

## **Editorial 34(3): (i) Trending on IIER ... methods insights; (ii) DEI revisited; (iii) Miscellanea**

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This Editorial begins with Chris Perry's insights into trends in the mix of methodologies represented in IIER articles (we shamelessly borrow *trending on ...* from Twitter/X). The second section revisits diversity, equity and inclusion, prompted by a shameless misuse of the acronym in recent political warfare. The third section, Miscellanea, allows us a little Editorial relaxation, just before uploading the file set that constitutes our third issue for 2024.

### **(i) Trending on IIER ... methods insights**

Over many years I (ChrisP) have been connected in some way with the journal *Issues in Educational Research*. When I began my career as a university academic in a faculty of education, I connected with the journal as a reader. Later my connection was as a co-author of several published articles. More recently, I have been on the Editorial Board and involved as Associate Editor.

One of the responsibilities for Associate Editor is to undertake the first reading of submitted articles. As a reader of countless paper submissions, it is clear to me that historically educational research has focused on quantitative methods that represent data as numbers-based and measurable. Strong papers using this approach show rigor in describing the process of interpreting the data by ensuring that tables of data are constructed and interpreted in a way that articulates the connections between theory, method, and the research questions.

In reviewing submissions in recent times, I have noted an increase in the numbers of submissions where the researcher has approached the research question from a qualitative perspective and used qualitative methods to gather the data. Researchers have applied qualitative methodologies to a very diverse range of topics in educational research, to explore ideas and meanings, utilising a qualitative method's ability to show the how or why of certain behaviours or events.

Good quality submissions taking this approach have demonstrated that qualitative data can be dealt with showing the same rigor as that of quantitative data. These papers have created situations where participants are given an opportunity (e.g. through interview, through focus group involvement, etc.) to 'have a voice'. Such articles describe in detail the data process, i.e., collection, recording, analysis, and use of data. When themes are produced as the outcome of this process, these themes are used as categories in the discussion section. Often the reader will encounter IIER citations of writings on thematic analysis by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke [1].

My first experience as Associate Editor was in June 2018. In that month there were 37 submissions. Of these, 69% suggested a quantitative methodology, 6% could be classified as taking a qualitative approach and 17% used a mixed method approach. The remainder were review articles. By comparison, in a more recent month of being Associate Editor rostered as Duty Editor (June 2024), I read 68 submissions: 45% quantitative, 27% qualitative methodology, 14% mixed method, the remainder were reviews. As an aside, it is interesting to note the significant increase in submissions over that time span - 37 in June 2018 and 68 in June 2024. [2]

There has been a broadening in perspective upon what constitutes appropriate methodologies for educational research, for example including the emergence of a mixed methods perspective, where qualitative and quantitative data are used in combination for corroborative or 'triangulation' purposes, or one is used as a preparatory step or phase for the other. Qualitative methodologies have diversified, in some forms adopting elements of 'quantitativeness' such as using text analysis software (*Nvivo*, *MAXQDA*, etc), and have become well served by 'standard' references from great authors such as Braun and Clarke [1, 3], Creswell [4] and many others.

Returning to a theme of "Trending...", we have made an exploratory count for the 21 accepted articles published in *IIER* 34(3), noting 4 taking a quantitative approach; 12 taking a qualitative approach; 4 using mixed methods approach; and one being a review article. Exploratory, because we (that is, *IIER*'s Editorial staff) have access to a 10-year dataset (2015 to 2024) from which we could extract monthly totals for quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, reviews and acceptances, without compromising the strict confidentiality we impose upon individual submission information. Also, we could expand the examination to include other analyses such as quality of practice (after Braun & Clarke, [3]) found in a subsample.

Is the "trending" towards "more qualitative" in *IIER* *acceptances*, as illustrated in the preceding paragraph, similar for *IIER* *submissions*, as illustrated in the first six paragraphs? Based on this very limited and exploratory 'look', showing that 57% (12/21) of 34(3) is qualitative, it may be plausible to hypothesise that aligning with "more qualitative" *improves the prospects for acceptance by IIER*. That is an important "Trending ..." question for a 'generalist' journal such as *IIER*, for prospective *IIER* authors, and for many other actors in the world of educational research. However, given the escalating pressures of high submission rates, how are we to set aside time to use our 10-year dataset to investigate this important hypothesis?

Coincidentally, *IIER*'s interest in one qualitative methodology, ethnography and autoethnography, is illustrated in the guest editorial for *IIER* 34(3), a fine contribution from Indonesian researchers Jagad Aditya Dewantara and Dasim Budimansyah [12].

## (ii) DEI revisited

IIER's Editorial 30(4) published on 19 December 2020 expressed our strong appreciation of *Open Access Week 2020's* promotion of "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" (DEI) in scholarly publishing [5]. Over three years later, we need to revisit DEI. The prompting was RA reading an item published by Australia's *ABC News* [6], under the headline "How Kamala Harris's run for the US presidency has reignited old racist and sexist tropes":

Few three-letter acronyms ignite controversy like DEI, which stands for diversity, equity, and inclusion. ... The term is a basic corporate framework about embracing all aspects of social identity (including race, sex, age, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, and socio-economic class) and promoting fair treatment and equal opportunities. ...

A Pew Research Center survey from last year [7] showed a majority of US workers believed DEI was a "good thing", with only 16 per cent labelling it as a "bad thing". ...

But the term has become a racist dog whistle and the bogeyman of the far-right. ... The term DEI in relation to Ms Harris on X (formerly Twitter) received renewed interest in the hours after Mr Biden's endorsement. Many among the flurry of posts suggested that Ms Harris was only chosen for her ethnicity and gender. ... Former Trump aide Sebastian Gorka — who has previously called the vice-president "coloured" and a "DEI hire" — was cut off during an interview... [6]

It is so offensive to us that Trump's mob are misusing "DEI", an acronym that emerged years ago from progressive open access advocates in modern academic research publishing. An acronym warmly adopted into IIER's positioning, along with very many other journals [8]. It is so wrong to use DEI as an accusatory dirty word.

## (iii) Miscellanea

*Miscellanea 1: Another part to "DEI revisited"*

There is an undercurrent to the "DEI revisited" story, arising from a Facebook posting by CMcB's son Andrew, who recently offered some thoughts on:

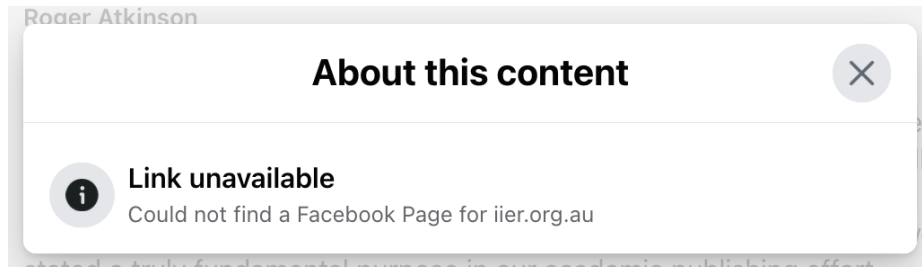
Words, and how they are used, are incredibly powerful ... they can be used to change people, incite emotions, triggering bias, prejudice and hate, sell lies and delude people, making the ignorant appear wise, cowards, brave and the weak, strong.

They can also be used to undo all this ...

*[RA responded, including some draft sentences on DEI and two citations]*

Thank you Andrew, Clare and I agree whole-heartedly. Especially the power of the written and published word, the giving of a 'Voice', as in <http://www.iier.org.au/iier33/editorial33-3.html> [9], subheading (ii) *The Voice* and voices. IIER Editorial 34-3, to be published mid September 2024, will explore the word "DEI" (diversity, equity, and inclusion), ... Firstly to update <http://www.iier.org.au/iier30/editorial30-4.html> [5], where we stated a truly fundamental purpose in our academic publishing effort. ... [DEI story in here]

*[Facebook responded with a graphic complaint about <http://www.iier.org.au/> - RA ignores]*



*Miscellanea 2: How can I be able to publish ...*

A recently received editorial inquiry provides an opportunity to illustrate the kind of personalising that is sometimes added to a 'template' response (time permitting).

Hello,  
 How can I [be] able to publish an article in your journal?  
 Kind Regards,  
 [name, academic position and affiliation redacted]

Hello [name redacted],

Thank you for the succinct, 'pithy' (please Google that word) expression of an FAQ (frequently asked question). To begin with, IIER and other journals could give a succinct, 'pithy' answer that is, in a generalised form, a directive to 'Get into the really hard work'.

To illustrate that directive, after attaining your first degree in [discipline of xxxx redacted] and [academic appointment at a university in a South Pacific country redacted], it may now be 'payback' time for you. 'Payback' means that you must work on, and on, through your teaching activities, and your learning, reading, observing, recording of experiences, publishing, etc., in order to give 'payback' to all who helped you to get to where you are now - parents, grandparents, siblings, peers, former teachers, former schools and governments.

A less 'pithy', but equally important answer would include IIER's usual 'template' response:

Thank you for the interest in IIER. Please read:  
<http://www.iier.org.au/iier-inf.html>  
<http://www.iier.org.au/iier-submissions.html>

We recommend that authors self-assess the quality of a proposed submission, by searching IIER (see <http://www.iier.org.au/about/iier-search.html>) using keywords that are relevant for your article. The main question will be, "Can I do as well as, or perhaps even better than, similar articles already published in IIER?" Another important question will be, "Is my topic, country context, research question, or some other aspect under-represented in IIER?"

Best wishes,  
 [etc.]

*Miscellanea 3: Revisiting ChatGPT and AI-based services*

Some of RA's recent copy editing activities and reading of new submissions have prompted a renewed thinking about ChatGPT [13] and other AI-based software services such as Google Translate [14] that prospective authors may use or are using. We are considering an additional perspective in reviewing for IIER. At both the initial reading and the copy editing stages, we will be looking more closely for eloquence and extensive, diverse vocabulary, that is unusual for the topic, country context, and article author profile.

*Miscellanea 4: Follow-up on Acquisition Inquiry...*

Recently RA received an editorial email from "Manager, Mergers & Acquisitions, Open Access Text Limited (London)", with the subject line "Follow-up on Acquisition Inquiry: Issues in Educational Research", and body text including:

Dear Editor,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to follow up on my previous email regarding our interest in acquiring "Issues in Educational Research".

I understand that you are likely very busy, but I wanted to reiterate our sincere interest in the publication. ...

As Manager (Mergers & Acquisitions) guessed, correctly, RA is indeed "very busy", so RA's reply was terse and blunt, though a little longer than the current template, "... journal is not for sale" as used in [10]:

Hello [Open Access Text person],

We appreciate the interest in IIER. However, our view on Open Access Text was given in <http://www.iier.org.au/iier30/editorial30-1.html> published on 8 February (last item in the Editorial). Four years later, our view remains unchanged. [11]

As is usually done, RA checked the web addresses pertaining to the relevant item in Editorial 30(1), obtaining the following graphic response (it may not be oatext.com's fault; attempted viewing date was 25 August 2024):

**Warning: Potential Security Risk Ahead**

Firefox detected a potential security threat and did not continue to **oatext.com**. If you visit this site, attackers could try to steal information like your passwords, emails, or credit card details.

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