Sociality and the Need for the Epistemology of Social Relatedness: IJSS Editorial Statement

Bunmi Isaiah Omodan[1]
Senior Researcher, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa

Bekithemba Dube[2]
Senior Lecturer, University of the Free State, South Africa

CORRESPONDENCE

Bunmi Omodan
Faculty of Education
Walter Sisulu University
Butterworth Campus
Email: bomodan@wsu.ac.za

Abstract: *As our inaugural statement, this article conceptualises sociality, which forms the focus of the "Interdisciplinary Journal of Sociality Studies". We reinvigorated its "scope and focus" for the cognisance of our potential authors. We also explicated, step by step, our fundamental editorial process, including the issue of originality, trustworthiness and misconduct, ethical considerations, citation and referencing style, disclosure and conflict of interest, permissions and acknowledgement, as part of our quality production process. The article also presents the academic background of all our inaugural editorial team to display the potential of IJSS towards the production of quality knowledge on sociality studies. Based on this exploration, we conclude that IJSS accommodates any scholarly articles that solve social-related problems with an iota of sociological and emancipatory tendency involving humans and their relationships with but not limited to environment, objects and subjects. Therefore, we recommend that all potential authors ensure that the author guidelines' instructions are strictly adhered to while preparing for submission.*

Keywords: Sociality studies, IJSS, Social relatedness, Editorial statement, Publishing social issues.

1. Introduction

Sociality, though vague and ambiguous, remains one of the tools for social transformation and development. This is not far from the general understanding that underpins sociality as social relationships between people, animals and its environmental connectedness (Tuomela, 2007). The relationships that exist in the ecology of living and non-living things, which predicts their togetherness, could be seen as sociality. This is in accordance with the argument of Karpov (2016) that social development is dependent on people's socialisation and its implication on cultural and socio-economic growth. Being the inaugural article of the Interdisciplinary Journal of Sociality Studies (IJSS), this article understands that sociality is ambiguous and could mean two different but socially connected interpretations. Some scholars see sociality as a kind of sociology or group relationships that exist among animals (Silk, 2007; Wey et al. 2008; Burkart, 2017), while other scholars also see sociality as a kind of social relationships and anthropology that exists between individuals or group of individuals (Long & Moore, 2013; Toren 2013, Amit et al., 2019). This is to say that sociality, whether from a group of animals point of view or from the human point of view, possesses social interrelationships that bind people, objects and subjects together. This argument informs the definition of ERRCDF, that "Sociality Studies" is a socially informed discourse with an iota of sociological and emancipatory tendency involving humans and their relationships but not limited to the environment, objects and subjects. IJSS only considers human-oriented sociality and its interrelationships with people and their environmental dependency on society, economic, social, and political development.

Having established the concept of sociality as the journal's predominant focus, there is also a need to identify the gap that led to the establishment of the journal. Although humans and their social issues cannot be underrated because of their development and sociological tendency towards humanity and sustainable development (Becker, 1999), we found out that no journal currently publishes articles that produce a holistic knowledge of sociality studies within its title. This raised a concern to the effect that the sociality of people, objects and subjects, and their social relatedness

must be popularised, not only among scholars, students, social developers and readers but the world itself must be made aware that the hidden epistemology of related social knowledge is important because it is one of the cardinal agendas of sustainable development (Titumir et al., 2020). To this end, this article is written as an inaugural statement on the establishment of the Interdisciplinary Journal of Sociality Studies under the sponsorship of the Education Research and Rural Community Development Forum. The following session discusses the scope and focus of the journal.

2. Focus and Scope of the Journal

Based on the above conceptualisation of sociality as a social term, the Interdisciplinary Journal of Sociality Studies is set to provide a platform for academics, practitioners and social development experts across all fields of studies to publish their research findings. IJSS welcomes articles that seek to provide empirical, conceptual, theoretical, and opinions on current social related issues. It also encourages discourse on social development, policies and practices, relationships practices and innovations that empower individuals, families, groups, organisations, small and large entities. The journal's interest is limitless to thought-provoking interdisciplinary debates on the practical application of social-related issues, among others. The journal seeks articles that contribute to the social interpretation and emancipation of socially disadvantaged groups by creating a socially just, right, and humanity-based context. This journal is considered an outlet for academic scholarships in all disciplines, including, but not limited to the following perspectives:

- Social sciences,
- Political and governance studies,
- Education and social pedagogy,
- Socio-political and economic studies,
- Social anthropology and relationship studies,
- Management and leadership studies,
- Psycho-social studies,
- Social health and wellbeing,
- Humanity and social communication,
- Language and sociolinguistics studies,
- Religion and human discipline,
- Social law and human rights,
- Social justice,
- Management and digital innovation,
- Social geography,
- Socio-cultural issues, among others.

3. IJSS Editorial Guidelines and Process

The quality of any academic journal is dependent on its editorial process, the people involved, its originality, management of ethics issues, conflict of interest and peer-review process (Jefferson et al., 2002; Kratochvíl et al., 2020). Based on this, ERRCDF, through IJSS, has adopted a rigorous and academic tasking editorial process discussed below.

3.1 Originality, trustworthiness and misconduct

Submissions must fall within the scope of the journal. It must include an assurance that the manuscript has not been published, submitted or sent for consideration elsewhere. If required, proof of language editing, done by native/L1 language speakers or experts in the English Language, should be submitted alongside the article as a supplementary file. Authors should be aware that only ten per cent or below similarity index will be accepted and that all manuscripts will be submitted to the Turnitin software before processing. However, the editor is rightfully obliged to make suggestions and/or suggest modifications and refuse any manuscripts with stated reasons without recourse to whether the manuscript's author is by invitation or a voluntary submission before publication.

IJSS and ERRCDF condone zero tolerance for research misconduct such as; plagiarism, citation manipulation, and data falsification/fabrication. Practices such as fabrication and manipulation of data, images, visual objects, and other research resources are prohibited and considered forbidden

in IJSS. Authors are expected to present an accurate account of data collection and their respective analyses. The true reflection of the work done should be presented. Anything other than that is considered unethical and would be rejected. Authors will receive an acknowledgement receipt of their submission within three days, and manuscripts outside IJSS's scope will be returned with the acknowledgement.

In the case of allegations regarding research misconduct, the publisher (ERRCDF), alongside the journal editor, shall follow the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)'s Core Practice in dealing with such a situation.

3.2 Ethical considerations

The issue of research ethics is important and must be keenly followed to protect the researcher, co-researchers, participants, respondents and every object and subject element involved in the study. In social sciences research, just like other fields of study, adhering to ethical rules involving human beings, vulnerable populations, confidentiality, anonymity, among others, should not be compromised. IJSS adheres to Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA), which may be perused and applied accordingly.

3.3 Citation and referencing style

All sources used must be acknowledged. Author(s) must ensure that all in-text citations are done appropriately and with no omission in the reference section. All citations in the manuscripts must be referenced, and all references must have been cited. IJSS has adopted the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition publication guidelines, which should be strictly adhered to.

3.4 Disclosure and conflict of interest

The author's responsibility is to disclose any conflicting, competing and financial interest that may influence the result, production and construe or result in liability. All official sources of financial support should be disclosed. The author must, therefore, notify the Editor-in-Chief should there be any conflicts of interest.

3.4 Permissions and acknowledgements

The author's responsibility is to obtain written permission for published tables, figures, text passages, and illustrations. The author should create a separate section before references to acknowledge people, funding organisations, grants, and others. This section should be titled "Acknowledgments", just like other sub-headings. However, the author must obtain permission from the author's acknowledged person(s), organisations, and others.

3.5 Publication process

Authors are requested to register and submit their manuscripts using our submission link. The submission and review gateways are designed to guide authors and reviewers step-by-step throughout the process. If they are unable to provide an electronic version, they should contact the Editor-in-Chief before submission. Article consideration processes are as follow:

Step 1: Author registers and submits the complete manuscript in Word document following double-blind peer review policy and formatting prescription of the journal.

Step 2: The Managing Editor checks the submitted manuscripts (subject to rejection if not within the journal's scope and unable to fulfil the standard research criteria).

Step 3: The articles are subjected to a plagiarism test (above ten per cent similarity result will be rejected and sent back to the author(s) for possible correction).

Step 4: The article will be assigned to a suitable editorial team member (content verification will be ascertained and may be rejected if found unsuitable).

Step 5: Two expert double-blind peer reviewers are selected from different institutions to review the manuscript. After that, the section editor evaluates the review results to decide based on the reviewer's recommendations. The likely recommendations are:
1. Accept in its condition,
2. Minor revision required,

3. Major revision required,
4. Resubmit for another review process,
5. Reject and resubmit elsewhere.

Step 6: In the case of 1, manuscripts are processed for publication. In the cases of 2 & 3, the author(s) have to submit the revised manuscript through the revision menu, where manuscripts are checked by the managing editor, section editor, and reviewers (may be rejected if it does not satisfy the reviewers' queries). In the case of 4, a new review process is initiated.

Step 7: The accepted manuscripts will be formatted and sent back to the author(s) for approval.

Step 8: A copy-edited version of the manuscript is uploaded and shared with the author(s) for final approval before final publication.

4. Professional Backgrounds of our Inaugural Editorial Team

It is widely accepted that the calibre of a journal's editorial team determines the quality of knowledge such a journal produces. As a result, IJSS, through ERRCDF, galvanises the quality personality with undoubted research and academic endeavour evidenced in their research engagement over time. Furthermore, the calibre of editors is a pointer to the fact that the journal will operate within the principles of the professional standard required for interdisciplinary knowledge production in the field of social studies. Hence, the editorial team was selected from academic and professional institutions worldwide to ensure groundbreaking, intellectual and scholarly knowledge production within the international prerequisite for editorial composition. Below are the profiles of IJSS inaugural editorial members.

Dr Bunmi Isaiah Omodan: Walter Sisulu University, South Africa

Bunmi Isaiah Omodan is a researcher at Walter Sisulu University, South Africa, and currently holds a research grant worth 100 000 South African Rand. He is a certified human resource manager with a PhD in Education Management and Leadership, a master's degree in Educational Management and B.A. Ed. in English Language. He is the Managing Editor of the "Interdisciplinary Journal of Rural and Community Studies" and "Interdisciplinary Journal of Education Research" and the Education Research and Rural Community Development Forum coordinator. He has propounded a method of analysing qualitative data tagged "Socio-thematic Analysis (StA)", and an Africanised theory called "Kenimani-Kenimatoni Organisational Theory". He is currently a member of the British Education Leadership, Management and Administration Society (BELMAS), Nigeria Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEAP) and Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM). He has published articles in various local and international journals, chapters-in-book, and local and international conference proceedings. His research focus includes but is not limited to qualitative and quantitative research approaches, Community-based Participatory Action Research, decoloniality, Ubuntuism, social transformation, social and Africanised pedagogy, social crisis management and university transformation.

Prof. James Maiden: University of the District of Columbia, United States

James Maiden is an Assistant Professor and Assistant Dean of Administration in the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences. He holds a Bachelor of Science in psychology, a Master of Science in counsellor education, and a Doctor of Education in counselling. Before coming to the University of the District of Columbia, Prof. Maiden served as the Department Chair of General Education, The Art Institute of Washington between 2009 and 2015. He also served as Director of Advising, Transitional Studies & Academic Support from 2007-2009. Earlier in his career, he was an Academic Programme coordinator, Howard University. Prof. Maiden teaches graduate courses in Rehabilitation Counselling, School Counselling, and Mental Health Counselling and provides clinical supervision to students in internship and practicum courses. As Principal Investigator, Prof. Maiden secured an $850 thousand grant from the Verizon Foundation for the Verizon Innovative Learning Young Men of Color programme, for which he serves as Programme Director. As a PI or Co-PI, Prof. Maiden has received over $1.2 million in grant funding to support various educational, leadership, and drug abuse prevention initiatives.

Dr Kunle Oparinde: Durban University of Technology**,** South Africa

Dr Kunle Oparinde is a Research Associate at the Durban University of Technology, South Africa. He completed his first degree at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, before coming to South Africa for his master's and doctoral degrees. He is an interdisciplinary researcher whose main areas of interest include: discourse studies, sociolinguistics, decolonisation, and research management. He authored several journal articles in reputable local and international journals. He has recently co-edited a book titled *COVID-19: Interdisciplinary Explorations of Impact on Higher Education.* He is the editor-in-chief of the *African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies* (*AJIMS*).

Prof. Rodwell Makombe: University of the Free State, South Africa

Prof Rodwell Makombe, an NRF Rated Researcher, is an Associate Professor of English Literary and Cultural Studies, Department of English, University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus. He was a Senior Lecturer at the Durban University of Technology between 2013 and 2015, Teaching and Learning Consultant at the University of Fort Hare between 2012 and 2013. Prior to his teaching and learning appointment, he was a Lecturer at the University of Fort Hare between 2009 and 2012. Prof. Rodwell Makombe holds a PhD in English, MA in English, and BA (Hons) in English. He was awarded the African Humanities Fellowship of the American Council of Learned Societies between 2018 and 2019, Afromontane Research Unit Grant between 2017 and 2019. He has published countless research articles in both local and international journals, book chapters and conference proceedings. His recent book "Cultural texts of resistance in Zimbabwe: Memes, Music, Media, Rowman and Littlefield" is upcoming.

Dr Taiwo Oladeji Adefisoye: Elizade University, Nigeria

Taiwo Oladeji Adefisoye holds a PhD in Political Science from the Department of Political Science, Ekiti State University, Nigeria. He was a member of the academic staff of the same Department until December 2019. He is currently the Coordinator, Department of History and International Relations (and Political Science) Elizade University, Nigeria. His research interests are in Political Analysis, Public Policy Analysis, Emergency/Disaster Management and International Politics and Geo-Politics, areas in which he has published chiefly. In addition, Dr Adefisoye is actively involved in gender advocacy research and has contributed to gender discourse in academic and civil society. His articles have appeared in both local and international learned journals. Currently, Dr Adefisoye contributes to the editorial process for notable academic journals, including the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Education Research*, the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Rural and Community Development* (South Africa), and the *FUOYE Journal of Criminology.*

Dr Bekithemba Dube: University of the Free State, South Africa

Bekithemba Dube is a senior lecturer and coordinator for the foundation and intermediate phase at the University of the Free State, South Africa. He holds a diploma in Bible and Missionary Work from ZBMW, a Bachelor of Education, majoring in foundation education/primary education, from Great Zimbabwe University, a Bachelor of Arts in Theology from the Theological College of Zimbabwe, a Master of Education in Curriculum Studies, from Great Zimbabwe University, and a PhD in Curriculum Studies from University of the Free State, South Africa. He is a self-motivated and dedicated scholar in education, focusing on sociology, philosophy of education, religion, research and statistics. He lectured at the Theological College of Zimbabwe in the field of sociology, religion and research. He has also lectured and assumed management duties at Solusi University in Educational Sociology and Culture. He is currently a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education, and the managing editor and coordinator for the International Society for Studies in Rural Contexts, QwaQwa Campus, University of the Free State.

Dr Damilola R. Seyi-Oderinde: MIRRAlliance, United States

Damilola R. Seyi-Oderinde, a first-class graduate of Guidance and Counselling, holds a master's degree in Educational Guidance and Counselling and a PhD in Psychology of Education. She currently works as a research fellow at MIRRAlliance, United States. She was a lecturer and researcher for more than eight years at Ekiti State University, Nigeria, and has undergone teaching responsibilities at the University of the Free State before her appointment at MIRRAlliance. She works as an expert reviewer for different scientific peer-reviewed journal platforms. At the same

time, she continues to publish series of scientific papers in learned journals. Her research interest includes mental health help-seeking, psycho-socialities of teaching and learning, and wellbeing.

Prof. Tom W. Okello: Walter Sisulu University, South Africa

Tom Okello is a Professor of Environmental Sciences in the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences. He holds a BA Hons from the University of Nairobi, Kenya, an MA, M.Sc, and a PhD from the University of Zululand, South Africa. He has extensive teaching and research experience in environmental, geospatial and geography at the university level. His focus has been to train the next generation of geospatial scientists and scholars to provide a fresh perspective on the world, the environment, and the relationship between people and the environment. His teaching and research philosophy rests on the integration of research, development and systems thinking. His approach to education mirrors his research: He embraces the Socratic approach and promotes critical thinking. He finds mentoring and teaching facilitation fulfilling because it allows him to engage and collaborate with the next generation of scholars and expand his worldview. Before his appointment at Walter Sisulu University, he served as a subject head for geography and environmental sciences at the University of the Free State QwaQwa Campus. He has also served in many capacities over the years, including Senior Lecturer and Programme Director – Geosciences and Biological Sciences, Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of the Free State, QwaQwa Campus, South Africa; Research Fellow – Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa; Project Director and Research Manager/Specialist – Human Sciences Research Council, Port Elizabeth, South Africa; and Senior Resident Lecturer – The SFS-Centre for Wildlife Management Studies, Tanzania & Kenya. He has promoted and supervised many doctoral and masters' theses. He has also authored a book, *Self-leadership in Research*, several book chapters and over fifty peer-reviewed articles, locally and internationally in geospatial and environmental sciences. His areas are limitless to environmental planning and development, climate change adaptation, health systems strengthening, performance monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning and change management, policy development, and community development.

Dr Keafon Jumbam: University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Keaton Jumbam is a postdoctoral fellow at the School of Physiology, University of the Witwatersrand. She holds a B.Sc Hons (*cum laude*) from Walter Sisulu University, M.Sc (*cum laude*) from Stellenbosch University and a PhD from the University of the Free State. She is incredibly passionate about the education of the girl-child, particularly in the field of sciences. While at the Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology at Stellenbosch University, she worked for seven years at the award-winning outreach project Iimbovane. This project empowers high school learners and educators across eighteen Western Cape schools to implement research techniques, understand biodiversity, and instil a passion for the sciences. Dr Jumbam is an avid reader; she has published several peer-reviewed papers and won numerous awards throughout her academic career, including eight different awards during her PhD. She is currently coordinating the South African branch of a multinational project to conserve endangered wild dogs.

Sr. Dr Kaahwa Maria Goretti (DST): Kyambogo University, Uganda

Dr Kaahwa Maria Goretti is a senior lecturer in curriculum and quality assurance. She holds a PhD, MS.Ed, B.ED, Dip in Education, certificates in quality assurance, distance education, guidance and counselling, stress management, theology of reconciliation, and methods of research with children. She is a curriculum specialist. She is experienced in programme designing, writing and publishing, research, supervision, monitoring, training and quality assurance. She is a national and international trainer of trainees in curriculum design and development, curriculum implementation, curriculum innovation, research, quality assurance processes, procedures and system. She is also an adjunct lecturer at Mount Kenya University (MKU) and an assessor/monitor for the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). A founder member of Uganda University Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF) and East Africa Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN); and a coordinator in Gender, Equity, Research, and Alliance (GERA) at Kyambogo University and the deputy coordinator of the Central Region in Uganda. She has published articles in both local and international journals, book chapters, conference proceedings and books.

Dr Kunal Sil: Srinivas University, India

Dr Kunal Sil is a Post Doctorate Research Fellow in Commerce at Srinivas University, India. Presently, he is working on a project for the Bank of Baroda on corporate banking. He has almost thirteen years of teaching and industry experience. He has a number of research papers published in national and international journals of repute. He is currently associated as the editorial board member of nine publication houses. He was awarded the best teacher in Commerce at Delhi University at the ICICC-2020 conference and best professor in commerce by the United Nations in the same year. He has been invited as a resource person in several national and international webinars. He is also an alumnus of IIT Tides and has worked on a number of incubation proposals. He is a member of the Financial Literacy Team run by the Centre for Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship Development (CEFLED). Recently, one of his research proposals on banking has been accepted by IIT Roorkee. He is specialised in the areas of accounting, costing, financial services and entrepreneurship.

Oluwaseyi Aina: University of the West of Scotland

Oluwaseyi Aina is an Associate Lecturer at the University of the West of Scotland. She is a recipient of the Emerging Scholar Award 2021 from the International Association of Sport and Society. She has her first degree in English Language and Literary Studies. She has her master's degree in Cultural Diplomacy and International Events. She is currently an associate member of the Centre for Culture, Sport and Events (CCSE) at the University of the West of Scotland. She is also a member of the Event Rights Team, a project funded by the European Commission regarding human rights in sporting events. She currently delivers lectures across Events, Tourism, Diplomacy and Child Rights. She also supervises student dissertations (both undergraduate and graduate) in the fields mentioned above. In addition, she has published articles, chapters-in-book, academic book reviews and presented at different conferences. Her research interests are child rights, international events, human rights, tourism, diplomacy, society, and international development.

Dr Nathan Moyo: Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe

Dr Nathan Moyo graduated with a PhD in History Education in 2017 from the University of Johannesburg and is currently employed as a senior lecturer in the Curriculum Studies Department at the Robert Mugabe School of Education, Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe. Dr Moyo has research expertise in curriculum studies, history education, curriculum history and teacher education. Presently, Dr Moyo is a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Free State, Qwaqwa, Campus, from January 2021. He has published extensively in history education and has gained an international presence with his latest publication, a book chapter in *The Palgrave Handbook of History and Social Studies,* published in 2020. In 2021, Dr Moyo co-authored a chapter on citizenship education with Routledge and has another forthcoming chapter in the Peter Lang series. In addition, he has published articles in leading journals such as *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *Journal of Education Policy, Pedagogy, Culture and Society and Research in Dance Education*. In 2021 Dr Moyo was appointed external examiner in the Faculty of Education, University of Zululand, KwaDlangezwa Campus till April 2022. Dr Moyo is currently enrolled in an online doctoral supervisory programme for African universities offered by Stellenbosch University.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Having made our inaugural editorial statement ranging from the conceptualisation of sociality, focus and scope of the journal, editorial guidelines process and the profiles of our editorial team, we conclude by saying that IJSS will only publish a socially informed article with an iota of sociological and emancipatory tendencies involving humans and their relationships with, but not limited to the environment, objects and subjects. Furthermore, we conclude that IJSS possesses all the required acumen, deducing from its editors' calibre to ensure quality article publication towards quality knowledge dissemination.

Based on this, the following recommendations were made to uphold "the integrity of our review process. Would-be authors should make concerted efforts to remove any indications of identity from their manuscript to ensure a blinded relationship between the author(s) and the reviewer(s). This step, among others, will be hundred per cent considered before initiating the review process. Therefore, authors:

- Should prepare two different documents; the first document named "main manuscript" must only contain the manuscript's title, the abstract and the entire article. The second document, which must be named and uploaded as a "supplementary file" must contain the title, author(s) information, and the email address of all the authors.
- In the case of the author(s) citing their previous works, the name(s) must be replaced with "author and year" in the text and also replicated in the reference session instead of the authors' name, article title, among others.
- When naming their documents, author(s) identification should also be removed from the properties of the files. Instead, they should name their main article with "main manuscript" and information file as a supplementary file.

In the same vein, manuscripts must be prepared on Microsoft Word, using 1.15 spacing and 12-point size in Times New Roman. Authors are advised to employ italics rather than underlining, noting that figures, tables, and other graphics must be placed at the appropriate place within the text according to the author(s) interest. The recommended length for manuscripts is between 4000 and 7000 words, including references, an abstract of 250 words or less, and any appendixes. Each heading must be numbered, for example, 1., 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, among others. In the case of multiple authors, the manuscript must indicate one author as the corresponding author. Before submission, the author(s) must check our published articles to ensure that their articles are properly formatted. Articles not formatted according to our format will be rejected unprocessed (ERRCDF, 2019; Omodan & Kanare, 2021, p. 8).

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