

## The Rhetorical Situation of the COVID-19 Public Briefings on National Response Measures in Namibia

N. HAUFIKU & P. BATHOLMEUS

### ABSTRACT

*The effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic have forced governments to step up and address their nations on measures to curb the spread of COVID-19. The governments' responses, however, had to be context-specific depending on the state in which each country found itself. This paper analyses the rhetorical situation of the COVID-19 public briefings on national response measures in Namibia presented to the Namibian nation by the Namibian government. The rhetorical situation by Bitzer (1968) is a combination of people, events, objects, and contexts, as well as the nature in which a specific discourse is created and how it shapes reality. The COVID-19 public briefing statements on the national response measures that Namibia had to follow during the different stages of COVID-19 established by the Namibian government are qualitatively analysed in this paper to describe the rhetorical situation during COVID-19 in Namibia. The analysis is based on Bitzer's constituents of any rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, constraints as well as fitting response. While COVID-19 was presented as the exigence, the Namibian nation at large was the audience for whom the briefings were prepared. These statements were made through the media by the President and complemented by selected ministers. Members of the various media houses, who were always present at these briefings, were given a platform to ask questions on behalf of themselves and the nation, at times, presented as constraints. The fittingness of the response is, thus, analysed as how the government attempted to meet the audience's expectations while operating within the constraints.*

**Key Words:** rhetorical situation; COVID-19; digital rhetoric; information dissemination, rhetorical discourse

### Introduction

The global pandemic, Covid-19, reported the first cases in the Republic of Namibia on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2020. The President, as the head of the state and policymaker, has the responsibility to act and guide the nation on the way to act. According to Article (26) of the Namibian Constitution, the 3<sup>rd</sup> democratically elected President of Namibia, Dr. Hage Geingob, thus declared a state of emergency on 17 March 2020, in which a country-wide lockdown was set. On the day the state of emergency was declared, and the country went on lockdown, there were only two cases reported of foreign nationals that had travelled from a different country, and no community transmissions have been reported yet. As of 21 October 2020, when the 19th public briefing was delivered, Namibia had 12 367 confirmed COVID-19 cases with 10 528 (85%) recovery rates and 1 707 (14%) active, while 132 people had unfortunately succumbed to COVID-19 and related complications (The Presidency, 2020). The country had up to seven testing laboratories across the country (WHO, 2021). The head of state used public briefings that were broadcasted by all media, including national television, newspapers, radio as well as social media platforms.

When the President first briefed the nation on COVID-19 measures, he announced five stages of the country's lockdown. Stage 1 (Full Lockdown) started on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March to the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, Stage 2 (Strict Precautions) started from the 5<sup>th</sup> of May to the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2020, Stage 3 (Moderate Precautions) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June to the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2020, and Stage 4 (Relaxed Precaution) from the

30<sup>th</sup> of June to the 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2020, while Stage 5 (A New Normal) started from 18<sup>th</sup> of September to the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 2020. In all the stages of lockdown, the key measures included points of entry in the country, public gatherings, quarantine and self-isolation, provision of essential and basic needs, and the school system as well as special measures to be applied to regions in which epidemiological developments have been observed.

The Head of State used public briefings that were broadcasted by all media, including national television, newspapers, radio as well as social media platforms. Although the President was the one tasked to address the nation, the statements were ultimately the government's response to COVID-19. It is against this background that during the briefings, there were ministers (part of the immediate audience) who also delivered or clarified additional points after the President's address. In addition to the statements, there were also committees and a COVID-19 communication centre put in place to regulate and handle matters related to curbing the spread of the virus and connecting the country to the rest of the world as far as COVID-19 information and updates are concerned. These have all played a vital role in describing COVID-19 as a rhetorical situation in the Namibian government's responses.

To fully understand the rhetorical situation that is COVID-19 as communicated in the statements delivered by the government to the Namibian nation, the rhetorical situation by Bitzer (1968) is used in this study. In the rhetorical situation theory, all rhetorical situations are based on an exigence. The rhetor is driven by the exigence to make an argument or, in this case, deliver a statement. This is done to an audience, but some constraints explain how the audience may interpret the address. The constraints include the government and audience's knowledge of COVID-19, their beliefs about COVID-19, their culture, the timing, the place of the addresses as well as the relationship between the rhetor and the audience. This study analyses 19 statements delivered at the 1<sup>st</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> briefings to the Namibian nation on national response measures under the different stages of the COVID-19 state of emergency, from Bitzer's rhetorical situation perspective. To reach the aim, the objectives of this study are therefore to:

- analyse how COVID-19, as a rhetorical situation, was presented in the Namibian public briefings
- and examine the audience's response to the COVID-19 measures as set out by the government
- to determine the significance of constraints as a controlling tool in rhetorical situations.

### **Literature Review**

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments across the world have developed measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 and control the pandemic. Mintrom and O'Connor (2020) explain that controversy ensued in many countries concerning how best to balance the government's responsibility to protect the lives of all citizens with the responsibility to support economic activities and avoid the massive social dislocations that come with financial hardship. They added that because the virus spreads so quickly around the globe, governments everywhere needed to devise and implement their responses simultaneously. All countries, therefore, devised plans to appropriately communicate to the public how to best control the virus.

According to the WHO (2019), "effective communication strategies are important to engage policymakers and communities in prevention and control efforts and to increase buy-in and confidence" (p. 10). The United Nations (2020), in collaboration with the WHO, provides a three-point

comprehensive response to control the virus. These are to support the development of a vaccine, diagnostics, and treatment, strengthen preparedness, safeguard lives and livelihoods by addressing the devastating socioeconomic, humanitarian, and human rights aspects of the crisis, and develop a recovery process that pursues a better post-COVID world. The Namibian government was no exception in coming up with a response as it introduced measures in place to control COVID-19, initially with the declaration of a state of emergency. Other measures in place included closing the borders during certain periods when the spread was high, closing all non-essential services, reducing the number of people in gatherings, and banning gatherings when necessary. The Ministry of Health and Social Services also created a Rapid Response Team, which consisted of medical personnel to attend to where there was a need (Amesho, et al. 2020; WHO, 2020).

Moreover, Salajan et al. (2020) explain that public health emergencies such as COVID-19 are situations that require immediate response actions, and decisions made during an emergency may have longstanding implications on global health. The COVID-19 control measures were communicated through statements, which in the context of this study, are rhetorical discourse. Bitzer (1999) explains that “by creating rhetorical discourse, the reality can be changed through the mediation of thought and action” (p. 219). Rhetoric, therefore, is pragmatic and calls for action depending on how it is received by the audience. In this way, the public was guided on what measures to follow.

However, with the governmental response, the pandemic has brought structural and social issues to light, including the erosion of public trust in government and in expert advice, which was compounded by a wave of mis- and disinformation (OECD, 2022). To respond to these challenges, countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) governments have deployed relatively quick, significant human, financial and technical resources to manage and mitigate the impacts of the crisis (OECD, 2022). Since COVID-19 is still active at the time of this article’s publication, it may be early to clearly state the impact of the measures deployed. Therefore, there is a need for more studies (especially those measuring effectiveness) to be undertaken to measure the impact until the end of the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed importance on public administration to incorporate public health into our scholarship and practice, but also its discourse. According to Hatcher (2022), “the danger of political leadership that is not equipped to deal with such a crisis and/or actively tries to mislead the public” (p. 614). In the American context, as an example, both Presidents, Obama, and Reagan failed to lead the public despite being the best orators. President Reagan sought public support for funding the Nicaraguan Contras to fight the communist threat. However, the public did not heed his call despite all his rhetorical efforts to mention the issue in his twenty-five speeches in 1986, thirty-one in 1987, and eight nationally televised addresses on Nicaragua and the Contras. Likewise, President Obama used his eloquence and “bully pulpit” in his 200 speeches, to gain enough public political scores for health care reform without success (Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2011, p. 2). According to Edwards as cited in Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, (2011), Reagan and Obama’s failure to gain public support was due to arrogance or hubris within the White House. It is, thus, important to have scrutiny and explanations of crisis discourse to guide policymakers and rhetors in creating and delivering discourse that will have the correct impact and contribute to solving the problem.

### Theoretical Framework

The Rhetorical Situation by Bitzer (1968) is the theoretical framework that grounds data analysis in this study. According to Bitzer (1968), it is not the rhetor or the rhetor's intention to persuade that creates a rhetorical activity but the situation itself. The situation, therefore, calls for discourse, and the presence of rhetorical discourse indicates the presence of a rhetorical situation. Thus, Bitzer defines a rhetorical situation as "the nature of those contexts in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse" (p. 2). While other rhetors or rhetoric theorists discuss discourse, the orator as well as the audience and the message put forward as determinants of rhetoric communication. The Rhetorical Situation theory, therefore, investigates the situation as the source of the orator's application of discourse. How the context/situation is described, the characteristics, and how the situation leads to the creation of rhetoric is, therefore, the focus of this theory. The Rhetorical Situation has three constituents that comprise everything relevant in a rhetorical situation and influence the rhetoric namely, exigence, audience, and constraints.

An *exigence* is an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, and in this study, the exigence is the COVID-19 pandemic. The rhetorical *audience* consists only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change (Bitzer, p. 8), who in this context, fully explained in the findings, are the President as well as Ministers and media corresponding in the public briefings and response to COVID-19. *Constraints* are the persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decisions and actions needed to modify the exigence. According to Bitzer (1968), standard sources of constraint include beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, and motives among others and when the orator enters the situation, their discourse not only harnesses constraints given by the situation but provides additional important constraints.

Bitzer (1968) explains five characteristics of a Rhetorical Situation that are underpinned by the constituents. Firstly, the rhetorical discourse is called into existence by the situation. It is this situation that invites the rhetor to the situation that the rhetor perceives amounts to an invitation to create and present discourse. Secondly, a rhetorical situation invites a fitting response that fits the situation. Thirdly, the situation prescribes the response which fits in, and that meets the requirements established by the situation in terms of the purpose, theme, matter, and style of response. The first three characteristics speak to each other in the context of COVID-19 in Namibia. The COVID-19 pandemic is the situation that brought about the public briefings analysed in this study. For the President and responsible ministers to effectively communicate the measures of curbing the virus to the public, statements had to be prepared that are befitting the current state at the time as well as the mode of delivery (in person, television and radio, social media and other modes selected). The panel or ministers' briefing also kept changing depending on the situation, to fit the requirements of the virus' state at the time of briefing.

The fourth characteristic as explained by Bitzer (1968) is that the exigence and the people, objects, events, and relations which generate rhetorical discourse are in reality; are objective and publicly observable historic facts in the world we experience; and are thus free to be scrutinised and criticised by any observer. In this study, the exigence, (COVID-19), is a reality and the statements being presented (discourse) are for changing the reality at the time they are presented. Therefore, what the statements say and how they are perceived matter because that will influence the implementation.

The researchers in this study are the observers who are examining the statements and the delivery for influencing the creation of this type of discourse. The fifth characteristic is that the rhetorical situations exhibit structures that are simple or complex, and organised. The simplicity and complexity of the situation structure are dependent on whether there are a few or many elements interacting. The COVID-19 situation in Namibia can be considered somewhat complex as the pandemic affected so many spheres of life including employment, finances, and education systems, and has generally disrupted all operations in the country. The situation in this context, its complexity, and its elements are thus fully explained in the findings.

### **Methodology**

This study follows a qualitative approach as it examines COVID-19 as a rhetorical situation in the Namibian government's directives to the Namibian nation during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. This is a desktop study in which the first 19 public briefings on national response measures on COVID-19 in Namibia delivered by the President are analysed as data. Criterion-i purposive sampling was used to select the first 19 public briefings in this study. Criterion-I sampling is defined by Patton (2001) as a purposive sampling strategy used to identify and select all cases that meet a predetermined criterion of importance. In this study, the 19 briefings were all statements available at the time this article was being written. Additional statements were delivered to the nation as the COVID-19 pandemic was not yet over by the time this paper was submitted for publication.

The statements analysed as data in this study were available on public platforms and are the primary data considered in the analysis. However, to fully explain the rhetorical situation, the authors used their observations during the public briefings from both the government, the public as well as the audience present at the deliveries. The analysis of the statements is done from Bitzer's (1968) Rhetorical Situation lens. In the Rhetorical Situation Theory, Bitzer (1968) explains three constituents, namely, exigence, rhetorical audience, and constraints as well as some characteristics as explained in the theory section. These are used to analyse and discuss the findings.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

This paper analyses how the rhetorical situation (COVID-19) was presented in the rhetorical discourse by President Hage Geingob, the sitting and third President of the Republic of Namibia, since the first COVID-19 case was reported in the country on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2020. The paper only analyses the first 19 COVID-19 public briefings on the national response measures. The analysis adopts Bitzer's (1968) rhetorical situation theory. Bitzer's constituents are the main themes guiding the discussion.

#### ***Exigence***

In the case of public briefings on the national response measures, COVID-19 is seen as an imperfect urgency (exigence) whose existence in Namibia, how it spreads, as well as how it can be prevented require a task team. Hence, just like other rhetorical exigencies such as Polio and Ebola, the COVID-19 pandemic is a rhetorical exigence whose presence can be modified. For this reason, the COVID-19 public briefings on the national response measures were necessitated as communication tools needed to make the necessary modifications for this rhetorical exigence (COVID-19). Gelmini et al. (2021) posit that disclosing COVID-19 concerns is tantamount to the survival of companies, which in turn helps in maintaining a positive relationship with their stakeholders. In the researchers' view, the establishment of a COVID-19 Response Team is one of the befitting measures that would ensure that a positive

relationship between the presidency and the stakeholders of various representations is maintained. To ensure that stakeholders are kept updated, the Minister of Health and Social Services launched a COVID-19 Communication Centre in April 2020 where various audiences were hosted to deliberate on matters about the rhetorical exigence (WHO, 2020).

The third modification to this rhetorical exigence (COVID-19) was done in the form of the COVID-19 Social Relief Grant for all unemployed citizens between the ages of 18 to 59. The grant was a once-off payment of N\$ 750.00, which was paid in the recipients' bank accounts. According to the Ministry of Finance (2020), the Namibian government had reserved N\$ 562 million to benefit 739 000 eligible citizens. However, there were many concerns such as the old practice of unfulfilled promises by the Namibian government, the reliability of eligibility checks on the system which were not reliable, and the confidentiality concerns regarding the identification documents of eligible Namibians as some citizens felt that their identification documents would be used by the officials to check their political affiliations. These concerns meant that only 350 000 applicants could be verified, and their claims were processed (Oliveira & Mbathera, 2020).

The fourth modification was made by the Social Security Commission (SSC) when it designed a conditional National Employment and Salary Protection Scheme for COVID-19, whose mandate is to assist employers in saving jobs in the sectors of Tourism and Hospitality, Construction, and Aviation. The second mandate is to provide a conditional Safety Net for all the members of the SSC whose conditions have been affected adversely by the COVID-19 pandemic (SSC, n.d). The four positive modifications of the COVID-19 pandemic in Namibia (the exigence) assisted in inviting discourse production of public awareness and the necessary actions to be effected. However, it seems the public failed to execute the necessary actions in some areas, for example, some companies retrenched their employees, while other employees' monthly salaries were cut by some percentage (Beukes, 2020; Namibia Wildlife Resorts, 2021). Bitzer (1968) argues that the success of any organising principle of any controlling exigence depends on the perception and interest of the orator and all the other people involved.

The failure of this effect could have been attributed to ineffective channels and barriers to effective communication. For example, an employee whose annual salary is less than N\$ 50 000 was qualified to receive a grant not exceeding N\$ 1000 for 3 months (April, May, and June) on condition that such an employee provides proof of loss of income related to COVID-19. These conditions are published in English, as a Second Language to most Namibians, and not all employees can read and write English. The experts who are invited to the Communication Centre shared their expertise in the official language, English. This hindrance could be a leading factor in people who do not understand the English language losing interest in keeping themselves updated about what the government has been doing to modify the controlling exigence (COVID-19).

### ***Rhetorical Audience***

Bitzer (1968) identifies rhetorical audiences as those people who act as catalysts of change (p. 8). In the Namibian context, and for the COVID-19 case, the main audience has always been the President, whose speeches are prepared for rhetorical discourse. Besides the President, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Finance, and the media representatives constitute the audience. The audience for the controlling exigence has different roles. For example, at the 15<sup>th</sup>

COVID-19 media briefing, after the President has addressed the nation on national response measures, the Minister of Health and Social Services would elaborate in detail about what, when, and how health-related measures will be executed.

“We are updating our models and projections to track the reality on the ground versus expectations. We must take informed decisions to safeguard both lives and livelihoods” (The Presidency, 2020, p. 2).

This excerpt from the President’s address is too general and would require an elaborated narrative by the various line ministries. For example, the Minister of Health or his Deputy is given a platform to explain how the ministry will ensure that lives are saved. It is during this time that the minister will roll out all the detailed strategic plans for safeguarding the lives and the livelihoods of the citizens. The *modus operandi* is expected by all the line ministries concerned. The 15<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 Media Briefing was a special one as it also had additional measures for the Walvis Bay, Swakopmund, Arandis, Okahandja, and Rehoboth Local Authorities. Hence, detailed, yet specific measures were narrated. For example, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health and Social Services, and the Minister of Justice presented strategic modalities on how their ministries were going to ensure that tourism in the country is revived. Since the detection of the first COVID-19 case on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, the tourism sector has been hit the hardest due to the country’s points of entry (borders) that were closed immediately. Although this action was a necessity, its ripple effects were too extreme, especially in the tourism sector, where salaries were cut, and in some severe cases, jobs were lost.

### **Constraints**

Bitzer (1968) contends that sources of constraints such as beliefs, persons’ attitudes, and interests are the main determining factors in modifying the controlling exigence due to their ability to constrain decisions and actions needed. During the first cases of COVID-19, all persons who tested positive and those in close contact with positive persons were sent to quarantine facilities and into self-isolation, respectively. The 14-day waiting periods for all positive persons was mandatory for all persons in quarantine facilities. However, the living conditions in the quarantine facilities forced people to want to live in them. For example, the food parcels were rationed and not properly prepared, too many people were living in one room, and some quarantine facilities were not fitted with entertainment facilities such as television and Wi-Fi connectivity.

Bitzer (1968) classifies constraints such as poor living conditions and inadequate food rations as “*inartistic proofs*” since they are not consequential to the orator’s character. The orator’s character and his/her logical proofs (*artistic proofs*) also can modify the controlling exigence. This is visible from the Namibian National Land Conference in 2018 where the President in his opening speech expressed his understanding of the Nation’s need for land, the lack of food security, and shelter as a basic need (Melber, 2019). Regardless of his emphasis in his Land Conference closing speech that the government needs to ensure that all Namibians live in a just and fair society where no one is left out (Melber, 2019), there was no implementation to date, and landlessness remains a big issue in Namibia; especially in urban areas. However, because of these addresses, many people have stopped erecting informal structures and allocating themselves to un-serviced land in urban areas. In the Namibian COVID-19 context, the media and the presidency’s relationship became toxic in August 2020. This commotion led to the media representatives refusing to attend the public briefings until their demands to be allowed to engage the President freely were met. This disagreement left the citizens

locked out from the briefings as their questions which are usually sent via the media representatives, could not be answered (Ngatjinazo, 2020).

### Conclusions

The paper concludes that the successful modification of any given controlling exigence depends on the relationship between the audience and the constraints. The orator's demeanour - "artistic proofs" is tantamount to a positive relationship that holds potential in the modification of the controlling exigence (Bitzer, 1986, p. 8). In the Namibian context, the President's character is key in determining the efficiency and the extent to which the citizens will heed the call for controlling the spread of COVID-19. This paper further concludes that the medium of instruction, one of the "inartistic proofs" plays an equal role in modifying any given controlling exigence (Bitzer, 1986, p. 8). In the case of COVID-19 in Namibia, the key modifications are all presented in English, which is not understood by all Namibians. This could be one of the reasons why some citizens are not interested in joining hands in the fight against COVID-19.

### Recommendations

This paper found out that for effective modification of any given controlling exigence, the modifications must appeal to the artistic and inartistic constraints of the controlling exigence, and not to the audience. For example, people in quarantine facilities must be given hospitality that will make their stay as conducive as they would be at their homes. Both the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Health and Social Services could avail funds for the upgrading of all quarantine facilities with services such as free Wi-Fi, Television connectivity, and proper meals. Important information such as the President's COVID-19 public briefings on the national response measures, the National Employment and Salary Protection Scheme for COVID-19, and the Safety Net for all the members of SSC must be translated into indigenous languages to ensure that all citizens get undiluted secondary information. Finally, the paper recommends that the main audience does not allow hubris within the state house since this act has the potential to negatively modify the constraints.

### References

- Amesho, J. N., Ahmadi, A., & Lucero-Prinsno, D. (2020). The calculated responses against COVID-19 in Namibia. *Pan African Medical Journal*, 37(1), 25. DOI: 10.11604/pamj.suppl.2020.37.1.25697
- Beukes, J. (2020, May 07). IUM slashes salaries by 40%. *The Namibian Sun*. <https://www.namibiansun.com/news/ium-slashes-salaries-by-402020-05-06>
- Bitzer, L. F. (1968). The Rhetorical Situation. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 1, 1-14.
- Bitzer, L. F. (1999). The rhetorical situation. In S. Caudill, M. Condit, and J. L. Lucaite (Eds.), *Contemporary rhetorical theory: A reader* (pp. 217–225). New York: Guilford Press.
- Eshbaugh-Soha, M., & Peake, J. S. (2011). *Breaking through the noise: Presidential leadership, public opinion, and the news media*. Stanford University Press.
- Gelmini, L., Minutiello, V., Tettamanzi, P., & Comoli, M. (2021). Rhetoric, Accounting and Accountability: COVID-19 and the Case of Italy. *Journal of Sustainability*, 13, 1 -21. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084100>
- Hatcher, W. (2020). A failure of political communication, not a failure of bureaucracy: The danger of Presidential misinformation during COVID-19 pandemic. *American Review of Public Administration*, 50(6-7). 614–620.



- Melber, H. (2019). Colonialism, land, ethnicity, and class: Namibia after the second national land conference. *Africa Spectrum*, 54(1), 73-86.
- Ministry of Finance (2020). *Emergency Income grant of the Economic Stimulus Package Relief Package* (Launch Statement).  
<https://mof.gov.na/documents/35641/36580/Launch+Statement+EIG+of+the+COVID-19+Economic+Stimulus+Package.pdf.pdf/1c4c320b-efae-72f4-6cb6-2942923fdc12#:~:text=The%20grant%20is%20a%20once,of%20the%20Emergency%20Income%20Grant>
- Mintrom, M., & O'Connor, R. (2020). The importance of policy narrative: Effective government responses to Covid-19. *Policy Design and Practice*, 3(3), 205-227. DOI:10.1080/25741292.2020.1813358
- Namibia Wildlife Resorts (2021). *NWR proceeds with salary cut*.  
<https://www.nwr.com.na/nwr-proceeds-with-salary-cut/>
- Ngatjinazo, O. (2020, September 03). Journalists gun for Hengari. *The Namibian*.  
<https://www.namibian.com.na/204117/archive-read/Journalists-gun-for-Hengari>
- OECD (2022). *First lessons from government evaluations of COVID-19 responses: A synthesis*. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/en/>
- Oliveira, Y., & Mbathera, E. (2020, April 14). Concerns over income emergency grant. *The Namibian*.  
<https://www.namibian.com.na/200077/archive-read/Concerns-over-Emergency-Income-Grant>
- Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London: Sage.
- The Presidency. (2020). *Statement by his Excellency Dr. Hage G. Geingob on the occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> COVID-19 public briefing on the national response measures*.  
[https://www.google.com/search?q=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&rlz=1C1NHXL\\_enNA825NA825&biw=1366&bih=568&sxsrf=ALiCzsYt-x6oh4bWCYNsitizm4nFYmtsZQ%3A1661097497256&ei=GVCY5GiD8eGhbIPi6yGuAk&ved=0ahUKEwjRkouyptj5AhVHQ0EAHQQuWAZcQ4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&gs\\_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAM6BwgjELADECC6BwgAEEcQsANKBAhBGABKBAhGGABQqwZYuiJgrSdoAXABeACAAcMliAHTFJIBBTYtMi4xmAEoAEBByAEJwAEB&scient=gws-wiz](https://www.google.com/search?q=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&rlz=1C1NHXL_enNA825NA825&biw=1366&bih=568&sxsrf=ALiCzsYt-x6oh4bWCYNsitizm4nFYmtsZQ%3A1661097497256&ei=GVCY5GiD8eGhbIPi6yGuAk&ved=0ahUKEwjRkouyptj5AhVHQ0EAHQQuWAZcQ4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAM6BwgjELADECC6BwgAEEcQsANKBAhBGABKBAhGGABQqwZYuiJgrSdoAXABeACAAcMliAHTFJIBBTYtMi4xmAEoAEBByAEJwAEB&scient=gws-wiz)
- The Presidency. (2020). *Statement by his Excellency Dr. Hage G. Geingob on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 public briefing on the national response measures*.  
[https://www.google.com/search?q=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&rlz=1C1NHXL\\_enNA825NA825&biw=1366&bih=568&sxsrf=ALiCzsYt-x6oh4bWCYNsitizm4nFYmtsZQ%3A1661097497256&ei=GVCY5GiD8eGhbIPi6yGuAk&ved=0ahUKEwjRkouyptj5AhVHQ0EAHQQuWAZcQ4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&gs\\_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAM6BwgjELADECC6BwgAEEcQsANKBAhBGABKBAhGGABQqwZYuiJgrSdoAXABeACAAcMliAHTFJIBBTYtMi4xmAEoAEBByAEJwAEB&scient=gws-wiz](https://www.google.com/search?q=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&rlz=1C1NHXL_enNA825NA825&biw=1366&bih=568&sxsrf=ALiCzsYt-x6oh4bWCYNsitizm4nFYmtsZQ%3A1661097497256&ei=GVCY5GiD8eGhbIPi6yGuAk&ved=0ahUKEwjRkouyptj5AhVHQ0EAHQQuWAZcQ4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAM6BwgjELADECC6BwgAEEcQsANKBAhBGABKBAhGGABQqwZYuiJgrSdoAXABeACAAcMliAHTFJIBBTYtMi4xmAEoAEBByAEJwAEB&scient=gws-wiz)
- The Presidency. (2020). *Statement by his Excellency Dr. Hage G. Geingob on the occasion of the 19<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 public briefing on the national response measures*.  
[https://www.google.com/search?q=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&rlz=1C1NHXL\\_enNA825NA825&biw=1366&bih=568&sxsrf=ALiCzsYt-x6oh4bWCYNsitizm4nFYmtsZQ%3A1661097497256&ei=GVCY5GiD8eGhbIPi6yGuAk&ved=0ahUKEwjRkouyptj5AhVHQ0EAHQQuWAZcQ4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&gs\\_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAM6BwgjELADECC6BwgAEEcQsANKBAhBGABKBAhGGABQqwZYuiJgrSdoAXABeACAAcMliAHTFJIBBTYtMi4xmAEoAEBByAEJwAEB&scient=gws-wiz](https://www.google.com/search?q=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&rlz=1C1NHXL_enNA825NA825&biw=1366&bih=568&sxsrf=ALiCzsYt-x6oh4bWCYNsitizm4nFYmtsZQ%3A1661097497256&ei=GVCY5GiD8eGhbIPi6yGuAk&ved=0ahUKEwjRkouyptj5AhVHQ0EAHQQuWAZcQ4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=19th+public+briefings+on+covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAM6BwgjELADECC6BwgAEEcQsANKBAhBGABKBAhGGABQqwZYuiJgrSdoAXABeACAAcMliAHTFJIBBTYtMi4xmAEoAEBByAEJwAEB&scient=gws-wiz)

[covid+19%2C+republic+of+namibia+pdf&gs\\_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAM6BwgjELADECc6BwgAEEcQsANKBAhBGABKBAhGGABQqwZYuiJgrSdoAXABeACAACmliAHTFJIBBTYtMi4xmAEAoAEBYA EJwAEB&scient=gws-wiz](https://www.scribd.com/document/64426420/covid-19-republic-of-namibia-pdf)

Salajan, A., Tsolova, S., Ciotti, M., & Suk, J. E. (2020). To what extent does the evidence support decision-making during infectious disease outbreaks? A scoping literature review. *Evidence & Policy*, 16(3), 453–475. DOI:10.1332/174426420X15808913064302

Social Security Commission [SSC]. (n.d). *National employment and salary protection scheme for COVID 19*. <https://www.ssc.org.na/#openModal>

United Nations (UN). (2020). *United Nations comprehensive response to COVID-19: Saving lives, protecting societies, recovering better*. United Nations

World Health Organization [WHO]. (2020). *Namibia launches COVIS-19 Communication Centre*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/namibia-launches-covid-19-communication-centre>

World Health Organization [WHO]. (2020). *A comprehensive COVID-19 response from government, WHO and partners keeps community transmission at bay and protects health services for the vulnerable*. WHO. <https://www.afro.who.int/countries/namibia>

World Health Organization [WHO]. (2019). *Global influenza strategy for 2019-2030*. Geneva: WHO.

#### About the Authors

**Mr. Naftal Haufiku\*** is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the International University of Management (IUM). He is a blind reviewer for the Journal of the University of Namibia Language Centre (JULACE). He completed both his undergraduate and post-graduate studies at the University of Namibia (UNAM). Haufiku holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education (English and Geography) and a Master's Degree in English Studies. His research interests are in rhetoric, and assessment in education.

**Ms. Petrina Batholmeus** is an Industry Liaison Officer at the Cooperative Education Unit at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). She values the use of language and research hence the application of the English language in teaching, editing, writing, and curriculum development in her previous role as an English Lecturer. Her research interests are in rhetoric, applied linguistics, and cooperative education. She has presented several peer-reviewed papers at national and international conferences and published research relating to work-integrated learning and TVET teacher education in academic journals. Petrina completed her undergraduate and Honours in English Studies at NUST; her Master of Arts in English Studies at the University of Namibia and is completing her doctoral studies in Education at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.