

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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As higher education institutions continue to negotiate effective ways forward embracing on-line learning pedagogies due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we now read many of the findings from on-going research into the effectiveness and impact these changes have made to student learning. Higher education institutions are at the very nexus of career-focussed education, for students seeking qualifications to contribute positively to their community. Recognising the strength of academia and the challenges that plague access to a range of reliable resources, ensure that policy-makers and educators alike, continue to review best practices in order to provide the innovative delivery of pedagogical excellence. We are proud to present this issue with contributions and perspectives from the USA, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Oman, South Africa, Spain, Kuwait, Uganda and Israel. This issue has a strong focus on learner pedagogy, gender performance, student teacher experiences, and post-COVID adaptations. Research in these areas provide interesting and informative reading, on how global educators continue with their core business of delivering relevant and meaningful education to their students.

The first article by Kaninjing, et.al., reports on a large study of students from four countries: the USA, Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria. Their mixed-method study aimed to (a) ascertain the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' ability to access online learning; (b) examine how college students adapted to changes in the learning/teaching environment; and (c) explore the students' perspectives on measures that institutions of higher learning could have adopted, to ease the abrupt transition to online learning. Their findings report participant results from each country, and they identify internal and external resources to better deal with the transition to online learning. The next article by Tzur, et.al., identified how in the last two decades the role of the teacher-lecturer has changed, from teaching to guidance and instruction e-learning skills via educational software, compared to instruction via educational software with the mediation of an instructor. Their study focuses on a case study in the Israeli Air Force, the first of its kind, and integrates instruction with technological means. Their findings report that training work using educational software had a high influence in the context of teaching and training in different and diverse institutions and organizations, such as in academia. The next article is from Samuel and Marimuthu that explored students' perceptions on the factors that may impact Cost Accounting students' performances, and determine if these factors have a significant association with their performance. The study found that student attendance had a positive impact on student performance in the module, and the findings of their study may be useful to higher education institutions and academics as it highlights the factors that influence students' academic achievement. The fourth article by Wajeha Al-Ani explores university students' perceptions toward global citizenship knowledge, skills, and values in the Sultanate of Oman. The findings report a significant difference between students' points of view, regarding the accommodation variable in the cognitive domain in favour of students who live with their families, compared with those who live on-campus. The fifth article by Njabulo Khumalo focuses on assessing and identifying the factors that affect the morale of employees in the institution of higher learning in South Africa. The findings recommend that all institutions of higher learning review their own policies, and ensure that all stakeholders of their institutions understand them effectively.

The sixth article by Eckhaus and Davidovitch centers on the effective and pedagogic planning of academic digital courses taught during the COVID-19 crisis, from the students' perspective. Their findings confirm that the evolving virtual bodies of e-learning knowledge and teaching, threaten to render universities irrelevant. The seventh article by Adelabu, et.al., explored first-year teacher education students' self-directed learning through Computer-Aided Mathematics Instruction (CAMI). The results revealed the skills that characterised self-directed learning and active learning, where the student teachers were motivated to learn more and to solve difficult problems in mathematics. The study concludes by recommending integrating technology such as CAMI, be implemented in teacher education and teaching and learning in Higher Education Institutions, to promote self-directed learning and support effective learning for future learners. The next article is from Medson Mapuya and Awelani Rambuda, who explored the learning experiences of accounting student teachers with digitally mediated learning. They reported that students appreciated the flexibility of digitally mediated learning, and its provision for real learning opportunities beyond the physical

learning environment. Their findings call for a radical paradigm shift in the pedagogical assumptions and practices of lecturers, towards a student-centred virtual learning environment which thrives on digital technology. The ninth article is from Ogegbo and colleagues, who explored and assessed the digital skills of female university students, and the implications for higher education in Africa. Their findings suggest that female students, particularly in Rwanda and Uganda, require training to be digitally competent and compete globally with their peers. Future recommendations for female African students include that students from different programs of study with less demand in technology, be allowed to take compulsory electives in technology courses, while older female students are given adequate support. The next article from Bagonza, Kaahwa and Itaaga investigated the District Quota Scheme (DQS) introduced in 2005 by the government of Uganda, to address the social inequalities in accessing university education. They examined how the DQS addressed the rural-urban divide in access to university; if it had increased access to university education for children with parents who have low levels of education; and whether the DQS improved access to university education for children from low-income families. The study recommends that the government of Uganda and other stakeholders in the higher education sector, address the structural challenges in society, to ensure that mainly the socially disadvantaged students take the biggest advantage of this scheme.

The eleventh article is from Reem Al-Rubaie, who investigated the implementation and impact of a teacher-designed debate program, based on constructivist principles of authenticity, student meaning-making, collaboration, and high-performance expectations, to teachers-in-training at an Education College in Kuwait. They reported how participants came to imagine themselves as future system leaders preparing future generations with higher-order skills involving complex solving, which our increasingly multifaceted social reality demands. Future recommendations include a move from instructivist teaching to constructivist learning for future teachers in Kuwait. The next article from Zunckel et al., explored the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on undergraduate management accounting students' learning underpinned by activity theory. The study findings provide implications for government, policymakers, regulatory bodies, and other researchers, as it offers the student perspective on the challenges experienced with remote learning. The next article from Diamini, Ede and Okeke investigated the post-corporal punishment challenges facing Eswatini primary school teachers in South Africa when disciplining learners, and the necessary counselling services required to effectively do so. Their findings report that teachers are confused and afraid of infringing learners' rights regarding learner discipline in post corporal punishment in primary schools, and provide some notable recommendations for future action. The next article by Gomez and colleagues addressed the impact of gender and academic degrees on the performance of transversal competencies, one of the key aspects in training people to adapt to the demands of today's world. This study aims to assess whether gender and degree have any impact on the level of transversal competencies obtained at the end of their higher education studies. The results reported that men perform better in Leadership, Initiative and Decision-making, whereas women score better in Planning and Teamwork skills. Students of Social Sciences degrees have a poorer performance in the competencies than students of Health Sciences and Technical Education. In Planning, women performed better regardless of the degree, when compared to men. The final article in this issue is from Mngomezulu, Ramaila and Dhurumraj, who examined grade 10 Physical Sciences teachers' perspectives on pedagogical strategies they adopted to enact formative assessment in science classrooms, in diverse schools in South Africa. The findings revealed that grade 10 Physical Sciences teachers adopted various pedagogical strategies when enacting formative assessment in science classrooms. However, meaningful enactment of formative assessment was largely hampered by a myriad of contextual factors such as class size and general lack of essential resources. Future recommendations and theoretical implications for pedagogic innovation are discussed.

As always, we hope you will enjoy learning from our international academic peers through their work published in this issue. We encourage you to contribute your research findings to the IJHE journal, so others in our readership may benefit from your professional research activities. Wishing you all the best with your work.

Warm regards,

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