

## **EDITORIAL PREFACE**

### **Learning from Others: Their Experiences, Challenges and Difficulties**

After quite a long silence following a COVID-19 lockdown and a very hectic ensuing semester, the IJUM IJES, with great pleasure, would like to present the much-awaited December 2019 issue featuring five interesting articles on issues relevant to higher education. The IJES team works very hard on every production to make sure that we publish high quality articles that can benefit our audience in more ways than one. All articles are reviewed through a double-blind review process, after which authors are meticulously informed about the corrections they need to make to their manuscripts, and are subsequently guided through the correction process from start to finish. Again, after this hard work, the December 2019 is now ready for your readership. In this issue, we feature two (2) research articles on counseling, with important implications for counseling education, two (2) systematic literature reviews (i.e., one on the usability of the i-CGPA system, and the other, on authentic mobile-learning experiences), and one (1) article on the performance of Malaysian primary school leaders in implementing relevant educational policies in their school settings.

Each article gives readers new insights into their respective subject matter, taking us to a new level of understanding of the issue at hand. In “Policy Implementation Performance of Primary School Leaders in Malaysia: An Exploratory Factor Analysis,” Noryati Alias and her colleagues developed and tested a scale to assess policy implementation performance among school leaders. Her analysis, which employed the Principal Components Analysis (PCA), succeeded in extracting in six (6) critical aspects that underlie the success of a policy implementation. The first four aspects are leader characteristics important to policy implementation, such as being *proactive*, *knowledgeable*, *supportive*, and *showing perseverance* in the implementation process. The final two aspects are their *ability to perform* their tasks according to their job scope, and adherence to the *standards of performance*. These aspects cumulatively explained 65.1% of the total variance of primary school leaders’ policy implementation performance. The procedures of instrumentation and data analysis are explicitly described in their article so it can be a guide for novice and experienced researchers alike.

Systematic literature reviews are not easy to conduct and report, but being able to produce one is an important skill that all students and faculty should have if they are to be well-informed about the subject matter of their research. Readers have much to gain from our two articles that reported a systematic review of the literature in their respective fields. Both followed the PRISMA method (i.e., the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) which explicitly spelled out the guiding research questions, search terms and inclusion criteria to select the studies to be examined. In Wan Nor Afiqah and Aziman’s article, “*Determining the Potential of Graduate Analytics Based on the iCGPA System: A Systematic Literature Review*,” a flowchart visualizing the PRISMA method is included. With the inclusion of the PRISMA flowchart, we hope to enable readers who are interested in this type of review to follow the process and conduct their own systematic review. The outcomes of such a review

tend to be more comprehensive and insightful of what is happening in the field of interest compared to those of a traditional review. For instance, Wan Nor Afiah and Aziman discovered a substantial lack of research and publication on Graduate Analytics and iCGPA system as no literature whatsoever could be found in these topics over an eight-year period from 2011 to 2018. Such a finding may not have been easily discovered through the traditional method of reviewing literature. Using similar procedures, Abdul Latheef Mohamed and Dawood Al-Hidabi in their review entitled, *“Mobile Device-Based Authentic Learning in Educational Environments: A Systematic Review,”* led us to the discovery that mobile-assisted authentic learning experiences are mostly researched at the elementary school level. Although mobile-assisted learning using authentic experiences have much to offer in advancing learning for tertiary students, research into this area is acutely lacking in higher education. Such a discovery provides a good impetus for future research in technology utilization, e-learning and mobile learning at tertiary levels.

The remaining two articles on counselling should be an eye-opening reading experience for mature readers. The phenomenological approaches adopted in the two studies provided a lens through which we could attempt to understand the difficulties encountered by obese female individuals in losing weight and maintaining their weight loss over time, and the challenges faced by married Malay-Muslim couples in attaining marital satisfaction. Connected by the same theme of difficulties and challenges, these two articles educate us on how effective counselling practices can make lives better for many individuals, single or married, thin or obese. Their findings have substantive implications on the curricula of school and university education, highlighting the importance of teaching content such as healthy eating, maintaining a healthy diet, exercising self-control, suppressing sabotaging thoughts, developing emotional intelligence, and having good communication skills. Rozaina Zainal Abidin, in her article called, *“Exploring the Views of Malay Married Couples on the Concept of a Satisfying Marriage: Some Educational Implications,”* brought to the fore twelve (12) factors as the major themes and subthemes underlying Malay couples’ conception of marital satisfaction. The conclusion of her article made a bold step in suggesting that sex education, generally regarded as a taboo subject in the Malaysian culture, should be incorporated into the Malaysian school curriculum so that Malaysian children and students can deal with the realities of life and the challenges of married life later on. From this article, too, we learned that religious coping is a predominant mechanism employed by Malay couples in reducing marital stress and tension. Indeed, there is much to learn and discover in the articles featured in this issue.

It is our hope that every time you flip open an IIUM IJES article to read, you will take away some new knowledge from it, be it subject matter knowledge, or research information, or methodological input, or a spiritual insight. Every time we gain new knowledge, we make one progressive step forward. As we strive to make our articles better and richer in content and methodology, we hope to continue learning and discovering with you, our respected readers.

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