descriptive strategy. Its aim is to utilise everyday language to provide a thorough description of a phenomenon being studied (Vat et al., 2017). Seixas et al. (2018) recommends that by following a qualitative descriptive approach capacitates the researcher to find straightforward description.

1.6 Research method

Next, the research method is discussed. This section consists of the research setting, entrée and establishing researcher roles, sampling, research procedures, data collection method, data

recording, strategies employed to ensure the quality of data and integrity thereof, reporting style and ethical considerations.

1.6.1 Literature review

A detailed literature review of workplace counselling in the changing world of work was conducted. The literature was obtained from the following databases: Google Scholar, EBSCOhost and PsycINFO (ProQuest). In addition, various reputable academic journals and textbooks will be consulted, which can be found at the North-West University Library. To find appropriate and reputable literature, the following keywords will be used: workplace counselling, changing world of work, employee counselling, employee wellbeing, employee assistance programme (EAP) and fourth industrial revolution (4IR). Lastly, journals such as the following were used: *South African Journal of Business Management*, *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, *International Journal of Applied Management and Technology* and lastly the *Journal of Business and Psychology*.

1.6.2 Research setting

The research was conducted remotely, the researcher utilised online platforms such as Zoom, videotelephony software program to conduct semi-structured interviews. The overview of the study and the consent form that required the participants to sign, prior to commencing with the collection of the data, was sent electronically to them (industrial psychology practitioners registered with the Health Professional Council of South African, HPCSA as intern psychologists or psychologists under the category of industrial).

1.6.3 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

Wa-Mbaleka (2019) maintain that in qualitative research study the researcher's role is instrumental. As such, the researcher role should be articulated in a detailed manner. Furthermore, the researcher in the present study fulfilled various purposes. The first role of the researcher was to write and submit the research proposal to the faculty's ethics committee for

approval and/or ethical clearance. Subsequent to the approval of the study, the researcher proceeded with sourcing the list of registered industrial psychology practitioners (intern psychologists and psychologists) under the category of industrial from the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in the search engine titled iRegister. This was followed by the phase during which the researcher utilised LinkedIn platform to search for the names of the industrial psychology practitioners that were sourced from HPCSA's website. The phase assisted the researcher in finding the contact details such as email addresses of identified industrial psychology practitioners. The researcher initiated the communication regarding this present study with the identified participants via LinkedIn inbox messaging or electronic messaging, sending them the following information: the objective of the study, the process of the interview and contact details of the contact person in relation to this study.

Korstjens and Moser (2017) emphasise that the key role-player in the process of data collection within qualitative research studies is the researcher. In the present study the researcher played an essential role in the data collection process in that the researcher was responsible for approaching the participants and scheduling the interviews. This was followed by the researcher conducting semi-structured interviews. This means that the researcher formulated the interview questions in advance. The researcher ensured that all the participants were asked these pre-determined questions. In so doing, the researcher ensured that, prior to the onset of the interview session, he established rapport with the participants by providing a brief description of the current study and ensured that the participants understood the objective of the study. To put in a nutshell, the researcher created an environment that was welcoming in which the participants could freely express themselves. During the interview sessions all the questions and concerns of the participants were addressed.

In qualitative research studies the researcher is responsible for transcribing the interview sessions (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Accordingly, in the present study, participants' answers to the interview questions were recorded and transcribed in an Excel spreadsheet to warrant a meticulous description of what had been said. This was followed by the implementation of controls to safeguard the captured data. This was achieved by ensuring that the data was kept where only the researcher and the research supervisor could have access to it. Basically, the

data was saved in a password encrypted file, and only the researcher and supervisor knew the password. The data analysis was conducted by the researcher under the supervision of two experts in the field of study. This was to ensure that methodological objectivity was maintained throughout the study.

1.6.4 Research participants and sampling

In the present study homogeneous sampling, as a non-probability sampling technique, was utilised. The primary aim of homogenous sampling is to ensure that the participants have similarities and/or share specific characteristics (Stratton, 2019). The homogeneous sample comprised participants that met the same or specific characteristics (Palinkas et al., 2015). Homogenous characteristics such as being registered with the HPCSA as an intern psychologist or psychologist under the category of industrial psychology was the main qualifier for forming part of the study.

The primary inclusion criterion was that the industrial psychology practitioners should be registered with the HPCSA as intern psychologist or psychologist under industrial category. Furthermore, that the industrial psychology practitioners' job functions should include rendering workplace counselling within a South African organisation. Lastly, the participants were expected to understand and communicate in English. The data was gathered until data saturation was reached. Hagaman and Wutich's (2017) findings indicate that studies with homogeneous samples require 16 or fewer interviews in order to reach data saturation; hence these findings served as a guideline for determining the number of participants in the current study.

1.6.5 Data collection method

In the present study, one data collection method was utilised, namely semi-structured interviewing. McGrath et al. (2019) explain that qualitative interviews allow researchers to delve deeper into issues that are unique to the interviewees' experiences, providing insights into how various phenomena of interest are encountered and perceived. The researcher conducted

semi-structured interviews online. The researcher underwent training on how to conduct semi-structured interviews. The training process included the researcher conducting a role-play of semi-structured interviews under supervision of two expert qualitative researchers. Thereafter he received developmental feedback and support to address his developmental areas.

The interview was conducted online via Zoom teleconferencing software; therefore, the participants' convenient environment, such as their home or office that had internet connectivity, was utilised for the interview. The researcher started the interview session by introducing himself and allowing the participant/s to introduce themselves, establishing strong rapport with the researcher. In the introduction phase of the interview session the researcher provided the participant with more information relating to the study and proceeded to attend to the issue of informed consent and ended this phase by providing details concerning the structure of the interview session.

The researcher posed pre-determined questions to the participants:

- 1) How do you experience the fourth industrial revolution (4IR)?
- 2) How do you view your role as industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work?
- 3) In your experience, how does the 4IR have an impact on employees?
- 4) How are you involved with workplace counselling in your organisation?
- 5) How often do you counsel employees who are influenced by the fourth industrial revolution (4IR)?
- 6) In your opinion, how effective is your workplace in assisting employees in the changing world of work?
- 7) What recommendation can you make to assist employees with workplace counselling in the changing world of work?

1.6.6 Recording of data

Smulowitz (2017) states that data recording is the fundamental part of qualitative study, but that the researcher should be mindful of ethical considerations around data recording.

Therefore, in the present study, the researcher ensured that the participants consented to participation in the current study and that they understood that the data collected during the interview session would be recorded. Smulowitz (2017) points out that data recording ensures that the researcher does not influence the findings of the study, and that all the data shared in the interview session are captured in detail and accurately (De Vos et al., 2011). To that extent, data recording ensured the richness and thickness of the data. Moreover, the researcher took notes during the interview sessions, and the participants were aware of this. The data collection process was followed by the capturing of the data in an Excel spreadsheet, to which only the researcher and researcher's supervisor had access. Lastly, all the forms that were completed by the participants during this study were kept online, in a cloud, to which only the researcher and supervisor have access.

1.6.7 Data analysis

Following the capturing of the information collected during semi-structured interviews in a spreadsheet, content analysis was utilised to arrange, analyse, and assign meaning to the data. Renz et al. (2018) maintain that most qualitative research utilises content analysis. As such Connelly (2016) highlights that the important phase of qualitative research is data analysis, and it is related to the findings of the research. Rahman (2016) describes the process of data analysis as demanding and complex. In this regard, the content analysis entails the following steps:

Step 1: Identified and collected data - To understand the in-depth descriptions and experiences of industrial psychology practitioners, the researcher was involved in the collection of data and identification of data. During this step, after the data was transcribed from the recording, it was captured in an Excel spreadsheet to which only the researcher and researcher's supervisor had access. Data capturing entailed listening to the recorded data more than once to ensure that the transcription of data was correct and accurate. The initial codes were established in this step.

Step 2: Determined coding categories – This step involved establishing the coding categories. The researcher was required to read and familiarise himself with the data collected in the current study in order to identify pattern to form the basis of the categories.

Step 3: Coded the content – This step involved the sorting of the data to form various spheres, categories, themes, and subthemes. The researcher achieved this by utilising vivo coding.

Step 4: Checked validity and reliability – This step included reviewing the codes as well as the themes that had already been identified. The aim of looking through the categories and themes was to determine whether any trends emerged. In the present study, the researcher went back through the categories and themes that had been created to determine whether they still existed and/or shaped patterns. When the researcher found some inconsistencies, he began the process of rewriting and, as a result, reviewing the recordings.

Step 5: Analysed and presented results - The researcher was tasked with the duty of writing the final themes. When writing this final report, the researcher applied content analysis to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. The final report included the following: literature review, established research questions, the findings, and conclusions.

1.6.8 Strategies employed to ensure data quality and integrity

Connelly (2016) emphasises that when conducting qualitative studies, it is important for the researcher to maintain the quality and trustworthiness of the data. Hence, in the present study, the researcher utilised the criteria tabled by Nowell et al. (2017) to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the data:

- *Credibility*, also referred to as internal validity – the main focus was to ensure that the study measured what it intended to measure. The researcher ensured that he asked questions

related to the topic and reporting an accurate reflection of the participant's experiences. The researcher in this study ensured credibility by having his work double checked by two experts in the field of study.

- *Confirmability* – this involved being objective. The researcher highlighted all the steps taken in the study so as to reach the final stage of the report such as the decisions made and the analysis process that was followed. The researcher kept all the notes and records of all the data collected during this study. This included all ethical dilemmas the researcher experienced during this current study.
- *Transferability* – the researcher ensured that he conducted a proper literature review, and that data collection and data analysis was done in an ethical manner, in that it was possible for the findings of the study to be reproduced, provided other researchers conducted similar studies. This ensured that the readers will be able to contextualise the study to their own understanding of the content.
- *Dependability* – the researcher documented every action that was performed during the study and ensured that the document was presented in chronological order, which made it easy to track in order to repeat the same study with the same methodology. In so doing the reliability of the study was ensured.

1.6.9 Reporting of data

In the present study tables were used to report on data and to discuss the themes as highlighted in the data analysis process. The participants' original responses were quoted to substantiate the identified themes.

1.6.10 Ethical considerations

Moriña (2020) states that ethics form the foundation of a successful and meaningful research study. Hence, in the current study, the researcher implemented the following ethical considerations in order to prevent ethical dilemmas or to address any ethical dilemmas that may arise:

- *The Faculty's Research Ethics Committee:* Prior to the onset of this study the researcher sought ethical approval from the Faculty's research ethics committee. After having followed the necessary steps and procedures the researcher obtained the go-head. The reference number is as follows: [NWU-0086-20-A4].
- *Informed consent and voluntary participation:* All the participants completed the consent form which highlighted that their participation was voluntary in nature. Sil and Das (2017) states that the informed consent process serves as a foundation for the relationship between the researcher and the participant. In the present study the consent form comprised the following issues: consent to form part of the study, voluntary participation, and privacy; the researcher ensured that the consent form was shared with the participants prior to their respective interview sessions for their perusal and signing. In the first phase of the interview session the researcher addressed the issues and concerns that the participant might have had in connection with the consent form, and voluntary participation. Fernandez Lynch (2020) stresses that it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that the participants understand their rights in research study such as the right to withdraw from the study as and when they wish to do so. In this regard, in the current research study, the researcher informed the participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any given time and that the withdrawal would not lead to them experiencing any negative impact.
- *Confidentiality:* Fleming and Zegwaard (2018) highlights that confidentiality protects the participants from harm, as it ensures that the identifying information regarding the participants is not disclosed in the process of conducting the research study. Therefore, the research participants were informed that all the information that was collected during the course of the study would be kept safe. Moreover, the researcher ensured that the Excel spreadsheet in which the data were captured is only accessible to the researcher and the research supervisor and that throughout the study no identifying information, such as the name of the organisation, or the name of the participant, would be used.

- *Deception*: King et al. (2018) mention that deception in research refers to the use of incorrect information about the study for the purpose of misleading individuals to participate. In the current study the researcher did not use misleading information to influence any participant to form part of the study; the information that was shared with the participant was ensured to be relevant to the present study. Likewise, Creswell (2014) states that the researcher should refrain from coercing individuals to form part of their study. Deception technique was not utilised in the present study.
- *Causing no harm*: During the course of the study, the researcher implemented controls such as ensuring that the identifying information of the participants was not shared at any given point in the research study as it ensured that no intentional or foreseeable harm was caused. The data collection process was conducted in an ethical manner; all the participants were treated in a respectful and honourable manner.
- *Other ethical considerations*: King et al. (2018) note that it is challenging to ensure anonymity. In this regard certain controls need to be implemented to minimise the risk of compromising participants' anonymity. In the present study, when reporting the findings, the researcher assigned numbers to the participants rather than using their names. Furthermore, feedback was provided by the participants indicating that they would like to be informed about the outcome of the study.

1.7 Chapter division

This mini-dissertation is structured into three chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Research article

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations, and recommendations

1.8 Chapter summary

In Chapter 1 the problem statement, research questions and objectives were enunciated. The research design followed in the study was also explained, followed by a brief overview of the chapters that follow.

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CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH ARTICLE

WORKPLACE COUNSELLING IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK: AN INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

Orientation: The scope of practice for industrial psychology practitioners includes offering short-term counselling to employees in the workplace; therefore, they should have the necessary skills to assist employees in coping in the changing world of work.

Research purpose: The general objective of this research study was to explore workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective.

Motivation for the study: The motivation was to explore the importance of workplace counselling from an industrial psychology perspective, particularly in the changing world of work.

Research design, approach, and method: A qualitative research method, utilising a social constructivism approach, was employed in this research study. A qualitative descriptive research strategy and homogeneous sampling was utilised, and the sample consisted of 22 participants ($n = 22$). The participants were industrial psychology practitioners practising across various institutions and/or organisations in South Africa. Data was collected by conducting virtual semi-structured interviews. Thereafter content analysis was applied to analyse the collected data.

Main findings: The results of this study indicate that workplace counselling plays a vital role in assisting the employees to adjust and adapt to the changes introduced by the changing world of work. Participants indicated that these changes are prevalent due to technological advances in organisations. These technological advances have a major impact on the manner in which people work. The findings further highlighted that the different generations reacted differently to the transition to the new world of work. As such industrial psychology practitioners as work counsellors supported employees' transition to the new world of work by rendering the following services, namely assisting managers, and addressing mental health issues. In addition, industrial psychology practitioners experienced that they serve different roles in the changing world of work, such as manager of ethics, being a change agent, a consultant and enabler to provide support and assist employees' transition to the new world of work.

Practical implications: The role of the Industrial Psychology practitioner as a counsellor within an organisation is instrumental in helping employees with accepting and coping with the changes and challenges presented by the fourth industrial revolution (4IR).

Contribution/value add: This study contributed to organisations by highlighting the importance of addressing challenges presented by the 4IR using workplace counselling employed by industrial psychology practitioners. The benefits for organisations that avail themselves of workplace counselling to address anxieties and insecurities among employees in the time of the 4IR are firstly, that the transition of the organisations, as required by the 4IR, is eased, and secondly, that resistance from employees is lessened or minimised.

Key words: Automation, digitisation, fourth industrial revolution (4IR), industrial psychology practitioner, workplace counselling

INTRODUCTION

Presently, organisations are faced with a world that is evolving rapidly due to technological innovation, as well as socio-economic, political, and cultural changes (Fink & Elisabetta, 2019). These changes are caused, amongst others, by the 4IR, which is increasing the rate of digitisation and automation within organisations (Horváth & Szabó, 2019); consequently, granting organisations various opportunities and challenges for doing business (Xu et al., 2018). Several studies indicate that these changes cause a strong sense of fear and frustration among employees in that automation and the digitalisation of work will eventually take over the work performed by humans (Aly, 2020; Arntz et al., 2020; Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2020; McClure, 2018; Min et al., 2019). Recently, with the onset of COVID-19 in the world, employees have found that the onset of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) was implemented much faster than initially anticipated (Javaid et al., 2020).

It can be expected that the 4IR holds the potential of exacerbating inequality (Schwab, 2016) and unemployment, and of lowering wages (Min et al., 2019), which all were caused by a lack of technological skills of employees in South Africa, since most of the South African employees only possess basic skills and lack advanced technological skills (Magwetshu et al., 2019). Moreover, Sutherland (2020) states that the main concerns about the 4IR are that the automation and digitalisation of work will create a sense of job insecurity and exacerbate the fear of potential job loss. The changing world of work may critically affect employees' psychological well-being, physiological well-being, and current and potential earnings (Bakhshi et al., 2017; Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2020). Hence the aim of this study was to investigate workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective. The research purpose and objectives are thus delineated.

Research purpose and objectives

The objective of this study is to explore workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective.

- To explore how the 4IR and workplace counselling are conceptualised in literature.
- To explore the influence of the 4IR on organisations and employees.

- To explore the role of industrial psychology practitioners in the changing world of work.
- To explore the experiences of the industrial psychology practitioner as a workplace counsellor in the changing world of work.
- To make recommendation for future research and practice.

This chapter is organised into a literature review, empirical research, discussion, and a section describing limitations and making suggestions to report on the above-mentioned purpose and objectives.

Literature review

Changing world of work

The significant societal and technological advancement over the past few decades have prompted major changes in the world of work (Korunka & Kubicek, 2017). Schwab (2018) states that these major changes are not limited to a certain industry or sector; they impact all sectors of the economy. Across four industrial revolutions societies have progressed from a community of farmers to consumers exchanging their interactions in a knowledge-based society (Venter et al., 2019). Bonciu (2017) explains that the word "industrial revolution" refers to a time of significant change and industrialisation in history. Due to its continuous existence and the manner in which it spreads to various industries and sectors during different periods, an industrial revolution is a dynamic phenomenon that cannot be attributed to a single year or single place (Schwab, 2018). Schwab (2018) maintains that industrial revolutions are characterised by significant changes that are disruptive and abrupt in nature.

The significant change was firstly introduced by the mechanical production which took place between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. These changes were classified as the first industrial revolution (Drath & Horch, 2014). The move from human and animal labour to machines, new chemical manufacturing and iron production methods, improved waterpower quality, increased steam power usage, and the invention of machine tools such as gears and belts all formed part of the first industrial revolution (Mohajan, 2019). Agarwal and Agarwal (2017) state that the first industrial revolution saw significant technological advancements in

textiles, steam power, iron manufacturing, and a variety of other fields such as agriculture. Agarwal and Agarwal (2017) further state that until the first industrial revolution, individual homeworkers spun and wove wool in their own homes or making clothes. In this regard Stearns (2020) states that the main transformation that was introduced by this industrial revolution was the removal of production from private homes to central factories. Stearns (2020) further states that significant changes taken place in manufacturing processes which resulted in an increase in production.

The first industrial revolution caused the wide spread of mass production which was fuelled by the increase in the utilisation of machinery, as manufacturing moved to factories (Brooks, 2018). Bajpai and Biberman (2019) further state that mass transportation utilising railway and shipping was introduced by this revolution. Operational and manual labour-intensive activities were replaced by computers, greatly increasing the rate at which goods could be manufactured (Taalbi, 2019). Due to these changes the production process improved, and work opportunities were created (Brooks, 2018). Öztürk (2017) notes that the first industrial revolution phase laid the foundation for an integrated and connected world.

Around 100 years later, the second industrial revolution started in the slaughterhouses of Cincinnati, Ohio and culminated with the launch of the Ford Model T in the United States (Drath & Horch, 2014). At the heart of the Second Industrial Revolution were the electricity and telecommunications networks (Schwab, 2017). Mohajan (2019) states that the second industrial revolution improved the innovations that were introduced by the first industrial revolution. Smil (2005) states that the second industrial revolution can be traced back to 1867-1914 and is centred around the belief that a better life can be achieved through science and technology, seeing that the introduction of electricity, steel, automobile, and aircraft improved people's lives and also the manner in which businesses functioned (Zhang & Yang, 2020). For example, prior to the second industrial revolution, households used electricity to generate light (Mohajan, 2019); these enabled factories to operate during the night (Uzunkaya, 2020). Standardization, technical complexity, and precision in production all changed significantly as a result of this revolution, as did large-scale technological infrastructure such as power grids and modern modes of public transportation that focused on the internal combustion engine (Philbeck & Davis, 2018).

The use of electronic technology was introduced by the third industrial revolution in the 1960s (Uzunkaya, 2020). This industrial revolution was also known as the information age (Xu et al., 2018). The discovery of the internet, which allowed networked communication and knowledge sharing, was a key development in this revolution (Rifkin, 2012). Therefore, the higher level of automation of production, new ways of working which were enabled by the use of industrial application of electronics and information technology, describe this revolution (Ghobakhloo, 2018; Liao et al., 2018; Petrillo et al., 2018). Taalbi (2019) states that industrial robots and electronic computers have grown in popularity as a result of this industrial revolution – particularly with the internet. Moreover, the computer was transformed to be faster and to have the capacity to store huge amounts of data (Hussain, 2019). As such it introduced new industries which adopted smart manufacturing (Agolla, 2018). Schwab (2017) states that the impact of the third industrial revolution was not limited to a certain location and/or sector; it was omnipresent; this is what differentiates this revolution from previous ones.

Uzunkaya (2020) emphasises that research and development formed the foundation of the third industrial revolution. These new technologies created a new concept of work (Bonciu, 2017) due to this revolution leading to the automation of many jobs (Rifkin, 2012). On the other hand, new organisations and some new jobs were introduced (Rifkin, 2016). Griffin (2017) points out that many countries such as Germany, Japan, America, and the United Kingdom have benefited from this industrial revolution, while China and South Korea have achieved significant progress.

It has recently become evident that the world of work is transiting to a new revolution as the use of new technologies such as robotics is increasing (Van Est et al., 2015). Schwab (2016) further mentions that this revolution includes advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, nanotechnology, biotechnology and increases human-machinery interaction. The current revolution was first introduced in the United States referring to the increase in technology-based human-machine interface, automation, digitalisation, and the internet of things (Calitz et al., 2017; Liao et al., 2018). This revolution threatens to replace humans and cognitive functioning (Nica, 2016; Peters, 2017; Prisecaru, 2016), unlike previous revolutions that were aimed at assisting humans in functioning better by assisting them in performing work activities efficiently (Larsson & Teigland, 2020). Lee et al., (2019) mention that technological advances are expanding at a high speed and are not limited to a specific sector, since they affect all the industries and sectors.

Schwab (2018) emphasises that the 4IR is a new era rather than a continuation of the third industrial revolution, although the third industrial revolution laid a foundation for the 4IR (Petrillo et al., 2018). Philbeck and Davis (2018) maintain that it is important to highlight the relationship between these revolutions as it focuses on challenging the technologies and systems that disregard the digital work. Technologies can be easily incorporated into our physical world due to the combination of efficient machine-learning algorithms, low-cost sensors, and sophisticated actuators (Mahdavinejad et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2020). Moreover, Philbeck and Davis (2018) state that our physiological conditions and cognitive faculties stand to be altered by the adoption of these new technologies when coupled with advanced imaging, signal processing, and gene-editing approaches. As digital technologies give rise to a new layer of physical and biological technologies, it is critical to recognise how newer technologies are expanding capabilities beyond the immediate functionality of being able to transfer, store, and process exponentially more data (Schwab, 2017).

Lee et al. (2019) state that organisations that are adapting to these changes by implementing forward-thinking strategies that are informed by the macro-environmental analysis stand far stronger chances of succeeding. The implementation of said strategies might pose a threat to cultural dynamics within the organisations and a shift in morale; more often than not, change can occasionally be viewed as a bad thing (Philbeck & Davis, 2018). The changing world of work will increase the speed at which work activities are performed, due to automation and digitalisation (Fink & Elisabetta, 2019). The 4IR is basically changing the manner in which individuals live their everyday lives and the way in which organisations operate (Armstrong et al., 2018). For this reason, it is a worldwide important societal and economic theme, which is predominately transforming the nature of work significantly (Arntz et al., 2016; Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Ford, 2015), consequently increasing globalisation (Mpofu & Nicolaides, 2019). Therefore, in February 2019, the President of South Africa Mr Cyril Ramaphosa appointed a presidential commission on the 4IR, which is tasked with the responsibility of assisting and guiding the government to take advantage of and swiftly adjust to the changing world of work (The Presidency, 2019). The task of this presidential commission involves developing and reviewing policies, strategies, and action plans so as to enable South Africa to have a global competitive advantage (The Presidency, 2019). Next, the influence of the 4IR on organisations and employees is discussed.

Schwab (2016) emphasises that a major challenge faced by employees during the era of the 4IR is job losses. In 2015 Ford predicted that 47% of jobs may be automated in the future. McClelland et al. (2017) report that 65% of children who entered primary school in 2018 will ultimately be working in jobs that do not yet exist. Recently a list of such unfamiliar jobs that could emerge by 2025 was developed by futurists, namely jobs such as virtual reality experience designer, professional triber (freelance professional manager who specialises in putting teams together for specific projects); urban farmer; end-of-life planner; remote healthcare specialist; and smart-home handy person” (Fast Company, 2016 as cited by Van Dam, 2017, p. 27). It is evident that the new skills that are required in the changing world of work include multi-skilled creativity, critical thinking and creative problem-solving (Scepanovič, 2019).

Furthermore, Cascio and Montealegre (2016) state that the use of technology for work activities and information-sharing within organisations may create a sense of lack of autonomy and of being inadequate, which will lead individuals to develop counterproductive behaviours such as abuse, sabotage, theft, production deviance, and organisational withdrawal (Lipińska-Grobelny, 2021). To that extent, the 4IR may negatively affect the mental health and well-being of the employees as it causes them to stress (Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2020). For these reasons, organisations are requested to assist employees in addressing the challenges presented by the changing world of work by providing them with the support that will enable them to deal with challenges positively and constructively (Kamaruddin et al., 2019). Abe et al., (2021) suggest that employers assist employees by providing time for employees and their families to adjust and adapt to new job demands. Van der Walt and Lezar (2019) further suggest that employers should assist the employees in finding meaning and happiness during their transition to the digital world by providing psychological support to the employees. Romero et al. (2016) and Sohimi et al. (2019) state that organisations could assist employees by providing training and development that is aimed at equipping them for the ever-changing world of work. Mpofu and Nicolaides (2019) add that the organisations can assist employees by providing and implementing training and development initiatives, since the 4IR is reshaping the relationship between the employees and the employers. Furthermore, management should guide the employees to implement new skills such as social, technical, and information and communication technology skills (Dew et al., 2018; Eberhard et al., 2017).

Redden et al., (2014) see robots and automated machines forming part of the workforce. However, humans play a fundamental role in the process of designing and integrating them with the workplace. Therefore, for the robots and automated machines to form part of the organisations, human acceptance is an important aspect – humans must accept them and be willing to work with them (Lewis et al., 2018). This is important as some functions will still be performed by humans and machines simultaneously (Ghislieri et al., 2018), for example in roles that are complex and that require customised production functions, seeing that humans are required to perform these functions (Sima, 2020). Nardo et al. (2020) urge that humans are critical to the implementation of the 4IR in that all planning jobs will be performed by humans in the robot-assisted production. However, some human-machine interaction issues may arise. For example, decreased situation awareness, distrust in automation, misuse, abuse, disuse, complacency, decrements in vigilance, and negative effects on other facets of human performance (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016).

Furthermore, Bolatan et al. (2016) maintain that the full benefit of the 4IR can only materialise with the assistance of humans, as they act as quality controllers in this new era. Employees have been continuously experiencing job insecurity as a result of intensive robotisation over the past decade – a concept that relates to the perceived danger of job loss and the concerns associated with this threat (Stankevičiūtė, 2021). The study conducted by Nam (2019) revealed that the changing world of work which is evident in the use of technology is related to job insecurity experienced by the employees. Nam further explains that employees experience job insecurity due to predictions that many jobs would not exist in the future and also expected job discontinuation. This experience led the employees to have anxieties and to worry about this threat (Cheung, 2019; Ganson et al., 2021; Shoss, 2017). The 4IR challenges are not only limited to influencing organisations to adapt to technological advances by digitalising and automating the business processes, but it also requires organisations to be open to change and to be resilient so as to derive the benefits presented by the 4IR (Schiuma, 2017). For example, marking from the beginning of the year 2000, approximately 52 percent of the Fortune 500 companies have suffered bankruptcy or have been required to merge (Wang, 2014).

The increasing rate of digitisation and automation accounts for these changes. Consequently, organisations are responsible for creating working environments that are characterised by curiosity, resilience, learning agility and creativity to remain operational (Armstrong et al., 2018) in preparation for jobs of the future, which are characterised by creativity and lifelong

learning (Emejom et al., 2019). Mpofu and Nicolaides (2019) assert that both the employer and the employees are required to understand the 4IR to adequately address the challenges such as job intensification and changed job demands (Paškvan & Kubicek, 2017; Mustosmäki, 2018; Thrasyvoulou, 2018).

Consequently, this will ensure economic growth and maintain the well-being of the employees. Organisations may therefore present individual level, group level and organisational level interventions that include workplace counselling in order to address these issues. Several studies have indicated the effectiveness of interventions aimed at addressing psychological issues and have shown that these interventions reduce the negative impact associated with experiences regarding psychological problems such as stress (Joyce, et al., 2016; Wagner et al., 2016; Paterson et al., 2021). Montano et al., (2014) state that workplace interventions at the organisational level are believed to have a longer-term impact on employee well-being than interventions that target individual behaviours.

The role of the industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work

Schultz et al. (2020) highlight that industrial psychology involves the use of psychological models to modify behaviour in organisations with the purpose of improving work and working, with the aim of addressing work-related problems (Jex & Britt, 2014; Van Vuuren, 2010). In the South African context, the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA, 2011) states that “industrial psychologists plan, develop and apply paradigms, theories, models, constructs and principles of psychology to issues related to the world of work in order to understand, modify and enhance individual, group and organisational behaviour well-being and effectiveness” (p. 1). Furthermore, for successful organisational functioning, industrial psychology practitioners conduct psychometric and other evaluations aimed at improving individual and group functioning (Van Zyl et al., 2016).

Industrial psychology practitioners are responsible for designing, monitoring, and evaluating individual, group and organisational level interventions and they assist organisations in developing various policies (Van Zyl et al., 2016). The Health Professions Act 56 of 1974 states that industrial psychology practitioners have the capacity to design and develop interventions in consumer behaviour, develop poor-performance interventions within the work context and are responsible for ensuring that ergonomic interventions are designed and

implemented within the organisations (Department of Health, 2011). Highhouse and Schmitt (2012) explain that industrial psychology practitioners are trained to serve dual roles: those of a scientist and a practitioner. As practitioners, they perform the above-mentioned functions, and as scientists, their role involves conducting scientific investigations aimed at finding solutions for work-related problems (Van Vuuren, 2010).

Hence, industrial psychology practitioners are usually the frontline contact when it comes to addressing psychological issues within organisations (Graupner & Watson, 2020). For instance, when line management becomes aware that an employee is stressed or experiences psychological problems, they are most likely to refer such an employee to an industrial psychology practitioner within an organisation (Graupner & Watson, 2020). According to the HPCSA (2019b) the industrial psychology practitioner bears the responsibility of diagnosing workplace-related psychopathology and recognising the need for further treatment and psychological intervention. The industrial psychology practitioner may refer the employees to other specialised professionals in collaboration with such professionals to ensure career and workplace-related adjustment of affected individuals (HPCSA, 2019a).

The industrial psychology practitioner assists employees in functioning optimally by means of workplace counselling (Graupner & Watson, 2020). However, this does not mean that when an employee functions on an apparent normal level that psychopathology is absent (Graupner & Watson, 2020). The main focus of workplace counselling is on optimal well-being and assisting employees in their personal growth while addressing stress-related issues. The industrial psychology practitioners possess the knowledge of psychology theories such as personality theories, pathology, trauma and group dynamics and group processes. Furthermore, the practitioner demonstrates competencies such as intra- and interpersonal awareness and interpersonal skills as a helper, which will assist employees in coping better and addressing stressors presented by the changing world of work (Barkhuizen et al, 2015; Graupner & Watson, 2020).

Bisen (2010) states that psychological support should be given to employees who are stressed. Accordingly, Elder et al. (2018) state that, within the work environment, psychological support is often given by means of workplace counselling. McLeod (2010) emphasises that workplace counselling assists organisations in reducing symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression among employees. Schultz et al., (2020) attest that the functions of industrial psychology

practitioners include rendering psychological interventions such as workplace counselling to organisations with a view to address psychological issues within the organisation.

Lazar et al. (2018) state that counselling can be used to assist employees to swiftly overcome stress and anxiety. Lazar et al. (2018) explain workplace counselling as being a solution-focused psychological therapy that is given to employees within an organisation for brief periods of time while the employer carries the cost. Ajila and Adetayo (2013) explain that workplace counselling is concerned with enabling the employees to find their own solutions, which may include adopting the attitude of being lifelong learners in response to the 4IR (Yang, 2019). Thus far, workplace counselling can include, amongst others, various approaches and models, namely cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), reality therapy and solution-focused therapy, existential therapy, person-centred therapy, as well as gestalt therapy (Shoai, 2014). Therefore, by rendering counselling services to employees, stress and negative emotions caused by the changing world of work (Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2020) can be attended to and dealt with quickly (Lazar et al., 2018).

From the above mentioned it is clear that the industrial psychology practitioners has a major role to play in the changing world of work. Now more than ever organisations are challenged to provide solutions to employees who are experiencing stress and anxiety as the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide led to most employees already working from home for several months. The new way of work is causing employees to have less set boundaries between working time and family time (Chawla et al., 2020). To that extent, the following section reports on the above-mentioned literature review, purpose, and objectives by discussing the research method employed, followed by reporting on the findings.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In the following section the research approach, research strategy, and research method are discussed.

Research approach

In the present study, a qualitative research approach is employed. Mohajan (2018) maintains that the qualitative research approach is more suitable to use when researching new and unfamiliar research topics such as the present one. The fundamental reason for following a qualitative research approach in the present study is primarily that it can explore a phenomenon from the viewpoint of the participants (Roulston & Choi, 2018). This is so because it is mainly concerned with describing or exploring human experiences and perspectives (Kyngäs, 2020). Therefore, following this approach will enable the researcher to collect the in-depth description of the phenomenon being studied by means of semi-structured interviews. Alase (2017) states that the qualitative research approach enables the researcher to gather in-depth information relating to, without compromising, the meanings individuals attach to different phenomena that take place within their environment. The in-depth information that will be collected will enable the researcher to better understand the experiences of industrial psychology practitioners in relation to workplace counselling within the changing world of work (Mohajan, 2018). Hammarberg et al. (2016) emphasise that qualitative research allows for participant-focused research. Particularly in this prevalent research, namely a study of the changing world of work, it is imperative for the narratives of participants to be considered.

In the present study, the social constructivism approach was employed. Social constructivism proposes that individuals desire to understand the world they live in. Moreover, it suggests that participants attach meanings to their experiences and realities. However, these meanings are often subjective and varied (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, participants' experiences and realities should be understood from the meaning they attach to their work or life (Daher et al., 2017). The meaning they attach to their experiences might be influenced by the social and historical stance of the individual (Creswell, 2014). This will enable the participants to openly provide true narratives and experiences of workplace counselling in the changing world of work by means of semi-structured interviews.

Research strategy

A qualitative descriptive research strategy was employed in this study – primarily to provide a vehicle for the narratives of industrial psychology practitioners with regard to utilising workplace counselling in the changing world of work, as it enables the researcher to make the narratives of the participants to be heard, focusing on the *who*, *what*, *where*, and *why* of those narratives (Kim et al., 2017). Colorafi and Evans (2016) state that the general principles of naturalistic inquiry form the foundation of qualitative descriptive research. Its aim is to utilise everyday language to provide a thorough description of a phenomenon being studied (Vat et al., 2017). Bradshaw et al. (2017) explain that a qualitative descriptive research strategy is appropriate for using in studies in which information will be obtained from individuals who are experiencing the phenomenon that is explored and when the researcher's time and resources are limited. This strategy was primarily selected because it enabled the researcher to formulate a detailed understanding of the phenomenon explored.

Research method

Next, the research method is discussed. This section consists of the research setting, entrée and establishing researcher roles, sampling, research procedures, data collection method, data recording, strategies employed to ensure the quality of data and integrity, reporting style and ethical considerations.

Research setting

To collect data in the current study, industrial psychology practitioners from different areas of South Africa, working in different sectors, were approached. The researcher made use of an online platform such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, amongst others, to conduct semi-structured interviews. The reason for using online platforms as mentioned above was to ensure social distancing and limit the spread of COVID-19. When organising the interview sessions, the researcher made a humble request to the participants that the interview session should be conducted in a quiet environment such as their offices or homes; wherever it is convenient for them and where they have access to the internet. Prior to commencing with the sessions, the researcher-built rapport with the participants so as to make them feel welcome and relaxed.

This enabled the participants to be willing to share their experiences openly, honestly and in a detailed manner.

Entrée and establishing researcher roles

Firstly, the research proposal was submitted to the Faculty's scientific committee. When accepted, the researcher submitted it to the Faculty's ethics committee for approval and/or ethical clearance [NWU-0086-20-A4]. The researcher used the Health Professions Council of South Africa's (HPCSA) website to obtain the list of registered intern psychologists and psychologists (industrial psychology practitioners) in the category of industrial psychology from the iRegister. The names of industrial psychology practitioners that were obtained from the HPCSA website were utilised to search on LinkedIn to find their contact numbers and email addresses. The identified industrial psychology practitioners were approached and contacted via LinkedIn message and/or their email address. The information concerning the study, its aim and the process of the interviews was detailed in the LinkedIn message and the electronic messages.

The researcher plays a fundamental role in qualitative research studies, as the researcher bears an important responsibility when collecting data (Mohajan, 2018). In this regard, in the present study, the researcher initiated the research process by drafting the research proposal and submitting it to the Faculty's research committee, and then submitting it to the ethics committee to seek ethical clearance and/or permission to proceed with the study. In the next stage, after obtaining approval to proceed with the study, the researcher started the process of collecting data. During this process, the participants were asked predetermined interview questions. In other words, the researcher conducted standardised interviews with the participants. These predetermined interview questions were developed by the researcher. Prior to commencing with the interview session, the researcher provided a brief description of the current study. The participants were afforded the opportunity of addressing questions to the researcher if they did not understand anything or when they simply wished to understand more about the study. The researcher is also responsible for capturing the collected data in an Excel spreadsheet. Moreover, he was responsible for analysing collected data. In the process of data analysis, to ensure the quality of the study, the researcher worked closely with his research supervisor who has several years of experience in this field of study. For this reason, methodological objectivity

was ensured throughout the study. Next, the researcher proceeded with drafting the final report, reporting, and discussing the findings in an ethical and detailed manner.

Research participants and sampling

Etikan and Bala (2017) state that sampling is an activity of figuring out and deciding on the best sample from the broader population, with the focus on understanding positive traits or parameters from that population. In the present study, a non-probability sampling technique was employed, namely homogeneous sampling (Etikan et al., 2016). The similarity or specific characteristics of the participants played a fundamental role in them forming part of the sampling group (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016). Homogenous characteristics, such as being registered with the HPCSA as an industrial psychologist or intern industrial psychologist, were used in the present study.

The inclusion criteria were proposed as follows: The participants in the present study were industrial psychology practitioners (intern psychologist and/or industrial psychologist) within South Africa. Participants should be registered industrial psychology practitioners with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The participants were able to communicate in English, as the interviews were conducted in English. This study had 22 participants who were registered with HPCSA under the category industrial psychology. The characteristics of the participants are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Overview of the research participants' characteristics (n=22)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	18	82%
	Male	5	22%
Age	23 – 32	8	36%
	33 – 41	10	45%
	42 – 51	4	18%
Language	Afrikaans	8	36%
	English	8	36%
	isiZulu	3	14%

	Sesotho	1	5%
	Setswana	2	9%
Race	Asian	4	18%
	Black	7	31%
	Coloured	2	9%
	White	9	41%
Registration category	Psychologist (Industrial)	13	59%
	Intern Psychologist (Industrial)	9	41%

Table 1 above indicates that the research sample included 22 participants. The sample comprised 17 females (77%) and 5 males (22%). The highest percentage (45%) of the participants was between 33 and 41 years of age, followed by the participants that were between 23 and 32 (36%) years of age, and 4 (18%) participants that were between 42 and 51 years of age. The participants were equally Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking at 36% respectively, while 14% of the participants were isiZulu-speaking. Furthermore, in this study 9% participants were Setswana-speaking, and 5% participants were Sesotho-speaking. The sample population was represented by 18% asian, 31% black, 9% coloured and 9% white individuals. Lastly, 59% of the participants were registered with the Health Professions Council for South African (HPCSA) as psychologists in the category *industrial*, and 41% were registered with the HPCSA as *intern psychologists in the same category*.

Data collection method

Following the approval of this study, the researcher proceeded with data collection. The data collection method that was utilised is semi-structured interviews. Barrett and Twycross (2018) explain that qualitative interviews enable the researcher to collect accurate and straightforward information as well as detailed experiences relating to the phenomenon being studied, which consequently contribute to the richness of the study (Iyamu, 2018). Similarly, Roulston and Choi (2018) maintain that semi-structured interviews provide the researcher with in-depth descriptions of the phenomenon being studied, as the participants will be asked open-ended questions. For this reason, semi-structured interviews were conducted individually; the

researcher connected with the participants online. Prior to the process of collecting data, the researcher participated in a role-play semi-structured interview session while being observed by two expert researchers, and feedback was provided to him at the end. The researcher was subjected to training to address any weakness and/or inadequacy that was identified by the two expert researchers.

The interview took place at an environment convenient to the participant, such as home or office, where he or she had internet connectivity. At the onset of the interview session the researcher introduced himself to the participant and ensured that rapport was established with the participant. This stage of the interview session involved an informed consent process, which was followed by providing a brief description of what the study entails and informing the participants about the structure of the interview and providing an indication of the duration of the interview session. At the end of each interview session the researcher expressed gratitude towards the participants. The participants were asked predetermined questions, which are listed in the section below:

- How do you experience the fourth industrial revolution?
- How do you view your role as an industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work?
- In your experience, how does the fourth industrial revolution have an impact on employees?
- How are you involved with workplace counselling in your organisation?
- How often do you counsel employees who are influenced by the fourth industrial revolution?
- In your opinion, how effective is your workplace in assisting employees in the changing world of work?
- What recommendation can you make to assist employees with workplace counselling in the changing world of work?

Recording data

The consent form and confidentiality form were emailed to the participants to be completed and signed prior to the interview session; a detailed discussion on this is provided below under the heading *ethical consideration*. The explanation of using the voice recorder during the interview session appeared in the consent form. Furthermore, the researcher addressed the

concerns of the participants relating to the use of a voice recorder and ensured that they were comfortable with it. The use of the voice recorder assisted the researcher in ensuring that accurate information was recorded, and thereby contributed to the richness and thickness of the data. In addition, during the interview sessions, the researcher was taking down notes and the participants were informed accordingly. Once the researcher had completed the data collection process, the data was documented in a protected Excel spreadsheet. The Excel spreadsheet could only be accessed by submitting a password which was known only to the researcher and the research supervisor. Over and above this, the completed forms as well as the recorded data were safeguarded by keeping them in a safe place to which only the researcher and the research supervisor had access.

Data analysis

Gibbs (2018) defines data analysis as being the process of arranging and analysing data, and accordingly assigning meaning to that data. For this reason, Connelly (2016) states that data analysis is a fundamental part of qualitative research, as it informs the outcome of the research. In other words, the process of data analysis is complex and time-consuming, but can also be exciting and may ignite innovation (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). Content analysis is mostly used in qualitative research because it is content-sensitive and flexible in nature (Kyngäs, 2020). Due to its content-sensitive nature and ability to evaluate a number of open data sets, content analysis is a valuable qualitative analysis process (Kyngäs, 2020). Hence content analysis was utilised in this present study.

Step 1: Identified and collected data: the purpose of this step was to ensure that the researcher understood the in-depth descriptions and experiences of industrial psychology practitioners. He started reading the notes that were taken down during the interview sessions, transcribed the data from the recordings and then captured it in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The researcher also authenticated the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet by listening to the voice recorder at least twice. This process assisted the researcher in identifying initial codes.

Step 2: Determined coding categories: The researcher read the data and familiarised himself with the data and proceeded with determining the coding categories. This step is characterised by the development of initial codes from the data. The researcher marks or highlights potential codes or writes down something alongside these codes. The researcher applied himself in this

step by thinking of and interacting with the data; thereafter identified common patterns, as the coding enabled the researcher to simplify and categorise data. This step assisted the researcher in comprehending the data by placing the data in broad spheres, and thereafter to identify categories and themes.

Step 3: Coded the content: When all data had been placed in spheres and categories, the researcher sorted data into different themes. The researcher selected and grouped related codes to form a theme. This process assisted the researcher in understanding the data much better.

Step 4: Checked validity and reliability: This step involved scrutinising the themes and the subthemes that previously emerged in order to verify the patterns. In the present study the researcher revisited themes that were formulated and verified whether they indeed existed and/or formed patterns. Provided any inconsistency was identified by the researcher, he commenced with the process of rewriting and therefore updating them accordingly. Moreover, in the process of rewriting the themes, the researcher discovered new codes and/or themes, which were recorded accordingly, and overlapping codes were deleted. Correspondingly, where necessary, the researcher combined some themes to form one theme. On the other hand, he had to separate some themes to form two different themes. Lastly, the researcher ensured that themes were extracted from the data to which extent validity was maintained in the study.

Step 5: Analysed and presented results: This step entailed writing the final themes that were established. The researcher followed the content analysis method rigorously to ensure that the final report was reliable and valid. The researcher presented overall spheres which was divided into categories, themes, and subthemes. The discussion included literature and research objectives.

Strategies employed to ensure data quality and integrity

In qualitative research the quality and trustworthiness of data are important aspects and should be ensured throughout the study (Connelly, 2016). For this reason, in conducting the present study, the researcher was guided by the criteria as explained by Nowell et al. (2017) and subsequently elaborated on.

- *Credibility*, also referred to as internal validity, is primarily concerned with ensuring that the study was measuring what it aimed to measure. The researcher ensured that the research findings are a true reflection of the data collected and analysed, that participants recognised the findings of the study. In order to achieve this, the researcher's work was verified by the subject expert to provide external checks on the research process.
- *Confirmability* entails ensuring objectivity. Therefore, the researcher demonstrated that the report findings and interpretations are a true reflection of the data collected as the data provided a detailed account of how the findings and interpretations were reached.
- *Transferability* means that the researcher conducted the following activities thoroughly: data collection, data analysis and final report-writing to ensure that the findings of the present study are replicated in the same study with the same conditions; similarly, when the readers can relate the study to their narratives.
- *Dependability* means the researcher ensured the logical documentation of every step taken during the research process in a traceable manner. This guaranteed the reliability of the study. To that extent, if the present study is conducted by another researcher with different participants and methods, it yields the same results.

Reporting

In the present study the researcher utilised tables and infographics to report on data and to discuss the spheres, categories, themes, and sub-themes identified during the process of data analysis. The original responses from participants were quoted from the initial data, which were cited to substantiate the proposed themes. Each table is discussed and then the findings are substantiated from literature in the discussion section.

Ethical considerations

The foundation of a meaningful and successful research study is ethics; therefore, it is important for the researcher to ensure that the research study is conducted in an ethical manner (Reid et al., 2018). In the present study the following ethical considerations were adhered to:

- *The Faculty's Research Ethics Committee:* The researcher obtained ethical approval [NWU-0086-20-A4] from the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee. Following this approval, the researcher proceeded with this study.
- *Informed consent and voluntary participation:* The researcher sought consent from participants. The information relating to consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and privacy was detailed in the consent form that was emailed to the participants prior to the interview session. This document explained consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and privacy to the participants. King et al., (2018) point out that the researcher should inform the participants about their right to withdraw from the study at any given time, if they so wish. For this reason, the researcher also informed the participants in this regard. Furthermore, participants were informed that withdrawing from the study would have no negative impact on them.
- *Confidentiality:* The researcher informed the participants that everything that was discussed during the interviews was kept private and was not shared with anyone (King et al., 2018). In addition, the researcher informed the participants that the data collected were kept in a safe place and that the password for the data recorded on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, was known only to the researcher and his supervisor. The names of the participants were not requested from participants.
- *Deception:* This refers to the act of misleading an individual to participate in a study by providing incorrect informing concerning the study (King et al., 2018). The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were not coerced by the researcher to participate in the present study (Creswell, 2014). In the present study, before each session,

the researcher provided a brief description of the study as documented in the research proposal. Therefore, techniques of deception were not applied in this study.

- *Causing no harm:* The researcher ensured that no intentional or foreseeable harm was caused to any participant in any way. He conducted the interviews in an ethical manner, ensuring that he was honest and respectful, and that he used proper language.
- *Other ethical considerations:* King et al., (2018) explain that the process of ensuring anonymity is never easy. However, the researcher should take the necessary steps to minimise the risk of disclosure. In the present study the researcher did not use any identifying information, for example identifying document numbers or mentioning the names of the participants. Feedback was provided to participants if requested. The findings of the study contribute to literature relating to the phenomenon being studied, thereby provide recommendations for practice.

FINDINGS

The research findings of the study were delineated into a collection of spheres, categories, themes, and sub-themes, substantiated by direct responses from the participants to support the results. Each of the spheres with the accompanying categories, themes and sub-themes were extracted and are presented in detail below. All the data collected from the participants were in English and no translation was necessary. During the process of forming and revising the themes and sub-themes specific categories were identified. These categories were placed in spheres to provide structure to the data in accordance with the research objectives. To obtain an overview of the findings that follow, the spheres are summarised in the following figure:

Overview of spheres

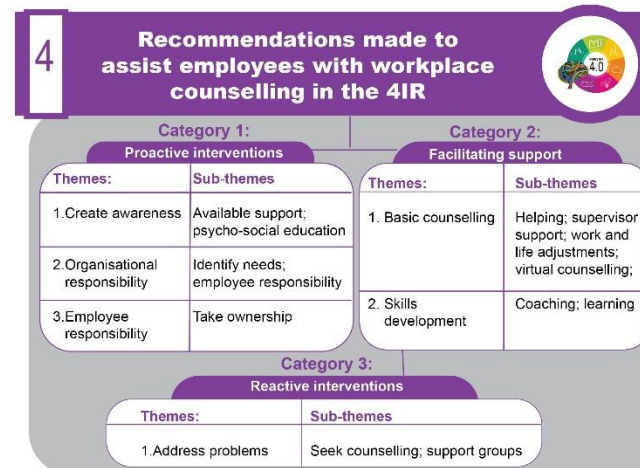
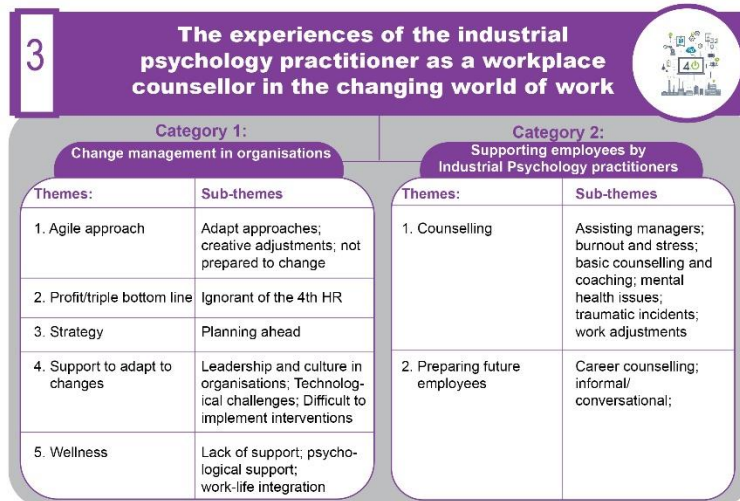
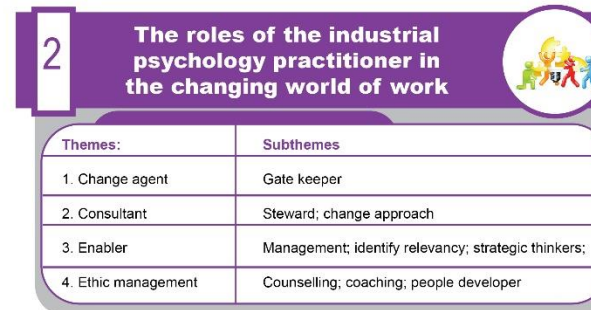
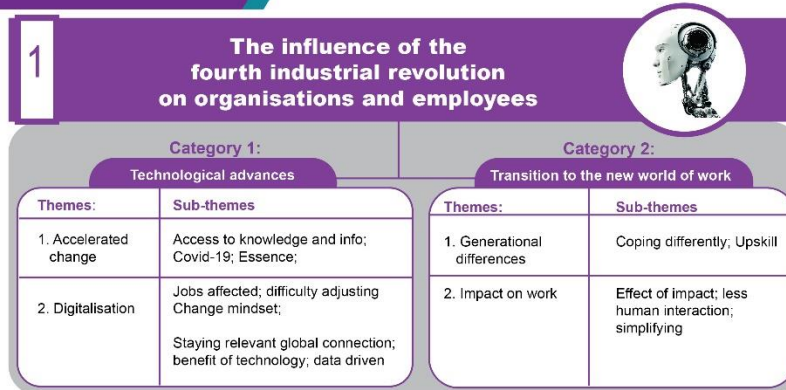


Figure 1: Overview of spheres

The next section focuses on the influence of the fourth industrial revolution on the organisations, which is sphere 1. Sphere 1 disseminated into 2 categories, namely firstly, technological advances and secondly, transition to the new world of work. The data revealed various themes and sub-themes. These themes are subsequently reported along with the responses of the participants, which are indicated by identifying them as e.g., Participant 1 (Female) in table 2 below:

Table 2

Categories of Sphere 1: The influence of the fourth industrial revolution on organisations and employees.

Category 1: Technological advances		
Theme	Sub-theme	Response
Accelerated change	Access to knowledge and info	"My understanding shortly is due to technology developing and access to each firstly, secondly, to knowledge and information. We are dealing with a whole new workforce, community, society which are much more informed. ..." (Participant 4, Female)
		"...fourth industrial revolution is moving away from human knowledge and more going towards computer knowledge, you report now interpret result for you..." (Participant 20, Female)
	COVID-19	"It is about change in the work environment and change on how we do things. Also change in the way we live and our lives. I must say the same situation we find ourselves right now with COVID-19, it has changed our lives...." Participant 12, Female)
		"...COVID-19 has pushed the fourth industrial revolution agenda very fast. For example, when we introduced the HR application at my workplace most of the baby boomers, and generation x (older employees) struggled with using it. The main challenge of employees is lack of technological skills and or the use of technology. Therefore, the employees find it difficult to navigate technological/digitized interventions offered by the organisations." (Participant 19, Female)
	Difficulty adjusting	"I think it makes work at faster pace, technology definitely puts pressure on the employees because is the emphasis to learn new systems, new technology, new social media almost on a weekly and monthly basis. There is a lot of change coming in, with change put a lot of stress on employees and it can also cause burnout..." (Participant 2, Female)
		"...the impact on employees – the stress level is so much higher, lack of authentic emotional expression and the demands on them have increased. In my time in the

		police, I said to management we need to evolve our counselling into WhatsApp and facetime, because the younger generation prefers communicating on WhatsApp and using emoticons rather than one on one counselling, which was not favourably met. We had to evolve in that regards. Organisations do not understand the impact of the 4IR." (Participant 4, Female)
	Essence	"...we are going in a face where technology will be the most used and sought-after platform for everything..." (Participant 1, female)
		"It seems as if we are entering in a world where technology will be a fundamental core of everything we do as human beings" (Participant 20, female)
	Jobs affected	"It is the knowledge base revolution, so the emphasis is going to be on employees' skills and knowledge. It is going to affect jobs in the sense that technology is going to phase out certain positions and/ or basic positions even more. For example, a teller at the bank and cashier, those type of positions will be made redundant by technology." (Participant 2, Female)
		"... the fourth industrial revolution is going to make it difficult for blue collar employees to find job; therefore it is going to increase the unemployment rate in South Africa even greater than the current unemployment rate... (Participant 21, Male)
Digitalisation	Change mindset	"...at first my understanding was that robots are coming to take over, until I realised that robots are not necessary robots taking over. They are making life simpler...saving a lot of time and energy.... (Participant 9, Female)
		"...there is new way of thinking, which will bring innovation and creative and challenge employee's mind to do different things..."(Participant 20, Female)
	Staying relevant	My prospective with regard to the fourth industrial revolution, is that it is relating to digitalisation things, especially from the HR perspective and most importantly with the environment we find ourselves in, is ever changing. My understanding of the 4IR is about artificial intelligence, digitalisation, and automation of things. Making sure that everything is done in effective and efficient manner in order for the organisation to achieve its success or stay relevant in their specific industry." (Participant 8, Female)
		"...if they do not upskill, they will become redundant and obsolete. So, obsolescence is one of those things that the employee will face if they are not upskilling or aligning their skill sets to the new challenges in the world of work. People that struggle to adjust will find it very difficult to stay relevant in the new world of work." (Participant 13, Male)
	Global connection	The 4IR is here, it is not coming. It is not an event; however, it is something that is happening gradually. People are running conference online; you can post something online, and it has global impact. (Participant 11, Female)

	<i>"...the 4IR will change the way we work, and it is going to have an impact on every kind of career. Moreover, organisations that want to stay productive or profitable and want to compete in the global market..." (Participant 13, Male)</i>
<i>Benefit of technology</i>	<i>"...most of the people complain about it in a negative way but it has changed our lives in a positive way. In the fact that if you look on how we do things and how we are accessing information and how we found each other easily. It shows that the world has changed and that we need to embrace technology, and not only technology but how we communicate with each other out of work." (Participant 12, Female)</i>
	<i>"... it is the transition of the new way of work that involves the use of machines, machine learning, computer-related software and leveraging of the power of the internet to conduct our lives (business, schooling, communication etc.)" (Participant 6, Male)</i>
<i>Data-driven</i>	<i>"Integration of more technology into the workplace, more focused on big data and people analytics not doing big data and people analytics the traditional way (spreadsheet individually). The increased use of technology and using technology in your work processes. We are already functioning in the 4IR and it is evident in the workplace." (Participant 7, Female)</i>
	<i>"...it will give raise to things like HR data analytics..." (Participant 20, Female)</i>

Category 2: Transition to new world of work

Theme	Sub-theme	Responses
Generational differences	<i>Coping differently</i>	<i>"Different generations are handling this differently. I think for our millennials or Gen Y are adapting much faster because job security is not that important for them as the older generation.... the older generation we are not that responsive to change, and we like to have job security..." (Participant 3, Female)</i>
		<i>"...I think the challenge we are going to face with the fourth industrial revolution is different between these generations (workforce). Your Millennials will be more inclined to the 4IR because they grew up with using technology and the baby boomers might find it difficult to adjust to it...when 4IR changes are introduced most of the baby boomers, and generation x (older employees) struggle with using it..." (Participant 19, Male)</i>
	<i>Up-skill</i>	<i>"...the older generation need to be upskilled to quite a large degree and they need to study a bit further to equip themselves with knowledge/skills required to cope in the changing world of work" (Participant 6, Female)</i>

		<i>"... so that is very relevant risk, especially when you have the older generation that are not so change agile; they may struggle with new technology coming in." (Participant 2, Female)</i>
Impact on work	Effect of impact	<i>"My understanding of the 4IR is how the changing world of work with all the technological advances will have an influence on the way that we are doing our work, jobs and how it is already influencing what is being done..." (Participant 3, female)</i>
		<i>" ... anything basically will be transformed and adapted because technology will have such a huge impact on it. We moving to that change now..."(Participant 5, female)</i>
	<i>Less human interaction</i>	<i>"there is more of online working, you will end up having a lot working on your computer, you will end up not having face-to-face meetings; you have virtual meetings. It is like little shifts that you did not notice but they are having an impact in your life..." (Participant 11, Female)</i>
		<i>"...but technology has enabled us to do work remotely and more efficiently because if I am home, I am not spending a lot of time chatting to my friends in the office; therefore, I am actually doing much more with my time when I am working from home. It saves time and it is convenient... (Participant 17, Female)</i>
	<i>Simplifying</i>	<i>"...making sure that everything is done in effective and efficient manner in order for the organisation to achieve its success or stay relevant in their specific industry. (Participant 8, Female)</i>
		<i>"it makes life easier, I think it making life easier, if you look at stuff like AI within the field that I currently work, it is used to help with comparing documents and dealing with different legal areas etc." Making the jobs of a lawyer easier of course it is something that we need, and it is the way forward...." (Participant 22, Female)</i>

From table 2 above it becomes evident that the data revealed two categories. The participants indicated that the organisations are faced with two main influences: technological advances, and transition to new world of work. In the first category two themes relating to technological advance were extracted, namely accelerated change, and digitalisation.

The participants indicated that, in their opinion, in the new world of work change is accelerated. The following sub-themes were found in the data: assess to knowledge and information, COVID-19, essence, and jobs affected. The participants indicated that it is now easier to access knowledge and stay informed. The data showed that most participants indicated that the onset of COVID-19 led to change accelerating in the workplaces. Some participants indicated that

the 4IR was driven by COVID-19. The participants indicated that employees are finding it difficult to adjust to the 4IR, because change is taking place at a growing pace; hence employees are finding it difficult to keep up with it. Employees need to master a large number of new systems and technology, which leads to them feeling tired, stressed, and burnt out. The participants also indicated that in the changing world of work technology is important for optimal functioning. The data indicated that the participants felt that many jobs are affected by the accelerated changes. Furthermore, certain positions have become redundant and for certain occupations it might be difficult to secure employment.

The data revealed that the influence of the fourth industrial revolution on organisations has led to digitalisation. The first sub-theme, namely change mindset, revealed that open-mindedness is necessary for functioning in and/or adjusting to the changing world of work. The participants indicated that for organisations to remain competitive in the changing world of work they need to be aligned with the changes introduced by the 4IR. The data revealed that the participants believed that the 4IR affords organisations the opportunity of functioning at a global level. Furthermore, the participants indicated that the 4IR grants other opportunities such as enabling people to communicate and to conduct schooling activities online. Put in a nutshell, the participants indicated that the 4IR is pushing people to move away from the traditional way of doing things into a new way of doing things.

The participants indicated that the influence of the 4IR has on organisations shows an impact of transition to the new world of work. This was coded as the second category in this sphere. Two themes were extracted here: generational differences; and impact on work.

In the first theme, generational differences, the participants highlighted that different generations react in different ways to the 4IR. The younger generation seem to generally adapt faster and cope better than the older generation. The participants further felt that the older generations need to upskill to a large extent, especially with regard to technological changes.

In the second theme, impact on work, the participants indicated that the fourth industrial revolution strongly impacted their lives. The data revealed several sub-themes such as effect of impact, less human interaction and simplifying. The first sub-theme, effect of impact, revealed that the 4IR is fundamentally transforming everything people do; it is impacting how people live and how work is conducted. Employees can work remotely and online, which leads

to a decrease in human interaction. The data showed that participants felt that the 4IR is simplifying life.

Next, sphere 2 will be discussed, which relates to the roles of the industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work. Sphere 2 did not disseminate into categories, but rather four definite themes were identified. These with the sub-themes are subsequently reported, along with the responses of the participants, indicated by identifying them as e.g., Participant 1 (Female).

Table 3

Sphere 2: The roles of the industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work

Theme	Sub-theme	Response
Change agent	Steward	<i>We have a number of responsibilities; the first thing is that we need to serve as change agents, reason being that a lot of jobs are going to have to undergo a large transition in order to remain relevant and some jobs are not going to be relevant. As IOP practitioners we have to serve as stewards for this change for these types of jobs that are coming..." (Participant 6, Male)</i>
		<i>"Help people understand 4IR and the interventions the organisation is proposing in response to the 4IR. To ensure that there is an integration between the automated process and the people. By looking at the risk involved in the process the organisation wants to implement and the reason thereof (efficiency, better profit margins, for reduction of Labour force or reduction in the production time) and what is the purpose of implementing these things. Use tools (evidence-based approaches) to understand the impact of the 4IR and address the identified impact. Help organisations to be transparent to employees and manage the relationships (e.g., union)." (Participant 7, Female)</i>
	Change approach	<i>"My role in fourth industrial revolution will be implementing gamification within recruitment and selection, along as administering psychometric assessments online only as well as providing the feedback online whether it be via ZOOM, google team etc. It also entails that coaching and counselling sessions will also take place online. Intervention creation and implementation will be online base. Even performance management will be conducted online for the employees. This broadens up our scope of practice</i>

as upcoming industrial psychologists in the industry.” (Participant 1, Female)

“...also making sure that you make it fun like running competitions, changing performance enhancement approach to suit the workforce, and following more contemporary approach. I recurrently lodged the project called growth for growth and the purpose of this project is to build high performing team in the sense that people are able to achieve goals, work collaboratively.” (Participant 8, Female)

Consultant	<i>Management</i>	<i>"Very important role because people have access to information firstly. In the past management could tell the employees anything they pretty much want to and there was no other source of information regarding that. Now employees can access that information immediately in terms of their rights and whatever they want. In my previous employment was this unit that was always experiencing problems and I consistently said to management you cannot feed nonsense to the members (employees)...They are new generation of people that have access to information, that can connect to each other immediately whether they are thousands of kilometres apart from each other. For management it might create problems in that, but for the employees is an advantage to have that correct information to their disposal immediately..." (Participant 4, Female)</i>
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"...use tools (evidence-based approaches) to understand the impact of the 4IR and address the identified impact. Help organisations to be transparent to employees and manage the relationships (e.g. union). Participant 7, female)

<i>Identify relevancy</i>	<i>"...from the development perspective we need to be able to identify what characteristics are more relevant for the world of work going forward; we are no longer going to be doing things in the traditional matter. I do not think we will go back to how things were. In that way we need to adjust to how things should be going forward (it can be something small, job requirements, job characteristics and qualifications) ..." (Participant 6, Male)</i>
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“...those skills might be relevant of the world of work we are moving into; you need to be aware of that and implement that in the recruitment and selection process. Are the psychometric tests that you are using still

relevant, are we still measuring competencies that are still relevant for that specific role?" (Participant 10, Female)

Strategic partner

"...we have to help the organisation to be future-thinking from a people perspective, future-required jobs, organisation structure, working space and training etc..." (Participant 11, Female)

"...To ensure that from the people perspective we are staying up to date of the change and preparing the workforce for the wave of change we are faced with.201D (Participant 8, Female)

Enabler

Counselling

"...also, our people the society have started to unlearn emotions and facial expression on emotions and verbalizing their emotions because it is very easy to put emoticon next to what I think people would like to see. We did a lot of counselling yesterday at the company that suffered armed robbery and they lost their phones... It is almost that we never switch off, it is to teach people that balance of when to draw boundaries because your workplace is in your home and with Covid your home becomes your office." (Participant 4, Female)

"...the role of Industrial psychology practitioner is to provide guidance, coaching and counselling. IOP should do needs analysis of what people are struggling with in terms of the 4IR; therefore, counsel them accordingly." (Participant 20, Female)

Coaching

I think with this industrial revolution (4IR) change is much faster than we have known it to be, and I think my role will be more of supportive role to people to adapt to changes and also to loss. I think in many cases there will be losses and then helping clients and/or employees to craft their own in job of doing things and also to assist them that if they experience job loss to go on to a new career path... And helping people to cope with change." (Participant 1, Female)

"My role will be to guidance this person through coaching. The more technology will increase the more and more they will be neglecting of people side. We (IOPs) will have to work harder to ensure that people are well looked after, they know how to balance (work and life), that they know which careers they can choose (obviously the whole career mapping will change going forward, in terms of the impact of technology on the careers). I think in the end our role will have to adapt as Industrial Psychologists providing more support to people and things impacting our workforce in the workplace." (Participant 5, Female)

People developer	<i>"The most important role is multiskilling. When you have the employees in the workforce that you think they would be affected by this revolution (4IR), in other words, some way technology is going to replace them in their occupation, it is important for us to identify these occupations and multi-skill these employees. When it comes that their positions are made redundant you can use them somewhere else in the organisation because they have already obtained a variety of skills." (Participant 2, Female)</i>
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"...in the 4IR as things are becoming more complex and challenging, people are having multiple roles; it is not necessary that you come to work and do a single role. It is going to be having multiple portfolios, stretching your skills, having side-hustle, and having short-term contracts; not having long-term commitments. There is a lot of demands on the individual and for an individual to catch up with those requirements, requires a special touch that is where is see the Industrial Psychologists ideal role is to be able to support the individuals in those transitions. Being able to understand how you can handle that complexity, the dynamics between now that it is like a lot of challenges being faced, is the softer side of things and the harder thing to explain to people in terms of the value..." (Participant 11, Female)

Ethics management Gatekeeper	<i>"...the biggest role is Ethics, in particular data ethics, a thing that I think we need to champion and steward as well because with everything, especially the fourth industrial revolution which is centred around data and live big data, I think we need to be careful around help manage and control companies around how to capture and keep data. Because there is a lot of potential for the data to be misused and manipulated in a way, if you look at it no. Primarily when you are applying for a job they are asking for self-identifying information which is still a bit of a hiccup and a sore point because you are not supposed to be collecting that information now with the POPI Act coming into effect. So, they are asking for things like ID number, cell phone, and email address, this are all IOP Practitioner who should be ensuring that we do not self-identify information." (Participant 6, Male)</i>
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"The thing that comes to mind is the check and balance. So, ethically the role of an Industrial Psychologist is around people, our focus in on people. There are number of different things we would be doing in that role. I always think our role is a bit of a check and a balance, ethical viewpoint. So, we will always want people to come to us and ask is that right, ethical and kind, all the considerations/decision around people. We

also want to be looking not just making sure things are fair, safe, kind, and ethical sound for people, but also in terms of enhancing the wellness of people... For it is the ethical foundation and making sure that things are done properly, and people are being considered because things are going fast it is easy to forget the people side and is so to how we ensure that people are being enhanced..." (Participant 11, Female)

In table 3 above, the role of the industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work was reported. Four main themes were extracted from the data: ethics management, change agent, consultant, and enabler.

The participants indicated that their role as change agents within organisations in the changing work of work involves facilitating the change process. As stewards this included facilitating the process of relevancy of jobs, and the integration of the automated process. The data further revealed that the industrial psychology practitioner should employ a change approach that will enable the organisations and employees to be agile in the face of uncertainty.

In addition, the participants indicated that, in their opinion, in the changing world of work they act as consultants to organisations in order to assist them in navigating the change proposed by the 4IR. The following sub-themes were found in the data: management, identify relevancy, and strategic thinkers. The data revealed that industrial psychology practitioners play an important role in supporting management during the change management process. They also act as identifiers of skills, competencies and developmental needs that are relevant to the changing world of work. In addition, the participants indicated that their role involves helping organisations plan strategically about the future of the work.

The participants indicated that the role of an industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work is to enable the organisations to be prepared for the changes presented by the 4IR. The data revealed several sub-themes, such as counselling, coaching and being a people developer. The participants indicated that as workplace counsellors their role involves supporting employees in their transition to the new world of work. The data further showed that most participants indicated that, as coaches, their role involves enabling employees to cope with change and assisting them to craft a new path. The data further revealed that the role of the industrial psychology practitioner involves providing training and development initiatives to empower employees to be relevant in the changing world of work.

Lastly, the participants indicated that they view their role within organisations as being that of honouring responsibility of managing ethics. As a gatekeeper, this included ensuring that data is managed responsibly, and that considerations regarding implementing the changes proposed by the fourth industrial revolution are fair and ethical.

Next, sphere 3 is discussed, which relates to the experiences of the industrial psychology practitioner as a workplace counsellor in the changing world of work. Sphere 3 disseminated into 2 categories. Firstly, the participants reported on how they experienced the impact of the change in the workplace during counselling sessions and secondly, the participants reflected on how they are supporting employees in the workplace. In this respect several themes and subsequent sub-themes were extracted from the categories. These are reported next, accompanied by the responses of the participants:

Table 4

Categories of Sphere 3: The experiences of the industrial psychology practitioner as a workplace counsellor in the changing world of work.

Category 1: Change management in organisations		
Theme	Sub-theme	Response
<i>Agile approach</i>	<i>Adapt approaches</i>	<i>"... looking on multiskilling, looking at change management and change agile within organisations. But in South Africa is still a fairly new concept but it is a discussion point, especially in big organisations." (Participant 2, Female)</i>
		<i>"... how are the employees doing? How are they coping? Not following an umbrella approach in terms of change management but what works for the one and what does not work for the other.. there is still a lot of things to be done such as supporting our employee in the process of adjusting to the fourth industrial revolution." (Participant 8, Female)</i>
	<i>Creative adjustments</i>	<i>"...I think organisations can do a lot more in looking at ways of creating new jobs and more opportunities for employees who might be at risk in terms of the 4IR." (Participant 13, Male)</i>
		<i>"I think workplace are trying, I would say they are (not) very effective, but they are trying to do the best they can. They also</i>

		<i>required to reimagine processes, their own competitiveness...”</i> <i>(Participant 16, Female)</i>
	Not prepared for change	<i>“...Organisational are not making the fourth industrial tangible or relatable to the employees and they are not preparing for it. They do not know how to prepare for the 4IR. ” (Participant 11, Female)</i>
		<i>“...companies have not done enough in terms of assisting employees in adjusting to the 4IR because South Africa is not ready to implement the 4IR....” (Participant 12, Male)</i>
Profit/triple bottom line	Ignorant of 4IR	<i>“Organisations are mostly worried about if they make profit (money) or not. I do not think that the 4IR is on their minds. When a lot of people think the fourth industrial revolution, they think robots, machines, time machines and future stuff. I do not think a lot of organisations are turning it back to tangible day to day, how is already evident in the day to day work we in now. I think is the buzz word, everyone is like the fourth industrial revolution, but I do not think that it has translated into what does that mean and what do we do...” (Participant 11, Female)</i>
		<i>“...a change like this is embraced when there is profit and business coming to your company but is not if is not organisations would support employees to adjust to the 4IR. There is money in the sense some 4IR interventions save costs, so that cost should be directed to making sure that people are empowered respond to change but in most cases, it is not happening. The organisations are not creating jobs that are in line with the fourth industrial revolution, they are not being creative.” (Participant 12, Male)</i>
Strategy	Planning ahead	<i>“I must be honest, I think companies are actually thinking about it, you know there is learning and development that is being introduced and support people through this but I definitely feel that more can be done from an execution perspective from having an actual strategy around the impact of 4IR and what does the impact look like for each part of the workforce because remember that technology and 4IR does not have an equal impact on everyone, right..., I still feel that companies are more thinking about loosely rapid by doing things here and there which sort of speaks to 4IR to helping the employees but I feel the magnitude and the scale to which should be done, I personally don’t feel is there as yet, particularly if I was to speak more broadly within the industry and most importantly yes the workplace has the responsibility for employees...” (Participant 14, Female)</i>

		<i>"I think it depends on the organisation itself. Organisations are all adjusting at their own different pace and speed. I always find that when consulting with different clients that there are different ways of communicating what workers can expect on the future of the organisation, how will the organisation is planning for and even acting and implementing strategy towards the 4IR. A lot of what gets shared is what happens in the financial year, so it almost feels short-to medium-term and it is almost year on year performance of the organisation is presented and communicated about not necessarily the longer-term plan would be, that have an implement on how ready your staff would feel..." (Participant 15, Female)</i>
Support to adapt to changes	Leadership and culture in organisations	<i>"...with change agile that is coming in, it is going to depend on the leadership in the company, if you are looking at how the organisation is supporting employees it is going to depend on the leadership and the culture within that organisation." (Participant 2, Female)</i>
		<i>"In my opinion, I do not think we are doing enough to help employees to adjust to the 4IR. It also depends who is on the driver's seat in terms of the leaderships. If the leadership themselves are not struggling with 4IR, they must see it as a need to help employees adjust. The assumption is that everyone can, as such people who are not coping with the changes introduced by the 4IR may sometimes be too afraid to raise their hands up asking for help, as in most cases they are looked down upon. They are thought of as old and outdated..." (Participant 17, Female)</i>
	Technological challenges	<i>"... I think the resource to assist in adapting to the new technology is there, but employees have to make time for that assist, time to learn new things. For example, time to learn zoom meeting app. my computer software was outdated, and I had struggles and I phoned the IT department and they said you working on an old system. There is no way I could have known that I am working on a very old system. But if you go to the IT site the information is there. It's just that we are just busy with our core business. It's not one of thing that I could make appointment with myself to go and see what things are out there; it's more of the case of necessity that I had to adapt. So, it is more me that is not making use of that because I am focusing on my core business. But if the need arise that I cannot do my job without it and the assist is available, that is on the technical level..."(Participant 3, Female)</i>

		<i>"I think we saw the first work from home during the hard lockdown, level 5. I do not think we realised then that we have more employees who cannot afford to work from home than those who can work from even those who can work from they still need equipment (laptop, chairs, printers etc.). Therefore, I do not think organisations are forward looking or proactive, but they are reactive; something happens, and they respond..." (Participant 7, Female)</i>
	<i>Difficult to implement interventions</i>	<i>"...nurses have this stigma of not wanting to learn the skills of computer literacy, this makes it so difficult to successfully implement things such as succession planning and onboarding for instance." (Participant 1, Female)</i>
		<i>"the organisations are investing a lot in communication when introducing 4IR initiatives... in the beginning of this initiatives you would see employees attending but as the course advanced people dropped out" (Participant 22, Female)</i>
Wellness	<i>Lack of support</i>	<i>"Not effective at all, they take a lot from employees in the sense that send WhatsApp, WhatsApp groups, email, teams, I need information from you, I need Labour hours from you, the no support in the demands I place on you which cause stress on you and your family." (Participant 4, Female)</i>
		<i>"..the workplace is not effective in assisting the employees to adjust into the 4IR because top management is not prepared and they are change resistant....someone will come and say this needs to be implemented but no one is giving a course/training, no discussion or upskilling is offered to employees to assist them to adjust. They just see things happen in the organisation without any form of communication... (Participant 9, Female)</i>
	<i>Psychological support</i>	<i>"We are getting there in South Africa, but I think we have a way to go, I think there is starting to be more emphasis on employee wellness..." (Participant 2, Female)</i>
		<i>"I am first the point of contact, as a business partner I always get employees reaching out asking for help about different issues such as coping with working from home, conflict management, amongst other things." (Participant 17, Female)</i>
	<i>Work-life integration</i>	<i>"...currently, employees are allowed to work from home, and I believe it is the good way of supporting employees to stay healthy and well and still balance their home responsibilities and their work responsibilities to have that work-life integration. I think at this point in time we are supporting employees." (Participant 2, Female)</i>

"...but there is no support in that work-life balance." (Participant 4, Female)

Category 2: Support to employees from Industrial Psychology practitioners

Theme	Sub-theme	Responses
Counselling	Assisting managers	"... helping managers address conflict, which arise between them and their direct reports... (Participant 9, Female)
		"...I am directly involved in ensuring that the line manager changes the process, and the way they do their work and responding to the need of the employees." (Participant 12, Female)
	Burnout and stress	"...it also focusses on stress management and burnout, how you recognize the signs, how you cope better with work related demands and expectations" (Participant 15, Female)
		"...my counselling is often related to work pressure and stress of not coping with information overload" (Participant 6, Female)
	Basic counselling and coaching	"I am managing a consulting firm; we are doing counselling, coaching online and face-to- face." (Participant 5, Female)
		"...we found a lot of that happening currently during COVID-19, literally offering short-term counselling and coaching, following the positive psychology approach..." (Participant 22, Female)
	Mental health issues	"...touching around things that cause decrease in performance, some of them are linked with anxiety, depression as such may lead to me referring to the appropriate mental health practitioner for further support... Psychological safety, toxic leadership sometimes, where counselling is needed on both sides; for the people that are on the receiving end of that toxic leadership and the toxic leader himself. Sometimes there is a need for counselling for workplace bullying..." (Participant 15, Female)
		"...it is goal-oriented counselling that I do for the individuals but within that as well it is being struck in an emotion, low self-esteem and challenges that needs to be overcome. I also counsel some employees around the university, I assist them to work through their emotional issues." (Participant 16, Female)
	Traumatic incidents	"We counsel on the daily basis. It is ad hoc and sometimes informal. Employee is coming to you, for example had traumatic incident at home and/or breaking at home." (Participant 2, Female)
		"...I do day to day counselling...I do a lot of trauma debriefing; we do a lot of psychology preparedness before the employees go out to

		<i>accidents. Upon their return, I do trauma debriefing after they come back from attending the incident and/or accidents, just to check in, if there is trauma, we formalize it..." (Participant 9, Female)</i>
	<i>Work adjustments</i>	<i>"We are offering counselling sessions in the organisation, both individual and group counselling sessions. The purpose of this sessions is to help employees adjust to the change/s and improve their work experience, for example help them cope with working remotely. (Participant 10, Female)</i>
		<i>"There tends to be more counselling happening at that stage because of what they are experiencing in this new workspace and just needing support..." (Participant 15, Female)</i>
<i>Preparing future employees</i>	<i>Career counselling</i>	<i>"I teach a lot at postgraduate level and most of those students are part-time students. This means that they are working and studying. There are often times when I engage with them in terms of counselling. It may about the conflict that they are experiencing at work but often times it is about their careers. Most of the times when people are studying, they are preparing for the future..." (Participant 16, Female)</i>
		<i>"...I am more comfortable with career counselling; my sessions are directed to helping people prepare for the future" (Participant 21, Male)</i>
	<i>Informal/ conversational</i>	<i>"Imbedded type/ informal type of counselling one part and I do get sometime referral from employees within the organisation but that is limited. I am also counselling students informally and/or community services." (Participant 3, Female)</i>
		<i>We are using a service provider to provide counselling services, but I am offering counselling informally and my office is open for the employees if and when they need someone to talk with (counselling). (Participant 7, Female)</i>

From table 4 it becomes evident that the data revealed two categories. In their experience as workplace counsellors in the changing world of work the participants indicated that they are basically confronted with two main issues as counsellors, namely firstly, how organisations implement change management and secondly, how industrial psychology practitioners are supporting employees efficiently through the new changes.

In the first category six main themes were extracted relating to change management in organisations, namely agile approach, profit/triple bottom line, strategy, support to adapt to

changes, unwillingness to learn, and wellness. The data revealed that organisations implement an agile approach during change management. The following sub-themes were found in the data: adapt approaches, creative adjustments, and organisations not prepared for change. The data shows that the participants indicate a key principle for employees to be change agile is not to adopt an umbrella approach when implementing interventions. The data further indicated that the organisations should adapt and adjust by being creative. The participants further felt that organisations are not doing enough to assist employees to adjust to the 4IR, especially the older generations and unskilled labour who are not technology literate.

In the second theme in this category the participants indicated that they found that organisations tend to only focus on the profits they are making and less so on supporting staff members. One sub-theme that emerged here was ignorance of the 4IR, and the data revealed that organisations would easily use 4IR as an excuse to retrench people, while the motive actually is to make more money.

Next, the participants indicated that, in their view, the organisations implement a strategic approach during change management by planning ahead. The data further indicated that when planning ahead, organisations tend to adopt the umbrella approach by not taking into consideration that the 4IR does not have an equal impact on everyone.

The participants reported that specific support to adapt to changes should be provided to employees. The first sub-theme revealed that the participants indicated that leadership and culture in organisations play a major role in how employees are supported. Also, leaders should be aware that they need to support employees differently in the 4IR, especially with resources as well as being available to employees. The data further revealed that with technological changes low-skilled and older employees are the ones being most impacted. The participants indicated that, in their opinion, the focus of organisations is not on people – that they are not focussing enough on equipping employees with machine-learning and soft skills. Also, some participants reported that there seems to be an unwillingness in some employees to learn. The data revealed that the employees' unwillingness to learn new skills, that could lead to them adapting and adjusting, make it difficult to implement interventions. Employees tend to be enthusiastic about the 4IR interventions such as training and developmental opportunities in their beginning stages but as the interventions move forward, they drop out.

Lastly, in the first category, the participants reported that they perceive that the employees' well-being should receive more attention in organisations. The first sub-theme, lack of support, revealed that the participants experience that organisations are not adequately supporting the employees in their transition to the changing world of work. The participants indicated that the employees need assistance with health and psychological support, especially for burnout caused by increased job demands. The participants in their role as workplace counsellors further reported that psychological support is instrumental in helping the employees adapt and adjust to the changes. Lastly, the data indicated that some participants felt that employees are not assisted in finding a balance between work and home.

Where the first category revealed how the participants experienced the organisation's manner of implementing change management and its impact on the employees, the second category focused on the participants' reactions with regard to how, in their experience, they support employees in the changing world of work. The data revealed two themes: counselling and preparing future employees. Firstly, the participants indicated that they provide support to managers to manage employees who are experiencing psychological challenges and also assist them to manage effectively in the changing world of work. The data also indicated that the type of aspect they counsel is burnout and stress. The data further revealed that industrial psychology practitioners utilise basic counselling and coaching skills to help employees navigate changes which could lead to the development of coping strategies. The participants indicated that the counselling is focused on the mental health issues that the individuals are experiencing. Also, the counselling is facilitated to help employees brief traumatic incidents. Lastly, the participants indicated that they help employees to adjust to the changes in their work. In the second theme the data indicated that industrial psychology practitioners provide career counselling to employees which is directed at helping them to prepare for the changes such as future jobs. Moreover, some industrial psychology practitioners, in their experience as workplace counsellors, indicated that they prepare future employees, namely students and potential employees, by means of career counselling conversations. During these conversations possible study options are discussed as a way to prepare the individual for future work. Also, the participants indicated they conduct informal conversations with students and employees.

Sphere 4 is discussed next, which relates to recommendations the participants made with a view to assist employees by means of workplace counselling during the 4IR. Sphere 4 disseminated into 3 categories, and several themes and subsequent sub-themes were extracted

from the categories. These are subsequently reported, along with the responses of the participants.

Table 5

Categories of Sphere 4: Recommendations made to assist employees with workplace counselling in the 4IR.

Category 1: Proactive interventions		
Theme	Sub-theme	Response
Create awareness	Available support	"...advertise the counselling interventions offered by the organisation..." (Participant 20, Female)
		"I recommend that organisations should create a level of awareness about counselling intervention offered within the organisation and the impact of the 4IR on their well-being...and these options include counselling, and they should not understand counselling as that I have marital problems, or I have some kind of psychopathology that I need to see a counsellor. Normalize counselling that it can be for anything like adjusting to new thing and issues about my work or I am struggling with technology that can be something that can be assisted through counselling... just like how we are creating awareness about workplace bullying, we can create awareness about stress or difficulty experiencing because of the change in from face-to-face to more fourth industrial revolution-based methodologies and technologies." (Participant 18, Female)
	Psycho-social education	"...I would rather do proactive training programmes to employees to inform them what exactly the 4IR is and positive and negative impact it may have on them as employees and to inform that the counselling services available. Because as soon as you have knowledge that this might create a problem, the fact that I seat and do research on social media consistently when I home and not communicate verbally with my partner it might cause a problem. If I am not able to set boundaries with my supervisor in terms of my off time it's going to cause a problem at some point. So, I would really recommend a proactive approach to this and inform employees on a short little workshop..." (Participant 4, Female)

"...organisation should form workshops that address questions like what the fourth industrial revolution is, how does it look like to the organisation/s, highlighting the impact of the fourth industrial revolution to the employees and to their respective organisations. Following this workshop schedule individual counselling sessions, addressing the emotional impact/ anxieties caused by the realities of fourth industrial revolutions. These workshops will guide the interventions such as counselling that the organisation/s can implement. Have discussions/ group counselling where the issues of 4IR will be addressed. I do believe that a lot more people are passive, for example they do not necessary reach out for help when they struggle with fourth industrial revolution component. The managers are getting frustrated asking the employees, why they are not doing the work. People do not like being vulnerable, they do not like to reach out and say I do not understand. Sometimes employees would rather wait until it is too late to reach out." (Participant 20, Female)

**Organisational
responsibility**

Identify needs

"I think the big thing with the fourth industrial revolution is Organisational development (OD). I think if the proper OD processes are followed then counselling needs will be less. What I mean by that is if you have proper process where to identify why the change needs to take place and what exactly is the change that needs to take place. If those process in the company are done properly in the company then your counselling will be less. If anything, new technology wise is introduced within the company, I think it is important to be proactive in the sense that employ psychologists taking in account when introducing change." (Participant 1, Female)

"Personalizing the interventions for the employees, e.g. understand the needs of the employees..." (Participant 7, Female)

**Employee
responsibility**

Take ownership

"I think if there is a culture that employees should take care of their own psychological well-being, they need ownership of that... Also, they need to know that they should take care of their own well-being. Sometimes without even knowing it employees are counselling each other, so if you maybe want to do some training and development for employees, you maybe do something like helping facilitation or effective helper courses so that when the need arise someone does come and talk with

you(employee) that you have the main skills to counsel in that moment even if the employee refer afterward, it is fine but just to be there. Because psychologists can be limited for the employees, therefore, it is like you are teaching people how to fish..." (Participant 3, Female)

"Employees who are concerned they should approach their employers asking for these services. They should come forward and be proactive because is their career, contrary to popular belief organisations would not bend over backwards to save every career or job. The more informed people are more knowledgeable people will be to address their own careers to be in charge of their own future in terms of their career. My recommendation, in a nutshell, to employees would be act, do not sit back and wait for organisation to counsel you to give you information to help you navigate this difficult situation. Approach your supervisor for counselling or to refer you to someone within the organisation to provide you counselling so that you can be empowered to make better decisions. (Participant 13, Female)

Category 2: Facilitating support

Theme	Sub-theme	Response
Basic counselling	<i>Helping</i>	<i>".... If you transfer those basic counselling skills to other employees and they can help other employees before sending/referring them to a psychologist. Let people tell their stories (counselling can help people just to voice their experiences regarding to 4IR) and also moving forward to generating alternatives on how to adapt and to come to a solution of not getting stuck and helping them to know what different options are of doing job. But also, to help employees know what unique skill sets that they will apply in different work situations." (Participant 3, Female)</i> <i>"Firstly, we can start by listening and understanding what employees are struggling with. We can facilitate a process to understand what blockages/myths for them are that are related to 4IR, help them understand what are the options that they can explore and change their narratives on the 4IR. Using the buddy system, where the employees will keep checking on each other's mental health on an on-going period." (Participant 17, Female)</i>

Supervisor support		<i>"I would recommend that senior management create the level of awareness for all the employees, to note that there are available options should they struggle with anything related to the 4IR in terms of their workplace...Definitely creating the level of awareness and that needs to come from management...This has to come from management/top management, it can be put out there as something that is available and important to the company, something that they promote. From that perspective an employee would not feel that I am the only one that is struggling, or I am afraid to speak to anyone; they must think that I am not coping, or I cannot do my job. The management should be seen as more promoting counselling and support employees. (Participant 18, Female)</i> <i>"Getting the leaders/top management involved, the employees need to know that the employer is there to support them..." (Participant 22, Female)</i>
Work and life adjustments		<i>"Thereafter communicating the change for the necessary employees and allow them to give input into the new system. Thereafter, providing them with enough time, assistance, and training to learn the new system." (Participant 2, Female)</i> <i>"... sometime people live in a system be it family system or community system, sometimes the 4IR may have a big impact on the partner, or a father or is having an impact on the family. We need to be able to help the individual to deal with changes in the structures that they live in. Helping employees through counselling to feel better about change."</i>
Virtual counselling		<i>"The transformation of the mind is very critical; we should use counselling champions within the organisations. Open up counselling globally and into online platforms. Once we pick up success story we focus on continuous improvement." (Participant 12, Female)</i> <i>"...the counselling session should not be limited to face-to-face but should also be offered virtually. We need to come to place where we acknowledge that there is different anxieties and what kind of anxieties are being caused and how we can workshop, how we can train and understand how we can have group set-up on the 4IR..." (Participant 9, Female)</i>
Skills development	Coaching	<i>"To provide coaching sessions to employees regarding 4IR on a group level. In the coaching sessions emphasise the importance of mastering 4IR skills... (Participant 1, Female)</i> <i>"My recommendation is that always go back to the individual; there is no formula that works for everybody. The individual's inner wisdom is</i>

	<i>not going to guide them in the wrong direction. Teaching people to trust in their inner wisdom; no matter where they go and what they do they will always be prepared.” (Participant 11, Female)</i>
<i>Learning</i>	<i>“...the employees need to know that the employer is there to support them when it comes to technology, upskilling themselves for the skill required for the future. That the employer is providing counselling to help them navigate these times...” (Participant 22, Male)</i>
	<i>“...and providing them with the right tools (training & learning opportunities, emotional support through counselling, and career counselling).” (Participant 14, Female)</i>

Category 3: Reactive interventions

Theme	Sub-theme	Responses
Address problems	<i>Seek counselling</i>	<i>“...for me counselling is reactive intervention so in other words you give counselling when there is an existing problem so I will in order to effectively and on a micro level to address this...” (Participant 4, Female)</i>
		<i>“It starts with honesty and acceptance. Given all the changes that have happened, people need to accept some counselling/ upskilling/ guidance and that if they need help, they should come forward and seek assistance. To large extent in South Africa, psychologists are seen to be for “crazy people” that why some people are reluctant to approach us for assistance, I feel like if you need help, come forward and seek assistance and I also think that to a large extent that it is always not their fault; I think the availability and who is available is not always available to these employees...” (Participant 6, Female)</i>
	<i>Support groups</i>	<i>“I would recommend that there should be enough platforms for people to be able to engage about the 4IR as it relates to their context and as they feel about it. Facilitated sessions, in the space where they are facilitated by IOP, I think it will be something that helps to create a space for people to be able to engage with one another about how 4IR looks like for their environment/workspace.” (participant 15, Female)</i>
		<i>“...to provide them with further support one-on- one and do counselling group. In the past we had HIV support group and</i>

people with disabilities support group, we can equally make 4IR support group." (Participant 4, Female)

From table 5 above it can be concluded that the data revealed three categories of recommendations that were made to assist employees with workplace counselling in the 4IR: pro-active interventions, facilitating support, and reactive interventions.

In the first category, proactive interventions, the participants' recommendations included creating awareness of workplace counselling, organisational responsibility, and employee responsibility. The following sub-themes were found in the data: available support and psycho-social education. The participants recommended that organisations provide psychological support to all employees to assist them in adjusting to the changes. Also, that organisations include psych-social education in their training and development initiatives as an effort to promote awareness regarding mental health issues that may result from the changes. The participants further recommended that organisations bear the responsibility of identifying the needs of the employees and of implementing interventions for the identified needs.

The participants indicated that they found that organisations are mainly responsible for assisting the employees in the process of transiting to the new world of work. The first sub-theme, identify needs, revealed that organisations should assist the employees by identifying their needs in the changing world of work and provide training and development interventions to address these needs. The participants recommended that the employees also take the responsibility and ownership of approaching their employers for assistance with coping with the changes and that they participate in the change interventions provided by the organisations.

In the second category, the participants referred to how they facilitate support to employees in the changing world of work. Two themes were extracted here: basic counselling and skills development. The participants, in their experience as workplace counsellors, recommended that organisations utilise basic counselling to help employees adjust and adapt to the changes. In addition, they recommended that management within organisations play a key role in creating awareness of the support that is offered by the employer to assist them cope with the changes. The participants recommended that the organisations play an active role in helping the individuals in adjusting to the work and life. The participants recommended not to limit

counselling interventions to face-to-face but to offer it virtually as well. In the second theme, skills development, the participants recommended that the organisation's training and development initiatives be directed to helping the employee master 4IR skills, this could be done by means of coaching learning opportunities. The participants further recommended that the organisations provide learning opportunities to support employees to up-skill themselves to navigate the changes.

In the final category, the participants indicated that reactive interventions for workplace counselling should be provided to address psychological problems that are caused by the changing world of work. This is evident from the following sub-themes: seek counselling and support groups. The data revealed that counselling is a reactive intervention by means of which employees are allowed to seek support to solve problems and address issues. The participants also reflected on counselling as a reactive service being made available to the distressed employees. Also, that participants recommended that organisations form support groups that will help the employees navigate the changes and challenges presented by the 4IR.

DISCUSSION

In this section the findings are discussed and related to literature.

The general objective of the present research study was to explore workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective. The findings showed that the participants indicated technological advances to be one of the major influences of the 4IR on organisations. The participants further indicated that different generations reacted differently to the transition to the new world of work caused by the 4IR. The 4IR further had a major impact on the manner in which people work. The study revealed that industrial psychology practitioners experienced that they serve different roles in the changing world of work, such as manager of ethics, being a change agent, a consultant and enabler. The participants experienced the effect on how change was managed in organisations and its effect on organisations and employees. They indicated the different methods they used to support employees in the new world of work, such as assistance to managers and addressing mental health issues. Hence the participants recommended that organisations proactively facilitate support to the employees and where necessary reactively address problems by implementing

counselling and support groups in order to support employees in their adjustment to the changing world of work.

The **first objective** of this research study was to conceptualise fourth industrial revolution and workplace counselling, according to literature. Schwab (2016) states that the 4IR is reshaping how everything is done. This suggests that the 4IR is changing the way in which organisations do business and how people connect with one another and how they live their lives (Mpofu & Nicolaidis, 2019). Schwab (2016) emphasises that the 4IR is transformation in technology, which is prevalent through the use of cloud and mobile computing, big data and machine learning, sensors, and artificial intelligence and advanced robotics, amongst others. Moreover, these transformations are taking place rapidly and in an unpredictable manner (Huang & Rust, 2018).

Bajorek and Bevan (2020) define workplace counselling as a short-term psychological support which is rendered to employees with the aim of addressing psychological problems they experience. Ajila and Adetayo (2013) state that the purpose of workplace counselling is to facilitate the process of solution-finding by the employees. Furthermore, the organisations should implement proper structures to assist employees with any issue that may prevent them from performing their duties (Ajila & Adetayo, 2013). One resource that is available in organisations is industrial psychology practitioners, as they are trained and equipped to render workplace counselling (Schultz et al., 2020).

The **second objective** of this research study was to explore the influence of the fourth industrial revolution on organisations and its employees. Firstly, the results indicated that the participants mentioned that the 4IR's influence on organisations was especially prevalent in the rapid advancement of technology in recent years. This was especially evident from the manner in which knowledge and information was distributed and how jobs were affected, thereby accelerating change, the automation and digitalisation of organisations. These findings are similar to the findings from a study conducted by Rachinger et al. (2019) among staff members in the media and automotive industries, which indicated that technological advancements have had a major impact on organisations; consequently, there has been numerous job losses in those industries (Parschau & Hauge, 2020; Sherwood & O'Donnell, 2018). Mayer and Oosthuizen (2021) found in their study among managers in a South African technology organisation that the challenges of the 4IR highlighted both the positive and negative experiences of the

participants regarding the rapid and disruptive changes within the organisations. Also, Müller et al. (2017) reveal in their study that technological advances provided the organisations with strategies to deal with competition, as such technological advances granted organisations opportunities to adequately adjust to the changes. In the current study, some participants referred to the onset of COVID-19 as having had an influence by changing the work environment. One participant indicated that COVID-19 “pushed the 4IR agenda”. Horgan et al., (2020) agree in this regard and suggest that the implementation of the 4IR agenda is fast-tracked by the onset of COVID-19 and that it poses various challenges to organisations.

The participants indicated that the digitalisation within organisations resulted in changing mindsets by challenging employees to think different and be more creative and ensure that organisations stay relevant. Similarly, Mayer and Oosthuizen (2021) found in their study that the participants reported a negative mindset regarding the 4IR changes which caused rapid changes in the organisations, such as automation and digitisation. From the findings it can also be concluded that not all the participants experienced digitisation to be negative. Some participants indicated that the benefits of technology improved their lives, and that knowledge is accessed easier by leveraging the power of the internet to conduct their lives (such as schooling). Again, similarly, the findings from Mayer and Oosthuizen (2021) indicated in their findings that some of the participants felt excited and positive about the changes the 4IR has brought.

The findings further revealed that the 4IR does not only have an influence on how technology brought change in the workplace, but employees also found themselves transitioning to a new world of work. In the same way, Schwab (2017) revealed in his study that organisations and employees are continuously required to adjust and adapt to the changing world of work. The participants indicated that they found that different generations coped differently with this transition. While the younger generation seemed to find it easier to transition to the new world of work, the older generation felt a sense of job insecurity as a result of automation and digitalisation in the workplace, which then forced them to upskill and learn to adapt to the changes. Alcover et al. (2021) found in their study that the older employees are most likely to experience feelings of job insecurity because they are not tech-savvy. In addition, the Clochard and Westerman (2020) revealed in their study that job insecurity influenced the older generation to upskill with the aim of ensuring that they remain competent in the changing environment.

According to the participants the transition to the new world of work has quite a large impact on work. The manner in which work is being done, having less human interaction, and simplifying organisations are a few examples of the impact of the transition. Similarly, Schwab and Davis (2018) revealed in their study that the changing world of work is reshaping how work is performed.

The **third objective** of this research study was to explore what the role of the industrial psychology practitioner is in the changing world of work. The participants indicated that the primary role of industrial psychology practitioners in the changing world of work is being ethics managers. Participants reported that as ethics managers, they were responsible for managing ethics by gatekeeping in organisations, thereby making sure that the organisations are adhering to legislation such as the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act). Furthermore, the findings indicated that the participants felt that it is their responsibility to keep the workplace fair and safe. Jorgensen-Graupner and Van Zyl (2019) assert that ethical positive behaviour is regarded as a foundation of industrial psychology practitioners. In this regard, Van Zyl et al. (2016) confirm that industrial psychology practitioners are responsible for maintaining ethical standards and practices within organisations.

The results showed that the role of industrial psychology practitioners in the changing world of work is to be change agents; they steward for change by facilitating the process of relevancy of jobs and re-humanising work by integrating humans and automation. They mentioned that they use evidence-based tools such as psychometric assessments to help organisations and employees to understand the impact of 4IR so as to adjust and adapt to the changes. Van Zyl et al. (2016) found in their study amongst industrial psychologists across South Africa that the role change-agent is the role of the industrial psychology practitioners. From the findings it can be seen that the industrial psychology practitioners in their role as change-agents should implement change approaches that enable employees to be agile and flexible in environments characterised by uncertainty. Similarly, Witjes et al. (2016) found in their study that change-agents are responsible for creating a transformational environment which will enable organisations and employees to thrive in the face of change.

The findings also indicated that industrial psychology practitioners act as consultants to organisation in the changing world of work. The participants reported that they provide

consultancy services, especially to management, in order to assist them in efficiently and effectively navigating the changes introduced by the 4IR. These findings are supported by Koppes (2014) who states that industrial psychology practitioners as consultants are confronted with the following duties: (1) to address and create solutions to challenging problems, (2) to communicate the findings and recommendations to management, (3) to implement interventions, and (4) to advocate for the human element in the process. Some participants reported that industrial psychology practitioners were positioned as strategic partners.

Lastly, participants reported that their role in the changing world of work is being the enabler. They reported they enable organisations to be prepared for the changes by providing the following services: counselling, coaching, and developing people. In this regard, the industrial psychology practitioner is concerned with talent management with organisations, in their capacity as counsellors, coaches and people-developers, they equip individuals to address their personal or developmental needs (Jorgensen, et al., 2016; Van Zyl & Stander, 2013). Piwowar-Sulej (2021) states that these developmental needs should be aligned with future competencies. To that extent, the industrial psychology practitioners reported that their role as workplace counsellors involves supporting employees to transit to the new world of work.

The findings showed that most participants indicated that, as coaches, their role involves enabling employees to cope with change and assisting them in crafting a new path. Park and Oh (2020) urge that coaching facilitates the process that leads the employees to be self-aware and equip them with problem-solving skills. The participants further revealed that the role of an industrial psychology practitioner involves providing training and development initiatives to empower employees to be relevant in the changing world of work. This finding is supported by the study conducted by Deloitte (2020) which highlighted that training and development is a top investment priority in many companies, as it is utilised to prepare the employees for future skills and jobs.

The **fourth objective** of this research study was to explore what the experiences are of the industrial psychology practitioners as workplace counsellors in the changing world of work. The results showed that the industrial psychology practitioners answered the research questions in such a way that structured the data in to two categories. The participants indicated their experienced from the organisational perspective, and secondly the participants indicated how they perceive their role in the organisation as counsellors.

The participants perceived change management interventions as a platform for implementing an agile approach in the organisation. In a study conducted by Balashova and Gromova (2018) it was found that, when addressing the conditions of the fourth industrial revolution, agile approaches are effective change management interventions. The participants further mentioned that they experienced organisations are not prepared for the changing world of work because South Africa is not ready to implement the 4IR. These findings are similar to the those of a study conducted by Lekhanya (2019), which indicated that the majority of South Africans reported that they consider the 4IR to be a difficult concept and that they do not understand it. One of the participants indicated that people are still struggling with the third industrial revolution in organisations. Uleanya and Ke (2019) confirm that adjusting to the 3rd industrial revolution is still a problem for many people, particularly in a developing continent such as Africa, seeing that such organisations are not prepared for the change. In the study conducted by World Economic Forum (WEF) (2018) it was found that the South African workforce does not possess sufficient digital skills and critical thinking skills to function in the 4IR era.

In addition, participants argued that it seems that companies are only focused on making a profit; they would easily use 4IR as an excuse to retrench people, but the motive is actually to make more money. In a study conducted by Deloitte (2020) amongst global executives and public sector leaders it found that companies are mainly concerned with profit-making. As such they hope to utilise the 4IR changes to increase revenue while decreasing the cost of production. Therefore, the organisations are not interested in making transformational change; they are only concerned about the profit and/or triple bottom line (Schroeck et al., 2019).

The results also indicated that when developing strategy, management needs to focus on planning ahead and these plans should consider the changing world of work. In this regard, the study conducted by Schroeck et al. (2019) agrees with these findings and suggests that the foundation for digital transformations within organisations is strategy. This view is consistent with that of Nam (2019) who urged that organisations should proactively plan for the 4IR with a view to adequately adjust and adapt to changes presented by it. Hence it is important for organisations to implement training and development interventions that have a long-term perspective in mind (Piwowar-Sulej, 2021). Deloitte (2020) confirms that the integration of new technologies with operations within organisations will lead to long-term success.

The participants indicated that leadership and culture in organisations play a vital role when it comes to support to adapt to changes. From the result it was evident that organisations are operating in the environment that is characterised by increasing competition and continued changes, as such employees are forever required to adjust and adapt to these changes. Xu et al. (2018) confirm that these changes are difficult to ignore because they are taking place at an accelerated speed and have a large impact on societies, organisations, and governments. Participants reported that employees' preparedness and readiness for these changes are influenced by leadership and organisational culture. These findings are in accordance with similar findings from Metwally et al. (2019) who state that leadership influences employees' readiness for the changing world of work by creating organisational culture of effectiveness and by ensuring maintained transparent communication with the employees (Li et al., 2021). In addition, participants indicated that technological changes have an unequal impact; low-skilled labourers are the ones being most impacted. Xu et al. (2018) point out that technological changes may further inequalities.

The participants indicated that organisations find it difficult to implement interventions directed at helping employees to adjust and adapt to the changes. This finding is in accordance with similar findings from Nankervis et al. (2021) who state that employees are disinterested in participating in the interventions developed and implemented by organisations to assist them in adjusting and adapting to the changes, primarily because employees are resisting the changes brought about by the changing world of work. As such, the participants reported that they perceive that wellness should receive more attention in organisations. Ramraj and Amolo (2021) maintain that although the workforce in the 4IR is mostly characterised by machinery and technology, it is still important for organisations to implement wellness interventions. The participants reported that organisations are not supporting them to deal with stress and anxiety caused by the changes. Interestingly, this finding is in contrast to what Kamaruddin et al. (2019) state, namely that organisations are required to assist employees to address the challenges presented by the changing world of work by providing them with the support that will enable them to deal with challenges positively and constructively. The participants further indicated that no support is offered to master work-life balance. The study conducted by Ethel et al. (2016) found that when the employees are unable to successfully balance their work and life responsibilities it may lead to an increase in stress-related ill-health in organisations.

Secondly, the results indicated how the industrial psychology practitioners are supporting employees. The majority of the participants reported that they support employees by providing psychological support by means of counselling. This is supported by findings from the study conducted by Barkhuizen et al. (2014) which state that industrial psychology practitioners are workplace counsellors. As such they assist employees and provide support through counselling in the workplace (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). The participants indicated that they provide counselling to support employees to deal with burnout and stress, traumatic incidents, and work adjustment. Bisen (2010) confirms that an important resource to be offered to employees who are experiencing psychological problems is counselling.

Lastly, the participants indicated that they also support employees in preparing for their future by providing career counselling and informal/conversational interventions. The study conducted by World Economic Forum (WEF, 2016) found that the number of jobs worldwide that would be lost is less than the number of the new jobs that would be created through automation. Krapivin (2018) maintains that the relevance of career counselling depends on its focus to address the challenges and changes presented by the changing world of work. A career counsellor is not merely assisting the individuals in making a career decision and/or in deciding which career path to follow; it facilitates the process of self-discovery and in the process helps the individual to craft his or her career (Savickas, 2019). This is consistent with the view of some of the participants that mentioned that they utilise career counselling models and theories to support the employees in their attempts to craft their new paths.

The **final objective** of the research study was to make recommendations for future research and practice, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Practical implications

The present research study endeavoured to explore workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective. This study aimed to create awareness of the influence that the 4IR exerts on organisations and employees. It highlights the impact of workplace counselling in assisting the employees to transit to the new world of work. This study also assists organisations to understand the role of industrial psychology practitioners in the changing world of work; thus, providing awareness into the role of industrial psychology

practitioners as workplace counsellors in facilitating support and helping employees prepare for the ever-changing world of work.

Limitations and recommendations

During the course of this study, the researcher realised there were limitations to the study. Firstly, the data gathering had to be reverted to an online platform due to the outbreak of COVID-19 by using online teleconferencing applications such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. The use of online teleconferencing application was necessitated by the onset of lockdown restrictions that were implemented by the national government of South Africa as an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, to form part of this study, the participants who were industrial psychology practitioners were required to have stable internet connectivity and possess computer skills such as the ability to use online teleconferencing applications. This means that the industrial psychology practitioners that did not have stable internet connectivity and/or did not possess online teleconferencing skills could not be part of the present study. For these reasons it is possible that important and rich data could have been excluded. The findings of the study cannot be extended to other contexts since the purpose of qualitative research is not to generalise the findings.

The recommendations highlighted in this study is that data gathering be conducted face-to-face. This would lead to including all the industrial psychology practitioners – even those who do not have stable internet connectivity and/or possess teleconferencing skills. As such this might lead to the research findings being richer and more detailed. The organisations could implement the recommendations of this study by investing in interventions such as workplace counselling, as they consider the mental health of the employees in the process of transiting to the new world of work. This will enable organisations to facilitate support for the employees to find the solutions to their psychological and social problems. In this manner the employees will be prepared for the changing world of work. Furthermore, the organisations should use the findings to understand the role of industrial psychology practitioners in the changing world of work, and to start utilising their skills in order to effectively transit to the new world of work. The industrial psychology practitioners could use the findings of this study to position

themselves as change agents, consultants, enablers, ethics managers, and workplace counsellors in order to adequately facilitate support in organisations in the changing world of work. In so doing the industrial psychology practitioners will enable organisations and employees to flourish in the changing world of work.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the objective of the present research study was to explore workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective. In this study it was found that technological advances were one of the major influences of the 4IR on organisations. The study also found that 4IR further had a major impact on the manner in which people work. As such organisations are challenged to assist employees to address the challenges presented by the changing world of work, by providing them with the support that will enable them to deal with challenges positively and constructively (Kamaruddin et al., 2019). To that extent, the findings of this study further indicated that organisations should facilitate support through implementing proactive and reactive workplace counselling interventions which are aimed at facilitating support for the employees to adjust and adapt to the changing world of work.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, we firstly present the conclusion drawn from the specific objectives. Moreover, the limitations of this study are delineated, and recommendations are made to assist employees with workplace counselling in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) which are presented in detail.

3.1. Conclusion

The general objective of this present research was to explore workplace counselling in the changing world of work as viewed from an industrial psychology perspective. The findings indicated that the participants considered technological advances to be among the major influences of the 4IR on organisations. The data highlighted four spheres, namely the influence of the 4IR on organisations and employees, the role of the industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work, the experiences of industrial psychology practitioners as workplace counsellors in the changing world of work, and recommendations made to assist employees with workplace counselling in the 4IR.

The following section presents a summary of the findings under specific objectives of the present study.

Specific objective 1: To conceptualise the fourth industrial revolution and workplace counselling, according to literature

The first objective of this research study was to conceptualise the fourth industrial revolution and workplace counselling, according to literature. The literature review emphasised that the 4IR is changing the world of work, our lives and how individuals connect (Hattingh, 2018; Schwab, 2017). The 4IR is classified as an important societal trend in the economy (Arntz et al., 2016; Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Ford, 2015) as it is causing significant disruptions to how work is done, how business is being done and how individuals connect (Zervoudi, 2020). Lee et al. (2018) further elaborate that the 4IR is characterised by continuous changes and uncertainty, which result in organisations and employees consistently seeking ways to adjust

and adapt to the changing world of work; as such these changes and ambiguity may lead to employees experiencing anxiety and stress – fearing that eventually new technologies will lead to them being redundant (Coldwell, 2019; Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2020; Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2021). Sima et al. (2020) and the World Economic Forum (2016) state that the 4IR affords new opportunities as well as threats. To succeed in this changing world of work, organisations need to understand these opportunities and threats and develop a plan to address them.

Workplace counselling is a short-term psychological support offered by the employer to distressed employees (Bajorek & Bevan, 2020). The literature revealed that industrial psychology practitioners provide short-term counselling within organisations (Van Zyl et al., 2016). Omoegun et al. (2018) further state that the primary role of workplace counselling in organisations is to facilitate the process of support to help and equip the employees in confronting and addressing psychological problems they may face in their lives. Omoegun and colleagues state that employees value the services of workplace counselling. Allwang et al. (2020) point out that workplace counselling is an effective intervention in helping employees reduce psychological symptoms. The following figure provides an illustration of the categories and themes that transpired in this sphere.

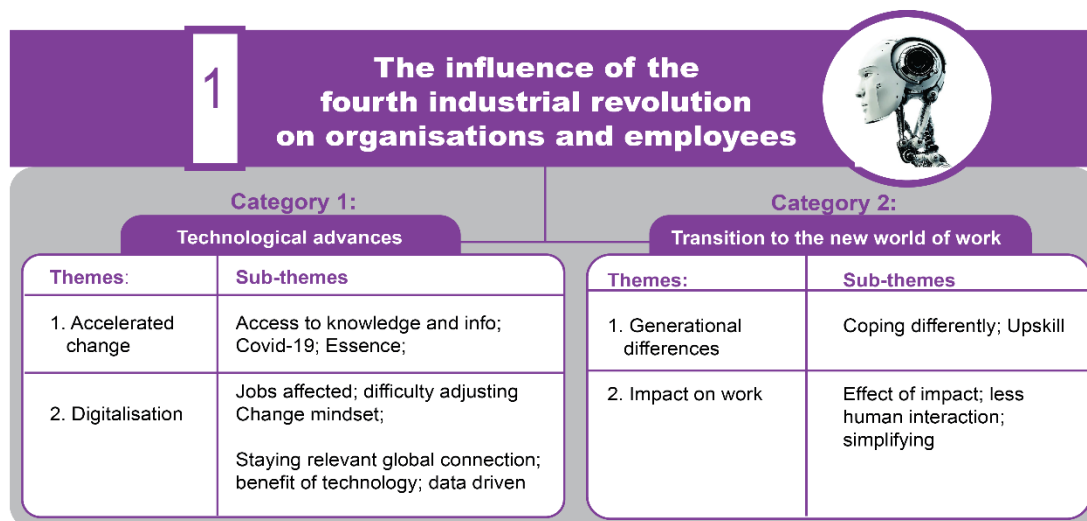


Figure 2: Sphere 1 - Categories, themes, and sub-theme

Specific objective 2: To explore the influence of the fourth industrial revolution on organisations and their employees

This second objective of the research study was to explore the influence of the 4IR on organisations and their employees. During the interviews participants in this study reported that the 4IR is influencing organisations and their employees through automation and digitalisation. The 4IR introduced automation and digitalisation, which is increasingly changing the nature of work and how organisations operate (Coldwell, 2019). The industrial psychology practitioners also indicated that the onset of the COVID-19 propelled the rate of changes introduced by the 4IR. The 4IR has enabled organisations and their employees to operate remotely during the covid-19 global health pandemic by utilising the following technologies: Microsoft teams, Skype, Whatsapp groups and Zoom (Akpan et al., 2020).

Although the 4IR is creating new opportunities and new competitive advantages, organisations and their employees find it difficult to adjust and adapt to these transformations (Armstrong et al., 2018). This study highlighted the difficulty for organisations and their employees in adjusting and adapting to these changes. This is because these changes are taking place continuously and at an accelerated rate. It has created employees' need to up-skill themselves; thus, ensuring that their skillset is aligned with the ever-changing digital landscape (Singh et al., 2018). The participants in this study also indicated that the organisations and their employees are compelled to transit to the new world of work. The employees are at the epicentre of the transitioning new world of work (Schwab, 2018). Therefore, when organisations are putting together their developmental strategies, they must note the 4IR and the impact it would have in its workforce; rather than recruiting external candidates for digital skills it would be more advisable that the organisations up-skill and develop their existing employees (Canedo et al., 2017). The following figure provides an illustration of sphere 2 along with the categories and theme.

2 The roles of the industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work 	
Themes:	Sub-themes
1. Change agent	Gate keeper
2. Consultant	Steward; change approach
3. Enabler	Management; identify relevancy; strategic thinkers;
4. Ethic management	Counselling; coaching; people developer

Figure 3: Sphere 2 - Themes, and sub-themes

Specific objective 3: To explore what the role is of the industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work.

The *third objective* of this research study was to explore the role of the industrial psychology practitioner in the ever-changing world of work. It was found that industrial psychology practitioners have had to fulfil various roles within organisations. Moyo (2012) attests that within organisations, aiding and supporting employees is the task of industrial psychology practitioners. The participants in the present study confirmed that they performed the following roles: change agents, consultants, enablers, and ethics managers. As change agents, the role of industrial psychology practitioners is to aid organisations and employees in re-imagining a new world of work (Jacobs et al., 2018). As consultants, the role of industrial psychology practitioners involves assisting management in navigating challenges that are met in the changing work of work by providing evidence-based solutions (Van Zyl et al., 2016).

The participants also reported that their role in the changing world of work was to support employees by providing counselling, coaching, and developmental interventions. This finding mainly supports the general objective of this study, namely, to determine the place of

workplace counselling in the changing world of work as viewed from the industrial psychology perspective. The participants indicated that they very much fulfil the role of counsellor in different contexts such as change management, consultancy, and ethics management, as many employees in this ever-changing world of work are struggling to contend with rising stresses and facets of organisational environments that can have negative personal and professional implications (Elder et al., 2018). Ahimie and Agbogidi (2019) urge that workplace counselling can help employees because it includes all facets of human life, including academic/educational issues, career/vocational issues, and personal social problems (emotional, behavioural, familial etc.). The purpose of counselling in a work-related context is to help employees increase their individual and group functioning (De Jager-van Straaten et al., 2016). Subsequently the industrial psychology practitioner's role as an enabler is to aid individuals to reach their fullest potential (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Barnard and Fourie (2007) assert that the industrial psychology practitioners, in their role as enablers they influence individuals to do; in the context of the changing world of work, enablers will affect the individual to embrace lifelong learning. As such, lifelong learning will enable the employees to continuously acquire the skillset and competencies that will enable them to adapt and adjust to the changing world of work (Hattingh, 2018).

Participants further reported that as ethics managers, they act as gatekeepers to ensure that organisations maintain ethical standards and practices by following the legalisation and effectively integrating the human-machine workplace. As Mpofu and Nicolaides (2019) claim, the 4IR presents organisations with unique and new ethical challenges. Therefore Van Zyl et al. (2016) point out that, in their role as ethics managers, industrial psychology practitioners support and aid organisations in adhering to ethical standards and practices. This is because ethical, positive behaviour central to their scope of practice (Jorgensen-Graupner and Van Zyl, 2019). Next the illustration of sphere 3 is presented.

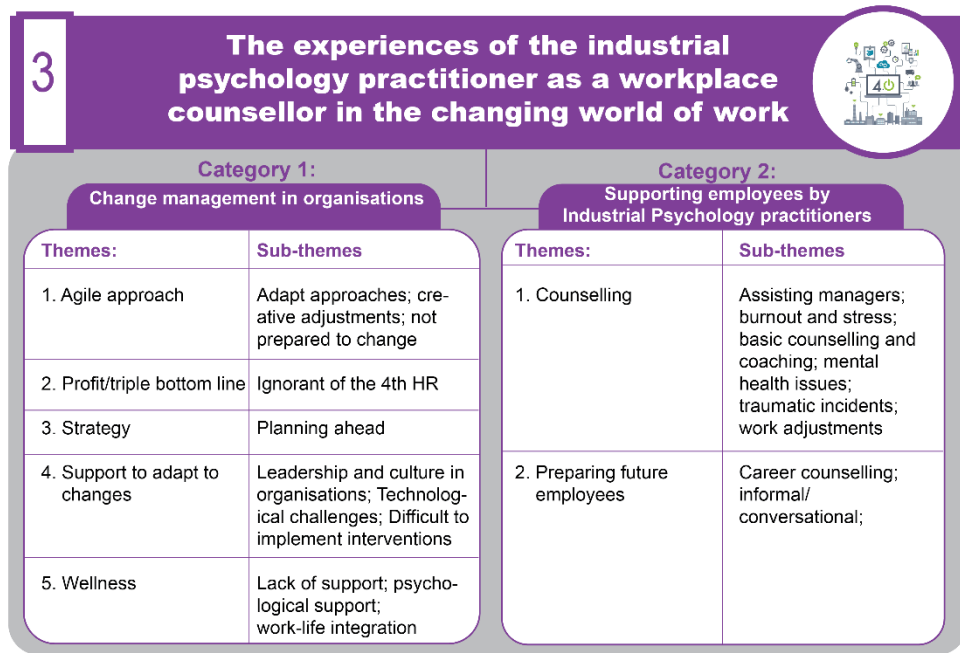


Figure 4: Sphere 3 - Categories, themes, and sub-themes

Specific objective 4: To explore the experiences of the industrial psychology practitioner as a workplace counsellor in the changing world of work.

The *fourth objective* of the study was to explore experiences of the industrial psychology practitioner as a workplace counsellor in the changing world of work. The participants indicated that organisations implemented change management interventions such as the agile approach, however they still found that employees are still finding it difficult to cope with the changes. Mergel et al. (2020) argue that agile approaches hold the potential of reshaping organisations; they are client-focused, and they assist organisations in fostering the spirit of teamwork and collective ownership (Balog, 2020). Ifenthaler (2020) maintains that it is essential to implement change management interventions before implementing organisational changes.

The industrial psychology practitioners as workplace counsellors help employees to facilitate support for the employees to adapt and adjust to the changing world of work. However, management is primarily concerned about making profits. The industrial psychology

practitioners observed that management occasionally even use the 4IR as an excuse to retrench people with a view to make more profit. It seems apparent that organisations are mainly concerned about profit as they failed to plan for their human resources. While planning is critical to preparing the workforce for the changing world of work (Manyika et al., 2017), the study conducted by Schroeck et al. (2019) identified that organisations are not interested in making transformational change. Hence, they are only concerned with making more profits (Deloitte, 2020).

The participants highlighted that leadership and organisations culture is instrumental when supporting employees to adapt to changes. Although organisations are operating in the market characterised by continuous changes, leadership and organisational culture influence their response to these changes. Lee et al. (2018) argue that organisations should develop strategies directed at supporting leadership capacities in the changing world of work. This is because the automation and digitalisation introduced by the 4IR require leadership to have a different mindset that will allow them to respond to opportunities, threats and uncertainties that may be faced in the changing world of work (Kişi, 2021). The leadership of the organisation influences the culture of the organisation (Gao, 2017; Zaabi et al., 2017).

As workplace counsellors, the industrial psychology practitioners highlighted the value of implementing wellness interventions to support the employees to adapt and adjust to the changes in the changing world of work. Although it was found that employees are finding it difficult to cope with the changing world of work, organisations are not prepared for change. Spagnoletto et al. (2019) recommends that organisations assist the employees in addressing issues that may arise as they transit to a new world of work.

One of the main findings of this study was that the participants highlighted the importance of workplace counsellors. They indicated that they support employees by means of counselling and by preparing them for the future. Brown (2019) urges that industrial psychology practitioners as workplace counsellors utilise counselling to assist the employees in finding solutions to their problems and aiding in performing optimally. They utilise basic counselling and coaching skills to facilitate the counselling process (Barkhuizen et al., 2015). Barkhuizen

et al. (2014) emphasise that the counselling provided by workplace counsellors is aimed at helping employees address traumatic incidents and mental health issues such as burnout and stress. The participants indicated that they provide support in the changing world of work to line management to deal with employees who are presenting with mental health issues such as burnout and stress and assist employees to adjust to their new work demands through counselling interventions. Similarly, Ahimie and Agbogidi (2019) state that workplace counselling provides employees and line management with benefits as it facilitates the helping process of addressing their psychological problems and social issues.

Lastly, the participants indicated that as workplace counsellors, it is their responsibility to prepare the employees for the future. Davis (2016) states that the focus of the organisations needs to shift towards equipping the employees with future skills and competencies.

Specific objective 5: To make recommendations for future research and practice

This will be discussed under the heading recommendations.

3.2. Limitations

The following section highlights the limitations of the present research study. The government of South Africa implemented lockdown to ensure that citizens of South Africa adhere to social distancing which was reported to be the relevant practice to prevent the spread of the COVID-19, this took place during the course of the present study. As such, in the present study the data gathering process was completed by using online platforms such as Zoom. Therefore, in order to participate in this study, the participants were required to have internet connection, electronical device, and teleconferencing skills such as using the teleconferencing applications. Although no problems were experienced, the participants had to adapt to the new way of data gathering, and some participants who could have contributed valuable information, could have been excluded because they may not have had internet connection that would allow them to form part of the study. The sample size of 22 participants (n=22) was the second limitation

found in the current study. On the other hand, the aim of qualitative research is not to generalise the results. Next, the recommendations made in this study as an illustration of sphere 4, are presented.

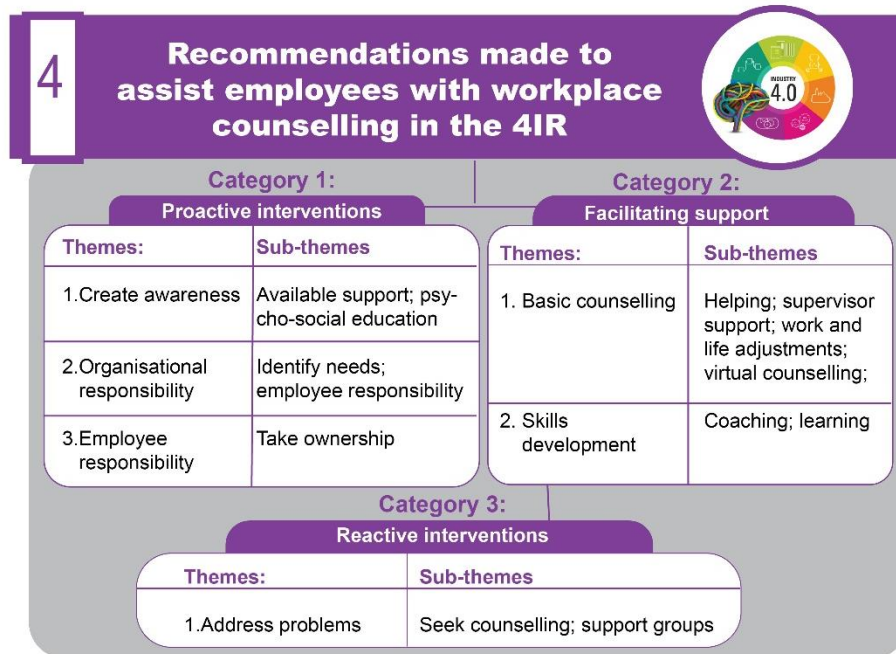


Figure 5: Sphere 4 - Categories, themes, and sub-themes

3.3. Recommendations

The final objective of this research study was utilised to make recommendations:

Specific objective 5: To make recommendation for future research and practice.

3.3.1 Recommendations for the organisation

Figure 5 shows that the participants recommended three phases of interventions for the organisation to assist employees with workplace counselling in the changing world of work, namely proactive interventions, facilitating support, and reactive interventions.

The industrial psychology practitioners indicated that organisations should implement proactive interventions to assist employees with workplace counselling in the changing world of work. These proactive interventions ensure that employees are ready and prepared for future jobs and challenges (Lent, 2018). Bajorek and Bevan (2020) highlight that organisation should create awareness of available support to address and prevent mental problems proactively, as organisations bear the responsibility of identifying the needs of the workforce and implementing interventions relevant to addressing them (Deloitte Development LLC, 2020). However, Gwata (2019) also states that the employee also bears the responsibility of taking ownership of their personal and development needs to transit to the new world of work.

The industrial psychology practitioners also recommended that face-to-face and virtual counselling be provided to facilitate support to the employees in the changing world of work. The participants further indicated that they provide basic counselling to facilitate the support of the employees to find a solution to the challenges they experience. Besides, the success of this proactive intervention is influenced by the support management provides to them. The organisations should ensure that they provide skills development interventions to facilitate support to enable the current workforce to up-skill (Schwab, 2018).

Lastly, the participants recommend that although the organisations should implement support and facilitate support for the employees, they should also make provision for reactive interventions. The reactive interventions should help employees recuperate by implementing workplace counselling and addressing problems and challenges that they may experience, as organisations continue implementing the changes introduced by the changing world of work. Brown (2019) points out that workplace counselling may be perceived as reactive in nature, as it is aimed at assisting individuals in coping with challenges and difficulties in order to restore efficiency.

In conclusion, the main finding in the present research study is that workplace counselling plays a vital role in preparing and supporting the employees for the changing world of work. This will make the transition to the new world of work efficient and effective. As a final recommendation, organisation should focus on implementing effective workplace counselling interventions, on primary, secondary, and tertiary level, for employees to feel supported and have a safe place where they are supported in their adjustment to workplace changes.

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

Relevant recommendations for future research may be made based on the results of this research. It is recommended that in future research data gathering be conducted face-to-face. As such, it will enable the researcher to collect rich and detailed information, as face-to-face the data gathering process eliminates challenges such as poor internet connectivity and lack of technological skills which might be present during an online data gathering process. This will enable the researcher to broaden the field of industrial psychology as it will lead to a rich and detailed understanding of workplace counselling in the changing world of work as viewed from the perspective of industrial psychology.

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ADDENDUM A

INFORMED CONSENT

CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

For undertaking by the participant:

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it, and any questions I have asked, have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and give consent to participate in the whole process:

Signature of participant: _____

Date (day/month/year): ____/____/____

For undertaking by the researcher:

I witness that the participant had the opportunity to ask questions and have given consent freely.

Print name of researcher: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date (day/month/year): ____/____/____

Statement by the participant/researcher taking consent:

I have accurately read out the information sheet, and to the best of my ability made sure to understand the information regarding the research.

Biographic information

These questions below concern your biographical information. The information will be used to describe the study population and not to make any inferences. Please answer all the questions. Write your answer in the appropriate space, or mark your answer with an “X” where applicable:

1 Age _____

2 Gender _____

3 Home language?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ 1 English | ☐ 7 Sesotho |
| ☐ 2 Afrikaans | ☐ 8 isiNdebele |
| ☐ 3 Setswana | ☐ 9 Tshivenda |
| ☐ 4 isiXhosa | ☐ 10 siSwati |
| ☐ 5 Xitsonga | ☐ 11 Sepedi |
| ☐ 6 isiZulu | ☐ 12 Other |

4 Ethnicity?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ 1 Asian | ☐ 4 White |
| ☐ 2 Black | ☐ 5 Other |
| ☐ 3 Coloured | |

5 How many years have you been working in your current organisation?

_____ years _____ months

6 How long have you been working in your current position?

_____ years _____ months

8 Please describe your current position.

Workplace counselling in the changing world of work: An industrial psychology perspective research project



Ethics clearance reference number: [NWU-0086-20-A4]

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Invitation

You are hereby invited to participate in this master's research study. Prior to drawing a conclusion on whether you would like to take part, it is important for you to understand the reason to why the research is being conducted, what your participation will contain and what the process consists of. Please take your time to read the following information carefully. You are welcome to ask any questions for clarification if you so wish before making your final decision.

Study topic

The purpose of this study is to explore workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective within the South African context.

Study origin

This is a post-graduate project initiated and conducted as part of a master's (Industrial/Organisational Psychology) mini dissertation. Therefore, this research project has been approved by the North-West University - Faculty of Economic and Management Science's Ethics Committee (Ref number: NWU-0086-20-A4).

Who will be taking part in the study?

The invitation to participate is industrial psychology practitioners rendering workplace counselling in different organisations and or sectors within South African. Participants should be registered industrial psychology practitioners or with Health Profession Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The inclusion criteria for the participants to take part in the study is that their job functions should include rendering workplace counselling within their organisations. The participants should be able to communicate in English, as the interviews will be conducted in English

Do I have to participate?

Your participation is voluntary, and you are welcome to withdraw from the research project at any moment you desire. To that extent, you will not be disadvantaged in anyway if you wish not to participate in this study and or withdraw from the study at any stage.

How will the data be collected?

The semi-structured interview will be used to collect information. The semi structured interview will consist of six questions and will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

How will my responses and information be kept confidential?

The information collected will be recorded in a locked document “online”, where only the primary research and study supervisor have access. The password of this locked document will not be shared with anyone. Your identity and that of the organisation/s you are working for will remain totally confidential and no personal information will be requested. Therefore, you are not required to provide your name or surname.

What are the risks involved?

The Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economics and Management has classified this study as minimum risk and you are only required 30 – 45 minutes of your time to participate in a semi-structured interview. Your participation in this study is anonymously, thus, it alleviates and or minimise risk.

What will happen to the results?

Upon completing the process of collecting data, the research will commence with the process of analysing data and thereafter report on the findings will be written in the researcher's research report anonymously. The findings can be discussed with the participants of the study if requested. The final copy of the full report findings will be held by the North-West University. Furthermore, the anonymised data and results may be used for peer-reviewed academic publications in journals or to present at conferences. At no point will individual results be reported only the total group results.

Will I receive an incentive to participate?

No, you will be provided with any incentive to participate.

Who can I contact for more information or to ask questions?

For more information about this study please contact the researcher using the following contact details:

Mr Sendry Moralo
M.Com Industrial Psychology Student
North-West University
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
Cell: 083 212 9677
Email: sendrymoralo@gmail.com

ADDENDUM B

QUALITATIVE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Dear Participant,

Research on workplace counselling in the changing world of work: An industrial psychology perspective

You are invited to participate in a semi-structure interview as part of Mr Sendry Moralo's research project at the North-West University for this Master of Commerce of Industrial and Organisational Psychology which consists of two sections, a biographical section, and a section that seeks to understand your experiences on workplace counselling in the changing world of work. The purpose of this study is to explore workplace counselling in the changing world of work from an industrial psychology perspective. This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences at the North-West University, ethics clearance reference number [to be determined]. The duration of the interview is approximately 30 to 45 minutes. It is worth noting that all the information that will be shared during the interview session will remain confidential. Please note that the responses from each individual will not be identified, but rather the results of the group as a whole will be used in this study

You are hereby requested to answer all questions honestly and accurately as possible. Upon completing this interview, the researcher will analyse the data and feedback will be provided if participants want feedback. Most importantly feedback will only be given after the mini dissertation has been examined. Therefore, your participation in this study will benefit you and the broader industrial-organisational psychology community in South Africa.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are welcome to withdraw from the study at any stage. To that extent, you will not be disadvantaged in anyway if you wish not to participate in this study. If you are comfortable with the content, meaning and you have no objections, please participate in the semi- structure interview session. *By participating in this interview session, you give consent that this information may be used for research purposes.*

If you have any queries that we have not addressed and would like to discuss these with us, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

Mr S Moralo

Primary researcher

North-West University

+2783 212 9677

sendrymoralo@gmail.com

Prof. L Graupner

Study supervisor

North-West University

(018) 299 4309

Lene.Graupner@nwu.ac.za

Workplace counselling in the changing world of work: An industrial psychology perspective

1. How do you experience the fourth industrial revolution?

2. How do you view your role as industrial psychology practitioner in the changing world of work?

3. In your experience how does the fourth industrial revolution have an impact on employees?

4. How are you involved with workplace counselling in your organisation?

5. How often do you counsel employees that are influenced by the fourth industrial revolution?

6. In your opinion how effective is workplace to assist employees in the changing world of work?

Thank you for your participation