

## The Global Impact of the HLRC Journal on Digital Teaching and Learning Research and Best Practices in Higher Education

The act of having one's articles cited by other authors is analogous to receiving a nod of recognition in the vast world of academia. Citation serves as a validation of scholarly contribution, affirming the relevance and impact of one's work within the academic community. In fact, each citation acknowledges the researcher's intellectual merit and the significance of their research, contributing to the author's academic reputation and standing within their field. This is especially true when one's article is published in an indexed journal.

For a journal, citations enhance its credibility and prestige, signaling to the academic community the quality and relevance of the published content. They validate the journal's editorial rigor and the significance of the research it disseminates, thereby attracting a wider readership.

As editors of HLRC, a journal that first received Scopus indexation in late 2018, we have witnessed a continuous rise in the number of citations received by the articles published, which instills a sense of pride and accomplishment. It signifies not only the quality and relevance of the research we publish, but it validates the effectiveness of the editorial processes. Because of our strategic decisions, the journal has escalated in the Scimago journal rank (SJR), which measures the frequency with which content published in a journal is cited in other journals during the 3 previous years. The SJR provides a numerical indicator of a journal's relative importance and impact within its field. Thus, higher SJR scores typically correlate with higher quartile rankings and indicate greater influence and visibility within the academic community.

So, it is with great satisfaction that we announce that HLRC has been ranked in position 612 out of 1,506 journals among all education journals indexed by Scopus, classifying HLRC within the second quartile of the field (Table 1). However, what makes this accomplishment even more important is that we continue to receive manuscripts and publish articles from researchers from the five continents; more than 65% of the publications originate from outside the United States. This accomplishment reflects our mission to disseminate high-quality research on digital teaching and learning, the public good served by higher education, and workplace skills development in tertiary education resulting in dissemination of best practices in higher education across cultures and disciplines.

**Table 1.** *HLRC Ranking Position in the Field of Education.*

Year	HLRC ranking position	Quartile (Education journals)
2019	1075	Q4
2020	921	Q3
2021	1009	Q3
2022	784	Q3
2023	612	Q2

*Note:* Data extracted from Scimago ([www.scimagojr.com](http://www.scimagojr.com))

We value this accomplishment, acknowledging the efforts of all the authors who have contributed to the enrichment of higher education and the sharing of valuable insights and best practices among scholars worldwide.

The focus of the HLRC is digital teaching and learning, higher education and the public good, and the preparation of students in key 21st-century employability skills, and the present issue reflects each of these focus areas. We continue to seek empirical studies (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods designs); research briefs that describe in a concise form results of pilot or other limited studies that potentially have broader value; critical literature reviews; book reviews; and editorials/essays.

Below are brief summaries of the articles in this issue.

## Original Research

**Bruna, Villarroel, Sanchez, Cortez, Castro-Carrasco, and Conejeros-Solar**, in their research article “Relationships Between Pedagogical Practices and Affective States for Effective Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Insights from University Professors,” analyzed how pedagogical practices and affective states during emergency remote teaching influence professors’ perspectives on their capabilities and the professor–student relationship. Participants were 636 professors from Chilean universities. Results of linear regression testing showed that male professors who reported a high evaluation of teaching quality and a high diversification of assessment strategies also reported higher perceived pedagogical competence. A higher perception of pedagogical competence was related to female professors who reported a high level of tutoring activities and activities in which students work collaboratively exhibited better professor–student relationships. Unpleasant affective states were experienced at a higher rate by younger and female professors. Results can guide future institutional actions to improve teaching conditions and establish guidelines for quality virtual education in the post-pandemic world.

**Dyliaeva, Rothman, and Ghotbi**, in their research article “Challenges to Inclusive Education for Students With Disabilities in Japanese Institutions of Higher Education,” elucidated the current challenges to inclusive education at the university level in Japan, thereby addressing the gap between policy and the provision of inclusion. In this qualitative case study, data were collected using semi-structured interviews to ascertain themes. Four themes were identified: (a) inclusion practices as a conceptual challenge, (b) conflicting practice of reasonable accommodations, (c) inclusion management gaps, and (d) barriers to and opportunities for inclusive education. There appears to be a disconnect between legal obligation and the actual implementation of accommodations. The contradiction between inclusion policy and practice related to students with disabilities hinders the provision of accommodation services to university students in Japan.

**Panigrahi, Nihar, and Singh**, in their research article “Quality Measurement of the Blended Learning Model in Higher Education: Scale Development and Validation,” developed and tested a scale for measuring the quality of blended learning models in higher education using a sequential mixed-method approach. The 26-item Blended Learning Quality Assessment (BLQA) contains four dimensions: technology integration, pedagogy and curriculum, physical infrastructure, and educator proficiency. Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the scale is reliable and valid.

This is a unique comprehensive scale to measure the quality of an institution’s blended learning model. The scale integrates digital aspects of pedagogy, delivery, and infrastructure and can be used to identify the dimensions contributing most to student satisfaction.

**Letchumanan**, in their research article “Understanding the Use of Mobile eBooks Among Mathematics Postgraduates,” sought to understand factors that encourage the use of mobile eBooks among mathematics

postgraduate students. In this qualitative case study, eight mathematics postgraduate students from the algebra research group at the university completed interviews. Results showed that utilitarian, cognitive, affective, social norms, and content qualities were the main factors influencing the use of mobile eBooks among the participants. Results expand our understanding of the factors that motivate the use of mobile eBooks for learning activities among mathematics postgraduate students and provide support for institutions planning to incorporate mobile eBooks as important reference material for postgraduate learning and research activities.

**Deniz and Kocabaş**, in their research article, “Understanding the Relationship Between Perceived Organizational Support and Psychological Well-Being: Perspectives of Turkish Faculty Members,” investigated the relationship between the perceived organizational support of 450 faculty members from universities in Istanbul and their psychological well-being. Results of multiple regression analyses indicated that perceived organizational support significantly predicted psychological well-being while controlling for gender, academic title, and tenure. Higher education institutions should diversify resources of support for faculty, make this approach a priority for the administration, and make organizational changes that consider the needs and expectations of faculty members.

**Peoples, Correa, and Burkholder**, in their research article “How Faculty and Students Understand and Experience the Development of Critical Thinking in the Online Classroom,” interviewed students and faculty in a distance education master of public health program about their perceptions and experiences of what critical thinking means and how it is developed in the online classroom. Themes emerging from student interviews included (a) differing thoughts on the meaning of critical thinking; (b) students’ primary role as learning and meeting course requirements; (c) technology as useful in learning; and (d) confidence in learning linked to engagement, feedback, and course alignment. Themes from faculty interviews included (a) how online classrooms promoted critical thinking; (b) critical thinking identified when students demonstrate application of independent thought; (c) primary role is to facilitate and keep students on track; (d) promotion of critical thinking through questioning and student collaboration; (e) assessment of critical thinking through discussion posts; and (f) faculty facilitation and focus on application as essential to student learning. Engaging in activities has been shown to develop critical thinking more effectively when it is accompanied by mentoring, dialogue, and authentic instruction.

## Research Briefs

Akgunduz and Topalsan, in their article “Examining Technology Use and Competence of Higher Education Academics During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” collected data from 392 faculty and lecturers at a Turkish university during the 2020–2021 academic year. A survey included questions regarding the use of educational technologies and perceived competency in the use of those technologies. Results indicated that academics are more familiar with distance education than hybrid or blended learning. Academics reported that blended learning, hybrid learning, and distance education provide more effective education on integrating technology but report that they mostly prefer face-to-face teaching after the COVID-19 pandemic. They concluded that faculty use of digital tools is limited, they experience significant deficiencies in using various digital tools and systems, and they are less competent in applying these tools. Thus, there is a need for professional development focused on pedagogical educational technology approaches.

We would like to thank Patricia Akojie; Amal Aljasser; Abdulqader Alyasin; Irene Cambra Badii; Silvia Bartolic; Javier Cifuentes-Faura; Emral Devany; Judit Garcia-Martin; Zahara Jiménez-Millán; Anders Jönsson; David Perez Jorge; Kshema Jose; Mudassir Khan; Carlos Laranjeira; Dawood Ahmed Mahdi; Irasema Mora-Pablo; Lazarus Nabaho; Biki Pitso; Lee Stadlander; Dimitrios Vlachopoulos; and Youliang Zhang for their service to the HLRC as peer reviewers of manuscripts considered for this issue.

**Erwin Krauskopf**, PhD

*Universidad de Las Américas, Chile*

Managing Editor

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4082-5758>

**Gary J. Burkholder**, PhD

*Walden University, United States of America*

Editor

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5084-8099>

**Contact:** [hlrceeditor@mail.waldenu.edu](mailto:hlrceeditor@mail.waldenu.edu)

**Submitted:** June 30, 2024 | **Published:** June 30, 2024

### Recommended Citation

Krauskopf, E., & Burkholder, G. J. (2024). The global impact of the HLRC journal on digital teaching and learning research and best practices in higher education. *Higher Learning Research Communications*, 14(1), i–iv. <https://doi.org/10.18870/hlrc.v14i1.1592>

---

The *Higher Learning Research Communications (HLRC)*, is a peer-reviewed, online, interdisciplinary journal indexed in Scopus, ERIC, JGATE and Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). It is an open access journal with an international focus published by Walden University, USA. Its aim is to disseminate both high quality research and teaching best practices in tertiary education across cultures and disciplines. *HLRC* connects the ways research and best practice contribute to the public good and impact the communities that educators serve. *HLRC* articles include peer-reviewed research reports, research briefs, comprehensive literature reviews, and books reviews.