



OPEN ACCESS

EDITED AND REVIEWED BY
Clifford A. Shaffer,
Virginia Tech, United States

*CORRESPONDENCE
Irene Kilanioti
✉ irenekilanioti@gmail.com

RECEIVED 26 February 2024
ACCEPTED 12 March 2024
PUBLISHED 02 April 2024

CITATION
Kilanioti I, Saqr M and Queiruga-Dios MÁ
(2024) Editorial: Diversity in the social
sciences: researching digital education in and
for the global south. *Front. Educ.* 9:1392017.
doi: 10.3389/educ.2024.1392017

COPYRIGHT
© 2024 Kilanioti, Saqr and Queiruga-Dios.
This is an open-access article distributed
under the terms of the [Creative Commons
Attribution License \(CC BY\)](#). The use,
distribution or reproduction in other forums is
permitted, provided the original author(s) and
the copyright owner(s) are credited and that
the original publication in this journal is cited,
in accordance with accepted academic
practice. No use, distribution or reproduction
is permitted which does not comply with
these terms.

Editorial: Diversity in the social sciences: researching digital education in and for the global south

Irene Kilanioti^{1*}, Mohammed Saqr² and
Miguel Ángel Queiruga-Dios³

¹School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, National Technical University of Athens, Athens, Greece, ²School of Computing, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland, ³Department of Specific Didactics, University of Burgos, Burgos, Spain

KEYWORDS

digital education, diversity, global south, information education, information communication technologies

Editorial on the Research Topic

Diversity in the social sciences: researching digital education in and for the global south

Most of the research on human cognition and behavior is based on mostly Western, educated, and industrialized-country populations. Yet, evidence shows that this population is in fact the least representative of humans. Therefore, it stands to reason that increasing the diversity of our research and widening the breadth of representation of humans wherever they are is both timely and needed. The aim of this Research Topic was to promote academic research conducted in and for the Global South across different aspects of technology, one of the four crucial pillars that differentiates global north economies from global south economies, and, more specifically, digital education, which should not be tailored solely for the West. Digital education is a crucial factor for democratization, especially in times of pandemic and in light of dramatic global changes.

Nowadays the English language prevails and funding is predominantly concentrated in rich economies, which prevents researchers in the Global South from being heard. In order to contribute to equality and to mitigate the uneven distribution of resources, stereotypes must be alleviated and research from the Global South should be equally incorporated in the global scientific agenda. This Research Topic aimed to represent research from the Global South and serve as a starting point to alleviate marginalization and eliminate discrimination and bias. We present the inaugural Frontiers in Education “Diversity in” series of article collections. This journal focuses on the impact of digital education research on the Global South and the transformative insights that it delivers. We aim to help increase the realization that we are not globally all on the same page and increase equality to help bring more research insights from the Global South to enrich our understanding of the breadth and diversity of human nature.

In the next section we offer a description of the articles included in this volume.

In the article *Colombian university journalism as a virtual stage for transitions toward acts of memory and peace*, [Rendon Cardona et al.](#) give an outline of a transmedia web project in Colombia conducted by journalism students belonging to 20 universities

that are part of the Colombian Network of University Journalism. The project combines educational communication, design, and art, and functions as a transmedia digital platform for peace narratives of digital and interactive stories from 2000 to 2021. The authors follow a mixed-methodological approach and an experimental scheme with Big Data techniques derived from an automated lexicometric analysis of media representations. Subsequently, they proceeded to implement a strategy for creating pedagogical narratives that categorize the results obtained.

In the article *Project-Based Learning Methodology as a Promoter of Learning Math Concepts: A Scoping Review* by Cruz et al., the authors study project-based learning (PBL) in learning math concepts and investigate its ability to promote understanding of math concepts. Data analysis allowed the building of a model from the empirical data on PBL in learning math concepts in terms of the learning environment, the mathematic content, the process, and the student skills. The potential results suggest that PBL engages students in math learning environments and that PBL should be understood as a learning strategy to develop hard and soft skills related to mathematics. There is also evidence that PBL improves the integration of math concepts in a natural context, promotes differentiated teaching, and enhances student-centered logic in math education.

In the article *Unequal literacy development and access to online education in public vs. private Panamanian schools during COVID-19 pandemic*, Cubilla-Bonnetier et al. investigate wide gaps in social inequality, access to technology, and public vs. private school achievement. After a partial transition to online education due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their study utilized existing data to carry out a pre-post comparison of the reading performance of students in the province of Panama, employing a subsample stratified by educational system for comparability. Based on the comparative analysis, findings indicated that public school students interacted online with their teachers significantly less than their private schools counterparts, and that the public-school students exhibited a significant decrease in reading speed by phonological and lexical route with a medium effect size compared to pre-pandemic standards, greater than those reported in other contexts.

In their work *Digital capital and belonging in universities: quantifying social inequalities in the Philippines*, Clamor and Saloma examine social inequalities in Philippine universities that were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic and measure the mediating role of digital capital on social inequalities associated with belonging to academic spaces. For the purpose of determining direct and indirect impacts, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed. Sociodemographic and educational features were the direct predictors that were examined as exogenous variables for both digital capital and belonging. The findings

suggest that there are indeed differences in students abilities to accumulate digital capital and that digital capital enhances the sense of belonging to and together in academic spaces for certain groups.

Finally, López-Sánchez et al. present in their article *Model of Adoption of Virtual Tools by University Students in the Context of an Emerging Economy* the impact of COVID-19 on higher education, which has generated the need to resignify teaching processes, motivation, and the development of new knowledge, linking information and communication technologies (ICT) as pedagogical tools. Understanding this reality fosters innovative spaces and opportunities for student cooperation and participation. Therefore, the authors examined the level of adoption of virtual tools by students attending higher education institutions in Medellín, and a quantitative approach using factor analysis statistical techniques was used. The authors suggest that their finding plays a key role in determining students' perceptions about the use and adoption of ICT tools oriented to teaching-learning, as well as for the design of effective pedagogical strategies in crisis situations.

Author contributions

IK: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. MS: Writing – review & editing. MQ-D: Writing – review & editing.

Funding

The author(s) declare that no financial support was received for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.