

FOCUS AREAS

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

2025 for 2026

Department of Life and Consumer Sciences

Consumer Science

Focus Area	Researchers in the focus area	Specialisation of researchers in the focus area	Profile of the researcher	Research project themes	Capacity per Researcher for 2026
1. Consumer Education, Food Stuffs, Clothing and Nutrition behaviour (perception, attitudes, value and consumer decision making) Contact person: Prof E Kempen kempeel@unisa.ac.za	Prof E Kempen kempeel@unisa.ac.za	Consumer behaviour and decision making	Prof Elizabeth Kempen is a professor in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She holds a PhD from The University of Liverpool. Her research focus is on Consumer behaviour and the drivers of consumer decision to purchase. Methodology expertise: Qualitative research	1. Consumer behaviour and the purchase decisions in clothing or food products. 2. Consumer behaviour in relation to indigenous clothing or foods.	Masters: 2 PhD: 1
	Dr EA Symington syminea@unisa.ac.za	Nutrition and health behaviour and practices during the first 1000 days (pregnancy, infancy and young children)	Dr Symington obtained her PhD in Nutrition from the North-West University. She is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Science. Her research focus is health and nutrition during pregnancy and early life development. Methodology expertise: Quantitative research	1. Maternal nutrition including dietary intake and nutrient status (with a focus on micronutrients) 2. Infant and young child feeding practices 3. Consumers' nutrition knowledge, behaviour and status. 4. Food consumption patterns of vulnerable groups – food behaviour	Masters: 2 PhD: 1
	Dr M Strydom strydm1@unisa.ac.za	Clothing related consumer behaviour	Dr Mariette Strydom is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Science. She completed her PhD in Consumer	1. Social and corporate responsibility and decision making relating to clothing products.	Masters: 1 PhD: 0

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			<p>Science at UNISA. Her research focus is small scale apparel product design and development with special interest in small scale production and related consumer behaviour, as well as sizing and fit issues.</p> <p>Methodology expertise: Qualitative</p>	2. Sustainable apparel consumer behaviour.	
	<p>Dr Lorna Truter Chrisl@unisa.ac.za</p>	Conscientious consumption	<p>Dr Lorna Truter is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She obtained her PhD in Consumer Sciences from Unisa, and a Masters' degree in Open Distance Learning in 2019. Her research thus focusses on Consumer Behaviour, in general, but also more specifically on sustainable consumption and conscientious decision-making. Additionally, she focusses on ODeL research.</p> <p>Methodology expertise: Quantitative research; Qualitative research</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consumer education 2. Sustainability education 3. Consumer behaviour 	<p>Masters: 2 PhD:2</p>
	<p>Dr A van Onselen vonsea@unisa.ac.za</p>	Microgreens Micronutrient deficiencies	<p>Dr A van Onselen is a senior lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She obtained her Master's Degree (The effect of short-chain fatty acids on glycometabolic control in men) and her PhD (To determine the risk factors associated with women practicing geophagia in QwaQwa, Free State).</p> <p>Methodology expertise: Mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative research.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The acceptability of microgreens in the diet in the community 2. The nutrient value of microgreens. 3. The effect of microgreens on the gut microbe. 4. The geophagia practices in pregnant women 	<p>Masters: 1 PhD: 2</p>

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2. Food product development, safety and quality assurance. Contact person: Prof FT Tabit: tabitft@unisa.ac.za	Prof FT Tabit tabitft@unisa.ac.za	Food processing & product development, microbial food safety and quality assurance	Prof Frederick T Tabit is a professor in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. He holds a Masters in Bio-and Food Technology from Lund University (Sweden) and PhD in Food Science from University of Pretoria (South Africa). Methodology expertise: Experimental research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of novel value-added food product with improved physio-chemical and sensory properties using indigenous food crops. 2. Optimisation of food processing parameters 3. Food safety knowledge of food handlers and the sanitary compliance of food processing and vending. 4. Microbial Quality of food products and food contact surfaces. 5. The hygiene status and incidence of foodborne pathogens on food processing surfaces. 6. Evaluation of the food safety and quality management systems in food processing facilities 	Masters: 4 PhD: 2
	Dr F Malongane malonf@unisa.ac.za	Nutrition and food security, African indigenous foods, therapeutic nutrition with the focus on chronic disease of lifestyle and functional foods; nutrition and microbiome	Dr Florence Malongane is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She holds a PhD from the University of South Africa. Her research focus area is in food and nutrition security, nutrition and chronic disease of lifestyle, functional foods, nutrition and microbiome. Methodology expertise: Quantitative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nutrition and Food security in rural and urban poor population 2. African indigenous foods and chronic diseases of lifestyle 3. African indigenous foods as functional foods 4. African fermentation foods and microbiome 	Masters: 1 PhD: 1
	Dr LL Mbuyane mbuyall@unisa.ac.za	Microbiological literacy and food safety knowledge practices	Dr Mbuyane is a senior lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She holds a BSc degree (majors Biotechnology and Biochemistry) from the University of Limpopo and pursued her postgraduate studies at Stellenbosch	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Characterization and exploitation of microorganisms isolated from food products 2. Food safety 	Masters:1 PhD: 1

			<p>University where she obtained her BSc Hons, MSc <i>cum laude</i> and PhD degrees in Wine Biotechnology.</p> <p>Methodology expertise: Experimental research.</p>	3. Food product development using fermentation technology	
	<p>Ms NV Nkosi nkosinv@unisa.ac.za</p>	<p>Food quality assurance and safety Food product development</p>	<p>Ms Nelly Nkosi is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Science. She holds a Masters in Consumer Science (Cum Laude). She is currently registered for PhD in Consumer Science in the University of South Africa. Her research focus area is on food product development and indigenous food crops. Her research interests include food quality assurance and food safety, nutrition education and food security.</p> <p>Methodology expertise: Quantitative</p>	<p>1. Food product development 2. Food quality assurance and safety 3. Consumer food products perception and attitude</p>	<p>Masters: 1 PhD: 0</p>
	<p>MS M Ngidi ngidimt@unisa.ac.za</p>	<p>Street food vendors perception relating to food safety practices, awareness and attitudes.</p>	<p>Ms Ngidi is a junior lecturer in the Department of life and consumer sciences. She is registered with the university of South Africa and is completing her post graduate certificate in education. She is also busy with her Master's with the university of Johannesburg. Her research focus is the perceptions of street food vendors relating to food safety practices, awareness, and their attitudes.</p>	<p>1. The perceptions of street food vendors relating to food safety practices, awareness and their attitudes. 2. The effects of food safety knowledge, attitude, and practices on hotel competitive advantages</p>	<p>Masters: PhD: TBA</p>
	<p>Ms. MN Rikhotso malulmn1@unisa.ac.za</p>	<p>Nutrition and Food security, Meal management, Food safety practices and knowledge.</p>	<p>Ms Rikhotso is a lecturer in the Department of life and consumer sciences. She holds a Masters in Consumer Science from the University of South Africa. Her research focus is in the areas of Food and Nutrition security, Food safety practices and knowledge of individuals and households.</p> <p>Methodology expertise: Quantitative</p>	<p>1. Nutrition and Food security for individuals and households 2. Food safety knowledge and practices of individuals and households. 3. Meal management and food safety.</p>	<p>Masters: 1 PhD: 0</p>

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3. Nutrition knowledge and consumption patterns, nutrition and food security Contact person: Dr EA Symington, syminea@unisa.ac.za	Dr EA Symington syminea@unisa.ac.za	Nutrition and health behaviour and practices during the first 1000 days (pregnancy, infancy and young children)	Dr Symington obtained her PhD in Nutrition from the North-West University. She is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Science. Her research focus is health and nutrition during pregnancy and early life development. Methodology expertise: Quantitative	1. Maternal nutrition including dietary intake and nutrient status 2. Infant and young child feeding practices 3. Consumers' nutrition knowledge, behaviour and status. 4. Food consumption patterns of vulnerable groups – report on food behaviour and nutritional adequacy	Masters: 2 PhD: 1
	Dr A van Onselen vonsea@unisa.ac.za	Food Security Community Nutrition with special attention to fight hunger	Dr A van Onselen is a senior lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She obtained her Master's Degree (The effect of short-chain fatty acids on glycometabolic control in men) and her PhD (To determine the risk factors associated with women practicing geophagia in QwaQwa, Free State). Methodology expertise: Mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative research.	1. The nutrient intake of communities. 2. The impact of social differences on food security. 3. How to reduce hunger in South Africa by introducing functional foods. 4. Gut Health, microgreens and Wellness Among Postgraduate Students in South Africa	Masters: PhD:
	Dr B van der Westhuizen vdwesb1@unisa.ac.za	Obesogenic environments; Evidence informed decision making; nutrition leadership; salt reduction strategies	Bianca van der Westhuizen is a senior lecturer in Nutrition at the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She completed her Ph.D. in Nutrition at the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition (CEN), NWU. She is currently conducting research in public health nutrition focusing on the obesogenic environment of South Africa and how that affects the non-communicable disease profile of the country. She also focusses on the salt reduction strategy in South Africa and monitoring it. Other research interest includes knowledge translation and how to bridge the gap	1. Assess the availability of healthy and unhealthy foods in consumer retail environments using geo-coding technology in South Africa 2. Assess the availability of healthy and unhealthy foods in community retail environment in South Africa 3. Describing the emerging digital food environment in South Africa 4. Investigating the use of evidence in nutrition policy formulation	Masters: 2 PhD: 1

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			between research and decision makers in terms of public health nutrition related problems. She is also passionate about nutrition leadership development in Africa. Methodology expertise: Quantitative	5. Investigating the impact of leadership training on the nutrition landscape in Africa 6. Monitoring the salt reduction strategy in South Africa	
	Mr R Mathye mathyr@unisa.ac.za	Nutrition education and practices, nutrition and food security, Food consumption patterns and behaviour.	Mr R Mathye is a Lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. He holds a Master's degree from the University of Pretoria and currently enrolled for a PhD in Nutrition at the University of South Africa. His research focus area is in food and nutrition security, nutrition and chronic disease of lifestyle. Methodology expertise: Quantitative	1. Consumers' nutrition knowledge, their nutritional behaviour and nutritional status. 2. Food consumption patterns of vulnerable groups – report on food behaviour and nutritional adequacy 3. The impact of nutrition education on the nutritional practices and knowledge of health care workers 4. The impact of nutrition education on the nutritional practices and knowledge of health care workers 5. Food and Nutrition Security	Masters: 1 PhD: 0
	Mr SC Hlako hlakosc@unisa.ac.za	Micronutrients	Mr Seemole Cedrick Hlako is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. He obtained his master's degree in public nutrition from the University of Venda, his master's dissertation was titled Iodine status of lactating mothers and infants aged zero to six months in the Vhembe and Mopani District of the Limpopo Province, South Africa. Methodology expertise: Quantitative Research	1. Micronutrients particularly iodine 2. Infant and young child feeding 3. Nutrition and HIV and Aids 4. Food fortification and nutrition	Masters: PhD: TBA

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4. 3D Body Scanning for Apparel, Health and Consumer Research Contact person: Dr K Pandarum, pandak@unisa.ac.za	Dr K Pandarum pandak@unisa.ac.za	Theme Group Leader, with 14 years of specialisation in 3D body scanning for apparel sizing and fit studies inclusive of developing standards for use in the clothing, textiles and in ergonomic applications.	Dr Pandarum is a Senior Lecturer in the department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She holds a PhD (Textile Science) from the Nelson Mandela University specialising in 3D body scanning in apparel and ergonomic applications; consumer apparel behaviour; cleaner production applications in the textile and clothing industries and, in clothing and textiles standards development both nationally and internationally. Methodology expertise: (mixed method) Quantitative and Qualitative	1. Apparel, sizing and fit projects 2. Apparel, consumer behaviour 3. Cleaner production in the clothing and textile industry 4. Developing clothing and textile standards for industry	Masters: 2 PHD: 1
	Prof Kempen kempeel@unisa.ac.za	Consumer behaviour and decision making	Prof Elizabeth Kempen is a professor in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She holds a PhD from The University of Liverpool. Her research focus is on Consumer behaviour and the drivers of consumer decision to purchase. Methodology expertise: Qualitative research	1. Apparel, consumer behaviour projects	As mentioned before.
	Dr M Strydom Strydm1@unisa.ac.za	Sizing and fit related consumer behaviour	Dr Mariette Strydom is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Science. She completed her PhD in Consumer Science at UNISA. Her research focus is small scale apparel product design and development with special interest in small scale production and related consumer behaviour, as well as sizing and fit issues. Methodology expertise: Qualitative	1. Apparel, Sizing and Fit projects 2. Apparel, Consumer behaviour projects	As mentioned before.
	Dr L Truter chrisl@unisa.ac.za	Apparel, Consumer behaviour	Dr Lorna Truter is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She obtained her PhD in Consumer Sciences from Unisa, and a Masters' degree in Open Distance Learning in 2019. Her research thus focusses on Consumer Behaviour, in general, but also more specifically on sustainable consumption and conscientious	1. Apparel, consumer behaviour projects	As mentioned before.

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			decision-making. Additionally, she focusses on ODeL research, specifically decolonial research. Methodology expertise: Quantitative research; Qualitative research		
	Ms M Makopo makopmmh@unisa.ac.za	Entrepreneurial behaviour of apparel small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) business owners	Ms Mirriam Makopo is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She holds a Masters in Clothing Management, from the University of Pretoria. She is registered for a PhD in Consumer Science. Her research focuses on the sustainability of apparel small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs), specifically that offer custom-made apparel, with specific focus on the entrepreneurial aspects (such as entrepreneurial orientation). Her interest is also with consumer behaviour related to SMMEs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apparel SMMEs owners' entrepreneurial orientation and coping strategies 2. Apparel SMMEs customers' motivation for purchasing custom-made apparel. 3. Consumer purchasing behaviour, preferences, and perceptions towards different categories of apparel (corporate wear/traditional wear/special occasion wear) offered by apparel SMMEs 	Masters: 1 PhD: 0
	Dr Sipho Mbatha Mbaths1@unisa.ac.za	Competitive advantage development and systems of innovation in the 3D body scanning industry	Dr Sipho Mbatha is a senior lecturer at the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences, UNISA. He holds a D-Tech in fashion, specialising in systems of innovation. He is a reviewer for the <i>Industry and Higher Education Journal</i> , the <i>African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development</i> , the <i>Entrepreneurial Research Journal</i> , the <i>Latin American Business Review</i> , and the <i>Transformation in Higher Education Journal</i> . He has research expertise in competitive advantages and systems of innovation in the clothing, textiles, leather, and footwear sector.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competitive advantage in 3D Body scanning (<u>any country of your choice</u>). 2. University-Industry-Government collaborations in the 3D body scanning industry (<u>any country of your choice</u>). 3. Exploring policies influencing the 3D Body Scanning industry 	Masters: 1 PhD: 1

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5. Sustainable Apparel Enterprises Contact person: Dr M Strydom strydm1@unisa.ac.za	Dr M Strydom strydm1@unisa.ac.za	Apparel product development and fashion entrepreneurship	Dr Mariette Strydom is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Science. She completed her PhD in Consumer Science at UNISA. Her research focus is small scale apparel product design and development with special interest in small scale production and related consumer behaviour, as well as sizing and fit issues. Methodology expertise: Qualitative	Apparel product design and development: 1. Apparel SMMEs: entrepreneurial orientation, motivational factors 2. Creativity and innovation in apparel product development 3. Sustainable apparel product development, production and consumption 4. Consumer behaviour with regards to custom-made apparel	As mentioned before.
	Prof E Kempen kempeel@unisa.ac.za	Consumer apparel and textile purchasing behaviour	Prof Elizabeth Kempen is a professor in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She holds a PhD from The University of Liverpool. Her research focus is on Consumer behaviour and the drivers of consumer decision to purchase. Methodology expertise: Qualitative research	1. Apparel SMMEs 2. Apparel product development	As mentioned before.
	Dr L Truter chrisl@unisa.ac.za	Consumer perception, attitudes, value and consumer decision making relating to sustainable clothing consumption	Dr Lorna Truter is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She obtained her PhD in Consumer Sciences from Unisa, and a Masters' degree in Open Distance Learning in 2019. Her research thus focusses on Consumer Behaviour, in general, but also more specifically on sustainable consumption and conscientious decision-making. Additionally, she focusses on ODeL research, specifically decolonial research. Methodology expertise: Quantitative research; Qualitative research	1. Apparel, consumer behaviour projects	As mentioned before.
	Ms M Makopo makopmmh@unisa.ac.za	Entrepreneurial behaviour of apparel small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) business owners	Ms Mirriam Makopo is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She holds a Masters in Clothing Management, from the University of Pretoria. She is registered for a PhD in Consumer Science. Her research focuses on the sustainability of apparel small, medium,	1. Apparel SMMEs owners' entrepreneurial orientation and coping strategies 2. Apparel SMMEs customers' motivation for purchasing custom-made apparel.	As mentioned before.

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			and micro enterprises (SMMEs), specifically that offer custom-made apparel, with specific focus on the entrepreneurial aspects (such as entrepreneurial orientation). Her interest is also with consumer behaviour related to SMMEs.	3. Consumer purchasing behaviour, preferences, and perceptions towards different categories of apparel (corporate wear/traditional wear/special occasion wear) offered by apparel SMMEs	
	Dr K Pandarum pandak@unisa.ac.za		Dr Pandarum is a Senior Lecturer in the department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She holds a MSc. (Textile Science) from the Nelson Mandela University and her Honours Masters and PhD qualifications were obtained in 3D body scanning in apparel and ergonomic applications; consumer apparel behaviour; cleaner production applications in the textile and clothing industries and, in clothing and textiles standards development both nationally and internationally. Methodology expertise: (mixed method) Quantitative and Qualitative	1. Apparel, sizing and fit projects 2. Apparel, consumer behaviour 3. Cleaner production in the clothing and textile industry 4. Developing clothing and textile standards for industry	As mentioned before.
	Dr Sipho Mbatha Mbaths1@unisa.ac.za	Systems of innovation in the sustainable clothing, textiles, leather, and footwear sector	Dr Sipho Mbatha is a senior lecturer at the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences, UNISA. He holds a D-Tech in fashion, specialising in systems of innovation. He is a reviewer for the <i>Industry and Higher Education Journal</i> , the <i>African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development</i> , the <i>Entrepreneurial Research Journal</i> , the <i>Latin American Business Review</i> , and the <i>Transformation in Higher Education Journal</i> . He has research expertise in competitive advantages and systems of innovation in the clothing, textiles, leather, and footwear sector.	1. Mapping the University-Industry-Government collaborations in the sustainable clothing, textiles, leather, and footwear sector (<u>any country of your choice</u>). 2. Exploring policies influencing the sustainable clothing, textiles, leather, and footwear sector (<u>any country of your choice</u>).	Masters: 1 PhD: 1

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6. Hospitality Management, Accommodation Management, Accommodation Operations	Ms R Motlogelwa motlor@unisa.ac.za	Small Accommodation Establishments (SAEs) grading and quality management	Ms Reba Motlogelwa is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She holds a Master's in Hospitality Management from Tshwane University of Technology. She is currently registered for a PhD. She holds a PGCE from The University of South Africa. Her research focus is small accommodation Establishments grading and quality management.	1. Perceptions of small and medium size accommodation managers regarding star grading (TGCSA) 2. Quality management in the accommodation sector 3. Customer service in hotels 4. Accommodation operations 5. Hospitality education	Masters: PhD: TBA
	Dr M Chibe chibeme@unisa.ac.za	Indigenous foods in Hospitality, food handling and preparation.	Dr Mumsy Chibe is a lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences. She obtained her PhD in Consumer Sciences: Food and nutrition from DUT, and a Masters' degree in 2019. Her research Food and Beverage Management focusses on Corn Soya Blend acceptance and acceptability in the school feeding programme. Additionally, she focusses Indigenous food in the Hospitality industry, food handling and preparation. Additional research includes Work Integrated Learning in the Hospitality Industry.	1. Indigenous foods projects 2. Food handling and preparation. 3. Work integrated learning projects.	Masters: 2 PhD: 1
	Dr. A Deen-Pather dpathea@unisa.ac.za	Hospitality, Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality, Rooms Division areas, Hospitality Management	Dr Deen is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Life & Consumer Sciences. She holds a PhD in Tourism and Hospitality from the University of Johannesburg. Research focus extends across service quality, customer satisfaction, hospitality and hospitality management, and corporate social responsibility. Methodologies: Qualitative and quantitative research designs	1. Exploring sustainability practices within Hospitality businesses 2. Smart Technologies within hotels and impact on satisfaction 3. Resilience and recovery strategies within the Hotels	Masters: 2 PhD: 1

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7. Adapting to 4IR and 5IR in the clothing, textiles, leather, and footwear sector: development of sectoral systems of innovation policy Contact person: Dr Sipho Mbatha mbaths1@unisa.ac.za	Dr Sipho Mbatha Mbaths1@unisa.ac.za	National systems in the clothing, textiles, leather, and footwear sector	Dr Sipho Mbatha is a senior lecturer at the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences, UNISA. He holds a D-Tech in fashion, specialising in systems of innovation. He is a reviewer for the <i>Industry and Higher Education Journal</i> , the <i>African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development</i> , the <i>Entrepreneurial Research Journal</i> , the <i>Latin American Business Review</i> , and the <i>Transformation in Higher Education Journal</i> . He has research expertise in competitive advantages and systems of innovation in the clothing, textiles, leather, and footwear sector.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exploring the regional systems of innovation for adapting to 4RI and 5IR in the clothing, textiles, leather, and footwear sector (any region of your choice in Africa). 2. Mapping the systems of innovation for adapting to 4RI and 5IR in the clothing, textiles, leather, and footwear sector (any country of your choice in Africa). 3. Mapping the systems of innovation to improve the mohair value addition industry. 4. Mapping the systems of innovation to improve the wool value addition industry. 	Masters: 2 PhD: 2
TOTAL					Masters: 29 PhD: 17