

This Issue of Asian Education and Development Studies (AEDS) emphasises the interdisciplinary and international nature of the journal, individually and collectively providing impactful research with clear policy implications at the regional and global level. Several of the journal themes and identified research priorities are evaluated in this Issue, namely the transnationalisation of higher education; human development, quality of life and well-being; digital transformation and society; and governance and environmental sustainability. Collectively, these twelve contributions position this Issue as a significant contributor to both theory and practice, given the diverse methodological approaches, range of countries researched and the array of stakeholder perspectives provided.

Skills, competencies and human capital

Skills development, graduate work readiness and the broader conversation around aligning employer needs with learners taught and experienced skills are highlighted in several of the papers in this Issue. *Are digital competencies enough for future entrepreneurs? Insights from human capital and social cognitive theory among STEM and non-STEM students* examine the complex relationship between digital competencies, religiosity and entrepreneurialism. Drawing on human and social capital cognitive theory and employing a quantitative methodology of learners from universities in Indonesia, the research highlights the importance of religiosity in entrepreneurial intentions as well as providing academics and practitioners a better understanding of the relationships between digital competencies, religiosity, self-efficacy, resilience, entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial orientation. Further insight was provided into STEM subjects and the relationship between educational practices and learner needs through the paper *Harnessing the power of the Values Automatic Sorting Algorithm (VASA): insights into mathematics learning attributes of Hong Kong students*. Using a quantitative methodology and the VASA the paper revealed the importance of cognitive-metacognitive traits and underlined the gap between educational focus and learner priorities which contributes to how “success” should be perceived in the context of mathematics education.

Iterative competency development in professional education for sustainability: a Kolb-informed framework for transformative learning in higher education focuses on sustainability competencies. Through the development of a competency development framework and engaging with a qualitative methodology in a Taiwanese context, the research demonstrates that a learner’s strategic, systematic and anticipatory competencies were developed when exposed to sustained real-world engagement. The importance of engaging with industry was underlined by the paper *Vocational education and skills development for new economies in Indonesia: uneasy parallel challenges* which assessed how vocational high schools in Indonesia are engaging with opportunities from the green, blue and digital economies. Using a case-study methodology across thirteen vocational high schools, the research revealed the need for measures to reduce socio-economic disparities and that efforts to engender a skilled workforce for these identified economies were hampered by limited industry partnerships. This finding in particular reveals the need to subject learners to the real world. Exposure to experiences outside the classroom is a common theme for this issue with international engagement explored through the post-experiences of Southeast Asian and South Asian learners in the paper *Belt and Road Initiatives: tracing the life and career transformations of international scholarship postgraduate returnees from China*. By means of a qualitative methodology, the research contributed to transnational higher education, revealing that exposure to international education engendered hybrid intercultural identities and adaptive globally acquired skills, creating globalised human capital.



Ethics and responsible behaviour in education

The earlier themes of entrepreneurial intention and identity were analysed in the paper *How does moral identity impact social entrepreneurship intention through social capital and self-efficacy?* This quantitative research of undergraduate students at tertiary education providers in Vietnam revealed a significant positive relationship between moral identity and social entrepreneurship intention and recommended that learners be exposed to community-based projects to develop networks and skills, further underlining the importance of real-world engagement. Shaping a learner's ethical, responsible and arguably moral behaviour was a theme in the paper *From awareness to action: the mediating role of plagiarism avoidance techniques in upholding academic integrity and ensuring legal and institutional consequences*. In this quantitative research of tertiary university students from Bangladesh, the authors provided insight into the relationship between plagiarism awareness, use of plagiarism prevention techniques and academic integrity. This research, aligned with other papers in this Issue to reveal the need for education providers to equip learners with the technical skills as well as the moral identity to successfully transition into the labour market.

Innovation, digitalisation and the development of education

The importance of the institutional infrastructure to support and develop learners is a key theme of this Issue and will likely be a much-debated topic in subsequent Issues as the diffusion of digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education continues at a pace. The paper *ChatGPT in the academia: exploring teachers' and students' practices and perspectives in higher education* underlines this debate and links to the ethical theme of this Issue. Through a quantitative study conducted in Pakistan, the research revealed contrasting opinions between educators and learners in the context of attitudes and perceived ease of use of ChatGPT. The authors found that learners perceived ease of use had a positive and significant impact on attitudes whereas educators perceived ease of use was positive yet an insignificant influence on attitudes. The findings from this paper emphasised the importance of understanding stakeholder perspectives and given the associated ethical risks associated with using AI in education, the need for further research into the associated challenges of integrating digital solutions into the academic curriculum. This need for further research was partially addressed by the paper *Generative AI in higher education: a deep dive into educators' concerns using the DEMATEL technique* which employed a quantitative methodology to understand the possible detrimental impact of generative AI on university students in India. The findings revealed that a move away from using traditional resources, inaccurate and/or misleading information, cheating, as well as taking shortcuts were considered influential in directing the detrimental aspects of generative AI. The research found that these factors hampered the development of skills, while also reducing creativity and originality which emphasises the need for education providers to engage with more imaginative ways to develop a learner's skills set, in particular their creativity and innovation.

Arguably, encouraging creativity and innovation in learners is premised on a creative and innovative educator which underlines the significance of the paper *Unlocking creativity in the ivory tower: the role of high-performance work systems (HPWS) and innovative climate in China's public universities*. Employing a quantitative methodology of academics from twenty-four public universities in Western China the research found that HPWS significantly improves creativity and innovation among academics, with an innovative organisational environment strengthening the positive relationship between creativity and innovation. Having such creativity and innovation across the institution can assist in developing new ways to assess students to engender the skills required for graduates to be responsible contributors to society. This was illustrated in the paper *How does gamification affect smart city education?* Which revealed the importance of gamification as a platform to influence behavioural change. Through a quasi-experimental approach among students in Iran, the research supported other themes to emerge from this Issue, specifically the importance for learners to interact with

technology, of a better understanding of the environment and for education providers to move beyond traditional training methods and be innovative when engendering life skills into the next generation of workers.

Education providers cannot achieve transformation change alone, as illustrated by the paper, *Development of an innovative ecosystem framework for construction 4.0: a Quadruple Helix approach*. This research, through a systematic review of the literature, emphasises the importance of stakeholders (academia, industry, civil society and government) with insights provided to enhance collaboration, modernise the curriculum and build capacity in the context of digital competencies. This research in conjunction with the other papers in this Issue reflect on the role education, in conjunction with identified stakeholders, has on skills development, ethical practice, innovation and sustainable development in Asia and across the globe. Bringing together diverse, yet complementary perspectives this Issue underlines the critical role of the AEDS journal to better understand education and its current and future contribution to an increasingly diverse society, a digitally and sustainability-focused industry and government policy.

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