

Editorial

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I am delighted to wish you a Happy New Year 2024 on behalf of the editorial team of the Loyola Journal of Social Sciences. In this edition, we present five insightful studies addressing contemporary socio-economic and educational issues.

In the first article, **Chingwanangwana** presents a qualitative case study aimed at understanding the origins of unethical leadership practices among teachers during periods of socio-political and economic instability in Zimbabwe. Focusing on the Marondera Education District, the research investigates the perceptions of school heads and teachers regarding the impact of ongoing turbulence since 2000. The study identifies key factors such as hyperinflation, inadequate salaries, teacher turnover, banking crises, political violence, and collapsed educational funding as major contributors to unethical practices. Recommendations include multi-dimensional interventions and the incorporation of Decoloniality Education and Indigenous Knowledge Systems to restore ethical leadership. The recommendations for multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral interventions are practical and highlight the need for comprehensive solutions involving various stakeholders. The emphasis on Decoloniality Education and Indigenous Knowledge Systems is particularly noteworthy, as it suggests a culturally relevant approach to addressing ethical leadership issues. This aligns with broader trends in educational research advocating for the integration of local knowledge and decolonial practices. The study is timely and addresses pressing issues in the Zimbabwean education system. The findings are crucial for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders aiming to foster ethical leadership in challenging environments.

Jayadev and Veena's study examines the intricate relationship between income tax policies, gold prices, and the Sensex in India. It analyses how these factors collectively influence the Indian economy, examining income tax's impact on financial decisions, gold prices' influence on market dynamics and investor behaviour, and the Sensex as an indicator of stock market health. Using an Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) approach and data sourced from Yahoo Finance

spanning from 1996 to 2023, the study employs various statistical tests including Augmented Dickey-Fuller, Granger Causality Tests, and regression analyses to explore the interdependencies among these variables. The study demonstrates a robust methodological framework by utilizing the ARDL approach, which is suitable for analysing relationships among variables over both short and long terms. The inclusion of statistical tests such as Augmented Dickey-Fuller for unit root testing and Granger Causality Tests enhances the reliability of findings by exploring causal relationships and stationarity of the time series data. The study contributes significantly to the understanding of economic dynamics in India by linking income tax policy, gold prices, and stock market performance. The findings highlight practical implications for policymakers and investors, emphasizing the interconnectedness of income tax policies, gold prices, and stock market movements. Understanding these dynamics can aid in formulating effective economic policies and investment strategies that mitigate risks and capitalize on opportunities in the Indian financial landscape.

Mthombeni's paper addresses the challenges of positionality and reflexivity in secondary quantitative research within the social sciences, focusing specifically on attitudes towards the Fourth Industrial Revolution in South Africa. It critiques the predominant positivist approach in quantitative social science research, which aims for objectivity and generalizability, often neglecting the subjective influences of researchers and their interactions with data. The study draws on the author's experience with large-scale secondary datasets, emphasizing the importance of reflexivity—a critical self-awareness of the researcher's biases, perspectives, and institutional affiliations—in directing the complexities of working with pre-existing data. The paper argues for a more refined understanding of positionality in quantitative studies, particularly in contexts where human subjects are both researchers and subjects of study. By addressing the complexities of positionality and reflexivity, the paper responds to a significant gap in literature, where quantitative studies often overlook the subjective influences on research outcomes. The paper makes a valuable theoretical contribution by challenging the positivist paradigm in quantitative research, advocating for a more reflexive approach. It highlights the necessity for researchers to critically reflect on their own biases and assumptions throughout the research process, especially when analysing secondary data that may already be structured by previous researchers or institutions.

Understanding Gender Perspectives Among Adolescents in Kerala: A Qualitative Approach by **Ligin and Nelson** effectively introduces the

importance of gender awareness among adolescents in Kerala. The article discusses the findings from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews conducted with adolescents in Kerala, focusing on their perceptions and experiences related to gender awareness and equality. It highlights that while adolescents generally support gender equality, traditional gender roles and stereotypes still exert significant influence. Factors such as family upbringing, peer influence, media exposure, and educational experiences shape their understanding of gender. The study concludes that adolescents in Kerala are aware of traditional gender roles but are willing to challenge them. It advocates for gender education across all sectors of society and emphasizes the role of education and media in promoting gender equality. The Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) program is cited as a positive example to emulate in Kerala.

Finally, **Mgence and Ntini** investigate the role of volunteerism in enhancing municipal waste management in eThekweni Municipality, South Africa. Through qualitative interviews with a diverse group of participants, including community members, municipal officials, and a councillor, the study illuminates key benefits of volunteerism such as skill development, economic empowerment, and social network expansion. It also identifies significant barriers like associated costs and highlights the pivotal role of trust and organizational mobilization in encouraging community participation. The article effectively argues that volunteerism not only enhances community cohesion but also contributes substantially to achieving municipal environmental management objectives. The conclusion provides practical recommendations for mitigating participation barriers and leveraging partnerships to optimize the Cleansing and Solid Waste Programme's impact. Overall, this research enriches our understanding of how volunteerism can be strategically harnessed to enhance municipal efficiency and substitute sustainable community development.

Collectively, these articles provide diverse landscapes of ethical leadership, economic interdependencies, methodological reflexivity, gender equity, and community participation, we hope this issue inspires new conversations, collaborations, and actions towards building more equitable and sustainable societies.

Thank you to the authors for their scholarly contributions, the reviewers for their rigorous evaluations, and our readers for their continued engagement in advancing knowledge in the social sciences.

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Editor**