

## Editorial

# Navigating Leadership Challenges in the Post-Pandemic World

This volume of the journal includes papers from South Africa, Latvia, Philippines, Germany, Thailand, Jamaica, Indonesia and Turkey.

In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 and by keeping the context of the fourth industrial revolution as the focus of attention, the authors of the articles discuss how to promote sustainability as a frame of mind. This interpretation of sustainability underlines the right relationship with nature as it is related to our attitudes towards the environment and our sense of identity. The authors discuss the factors that contribute to attainment of education for sustainable development in schools, such as resource mobilisation, context-specific curriculum content, adherence to school ethos, inclusive leadership and active community partnerships as discussed by Bongani Innocent Nkambule (2023).

Some articles are focusing on transformative leadership of schools in the 21st century and teachers' motivation to handle changes and challenges in the post pandemic context in striving for excellency. The authors from Thailand are modeling sustainable collaborative networks for educating digital literacy of students. In line with the European Green Deal to transform the world into a resource-efficient entity by 2050, great attention has been paid to environmental issues by emphasizing the need to develop ecological footprint awareness already being addressed in the pre-school level by the authors of this volume from Turkey.

The paper by **Sylvia Sepeng and Ephraim Kgwete** inspects the lack of readiness for school leaders to cope with demands of leading during the COVID-19 pandemic. Globally, school leaders were not trained to deal with a crisis of COVID-19. Leaders in the 21st century need to have the required skills like the 21st century leadership skills and 4IR skills. This study investigated how the school leaders have progressed. This study adopted a qualitative research approach. Local and international literature analysis was done to identify gaps. The study revealed that there is inadequate ICT skills for school leaders and teachers. Leadership preparation programmes are lagging behind in preparing school leaders to lead in a crisis. Furthermore, the study revealed that school leaders and teachers do not establish communities of learning to learn leadership skills from each other. The study has concluded that there is no alignment between the level of readiness for school leaders and leadership skills of the 21st century.

The study by **Mehmet Özcan** aims to explain high school teachers' work motivation with an explanatory sequential design, by the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. As a result of the analysis, high school teachers' work motivation levels do not significantly differ in terms of educational level and professional experience but significantly differ in terms of gender and branch. The mean score of high school teachers' team cohesion, job integration, commitment to the institution and personal development level are found high. As a result of analysis teachers' work motivations raise with peace, efficiency, academic success, balanced relationships, love of the job, communication, organizational belonging, organizational management, organizational culture, in-service training, self-confidence, research and experience.

The paper by **Muhammad Cahyadi, Thalsa Syahda Aqilah, Ediyanto Ediyanto, Ahsan Romadlon Junaidi, Tata Gading Jatningsiwi** seeks to realize Sustainable Development Goals, especially for quality education. This research is a follow-up study of research entitled "*Early detection assessment tools in children with autism spectrum disorder: A literature study.*" Their study describes development of the identification matrix related to communication aspects at an early age. The early detection or screening in the current study cannot directly diagnose a child with autism. Still, early detection can be the first step to identifying any developmental problem, and parents can refer the child to a psychologist or doctor for a clinical diagnosis.

**Geert Franzenburg** in his paper demonstrates how educational simulation plays facilitate real experiences in a safe environment, and, therefore, are appropriate for gaining a better sense of the dynamic relationships at work in complex environments, and therefore, facilitate resilience strategies. By such experiences, the participants become able to explore good fits and practical solutions for challenges, and understand how conflicts occur. Particularly plays reproduce some of the political, coordination, communication, and coalition building challenges that often accompany reconciliation and stabilization operations that exist in the real world; thus, they become an exercise in social science theorizing and a research tool to examine the implications of hypothesized relationships and conflict dynamics in a variety of forms (abstract plays or role-playing exercises).

**Emine Kübra Pullu and Mehmet Nuri Gömleksiz** from Turkey examine the correlation between the self-efficacy perception for environmental education and ecological footprint awareness of the child development programme for students. A relational screening model was used in the research and showed how the two goals positively affect each other at a moderate level. The sample group consisted of students from the child development departments in four universities in Turkey. A relational screening model was used in the research and showed how the two goals positively affect each other at a moderate level.

The study by **Bongani Innocent Nkambule** explores the perceptions of teaching and support staff, particularly six teachers and four administrative clerks by evaluating factors contributing to unequal power relations in knowledge sharing practices at two selected schools in Nkangala Education District, Mpumalanga Province (South Africa). The author uses a qualitative approach embedded in an interpretivist paradigm. The article explores the perceptions of ten teaching and support staff nestled within the

power elite theory. It was discovered that poor leadership practices contribute to unhealthy professional interactions, knowledge hoarding, contravention of contextual ethics (of Ubuntu), top-down communication and workplace bullying.

**Arisara Leksansern, Poschanan Niramitchainont, Panchit Longpradit, Sovaritthon Chansaengsee and Prasert Leksansern** discuss their findings and offer a model of sustainable collaborative network for educating digital literacy present a case study of schools in the sub-districts of Nakhon Pathom Province, Thailand. The paper reveals that teachers expressed their highest needs towards the use of digital content creation software, spreadsheet software, and using digital media securely. Findings are discussed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic that has unexpectedly called for the digital literacy needs for teachers at all levels. The pandemic has caused the global community to transform into a new and unfamiliar way of life by accelerating the immediate adoption of digital technology. The authors have applied action research aiming to investigate the need for digital literacy; design and create a model of a sustainable collaborative network for educating teachers' digital literacy. The findings indicated that teachers need to develop digital literacy.

**Robie Villamil Catubigan, Jhonnell Pancho Villegas and Helina Jean Perez Dupa** discuss the issue of women's empowerment and economic sustainability during the COVID-19 pandemic in Davao Oriental, Southern Philippines. They describe the situation of women during the pandemic who faced several struggles affecting their lives and livelihood. They discuss the devastating outcome of COVID-19 that impaired their income to sustain the needs of their family but at the same time highlighted the spirit of women to work despite the difficulties and dangers of the virus. The researchers found that this policy is vague to most women in Davao Oriental. Most efforts are focused in the celebration of a National Women's Month every March. This calls for an enhanced advocacy campaign to optimize the law's impacts, especially among women in the peripheries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, women struggled against delayed assistance, parental obligations, and selective and partial treatment. The vulnerability of women in crisis situations need to be underscored in the continuous plight to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Gender Equality or SDG 5.

**Fatima Betül Demir, Emirhan Kaya and Nedim Derman** in their article discusses the issue of a Carbon Footprints as discussed with Secondary School Students and their views on how their individual the consumption activities may have many destructive and permanent effects on nature. In this research, the authors aimed to determine the size of the carbon footprint. The research was carried out with mixed method in accordance with its purpose and content. The authors aimed to determine the size of the carbon footprint, which is an important component of the ecological footprint of secondary school students, and to evaluate their views on the carbon footprint. It was discovered that the carbon footprints of the students are moderate. In addition, it was determined that the class level and family income status were effective on the carbon footprint size of the students. It is seen that the results obtained from the qualitative data support the quantitative results.

**Kyambadde James and Shuti Steph Khumalo** from University of South Africa raise the question of The United Nations 2030 agenda of Sustainable Development agenda that envisions a future of inclusive equity and justice, and places an important emphasis on SDG Goal four. Their research seeks to investigate the implementation of justice policy in Ugandan primary schools in achieving educational objectives, thus promoting the principles of social justice. The researchers argue that failure to provide access to all primary school children is socially unjust and unfair. They raise the challenges that are related to stakeholder collaboration and coordination, communication, and engagement.

The paper by **Iluta Tarune, Svetlana Usca and Janis Dzerviniks** reflect on the effects of the challenges posed by social changes (migration, multiculturalism) in terms of sustainability, where children are perceived as the agents of change. They highlight the need for a transformation of the preschool teacher's competence. The teacher's competence in working with newcomer children becomes an important quality criterion. The aim of the paper is to identify the level of competence of Latvia's preschool teachers for working with newcomer children.

The results show that Latvia's preschool teachers lack the knowledge and skills for working with newcomer children, and needs to be improved. One way is through state-funded (fully or partly) continuing education that could be offered in three modules: 1) a knowledge development module, where lectures are the predominant form of teaching, 2) a skills development module, where workshops are organized to learn different skills; 3) an integrated module that could take the form of summer schools or camps, where knowledge and skills are acquired and good practices are shared. Attitudes change, as knowledge and skills increase, giving a teacher inner confidence. This is also indicated by the correlations between knowledge, skills and attitudes found in the research process.

We would like to express our gratitude to all the authors and reviewers of this volume for their contribution in compiling this volume. As our editorial title, *'Navigating Leadership Challenges in a post-pandemic World'*, suggests, the research community (to which we all belong), is tasked with a wide variety of responsibilities as we travel further with the effects of the pandemic in all parts of our world. The front cover photo gives a visual effect to the various forms of small and larger challenges we face on the road ahead. The attachment to Sustainable Goal 4, which significantly underpins the research in this edition of our journal, issues us with many challenges, and education leadership relies on many research projects such as these, to point the ways forward. Significance and accuracy of identification where problems arise, promote confidence as we examine each project published here.

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