

NICKY M NICHOLLS

Email: nicky.nicholls@gmail.com

phone: 0734123238

RECENT

Current (2017 onwards): Senior Lecturer at University of Pretoria, Department of Economics

2013-2016:

- PhD studies (University of Pretoria): I conducted a series of experiments looking at violations of rationality in decision making under uncertainty, as well as a game theoretic analysis of the findings in one of those experiments.
- I consulted to Nielsen, a leading global market research company, on an ad hoc basis. I led the Innovation Practice (BASES) division of Nielsen in South Africa before leaving full time employment to pursue my post-graduate studies in Economics.

EDUCATION

PhD (Economics)	University of Pretoria	2013-2016
Thesis: Essays on probability perceptions, decision-making and aging Supervisor: Prof A. Zimmer		
MComm (Economics)	University of the Witwatersrand	2011-2012
Research report: Information under uncertainty: an experimental study of violations of the Sure Thing Principle in a learning environment		
BComm Honours (Economics)	University of the Witwatersrand	2010
Passed with distinction		
MA (Psychology)	University of Stellenbosch	2002-2003
Thesis: A statistical analysis of the validity of two theoretical approaches used to explain variation in adolescent adjustment to divorce Passed with distinction		
BA Honours (Psychology)	University of Stellenbosch	1999
Passed with distinction		
BA	University of Stellenbosch	1998
Majors: Psychology, Economics and French Passed with distinction		
Matric	Westville Girls' High School	1995
English, Afrikaans, French, Mathematics, Physical Science, Biology (all passed with 80%+) Dux award for top matric student		

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PUBLICATIONS

- Hamann, H. and Nicholls, N. (Forthcoming). Group Identity in Intermediated Interactions: Lessons from a Trust Game with Delegation in South Africa. *Research in Experimental Economics* **20**. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Chisadza, C., Nicholls, N. and Yitbarek, E. (Forthcoming). Women empowerment and child obesity in Africa in *Women and Sustainable Human Development- Empowering Women in Africa* ed. M. Konte and N. Tirivayi. Springer.
- Nicholls, N., Romm, A.T. and Zimper, A. (2015). The Impact of Statistical Learning on Violations of the Sure-Thing Principle. *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* **50**, 117-141.
- Nicholls, N. and Zimper, A. (2016). Subjective Life Expectancy in *The Encyclopedia of Adulthood and Aging* ed. S. KraussWhitbourne. New York: John Wiley& Sons, Inc.
- Watson, N.M. and Greeff, A.P. (2004). An Analysis of Schema Theory and Learning Theory as Explanations for Variance in Adolescent Adjustment to Divorce. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, **32**, 437-448. (Published under my maiden name, Watson).

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

- Nicholls, N., Roberts, G. and Romm, A. Work harder or aim lower: An investigation of student reactions to feedback on academic performance.
- Nicholls, N. Information and violations of the Sure-Thing Principle: an experimental consideration of non-vanishing ambiguity.
- Harrison, G., Nicholls, N. and Ross, D. Belief updating and Sure-Thing Principal violations.
- Nicholls, N. The impact of alternative formats for formative assessment on summative educational outcomes.
- Nicholls, N. and Zimper, A. Strategic Choice of Agency when Identity Matters.
- Chisadza, C., Nicholls, N. and Yitbarek, E. Race and Gender biases in Student Evaluations of Teachers. (*under review*)

TEACHING

MIE 780, University of Pretoria

2015-2017

Honours (first year post undergraduate degree) course including consumer and firm theory, introductory game theory and introduction to behavioural economics.

EKN 244, University of Pretoria

Second year microeconomics foundations course.

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CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Nicholls, N., Romm, A. and Zipper, A. The Impact of Statistical Learning on Violations of the Sure-Thing Principle. Presented at ESSA Conference (September 2013).
- Nicholls, N. and Zipper, A. The Shape of Probability Judgments Revisited. Presented at ESSA Conference (September 2015).
- Hamann, H. and Nicholls, N. On the strategic use of identity in intermediated interactions – lessons from a trust game with delegation in South Africa. Presented at WINIR Conference (April 2017).
- Nicholls, N. The impact of alternative formats for formative assessment on summative educational outcomes. Presented at ESSA Conference (August 2017).
- Nicholls, N. Non-vanishing ambiguity and the Sure-Thing Principle. Poster presented at Foundations of Utility and Risk Conference (June 2018).

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

- UCT RUBEN Workshop: The Behavioral Economics of Risk, Uncertainty and Time 2012
- Warwick Business School Summer School: Decision Making under Uncertainty 2013
- ESSA Conference - Bloemfontein 2013
- UCT RUBEN Workshop: Field Experiments, Risk and Uncertainty in Development 2014
- ERSA Workshop: Economies with Asymmetric Information 2014
- ERSA Workshop: Knightian Uncertainty in Economics and Finance 2015
- ESSA Conference – Cape Town 2015
- GIBS/University of Pretoria Doctoral Conference 2015/2016
- WINIR Conference – Johannesburg 2017
- ESSA Conference – Grahamstown 2017
- Foundations of Utility and Risk (FUR) Conference – York, England 2018
- CEAR Workshop on Estimated Risk Preferences – Cape Town 2018

ACADEMIC AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Economic Society of South Africa (ESSA) Founders' Medal for top PhD in Economics in South Africa 2017
- Stella Nkomo Award for top PhD in Economic and Management Sciences Faculty at University of Pretoria 2017
- PhD Fellowship at University of Pretoria 2013-16
- Post-Graduate Finalist (top 10) in Nedbank/Old Mutual Budget Speech Competition 2010
- Top student in MA Psychology at University of Stellenbosch 2003
- University of Stellenbosch Academic Honours Award (top 4 in faculty) 1998
- Finansies & Tegniek Award for top Economics III student (Stellenbosch) 1998

VISITING RESEARCHER

- Centre for the Economic Analysis of Risk, Georgia State University Jan 2017

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FUNDING RECEIVED

- University of Pretoria Research Development Programme funding 2017-2018

SELECTED PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE

BASES South Africa Lead

Nielsen South Africa

2006-2009

I started up and led the BASES division (now “Innovation Practice”) for Nielsen in Johannesburg. I was responsible for overseeing most of BASES work in Africa. BASES consults on innovation: new product launches and product relaunches. We analysed custom consumer survey data to deliver actionable recommendations for launch optimisation (positioning and product). I was responsible for existing client relationship management and business growth, as well as new business development. I oversaw the BASES-Unilever relationship for the AMET (Africa, Middle East & Turkey) region. I also did *ad hoc* work with BASES global R&D team and was part of the regional training team, co-ordinating and running Associate Manager training for the Africa/Asia-Pacific region.

Some highlights include:

- Revenue growth: BASES South Africa showed significant revenue growth from 2007 to 2008, and accelerated growth from 2008 to 2009 (in 2009 revenue was 230% of target)
- Planning: I managed BASES developing platform business for SC Johnson in 2008: co-ordinating meetings and projects across 12 countries to ensure timeous, high quality delivery.
- Team management: I interviewed, hired and trained a team of analysts to staff the new BASES Johannesburg team. In my time running the team there was zero staff turnover.
- Cost efficiency: I compiled an analysis of English versus Afrikaans speaker data to support adjustments to standard sample quotas in South Africa, resulting in significant cost and time savings.

Senior Research Analyst

Nielsen (BASES) UK

2004-2006

Analyst on BASES team consulting to major FMCG clients on new product launches.