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## EDITORIAL

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## **EDITORIAL**

### **PRESENTATION AND FRAMING**

**ŞEFİKA ŞULE ERÇETİN**

**LUIS TOMÉ**

In recent decades, the internationalization of higher education has emerged as a central theme in global academic discourse. As universities and academic institutions around the world increasingly operate beyond national borders, the need to examine the implications, practices, and outcomes of internationalization has become both urgent and complex. Internationalization, in the context of higher education, refers not only to the mobility of students, faculty, and academic programs, but also to the integration of international dimensions into curricula, research agendas, institutional strategies, and campus cultures. It encompasses policies and practices designed to enhance global engagement, foster intercultural understanding, and prepare graduates to operate in increasingly interconnected societies. However, internationalization is not a neutral or universally beneficial process. It reflects broader dynamics of globalization, power relations, economic inequalities, and cultural negotiations that shape how it is experienced and implemented across different contexts. Effective leadership in this context must not only enable global engagement but also prioritize equity, diversity, and ethical responsiveness to global challenges.

While internationalization remains a cornerstone of higher education reform, it is increasingly entangled with broader structural challenges that institutions worldwide must address. What was once predominantly framed by national systems and local priorities is now significantly influenced by international pressures and transnational governance frameworks. The rise of global university rankings, cross-border knowledge economies, international accreditation mechanisms, and digitally mediated academic mobility has profoundly reshaped both the strategic aspirations and organizational configurations of universities.

Contemporary higher education operates within a dynamic and often volatile global landscape shaped by intersecting technological, social, political, and demographic transformations. In this climate of accelerated change, Artificial Intelligence and digital transformation are exerting growing influence over pedagogical practices, administrative processes, and knowledge production. These developments require not only technological



adaptation but also conceptual rethinking. Within this framework, the concept of quantum leadership has emerged—a non-linear, holistic, and adaptive approach aligned with the complex realities confronting internationally engaged universities.

The expanding international responsibilities of universities—particularly in domains such as climate change, migration, peace-building, and global citizenship—necessitate a reexamination of the core missions of higher education. Universities are increasingly expected to serve as agents of social transformation, embedding internationalization within broader goals of equity, sustainability, and human development. While these responsibilities entail complex challenges, they also present compelling opportunities for fostering intercultural dialogue, enhancing global competencies, and driving societal innovation on a global scale. Through inclusive governance structures that are participatory, reflective, and ethically grounded, higher education institutions can respond to global imperatives while modeling values-based leadership in times of uncertainty.

This thematic dossier, titled *Internationalization of Higher Education: Experiences and Challenges*, brings together a series of eleven scholarly articles that explore the multifaceted nature of internationalization in higher education, offering critical insights into its driving forces, lived realities, and the pressing challenges it entails. It features contributions that interrogate both the opportunities and tensions inherent in the internationalization process. Rather than conceptualizing internationalization as a fixed policy model, this issue examines it as a fluid, context-sensitive process intersecting with digital transformation, demographic transitions, geopolitical volatility, and institutional complexity.

By integrating theoretical, empirical, and practice-oriented perspectives, this issue advances a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of internationalization in a post-pandemic, AI-mediated, and globally uncertain era. Beyond identifying disruptions and contradictions, the contributions underscore the resilience, creativity, and adaptability of higher education institutions. Examples include the proliferation of globally integrated hybrid programs, enhanced international research collaborations, and the widespread adoption of learner-centered digital pedagogies. These developments illustrate the transformative potential of internationalization to stimulate institutional innovation, nurture global citizenship, and build inclusive academic communities.

The articles compiled in this dossier approach the theme from a variety of disciplinary, methodological, and geographical perspectives. Indeed, the authors come from diverse academic fields — ranging from Education Sciences to International Relations, and from Law to Public Administration — and are affiliated with various higher education institutions across different countries, including Bulgaria, Brazil, Spain, Hungary, India, Kazakhstan, Portugal, Türkiye, and Uganda. Together, they aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of how internationalization unfolds in practice, what it means for students, educators, and institutions, and how it can be navigated responsibly and ethically.

In bringing together these varied contributions, this dossier does not seek to provide definitive answers but to open space for critical dialogue. It underscores the importance of viewing internationalization not as an abstract ideal or a one-size-fits-all strategy, but as a contested and evolving process that must be examined in context. As institutions



continue to grapple with shifting geopolitical realities, technological change, and reconfigurations of academic life, the questions raised in this dossier are more relevant than ever.

As co-editors of this thematic dossier, we are deeply grateful to all 18 authors who generously agreed to share their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives through the eleven articles that follow. Gratitude is also extended to the scientific reviewers, whose recommendations contributed to further enhancing the quality of the articles, as well as to the entire editorial team of the esteemed scientific journal Janus.net, which is responsible for publishing this thematic dossier. To all, our heartfelt thanks for the honor and privilege of your collaboration in this truly collective and transnational endeavor.

This issue invites scholars, administrators, and policymakers to engage critically and constructively with the values, structures, and strategies shaping the future of higher education. The focus extends beyond navigating uncertainty to envisioning and building sustainable, equitable, and forward-thinking models of global academic engagement. We invite readers to engage with the articles that follow with an open and critical mindset, and to reflect on how internationalization can be reimagined in ways that enrich higher education while advancing global responsibility, equity, and mutual learning.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION LITERACY IN HISTORY AND CIVIC EDUCATION AS A 21ST-CENTURY LEADERSHIP SKILL**

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### **Abstract**

The information revolution of the 21st century brought several significant changes in the field of education, among many the spread of WEB 2.0, MOOC systems and artificial intelligence ultimately further blurring the line between the digital-analogue world. In this context history and civic education have become even more significant, giving information and media literacy a more prominent role. It should be the role of teacher training institutes to prepare future educators to tackle challenges and build on new opportunities. The concept of digital citizenship appears in the literature and curricular development goals, which also implies the ethical, responsible and safe possession and application of digital literacy and media literacy competences in both secondary and tertiary education (Erdem et al, 2022). Our study explores the relationship between media literacy, digital literacy and digital citizenship competences in the field of history and civic education. During the content analysis of the literature, global and EU strategy reports, we examined the most important challenges and objectives formulated in the topic. The results include the increasing role of information and media literacy since the 2010s, the approaches to citizenship education and a model of the key concepts in the title in the form of a competence network.

### **Keywords**

Information Literacy, Media Literacy, Civic Education, Digital Pedagogy, Disinformation, Leadership Skills.

### **Resumo**

A revolução informacional do século XXI provocou transformações profundas no domínio da educação, entre as quais se destacam a disseminação da Web 2.0, a emergência dos sistemas de ensino massivo aberto online (MOOC) e o avanço da inteligência artificial, contribuindo para esbater ainda mais a fronteira entre os mundos digital e analógico. Neste novo paradigma, as áreas da História e da Educação para a Cidadania assumem uma relevância



acrescida, conferindo à literacia informacional e mediática um papel central no desenvolvimento das competências cívicas dos cidadãos. Por conseguinte, compete às Instituições de Ensino Superior dotar os futuros professores das ferramentas necessárias para enfrentarem os desafios e explorarem as oportunidades proporcionadas pelas novas tecnologias e práticas educativas. O conceito de cidadania digital encontra-se amplamente representado na literatura especializada, bem como nos objetivos de desenvolvimento curricular, implicando a aquisição e aplicação ética, responsável e segura das competências associadas à literacia digital e mediática, tanto no ensino secundário como no ensino superior. O presente estudo analisa a inter-relação entre literacia mediática, literacia digital e competências de cidadania digital no âmbito do ensino da História e da Educação para a Cidadania. Com base na análise de conteúdo da literatura relevante e dos relatórios estratégicos, tanto a nível global como da União Europeia, identificam-se os principais desafios e metas delineados nesta área. Os resultados evidenciam, entre outros aspetos, o papel crescente da literacia informacional e mediática desde a década de 2010, as abordagens contemporâneas à educação para a cidadania e um modelo conceptual dos temas em estudo, estruturado sob a forma de uma rede de competências interligadas.

#### **Palavras-chave**

Literacia da Informação, Literacia dos Meios de Comunicação Social, Educação Cívica, Pedagogia Digital, Desinformação, Competências de Liderança.

#### **How to cite this article**

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## **DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION LITERACY IN HISTORY AND CIVIC EDUCATION AS A 21ST-CENTURY LEADERSHIP SKILL**

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### **Introduction**

Over a quarter of a century, the 21st century has witnessed an abundance of technological innovations that have profoundly impacted both education and society at large. The digital sphere and various algorithms are not only capable of influencing elections (e.g., the Cambridge Analytica scandal) or inciting violence against religious minorities (Harari, 2024), but also significantly facilitate the translation of texts, plagiarism, and access to information. It is therefore unsurprising that attitudes toward artificial intelligence among educators and researchers span a broad spectrum—from techno-optimism to outright rejection (Zompetti et al., 2024). Due to the pace of technological advancement, some scholars have begun to replace the notion of digital literacy with that of AI literacy, which emphasizes the critical and reflective use of artificial intelligence (Long & Magerko, 2020). In this study, however, we do not distinguish between AI literacy and media literacy, as both encompass the ethical, responsible, and safe acquisition and application of digital competencies (Erdem et al., 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic changed global conditions and highlighted the critical role of leadership in navigating uncertainty, transformation, and chaos. In this new reality, leadership increasingly demands skills like information literacy, enabling individuals to access, evaluate, and apply information responsibly amid rapid change. As part of the essential toolkit for 21st-century digital citizenship, information literacy empowers leaders to make informed decisions and foster resilient, adaptable communities (Erçetin & Açıkalın, 2025).

Although students—often referred to as digital natives—are immersed in digital media daily, they frequently lack the sub-skills essential for responsible and deliberate





technology use. For educators, the absence of adequate training often poses a significant challenge in fostering both their own and their students' digital competencies. On a more positive note, recent years have seen a shift toward the integration of digital citizenship into educational curricula, particularly within the field of civic education. This integration aims to equip students with fundamental competencies for engaging in the digital sphere, such as ethics—that is, appropriate, safe, and responsible internet use—information and media literacy, political and civic participation, and the capacity for critical resistance (Moonsun, 2016). Accordingly, this paper examines the educational policy objectives and pedagogical practices that have emerged regarding digital literacy, history education, and citizenship education, both in Hungary and in international contexts.

### **Theoretical background**

The concept associated with information literacy is now nearly half a century old (Tóth, 2024), and as such, it has undergone numerous revisions over the past decades. Although several attempts have been made to establish a unified definition, no universally accepted interpretation has emerged. Nonetheless, the ongoing discourse has drawn attention to the fundamental aspects of the field (Leaning, 2017). Accordingly, most authors define the concept as the competent use of technology, information, and its sources, as well as critical thinking skills (Koltay & Szőke-Milinte, 2020; Fedorov & Mikhaleva, 2020; Rahim, A. & Indah, M., 2024). These foundational understandings of information literacy provide a crucial framework for interpreting contemporary developments in the digital age. As the sociotechnical landscape continues to evolve, it becomes increasingly important to reassess how these core competencies are applied in practice. The growing complexity of digital environments—shaped by algorithms, artificial intelligence, and the proliferation of online content—demands an expanded perspective on what it means to be information literate in the 21st century.

### **Information and Media Literacy in European Policy Documents and Educational Guidelines**

Following the turn of the millennium, the growing impact of technological development on education and the labor market became almost immediately noticeable within the European Union. One of the first signs of this was that, in 2002, the European Training Foundation and the European Council assigned the application of information and communication technologies among the key competences (Bognár, 2002; Szabó, 2023).

From 2003 onward, these changes also began to emerge in the educational systems of several Central European countries — at that time not yet EU members — including Hungary. In Hungary, the National Core Curriculum already incorporates digital competencies to be developed within the subject of history, focusing on skills related to recognizing, retrieving, and evaluating information (Fekete, 2025).

A significant milestone in this trajectory was the Paris Declaration of 2015, in which educational actors identified four priority areas for education: (1) fostering social, civic,



and intercultural competences; (2) promoting critical thinking and media literacy; (3) improving the education of disadvantaged children; and (4) promoting intercultural dialogue (European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Eurydice, 2016).

The European Council's framework for the development of digital competence, DigCompEdu, includes information and media literacy among the key competences. Developed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, the DigCompEdu framework was first introduced in 2013 and updated in 2017 to reflect the changing needs of European citizens. (Fodor, 2024)

In March 2019, the *Second Survey of Schools: ICT in Education* was conducted at the request of the European Commission to examine the use of digital technologies in EU education systems, based on data from 400 schools per country. As a follow-up to the 2011 study, the longitudinal analysis showed progress in several areas over eight years. The report also identified a model called 'Highly equipped and connected classroom' establishing three scenarios with costs of technological equipment, network and professional development for educators of EU classrooms (European Commission, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, 2019).

The survey identified several key issues, such as the lack of skills of both students and educators concerning digital content development, the absence of thorough in-service and pre-service training for teachers, of whom only 12% had a proper ICT course at university. Analysis of Hungarian data from the survey also highlighted this obstacle.

Following COVID and the distance learning period in Hungary the education government implemented a reform in teacher training. The new policies brought compulsory courses and programmes related to both majors of teacher candidates<sup>1</sup>, alongside general digital instructional support and information literacy courses introduced. The new programmes are already present at universities, however, institutions are autonomous in developing their own approaches and strategies.

One of the most significant outcomes of the EU Commission survey was the lack of disciplinary models adaptable by teachers (European Commission, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, 2019). It is clear that there are general principles and ideas for digital redefinition of analogue learning (Puentedura, 2013) while pedagogical background is also set for learning and teaching (European Commission, 2021). On the other hand, both theoretical models and practical methods, techniques, tasks and platforms of digital learning in separate disciplinary contexts are still scarce with only handful of explorers in the field of history education (Breakstone et al, 2021; Cantabrana et al. 2022; Hajdarović, 2023).

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<sup>1</sup> Hungarian teacher trainees must choose two majors (e.g. history and a foreign language) which are studied parallel psychological and education related courses for five years including several field practices organised in schools.



## Changing role and toolkit of civic education

Although citizenship education has been a foundational element of schooling, the emergence of the digital citizen marks a contemporary shift in how civic identity is understood and promoted in educational theory and policy. Since its development in the 17th century, the roles and objectives of citizenship education have gone through countless stages of development in response to changing challenges in Europe and Hungary in particular.

The conscious and intentional education of the civic community was reintroduced after ancient times, the Enlightenment and it was developed further with the formation of nation-states. It played a prominent role in the enlightened absolutist monarchies of Central Europe. In Hungary, it appeared in curricula and classrooms as *Historical geography*, later with the title of *History and Social studies*, as *Constitutional studies* and as *Foundations of our worldview* during the period of the communist dictatorship (Kaposi 2019; Jakab, 2019).

Gábor Halász identifies the rediscovery of the need for civic education after the fall of communism in Central Europe as the interplay of several factors. First, the end of Eastern European dictatorships and emerging difficulties of young democracies, the phenomena of globalisation, the acceleration of European integration, and the experience of the ethnic-nationalist civil war reappearing in Europe (Halász, 2005). The subject of citizenship education was introduced as a compulsory subject in England in 2002 after a long process that began in the 1990s, based on the work of the British professor Bernard Crick (Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998). Independent thinking, activity, critical, and objective student attitudes played an emphatic role in the emerging civic competence, which sees the role of student participation not in the future, but already in the present (Kaposi, 2019).

Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne (2004) identify three distinct stages of citizenship: the (1) personally responsible citizen, the (2) participatory citizen, and the (3) justice-oriented citizen. The personally responsible citizen is characterised by adherence to laws and social norms, personal responsibility within the community, and generally positively characterised acts such as working, paying taxes, recycling, donating blood, or volunteering in times of crisis. The participatory citizen goes a step further, engaging actively in civic life by joining community organisations, initiating projects to support those in need, or fostering economic development. This model assumes a deeper understanding of how governmental institutions function. At the highest level of this framework stands the justice-oriented citizen, who critically examines social, political, and economic structures. Rather than focusing solely on surface-level problems, this ideal citizen seeks to understand underlying systemic issues, identify injustices, and engage with democratic movements aiming for structural change.

Moonsun (2016) also introduces three approaches to citizenship education: (1) traditional (or national), (2) critical, and (3) digital. The traditional model focuses on clearly defined social and economic rights and duties, through which individuals become "good citizens" by conforming to national expectations. The critical model emerged in response to civil rights movements in the United States, emphasising the development of multicultural



and global identities and giving voice to ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural minorities. The third and most recent stage is digital citizenship, which reflects the transformative impact of digital technologies on civic life. Moonsun (2016) outlines four core competencies for digital citizens: (1) ethical, safe, and responsible internet use; (2) information and media literacy; (3) civic and political engagement; (4) critical resistance.

In the framework proposed by Erdem et al. (2022), digital citizenship supports the higher-order dimensions of citizenship education. Moving beyond earlier models that focused primarily on normative behaviour, contemporary citizenship now encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills as well. Thus, citizenship education is undergoing a significant transformation. It no longer solely concerns legal and social responsibilities or conformity to civic norms. Instead, it now incorporates digital behaviours shaped by the Web 2.0 environment and promotes the development of interconnected digital competencies.

According to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), digital citizenship involves students' ability to recognise the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of living, learning, and working in an interconnected digital and analogue world. It entails acting in safe, legal, and ethical ways (ISTE, 2023). ISTE standards emphasise that digitally literate students understand the implications of their online presence, the significance of digital security, and the risks of data collection technologies. They are equipped to use digital tools ethically, respect intellectual property rights, and share information responsibly.

Fodor et al. (2023) highlight the diverse nature of both history and citizenship education in a comparative analysis of national regulatory frameworks. Among 16 European and Asian countries<sup>2</sup> all of the European nations have compulsory civic education without compulsory school leaving examination in the subject. On the other hand, declared objectives of development vary greatly from country to country. Education for democratic values and ideas are shared by all analysed curricula, but explicit further goals as sustainability, and financial knowledge vary. Among the countries of the research only Czechia, Hungary, Ireland, Austria, China and Turkey highlight digital competence and information literacy development (Fodor, Töhn, Máté, 2023).

The COVID pandemic and the unsettling American political events focused global attention on the threats of misinformation. The European Commission has published a Digital Educational Action Plan for the period 2021-2027, which aims to support digital citizenship by developing digital literacy and tackling misinformation.

The main findings of the report include: (1) A significant number of initiatives on this topic take a technological approach to digital literacy and pay little attention to critical thinking. (2) Awareness of the role and dangers of the media is still low among teachers and parents. (3) Information literacy and digital competence development are not emphasised in the training of teachers in Europe.

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<sup>2</sup> Armenia, China, Czechia, England, France, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Poland, Scotland, Slovakia, Turkey.



The report places great emphasis on the development of effective educational resources that can support information and digital literacy, and understanding of controversial historical and current issues.

Based on the report, a guide for teachers with the same title (*Guidelines for teachers and educators on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training*) was also produced. The textbook-like digital volume contains both theoretical and practical aspects. In one of its chapters, it presents the basic concepts of the topic, including disinformation, deepfakes, algorithms, digital citizenship, digital literacy, etc.) It also includes short summaries of teaching and learning strategies, such as the flipped classroom, blended learning, and gamification.

**Picture 1.** The relationship between misinformation, disinformation and malinformation



Source: European Commission, (2022)

**Picture 2 -** Digital proficiency levels

Level	Complexity of tasks	Autonomy	Cognitive domain
Basic	Simple tasks	With guidance/autonomy and with guidance where needed	Remembering
Intermediate	Well-defined and routine tasks, and straightforward problems/tasks, and well-defined and non-routine problems	On my own/independent and according to my needs.	Understanding
Advanced	Different tasks and problems/most appropriate tasks	Guiding others/able to adapt to others in a complex context	Applying/evaluating/creating

Source: European Commission, 2022, 38



An important chapter of the guide is built on the differences between misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation. Practical techniques include examining students' digital footprints, checking the source of facts and news, distinguishing between facts and opinions, discerning the difference between the processes of censorship and freedom of the press, and discussing conspiracy theories.

The guide also focuses on the measurement of digital competence. By partially simplifying the proficiency levels, DigCompEdu formulates three aspects: task complexity, learner autonomy, and cognitive level. Based on these, it distinguishes between basic, intermediate and advanced task levels.

### **Development of information literacy in history education**

As we outlined in the previous chapters, the accelerated digitalization triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted all levels and domains of education. However, the growing dominance of online sources in history education was already observable before the pandemic. This trend also manifested in research projects in history textbooks, where it became increasingly clear that textbook authors encouraged students to search the internet rather than conduct library-based research. Academic literature also responded to these changes; several authors had already emphasized the need to foster information literacy in history lessons, particularly since students during this period frequently relied on Wikipedia as their primary source of information (Walsh, 2008; Engel-Fekete, 2023).

Since 2020, however, the opportunities and challenges presented by artificial intelligence have become increasingly central to scholarly discourse surrounding the humanities. It is undeniable that AI offers substantial support in reconstructing historical objects and texts, as well as in certain aspects of pedagogical work, such as lesson planning and worksheet development (Kőmúves, 2024). Furthermore, large language models facilitate the generation of visual illustrations corresponding to various historical periods. As a result, many historians consider artificial intelligence a valuable tool (Kansteiner, 2022; Sternfeld, 2023; Szabó T., 2025)

However, a study conducted in 2023 among history teachers (Hajdarovic, 2023) revealed that participants could identify only four out of nine AI-generated texts as not being written by a human. These findings not only highlight the growing vulnerability of teacher assessment in the 21st century but also draw attention to a new and increasingly critical area for the development of digital and information literacy.

Texts generated by large language models, along with various deepfake methods (e.g., face-swapping, puppeteering, lip-syncing, voice-cloning, and image synthesis—and other visual disinformation strategies, pose significant challenges not only to educators. One indication of this is the increasing frequency with which the media publishes AI-generated images depicting fabricated or anachronistic historical events as factual. A striking example is the circulation of an AI-generated image purportedly depicting ancient Greek mosaics. To counteract the spread of false historical narratives and chronological distortions, it is essential that school education supports the acquisition of fundamental



historical knowledge and the ability to accurately place historical phenomena in their correct temporal context. However, this latter competency can be cultivated almost exclusively through the teaching of history. (Vajda, 2018).

In addition to fostering the recognition of anachronisms, history education also offers the opportunity to develop critical thinking, another fundamental component of information literacy. This capacity is primarily cultivated through the analysis of historical sources in history lessons. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that, according to some scholars, the methodologies traditionally used for historical source criticism, as well as certain digital competencies, are no longer sufficient for evaluating the credibility of online content and websites (Breakstone et al., 2025). In classroom practice, students typically concentrate on the content of written sources and may attempt to identify the author or the date of origin. In doing so, they tend to employ a vertical reading, approaching the text "from the top down" (Wineburg & McGrew, 2019; Lodhi, A. K. et al., 2025). However, this interpretive strategy can be ineffective when faced with websites spreading disinformation, which may lack grammatical or spelling errors, use credible-sounding domain names, and even cite various seemingly reliable sources to support their content. According to Pimentel and others (Pimentel, D. R., 2024; McGrew, 2021; Wineburg & McGrew, 2019), the solution could be digital civic online reasoning when training users to verify the credibility of a given website by consulting independent sources before engaging in a thorough analysis of its content. Nowadays, there are no widely established methodological approaches for teaching the civic online reasoning framework; however, its integration is becoming increasingly urgent in today's context.

## Discussion

Information literacy is widely understood as the competent use of technology and information sources, underpinned by critical thinking skills—an essential foundation for navigating and interpreting the complexities of the digital age. Its theoretical concepts are well known and widely repeated; however, real discussion of techniques, tasks, methods, strategies, and the ideal formal curricular position and school time devoted to its improvement are very rare. History and civic education may be two fruitful and interconnected fields where the necessary skills can be acquired through historical source analysis and fact checking recently produced information.

The evolution of citizenship education increasingly highlights the central role of information and media literacy in preparing students for active participation in a digital society. Educational systems must equip learners with the skills to critically evaluate sources and navigate digital environments, which is strongly targeted by European policy efforts.

History education provides a firm basis to learn the techniques of critically dealing with information met in historical sources. With sufficient training, methods and strategies, students can learn how to not only start dialogue with the past but also use their subskills to navigate in the flood of recently produced information.



Different ideal roles and toolkits are emphasized in connection with these objectives, thinking like a historian, fact checker or journal editor may also be applied. All of these refer to an advanced level of cognition/consideration/logic which is a uniquely useful tool for not only young adults, but future young leaders in particular.

A key question in today's education is whether subjects like history and civics can provide individuals, particularly those not in the humanities, with the necessary skills to tackle 21st-century challenges. Just as with the printing press or the steam engine, we cannot fully predict the impact AI will have on our world. Nonetheless, as educators, we should aim to maximize its potential for positive change.

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## MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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### Abstract

This study analyzes the effects of globalization on higher education institutions and the role of cultural diversity on leadership structures. With the acceleration of globalization, higher education institutions have transformed from being mere centers of knowledge production to dynamic social ecosystems where multicultural interactions take place. This transformation has also necessitated the redefinition of the concept of leadership; strategic roles such as vision development, change management, harmonization of different cultural values, and building sustainable academic communities have come to the fore. The structure of the global education ecosystem, the balance between global values and local cultural dynamics, and the impact of cultural diversity on learning processes have been comprehensively addressed in the study. In addition, multicultural leadership models, core competencies required for the development of leadership skills, and the impact of cultural diversity on innovation and creativity have been examined. It has also focused on how new technologies such as digitalization and artificial intelligence have transformed leadership structures. As a result, it has been revealed that flexible and inclusive leadership models that view cultural diversity as a strategic advantage play a critical role in increasing the global competitiveness and sustainability of higher education institutions. In future studies, it is recommended that in-depth studies be conducted on the application of these models in different regional and institutional contexts.

### Keywords

Globalization, Higher Education, Cultural Diversity, Multicultural Leadership, Sustainable Leadership.

### Resumo

O presente estudo investiga os efeitos da globalização sobre as Instituições de Ensino Superior (IES), com especial enfoque no papel da diversidade cultural nas suas estruturas de liderança. Com a intensificação dos processos de globalização, as (IES) deixaram de ser exclusivamente centros de produção e disseminação de conhecimento para se afirmarem como ecossistemas



sociais dinâmicos, caracterizados por interações multiculturais cada vez mais complexas. Esta transformação implicou uma necessária reconfiguração do conceito de liderança, conferindo relevo a funções estratégicas como a formulação de uma visão institucional, a gestão da mudança, a conciliação de valores culturais distintos e a construção de comunidades académicas sustentáveis. O estudo procede a uma análise aprofundada da estrutura do ecossistema educacional global, procurando compreender o equilíbrio entre os valores universais e as dinâmicas culturais locais, bem como o impacto da diversidade cultural nos processos de ensino e aprendizagem. Foram ainda examinados modelos de liderança multicultural, as competências essenciais para o desenvolvimento de capacidades de liderança eficazes, e a influência da diversidade cultural na promoção da inovação e da criatividade institucional. Paralelamente, analisou-se a forma como as novas tecnologias — designadamente a digitalização e a inteligência artificial — têm vindo a transformar as estruturas e práticas de liderança no contexto académico. Os resultados obtidos evidenciam que modelos de liderança flexíveis, inclusivos e culturalmente sensíveis, que reconhecem a diversidade como uma vantagem estratégica, desempenham um papel determinante na consolidação da competitividade global e da sustentabilidade das instituições de ensino superior. Com base nas conclusões alcançadas, recomenda-se, para investigações futuras, a realização de estudos comparativos e aprofundados que explorem a aplicação destes modelos de liderança em diferentes contextos regionais e institucionais.

#### **Palavras-chave**

Globalização, Ensino Superior, Diversidade Cultural, Liderança Multicultural, Liderança Sustentável.

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## **MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES AND GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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### **Introduction**

Globalization is a multidimensional process that refers to the enhanced mobility of goods, services, information, culture and people at the international level. This process, which has accelerated especially since the last quarter of the 20th century, has made the boundaries between world societies more porous through economic liberalization, technological advances, and revolutionary breakthroughs in transportation and communication (Held & McGrew, 2007: 3). Globalization has changed not only economies but also cultural, political, and social life. It has affected many areas, including how people live, what they consume, how they are governed, and how they are educated (Giddens, 1999: 7). Higher education has also been influenced by these changes. Universities have adapted by producing knowledge in new ways, encouraging cultural exchange, and building international partnerships.

With the impact of globalization, higher education institutions have gone beyond being mere centers of knowledge production; they have become dynamic social ecosystems where different cultural identities meet and multidimensional interactions take place (Marginson, 2018: 17). This transformation has led to radical changes in many areas, from the reshaping of institutional structures to the diversification of educational programs, from the increase in international academic collaborations to the evolution of social responsibility concepts. Higher education institutions are no longer structures that provide services only within national borders; they have become active actors in the production, transfer and intercultural communication processes of knowledge on a global scale. Especially with the rapid development of digital technologies, the speed of information circulation has increased, and it has become inevitable for academic institutions to interact on a global level (de Wit, 2020: 2).

In this comprehensive transformation process, the evolving environmental conditions confronting higher education institutions face, increasing cultural diversity, competitive pressures driven by internationalization, and constantly renewed social expectations



have inevitably necessitated the redefinition of the concept of leadership. This transformation in the leadership paradigms is not limited to the fulfillment of administrative functions alone; it also entails a strategic role in terms of the capacity of institutions to develop vision, manage change, harmonize different cultural values, and build sustainable academic communities in multicultural environments (Middlehurst, 2008: 87). The development of pluralistic leadership approaches increases the resilience of educational institutions against crises and enables them to produce innovative solutions (Leask, 2015: 23). In this context, reconsidering the concept of leadership in higher education on the basis of cultural diversity has become an critical imperative for all institutions that want to adapt to the requirements of the age.

In the last twenty years, the globalization of higher education has led to a significant increase in international student mobility. According to UNESCO data, the number of international students, which was approximately 2 million worldwide in 2000, has exceeded 6 million by 2020 (UNESCO, 2021: 5). In the case of Turkey, the number of international students, which was approximately 25,000 in 2010, has increased tenfold over twelve years, exceeding 300,000 by 2023 (YÖK, 2023: 3), which is a concrete indicator of the dimensions of cultural diversity in higher education. This increase forces higher education institutions to develop new strategies such as cultural adaptation, management of language diversity, and creation of multicultural learning environments. The prediction that internationalization will continue at this pace increases the importance of flexibility and inclusiveness in the structuring processes of higher education institutions; and requires qualities such as cultural sensitivity, inclusiveness and innovation to come to the fore in leadership approaches.

The researchers' long-term academic experience in a multicultural international university environment has been an important contribution in the structuring of this study. In particular, one of the researchers had a five-year senior management position at Khodja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University in Kazakhstan, where he worked directly with academic and administrative staff from different cultural backgrounds, providing a field-based perspective on multicultural management processes. This unique experience adds contextual depth and originality to the study's analysis of the global education ecosystem and leadership structures in higher education. Such field-based experiences enable a strong bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

In order to properly understand the transformation created by globalization in higher education institutions and its impact on leadership processes, first of all, the structure of the global education ecosystem into which these institutions are integrated must be understood fully, accurately and in all its dimensions. Without examining this system in a holistic manner, it is not possible to properly structure other structural factors in higher education. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt a multi-layered analysis approach that encompasses psychological, sociological, pedagogical and administrative dimensions (Altbach & Knight, 2007: 293). The complex nature of the global education ecosystem has reached a dimension that affects policy makers, administrators and academics not only locally but also at a global level.



## **Global Education Ecosystem: The Role of Cultural Diversity and Globalization**

In this section, the effects of globalization and cultural diversity on higher education institutions will be discussed within the framework of the concept of "Global Education Ecosystem". First, the definition of the global education ecosystem will be provided and the dynamics of this structure based on multicultural interactions will be explained. Then, the balance of interaction between global values and local cultural dynamics will be examined and the importance of this process in terms of the sustainability of educational institutions will be emphasized. Finally, the effect of cultural diversity on learning processes will be evaluated; the opportunities and challenges created in the context of critical thinking, cognitive flexibility and intercultural interaction will be discussed. Thus, the ground will be prepared for a comprehensive analysis of the multidimensional structure created by globalization in higher education environments.

### ***Definition and Dynamics of the Global Education Ecosystem***

The global education ecosystem refers to a multidimensional structure where different cultural values meet, interact and contribute to new knowledge production processes through higher education institutions. This ecosystem is not only an academic mobility network that transcends geographical boundaries; it is also a dynamic interaction area that allows for the mutual transfer of knowledge, values and cultural codes (Altbach & Knight, 2007: 290). Within the global education ecosystem, higher education institutions have to adapt to global knowledge standards and develop original academic structures while preserving their local identities. However, this process also brings with it risks such as the erosion of local cultural differences under the influence global norms from time to time. For this reason, it is emphasized that the multicultural structure offered by the global education ecosystem should be managed with a perspective that enriches and protects local cultures (de Wit, 2020: 2).

In light of this information, in other words, the global education ecosystem can be defined as an ideal environment where students, faculty members, management and operational systems are structured within a coherent framework that encourages cultural diversity, supports individual development and prioritizes academic freedom. In an ideal global education ecosystem, students have the opportunity to think critically, develop empathy, and gain a multi-dimensional perspective by interacting with individuals from different cultures. Faculty members are positioned not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as leaders who create inclusive learning environments that encourage intercultural understanding. Management structures develop policies that make cultural diversity an institutional value and ensure that all individuals feel safe, valued and belong. Operational processes are shaped on the principles of transparency, justice, equal participation and cultural sensitivity. When evaluated in terms of psychological needs, an ideal global education ecosystem offers an environment that strengthens individuals' sense of belonging, supports academic and personal development, allows them to preserve their cultural identities and where differences are perceived as enrichment rather than threat. Such a structure creates a sustainable educational atmosphere by





supporting not only academic success but also the psychological well-being of individuals (Maslow, 1943; Anderson, 2006).

### ***Global Interaction and Local Dynamics***

The global education ecosystem offers a multidimensional interaction area where higher education institutions are faced with the necessity of preserving and developing local cultural dynamics while embracing global values. Globalization has facilitated access to information, increased multicultural academic collaborations and encouraged international academic mobility. However, this process not only carries the risk of eroding local cultural specificities in the face of universal standards, but also in some cases, local actors may show excessive resistance to global values and tend to withdraw and reject universal principles (Marginson, 2010: 23). This two-way tension necessitates the development of a balanced strategy for higher education institutions. Educational institutions must develop flexible policies that will protect and strengthen local identities, languages and cultural traditions while embracing the global flow of information and values. The sustainability of local values is of critical importance not only in terms of the protection of cultural heritage but also in terms of the identity development, sense of belonging and psychological well-being of individuals (Appadurai, 1996: 44). Therefore, a successful global education ecosystem should be based on a balanced structure that can reconcile global standards with local dynamics and integrate both global diversity and local originality. This approach is based on an interaction model that feeds not on conflict but on mutual enrichment.

### ***Impact of Diversity on Learning***

Cultural diversity is a critical factor that directly affects the quality of learning processes in higher education. The inclusion of individuals from different cultural backgrounds within the same learning environment greatly contributes to the development of students' critical thinking, cognitive flexibility, and intercultural empathy skills. (Banks, 2006: 18). Diversity acts as a protective barrier against homogeneous perspectives and strengthens students' multidimensional problem-solving abilities. However, effective management of this multicultural structure is of great importance. Seeing cultural differences only as a superficial element of diversity can prevent the formation of in-depth understanding and pave the way for intra-group conflicts (Deardorff, 2006: 247). It is not enough to accept cultural diversity in educational processes; it should be understood, valued, and actively integrated into learning processes. Effective diversity management encourages students to question cultural prejudices, be open to different perspectives, and communicate effectively in multicultural environments. Such a learning environment supports a holistic development process that strengthens not only academic success but also the social adaptation skills and cultural intelligence of individuals.

As a result, the concept of the global education ecosystem discussed in this section has revealed that it offers a multidimensional interaction area in the context of the effects of cultural diversity in higher education. The preservation of the delicate balance between global and local dynamics is of critical importance in terms of the sustainability of



educational institutions and the preservation of cultural richness. In addition, the positive contribution of cultural diversity to learning processes stands out as a key determinant in the cognitive and social development of individuals. This conceptual framework prepares the ground for the discussion of how leadership approaches in higher education are shaped in the context of multicultural environments in the following sections of the study.

### **Multicultural Interaction and Management in Higher Education**

This section will discuss strategies that will ensure multicultural interaction in higher education institutions and the effective management of this structure. Considering the multicultural nature of the global education ecosystem, elements such as communication skills that leaders should have, integration of policies that support diversity into the institutional structure, and management of cultural conflicts are of critical importance. First, leadership and communication skills that support multicultural interaction will be examined; then, how diversity can be effectively integrated into the institutional structure will be discussed. Finally, strategies for resolving cultural conflicts and peaceful adaptation processes of different cultures will be evaluated. Thus, a comprehensive framework will be presented on how effective leadership approaches can be developed in the management of multicultural environments.

### **Multicultural Communication Skills and Leadership:**

Effective leadership in multicultural environments is based not only on managerial skills but also on deep intercultural communication competence. Being able to communicate effectively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds requires leaders to develop empathy, sensitivity and active listening skills (Deardorff, 2006: 247). Leading within cultural diversity does not only require tolerating differences; it also requires developing an understanding that can transform these differences into the intellectual and social richness of the institution. Effective leaders encourage open-ended dialogues in intercultural communication, question prejudices and evaluate cultural differences as learning opportunities (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009: 10). In this context, communication should not only include the transfer of information but also the correct interpretation of cultural meanings and values. The understanding of multicultural leadership necessitates an approach that honors the cultural identities of individuals and manages differences with an inclusive strategy. Such a leadership approach enables the development of a management model that supports multicultural interaction and makes diversity one of the basic elements of institutional success.

While effective leadership and intercultural communication skills provide a critical foundation for supporting multicultural interaction, the sustainability of this structure is only possible through the development of diversity policies and their effective integration into the institutional structure. In this context, the process of designing and implementing strategies that promote diversity at the institutional level is of great importance.



### ***Diversity Policies and Inclusion Strategies:***

Sustaining multicultural interaction is not only limited to developing empathy and communication skills at the individual level; it also necessitates the design and implementation of comprehensive diversity policies at the institutional level. The success of diversity policies is possible by defining cultural richness as an institutional value and integrating these values into daily operations through concrete practices (Hurtado et al., 1998: 186). These policies should not only include different cultural groups in the institution; they should also aim to create an inclusive learning, teaching and management environment. Effective diversity strategies should include concrete steps such as open participation mechanisms, fair representation, intercultural training programs, and practices that support language diversity (Williams, 2020: 17). In addition, sharing successful examples and making practical applications visible in the process of integrating these policies into the institutional culture both increases motivation within the institution and reduces resistance points towards diversity (Smith, 2015: 44). In this context, higher education institutions need to build structures that not only accommodate diversity but also actively sustain and develop diversity.

However, significant risks arise when diversity policies remain at a formal level and are not deeply integrated into the institutional culture. If practitioners and managers primarily support their own cultural groups instead of adhering to the principle of neutrality in situations of cultural conflict, this may lead to a deterioration in the perception of institutional justice and a feeling of exclusion for other cultural groups (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008: 275). In such an atmosphere, cultural differences cease to be a source of enrichment and become a source of conflict and alienation. Discriminatory attitudes, especially those fed by cultural prejudices, can have permanent psychological effects on both students and academic and administrative staff (Goodman, 2009: 9). In order to prevent such negativities, it is of great importance that diversity policies are no longer merely principles included in documents but become an organic part of the daily life of the institution. Otherwise, institutions may become structures that deepen cultural separation and institutional alienation instead of developing cultural diversity.

Although the correct implementation of diversity policies promotes cultural harmony, conflicts inevitably arise from time to time in multicultural environments. Therefore, the development of effective cultural conflict management and harmony strategies is of vital importance for the sustainability of a peaceful coexistence in multicultural higher education institutions.

### ***Cultural Conflict Management and Harmonization Strategies:***

The management of cultural conflicts in multicultural higher education environments is a critical process for creating an effective and sustainable peaceful institutional environment. Various theoretical strategies for resolving cultural conflicts have been defined in the literature, and clearly defining their practical steps increases institutional success.

First, the integrative conflict management approach focuses on discovering the common interests of different parties and producing solutions that will benefit both parties



(Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007: 495). The application steps of this approach are as follows: (1) The parties are enabled to clearly express their basic needs and expectations, (2) The value differences underlying the conflict are determined, (3) Win-win solutions are created by working together on options that will provide mutual benefit.

Secondly, conflict management strategies based on cultural intelligence aim to develop individuals' skills in understanding, interpreting and behaving sensitively towards different cultural norms (Ang et al., 2007: 337). The implementation steps of this approach are as follows: (1) Individuals involved in the conflict are encouraged to define their own cultural prejudices, (2) Conscious trainings and workshops are organized to understand different cultural communication styles, (3) Decision-making processes sensitive to cultural differences are developed.

Thirdly, collaborative dialogue and mediation models aim to build trust between the parties through direct communication and empathic listening (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 45). The implementation steps of this approach are as follows: (1) Face-to-face open dialogue sessions are held between the parties, (2) The feelings, perceptions and expectations of the parties are listened to with an empathic approach, (3) While the parties are encouraged to produce solutions together, a mediator guides the process with cultural sensitivity.

Finally, adaptation and flexibility strategies focus on individuals developing flexibility to adapt to different cultural environments (Gudykunst, 2004: 67). The implementation steps of this approach are as follows: (1) Conscious experience programs are created for individuals to develop tolerance for cultural variability, (2) Individuals are trained in adaptive communication techniques (e.g., language use that is sensitive to cultural references) (3) Flexibility and adaptation capacity are regularly assessed and strengthened at the individual and institutional level.

The holistic and systematic implementation of these strategies not only enables conflicts to be resolved, but also enables multicultural environments to become areas of creative cooperation and cultural richness.

## **Global Leadership Models and Higher Education**

In this section, global leadership models used in the effective management of multicultural environments in higher education institutions and the development of these models will be examined. It will be discussed how leadership approaches that can be effective in different cultural contexts support inclusiveness in higher education institutions and how they establish a balance between global and local values. In addition, the importance of core competencies such as empathy, cultural sensitivity and flexibility in the development of multicultural leadership skills will be emphasized. Finally, it will be evaluated how cultural diversity plays a catalytic role in the development of innovative and creative leadership strategies. Thus, the necessary theoretical and practical framework for effective leadership practices in multicultural higher education environments will be established.



### **Multicultural Leadership Models:**

In the process of developing effective leadership practices in multicultural higher education environments it is important to utilize theoretical models that take into account the impact of cultural differences on leadership styles. In the literature, several models that systematically classify leadership differences across cultures.

Initially, the GLOBE Leadership Project (House et al., 2004) classified leadership prototypes according to cultural context in nine dimensions. In this study, leadership behaviors that are universally perceived as positive, such as charismatic/visionary leadership, participative leadership, and human-oriented leadership, were determined among the leadership characteristics. However, it was also revealed that authoritarian or individualistic leadership styles are perceived more positively in some cultures and negatively in others. According to the GLOBE model, leadership must be sensitive to the value systems of the cultural context in order to be effective.

Additionally, Mendenhall et al. (2012) defined the core competencies required for global leadership and diversified leadership models: Global Mindset and Boundary-Spanning Leadership. Global Mindset refers to the leader's capacity to understand and evaluate different cultural perspectives beyond their own culture, Boundary-Spanning Leadership means that the ability to manage interactions across different cultural, organizational or national boundaries.

Similarly, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Model (2001) explained how leadership styles. Leadership styles change based on cultural dimensions like individualism-collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. For example, in cultures with low power distance, leadership has a more horizontal and participatory structure, while in cultures with high power distance, an authoritarian and directive attitude is expected from leaders.

These theoretical frameworks show that in multicultural leadership practices, not only general leadership skills but also strategies specific to the cultural context should be developed. Multicultural leadership in higher education institutions requires a flexible approach that can balance universal leadership principles with local cultural sensitivities.

### **Development of Multicultural Leadership Skills:**

Effective leadership in multicultural higher education environments requires leaders to have certain intercultural competencies. In the literature, the basic characteristics required for multicultural leadership and strategies for developing these characteristics have been systematically defined.

**Intercultural Empathy:** The ability to understand the perspectives of individuals from different cultural backgrounds and to communicate in a way that is sensitive to these differences (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015: 29). Development strategies are as follows: (1) Participation in intercultural simulation and role-playing activities, (2) Cultural story listening and telling studies to develop empathy, (3) Structured in-depth interviews with individuals from different cultural groups.



**Cultural Intelligence (CQ):** A set of cognitive, motivational and behavioral abilities that enable being effective in different cultures (Ang & Van Dyne, 2015: 34). Development strategies are as follows: (1) Cultural knowledge programs and cultural awareness training, (2) Taking an active role in intercultural tasks (e.g. international team leadership), (3) Receiving feedback using assessment tools that measure cultural adaptation skills.

**Flexibility and Adaptability:** The capacity to be sensitive to different cultural norms and expectations and to show behavioral flexibility according to these differences (Rockstuhl et al., 2011: 829). Development strategies are as follows: (1) Flexibility-based problem-solving studies on intercultural crisis scenarios, (2) Short-term relocation programs to gain experience in different cultural environments, (3) Keeping individual diary or writing reflection reports on adaptation processes.

**Global Mindset:** The ability to make intellectual and emotional transitions between different cultures, markets and organizational systems (Mendenhall et al., 2012: 43). Development strategies are as follows: (1) Regularly following the global agenda and international developments, (2) Developing a multicultural perspective by taking part in international consortiums, (3) Undertaking leadership in intercultural collaborations and exchange projects.

**Effective Intercultural Communication Skills:** The ability to communicate according to different cultural norms and correctly interpret cultural implications and differences (House et al., 2004: 65). Development strategies are as follows: (1) Participation in advanced intercultural communication training, (2) Learning culturally sensitive listening and questioning techniques, (3) Participation in the solution of case studies emphasizing cultural empathy in communication.

The systematic development of these characteristics directly contributes to the establishment of effective, inclusive and sustainable leadership practices in multicultural higher education environments.

### ***Innovation and Creativity in Multicultural Leadership:***

Multicultural leadership structures have the potential to not only manage diversity but also use this diversity as a resource for innovation and creativity. There is strong evidence in the literature that cultural diversity strengthens innovative thinking and creative problem-solving skills (Stahl et al., 2010: 692). The fact that individuals from different cultural backgrounds offer different perspectives paves the way for questioning existing patterns and developing alternative solutions. This requires leaders to view cultural diversity not only as a challenge to be managed but also as a strategic advantage.

According to Hofstede (2001: 353), individuals from cultures with high individualism tend to produce more original ideas, while individuals from collectivist cultures tend to develop group-based innovative solutions. Therefore, it is critical for multicultural leaders to create environments that encourage both individual and collective creativity.

Effective leadership practices to encourage innovation in multicultural environments include: (1) Open Communication and Psychological Trust: Creating an environment



where different ideas can be expressed without punishment (Edmondson, 1999). (2) Valuing Differences: Seeing cultural differences not as deficiencies but as sources of innovative thinking and integrating this perspective into the institutional culture (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002: 487). (3) Building Cross-Cultural Teams: Creating teams where individuals from different cultural backgrounds can work together and produce creative synergy (Stahl et al., 2010: 693).

Multicultural leadership fosters the development of innovative strategies nourished by this diversity, enabling higher education institutions to produce more creative and compatible solutions to changing global needs.

As a result, in this section, how leadership practices should be structured in multicultural higher education environments is discussed within the framework of theoretical models and a competency-based approach. Under the title of Multicultural Leadership Models, leadership typologies that are sensitive to cultural context are defined; In the section of Development of Multicultural Leadership Skills, the basic characteristics that multicultural leaders should have and the strategies for developing these characteristics are systematically presented. Finally, under the title of Innovation and Creativity in Multicultural Leadership, how cultural diversity contributes to the development of innovative and creative solutions through leadership is discussed. This conceptual framework will form the basis for a more in-depth analysis of the transformation processes of leadership in higher education in the continuation of the study.

## **Global Governance and the Future of Sustainable Multicultural Leadership**

This section explores the current status of sustainable leadership practices within multicultural structures in higher education institutions and the dynamics of transformation for the future. First of all, it will discuss how sustainable leadership models are built through the strategic integration of cultural diversity and how these models contribute to the long-term success of higher education institutions. Then, it will analyze how new technological developments in digitalization, artificial intelligence and intercultural communication transform leadership structures. In this context, it will be evaluated how flexible and inclusive leadership models shaped by cultural sensitivity will form the basis of future multicultural higher education institutions. Thus, the evolution of sustainable multicultural leadership structures will be examined with a holistic approach from a perspective extending from the present to the future.

### ***Sustainable Leadership and Multicultural Integration***

Sustainable leadership involves not only maintaining current operational success but also using cultural diversity as a strategic advantage for the future. Hargreaves and Fink (2006: 30) define sustainable leadership as an approach based on the preservation of values, long-term thinking and cultural sensitivity. In this context, multicultural integration has become an integral component of sustainable leadership.



The basic steps that leaders should follow for successful cultural integration are as follows: (1) The institution clearly defines cultural diversity in official strategic documents, (2) Establishing decision-making mechanisms where different cultural groups are represented, (3) Developing an institutional culture where cultural differences are accepted as values (Stensaker & Harvey, 2010: 104).

These steps ensure not only the preservation of diversity but also the transformation of cultural values into fundamental elements of sustainable development.

### ***Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Development Goals***

Cultural diversity plays a strategic role in achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs). According to the OECD (2019: 14) report, universities' support for cultural diversity strengthens their social responsibility and promotes inclusive development through education. In this context, universities should: (1) Develop social responsibility projects that support cultural diversity, (2) Encourage intercultural collaborations to achieve sustainable development goals, (3) Integrate cultural diversity and sustainability themes in their educational programs. These strategies reveal that cultural diversity is not only an ethical value but also an indispensable resource for sustainable development.

### ***Future Directions: Digitalization, Multicultural Communication, and Inclusive Leadership***

Future higher education leadership is taking shape in parallel with developments in the fields of digitalization, artificial intelligence and intercultural communication. Digitalization accelerates data-based decision-making processes; and artificial intelligence allows leaders to analyze different cultural needs more sensitively (Makridakis, 2017: 24).

Altbach and Knight (2007: 301) emphasize that the multicultural perspective has a transformative effect on leadership structures; they predict that in the future, leadership structures will be redesigned in a more flexible, inclusive and culturally diverse manner. Bush and Middlewood (2005: 98) state that future leadership models should be based on the principles of flexibility and participation in order to adapt to changing cultural, technological and social dynamics.

Accordingly, in future leadership practices, the following are primarily envisaged: (1) Use of artificial intelligence-supported cultural analysis and decision support systems, (2) Effective management of multicultural teams through digital platforms, (3) Creation of flexible and inclusive management structures that encourage cultural diversity.

This transformation will ensure that cultural diversity becomes not just a phenomenon to be managed, but a strategic competitive advantage and source of sustainable development in higher education.





## Conclusion

The rapidly changing dynamics of globalization have profoundly transformed higher education institutions; turning these institutions into multicultural ecosystems where different cultural values intersect and interact. This study reveals that the success and sustainability of higher education institutions in the global arena play a crucial role on their capacity to strategically integrate cultural diversity and adapt their leadership structures accordingly.

The examination of the global education ecosystem has emphasized the critical importance of establishing a delicate balance between global interaction and local cultural dynamics. It has been shown that effective management of cultural diversity strengthens learning processes, supports cognitive flexibility and creates inclusive social environments. In this context, multicultural leadership skills such as intercultural empathy, cultural intelligence, flexibility and global perspective have emerged as core competencies for leadership in complex multicultural environments.

The study also emphasized that sustainable leadership approaches should not only protect and respect cultural diversity, but also use this diversity as a strategic resource for institutional innovation and development. Transformative forces such as digitalization and artificial intelligence play an important role in future leadership models as critical tools that support multicultural decision-making and communication processes. This study offers a comprehensive framework that integrates the concepts of multiculturalism, leadership development, and sustainability in the context of higher education. The results indicate that the construction of culturally sensitive, flexible, and inclusive leadership structures is essential for higher education institutions to maintain their resilience and global competitiveness. Future research should examine that future research examine the practical applications of these models in different regional and institutional contexts in more detail in a world where technological change and cultural diversity are rapidly increasing.

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## **MANAGEMENT STYLES AND ORGANIZATIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVEL OF HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS**

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### **Abstract**

With the influence of globalization, the responsibilities of administrators are increasing day by day. Academic and administrative managers in higher education institutions guide students academically, socially, and psychologically, and the quality of this guidance directly affects the organizational intelligence of institutions, which in turn influences the quality of services provided and stakeholder satisfaction. However, no study has been found that examines the relationship between higher education administrators' leadership styles and organizational intelligence within a theoretical framework. No studies have been found that directly examine the relationship between the management styles of higher education administrators and organizational intelligence, although there are studies that are indirectly related. The purpose of this study is to explain the concepts of management styles of higher education administrators and organizational intelligence of institutions, and to discuss their theoretical foundations. It has been prepared using a qualitative literature review method. Case studies available in TR Index and Turcademy.com were examined, and the effects of management styles and organizational intelligence in higher education were analyzed. The data obtained were processed primarily using content analysis. The findings were examined carefully, in detail, and systematically, then classified and interpreted. This research contributes to understanding of the role of higher education administrators management styles in organizational intelligence.

### **Keywords**

Organizational intelligence, Management, Management Style, Administrator.

### **Resumo**

Com o avanço da globalização, as responsabilidades atribuídas aos administradores das Instituições de Ensino Superior têm-se intensificado progressivamente. Os gestores académicos e administrativos assumem um papel fundamental na orientação dos estudantes, não apenas a nível académico, mas também nos domínios social e psicológico. A qualidade dessa orientação tem um impacto direto na inteligência organizacional das instituições, a qual, por sua vez, influencia significativamente a qualidade dos serviços prestados e o grau de



satisfação das partes interessadas. Apesar da relevância do tema, não se identificaram estudos que abordem, de forma direta e enquadrada teoricamente, a relação entre os estilos de liderança dos administradores do ensino superior e a inteligência organizacional. Embora existam investigações com ligações indiretas, verifica-se uma lacuna na literatura relativamente à exploração sistemática desta relação. O presente estudo tem como objetivo principal clarificar os conceitos de estilos de gestão dos administradores do ensino superior e de inteligência organizacional, bem como discutir os respetivos fundamentos teóricos. A investigação foi desenvolvida com base numa metodologia de revisão qualitativa da literatura. Para tal, foram analisados estudos de caso disponíveis em bases de dados como o TR Index e o Turcademy.com, com o intuito de examinar os efeitos dos estilos de gestão e da inteligência organizacional no contexto do ensino superior. Os dados recolhidos foram tratados maioritariamente através de análise de conteúdo. Os resultados foram analisados de forma minuciosa, sistemática e detalhada, sendo posteriormente organizados e interpretados com base em categorias temáticas relevantes. Esta investigação pretende contribuir para um melhor entendimento do papel dos estilos de gestão adotados pelos administradores no desenvolvimento da inteligência organizacional nas instituições de ensino superior, oferecendo, assim, um referencial teórico para estudos futuros nesta área.

#### **Palavras-chave**

Inteligência Organizacional, Gestão, Estilo de gestão, Administrador.

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## **MANAGEMENT STYLES AND ORGANIZATIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVEL OF HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS**

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### **1. Introduction**

The fundamental principles and functions of management are valid for all organizations. While public institutions, voluntary organizations, and private sector organizations differ in their implementation styles (Erdoğan,1994), the success and effectiveness of organizations depend not on their type but on the efficiency and capability of their management. Just as water and air are vital for living organisms, successful and effective management is the lifeline of organizations. This is closely related to the organization's cultural values, organizational intelligence, the harmony of its management style, and the functions of its administrators.

Higher education represents the final and most critical level of formal education in preparing future generations. It plays a key role in a country's development across economic, industrial, cultural, technological, political, and many other domains (Ünsal, 2016). This diversity reflects not only on the execution of academic duties but also on the differentiation of expertise between departments, making the bureaucratic structure more complex. Although quantitative criteria such as punctual attendance, timely fulfilment of responsibilities, and positive student evaluations are commonly used to assess academic performance, these often result in a mechanical perception of the academician. Nevertheless, it is essential to prioritize and preserve educational quality. In the absence of comprehensive tools to assess academic quality, more easily measurable elements such as class attendance, timely grade entry, student evaluations, and job continuity become the primary focus. A shared governance model based on checks and balances and coordinated collaboration between academic and administrative units fosters neutrality. However, not all societies or higher education institutions can adapt to the changes brought by globalization. Some struggle to keep up with contemporary developments. Moreover, the standardization movement has caused higher education institutions to prioritize accreditation over individual institutional identity. Therefore, management styles in higher education have become a crucial issue requiring close attention (Celep & Tülübaşı, 2015).

This study was prepared using a qualitative literature review method. Case studies included in the existing literature in TR Dizin and Turcademy.com were examined, and



management styles, management styles in higher education, and their effects on organizational intelligence were analyzed. In processing the data obtained from these sources, content analysis was commonly utilized. The data collected during this process were examined carefully, thoroughly, and systematically, then classified and interpreted. The data were obtained from academic articles, books, master's/doctoral theses, and peer-reviewed journal publications. The selected studies were particularly those conducted in higher education institutions, addressing the relationship between management styles and organizational intelligence, covering basic management theories, and published within the last 5–10 years. The aim of this article is to explore the concepts of management, management styles, and organizational intelligence and to examine how they are explained with the help of the classical management theories on which the literature is based, particularly through the management process approach. In this context, a qualitative literature review was conducted, first addressing the question of “what is management, what is a management style?” and then examining the relationship between organizational intelligence and management styles in higher education. Understanding the theoretical foundations of management styles in higher education will contribute to a better understanding of the organizational implications of the subject.

When the national literature is examined, some of the case studies that investigate the effects of management styles in higher education institutions on organizational intelligence are as follows: Tekbulut (2017) investigated the relationship between leadership styles, organizational citizenship behaviors, and academic performance, based on the participation of 291 faculty members working during the 2015–2016 academic year at Hacettepe University, Middle East Technical University (METU), and Gazi University. The results of the study showed significant differences in faculty members’ views on the department chair’s leadership style according to the faculty and university variables.

In Turkey, various institutions including the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Development, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), and numerous non-governmental organizations actively support youth-oriented projects and scientific research. These bodies provide assistance to young individuals, initiatives targeting youth, and researchers through scholarships and grant programs. A tangible example of such support is the International Youth and Science Center project. In their (2018) study, Açıkalın, Erçetin, Potas, and Güngör examined the perspectives of 1,958 young individuals aged 15 to 29 who participated in the International Youth and Science Center in Ankara. The study aimed to assess participants’ views on the planned scientific activities. The findings revealed that participants reported high levels of satisfaction with the scientific events, the educators involved, and the physical facilities and educational materials provided. Furthermore, the participants perceived the educators as competent in their subject areas and acknowledged that the scientific activities contributed positively to their career planning and personal development.

In a study conducted by Altıntaş and Özata (2024) at Yozgat Bozok University, the effects of transformational and transactional leadership styles on employee satisfaction were analyzed. The findings revealed that organizational trust and organizational commitment



played a partial mediating role in the effect of transformational and transactional leadership on employee satisfaction among healthcare workers. Among education workers, organizational trust and commitment partially mediated the effect of transformational leadership on employee satisfaction, whereas in the case of transactional leadership, these factors played a full mediating role. Organizational communication was not found to significantly affect employee satisfaction; hence, no mediating effect was observed.

Aktemur (2016) investigated the effects of administrators' leadership styles on employees' emotional intelligence and perceptions of organizational culture. The study was conducted with a total of 103 participants, including managerial staff and teachers from a private educational institution in Istanbul. The analysis showed statistically significant relationships between educational level and emotional intelligence, years of service and charismatic leadership, empowering leadership and personal competence, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, transformational leadership and organizational identity, norms, rituals, perceived values, and institutional image, and similarly, charismatic leadership and empowering leadership with those same variables related to organizational culture.

Göl (2018) analyzed the relationship between decision-making styles of higher education administrators and organizational culture. The study was conducted during the 2016–2017 academic year with 310 administrators working in public and foundation universities in Turkey. According to the findings, a significant difference emerged only in terms of seniority among demographic variables. However, when means were considered, differences were observed for other demographic variables as well. Additionally, there were varying levels and strengths of relationships between perceived organizational culture types and preferred decision-making styles.

This study attempts to examine management styles and organizational intelligence in higher education within a general framework, based on Henry Fayol's Management Process Approach from Classical Management Theories. This is because the management process approach encompasses principles directly related to management styles. Management styles in higher education institutions are highly influential in shaping organizational intelligence. Factors such as transformational leadership, ethical leadership, and emotional intelligence contribute to enhancing organizational intelligence, enabling institutions to adapt more effectively and become more innovative in response to environmental changes. The case studies mentioned above demonstrate that leadership approaches have a direct impact on areas such as employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and academic performance. In this regard, although this study focuses on examining the relationship between management styles and organizational intelligence in higher education institutions through the management process approach from Classical Management Theories, it is also supported by the Contingency Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Organizational Learning Theory.





## 2. The Concept of Management and Management Styles

The concept of management has existed as a discipline for centuries. Management is the process of directing all resources in an organization primarily human resources toward predetermined objectives and controlling them around organizational goals (Bursalioğlu, 2012). While what a manager should do is generally defined by procedures in the private sector and by regulations in the public sector, how a manager should do it is often unclear (Özgür, 2011). The fundamental question in management, therefore, is "what to do" and "how to do it." Studies on management styles are expected to guide policymakers and educators. A management style effective in one society may hold little significance in another. Therefore, it seems implausible to talk about a standard set of management styles. Moiden (2002) argues that there is no consensus on the "most appropriate management style." Therefore, the expected outcome of the management process is to apply the style most suitable for achieving the organization's goals and objectives. When confronted with conflict, a manager must determine and implement appropriate resolution strategies. However, addressing conflict merely through organizational strategies may prove insufficient. Managers must also understand how individuals involved in the conflict perceive and approach it (Moberg, 2001: 48). Each manager acts as a conflict resolver within their organization and develops a personal management style. Effective managers are responsible for ensuring that their organizations operate constructively and productively. From this understanding, three fundamental management styles have emerged: autocratic, democratic-participative, and laissez faire.

**Autocratic Management Style:** In this style, managers concentrate all power, authority, and responsibility in themselves and grant no say to subordinates. The opinions of subordinates are considered insignificant, and the primary concern is the fulfillment of tasks. This style is typically adopted in situations requiring swift decision making or in organizations with unmotivated and untrained personnel who must be mobilized quickly through pressure or fear.

**Democratic-Participative Management Style:** This style involves managers encouraging subordinates to contribute to decision but does so after gathering input from subordinates. This style aims not only to achieve organizational goals but also to benefit from the managerial capabilities of subordinates. It does not rely on a centralized authority. The manager delegates tasks and responsibilities to subordinates, and decisions are made collectively in meetings. In this style, the manager's attitude is particularly important.

**Laissez-Faire Management Style:** Also known as the "hands-off" style, managers provide subordinates with a goal but allow them freedom in how to achieve it. According to Eren (1993), this style requires minimal managerial authority, with the manager acting as a supporter within the bounds of the resources provided, taking on a monitoring role. Organizational success depends more on the members than on the manager. To implement this style effectively, members must be experts in their work and possess a strong sense of responsibility (Yılmaz, 2016).



### 3. The Concept of Organization and Organizational Intelligence

The relationship between individual and collective learning is of great importance in organizational theory. Although organizational learning occurs through individuals, it is a mistake to consider it merely as the sum of individuals learning. Organizations do not possess brains, but they do have cognitive systems and memory. Individuals come and go, leaders change, yet the memory of organization preserves certain behaviors, cognitive maps, norms, and values over time. Organizations that fail to internalize the philosophy of organizational learning lose their ability to renew themselves, shape the future, and create differentiation compared to their competitors. A learning organization is one that possesses the ability to generate, acquire, and transfer knowledge and to modify its behaviors in accordance with new knowledge and insights. In this context, organization's adaptation to its environment its ability to raise awareness and transform its surroundings through Collective action and shared consciousness based on its goals and capabilities. In organizations that aim for high performance, members must engage in a Collective effort to refine, preserve, and transform both individual and organizational knowledge essentially, to focus on knowledge management, a key component of organizational intelligence. In this sense, organizational intelligence is defined as the willingness, unity, and ability of organizational members to enhance performance, refine Professional knowledge collectively, and communicate intelligently informed meanings through organizational behavior. Organizational intelligence is the foundation and key to the process of organizational learning (Yıldırım, 2006: 147). The importance of intelligent behavior within the structure and operations of organizations is undeniable. The reflection of this intelligence in organizational behavior is driven by internal dynamics (Neyişçi, 2018).

In the 2014-2015 academic year, a study was conducted with a total of 48 people in a primary school in Ankara to determine the social network structure of organizational intelligence and operational sub-dimensions and to determine how the social network structure differs. In the data collection, the "Multidimensional Organizational Intelligence Scale" was used to determine the organizational intelligence and operational sub-dimensions of the primary school and the "Social Network" data collection form was used to determine the characteristics of the network mechanism and the relationships of the actors in the network mechanism. Social network analysis, descriptive statistics, t-test and variance analysis were used in the analysis of the data. According to the research results, teacher and administrator perceptions regarding the intelligence level of the school were generally determined as very high and high (Neyişçi and Erçetin, 2020). Additionally, Potas et al. (2017) found that teachers' perceptions of the organizational intelligence levels of the schools they work in were high.

Various researchers have proposed different definitions of organizational intelligence. Weber et.al. (1996, as cited in Erçetin, 2004) define it as an organization's ability to adapt to, shape, and transform its environment through Collective action and consciousness in live with its goals and competencies. Simic (2005), on the other hand, defines it as "an organization's intellectual capacity to solve organizational problems." One influential framework in the literature is that of Terenzini (1993), who conceptualizes organizational intelligence through three dimensions: 1) technical-analytical, 2) problem-



solving, and 3) contextual. The technical-analytical dimension consists of factual knowledge or information and analytical/methodological skills. Factual knowledge refers to the operational principles and norms found in legal administrative texts about an organization's structure and functioning, as well as the resulting actions. Analytical and methodological competencies pertain to the processing, assessment, and interpretation of data related to organizational outcomes and help facilitate planning, monitoring, and evaluation processes aligned with organizational goals. The problem-solving dimension addresses various managerial issues and includes the effective operation of both formal and informal organizational structures. The contextual dimension integrates the technical analytical and problem-solving dimensions within the organization's cultural elements such as history, value systems, and norms. This dimension refers to the process of forming organizational identity. In summary:

- Organizations, like individuals, possess intelligence.
- Organizational intelligence should be analyzed through a multifaceted lens, taking into account interacting components.
- It is synergistic, involving the interaction and energy transfer from individual to organization and vice versa.
- Emotional intelligence and competencies of individuals play a critical role in this process.

To sustain the health and effectiveness of this living system (i.e., the organization), the emotional intelligence and competencies of individuals who are its most critical elements must be transformed into the collective emotional intelligence and competencies of the organization. At the individual level, emotional intelligence encompasses self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and interpersonal skills. On an institutional level, these correspond to organizational self-awareness (culture), emotional management, a shared and pursued vision, organizational self-assessment and environmental sensitivity, and effective communication (Erçetin, 2000: 16).

In organizations are viewed as living, learning, adapting, evolving entities then managers can be seen as interpreters of organizational intelligence. From this perspective, organizations to make decisions regarding both routine activities and unexpected situations in a dynamic global environment and their capacity to employ those capabilities (Erçetin, 2004: 42).

Ultimately, organizational intelligence entails: Quickness in action and response, adaptability to change, operational flexibility and ease, intuition and foresight, open-mindedness, creativity and imagination, and the capacity for renewal.

In their work, Halal and Kull (1998) identify various variables and benefits of organizational intelligence, including information Technologies and systems, organizational structure, culture, ecological relationships, knowledge assets, strategic processes, dynamic factors, and performance. According to their findings:

- Managers and organizational members can assess the proactive capabilities of the entire organizational system.



- The patterns of the organization's relationships with its environment can be understood.
- The organization's strengths and weaknesses can be identified.
- Proposals that foster knowledge creation and creativity in sub systems and the organization as a whole can be developed.
- Gains can be increased through dynamic factors such as leadership (Erçetin, 2004).

#### **4. Classical Management Theory, the Process Approach, and the Contingency Approach**

Classical Management Theory, which continues to influence contemporary management thought, includes Max Weber's Bureaucratic Theory, F.W. Taylor's Scientific Management Theory, and Henri Fayol's Administrative (Process) Management Approach. Rather than describing what is, this theory focuses on what ought to be (Mahmood & Basharat, 2012: 512). According to this theory, structure is central to the functioning of organizations; thus, classical theorists concentrated their attention on the design of formal organizational structures. Within this framework, the theory is built upon four foundational elements: division of labor, hierarchy, structure, and control (Turan & Şahin, 2016: 31).

To understand Fayol's views more clearly, one must consider the era in which he lived. The general characteristics of Classical Management Thinking and its proponents are as follows:

- It emerged in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution.
- It emphasized increasing added value and enhancing performance.
- It was rule-oriented, normative, and imposed a rigid discipline on employees.
- Centralized and hierarchical management structures were dominant.
- Job security for workers was considered important.
- Workers were often viewed as machines, ignoring emotional and psychological dimensions.
- Personal issues of workers were assumed to have no effect on productivity.
- Organizations were seen as closed systems with no interaction with the environment.
- Productivity was believed to increase through specialization and division of labor (Karaboğa & Zehir, 2020).

A significant portion of the theoretical foundation of Classical Management Theory is based on Fayol's Process Management Approach. Fayol's work focused primarily on management functions. In his 1916 publication *Administration Industrielle et Generale* (General and Industrial Management), he introduced six managerial functions and fourteen principles of management: Division of work, authority and responsibility,



discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, subordination of individual interests to general interest, fair remuneration, centralization, scalar chain, order, equity, stability of personnel, initiative, and esprit de corps.

Fayol believed the following about these principles (Fayol, 2005):

- Nothing in management is absolute or definitive.
- Management is a matter of measurement and comparison.
- Even under similar conditions, the same principle is rarely applied in the same way.
- Practice should consider changing and diverse circumstances.
- Principles must be flexible and adaptable to needs.
- Knowing how to apply them is essential this requires significant skill.
- Experience, intelligence, decisiveness, and comparative judgment are essential to applying principles effectively.
- There is no limit to management principles.
- Every rule and method shown through experience to facilitate management functions and strengthen the organization can be considered a management principle.

According to Fayol, organizations should have hierarchical structures, and management authority should rest with top managers. Lower-level managers must regularly inform upper management about work activities (Mahmood & Basharat, 2012).

Emerging in the 1960s, the Contingency Approach of Modern Management Theory posits that every organization is unique in terms of its subsystems and environment. It proposes that the management process should be internally referenced and context dependent (Gültekin, 2004). In contingency thinking, the practice of management should align with what the situation demands. Success lies in fit and flexibility; therefore, there is no universally best management approach. Management style, leadership effectiveness, or organizational structure varies by context. That is, organizations adapt to specific environmental conditions and variables to be successful. This approach, while highlighting the unique and dynamic nature of organizations, also offers clarity on how they should be managed.

The concept of Transformational Leadership was first introduced by Burns in 1978 and later developed by Bass in 1985. Gaining prominence in the 1990s, the theory of transformational leadership describes visionary leaders who lead their organizations to success, support the performance of their followers, and create new opportunities. It emphasizes empowerment and motivation as tools to change institutional culture and values. Transformational leaders are those who transfer strategic visions and strategies to a collective team spirit, find clear and feasible solutions quickly. They inspire others to follow suit. These leaders are charismatic, intellectually engaging, and foster high levels of trust and identification among followers. Higher education institutions, which need to adapt to rapidly changing technological, economic, social, and cultural trends, require continuous transformation. Given the increasing importance of entrepreneurial



universities, transformation leadership plays a vital role in enabling institutions to keep pace with global change. Such leaders empower academic staff and enhance productivity. In higher education, transformational leaders also serve as sources of inspiration for students (Karadağ, 2024).

The theory of Organizational Learning includes various models and approaches. It posits that organizations generate two types of knowledge necessary for operations: "process knowledge" and "deep knowledge" (Anderson et al., 1994). Process knowledge involves the Technologies, human capital, and task requirements that guide organizational operations and define quality standards. Deep knowledge, on the other hand, encompasses foundational disciplines such as systems theory, statistics, and psychology. While process knowledge helps understand the production and distribution of goods and services, deep knowledge facilitates the learning processes within the organization. Utilizing both types of knowledge lead to continuous improvement in products, services, and processes (Aydınlı, 2005). The concept of the "learning organization," popularized in the 1990s through Peter M. Senge's book *The Fifth Discipline* (2007), refers to organizations that facilitate the learning of their members and continuously transform themselves. Just as individuals learn, so too do organizations. This learning process is Collective and includes acquiring knowledge, gathering information, and changing behavior. It promotes adaptation to the environment and supports innovation and competitiveness.

When we evaluate the relationship between organizational intelligence and organizational learning, we find that organizational intelligence enables leaders to make strategic and creative decisions by using information quickly and effectively. Meanwhile, organizational learning brings about behavioral change through the acquisition of knowledge. In turn, organizational intelligence enhances the quality and pace of learning processes. Thus, there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between organizational intelligence and organizational learning like branches growing from the same rooted tree. In choosing a management style in higher education, administrators must consider both organizational learning as indispensable tools for achieving effective and solution-oriented outcomes.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is observed that contemporary universities have undergone a transformation, influenced by global implementations of new public management, neoliberal policies, and the concept of globalization, which began in the 1980s. In this context, efficiency and accountability have become the primary focus in higher education institutions and among their representatives. Management practices in the higher education sector have shifted from collegial governance to a more institutional or commercial paradigm, functioning as mechanisms for control, cost reduction, and the advancement of specific policy agendas. This transformation has led to a decline in the influence of academics in goal-oriented decision-making processes, with authority shifting from academia to hierarchical structures.

In a critical perspective toward this shift, which evaluates universities through the lens of business logic, Owen (2003: 43) advocates for a culture of evaluation in higher



education institutions. He emphasizes the necessity of implementing evidence-based practices by involving staff in decision making processes to promote continuous organizational development. In this context, transformational leadership may serve the success of organizations by aligning with these objectives. However, today's university academics, who are expected to be the main participants in university governance, often find themselves burdened by excessive workloads and low salaries. Through increased collegial participation, it may be possible to meet their legitimate need for a voice in institutional matters. Therefore, effective managers should focus on systems of organizational learning, organizational intelligence, and design processes. When these conditions are met, the participation of all stakeholders and the empowerment of personnel will be ensured leading to greater accountability. Consequently, academics will be better equipped to fulfill their duties in a manner aligned with institutional expectations.

Mintzberg (1994) does not view employees merely as passive implementers within organizations but rather as effective strategists. He defines universities as Professional organizations in which employees are loosely and often inadequately involved in organizational processes. From this perspective, he criticizes top-down management styles. Hence, we may contrast Fayol's process approach with Mintzberg's emphasis on employee agency and suggest that practitioners consider complementary viewpoints while applying Fayol's principles in higher education setting.

Ramsden observes a shift in Australian universities from bureaucratic structures to learning oriented frameworks. He argues that top-down administrative control is both erroneous and problematic. In this context, comparing higher education management in Turkey with that of other countries may serve as a valuable tool for evaluating and benchmarking institutional performance.

In the 21st century, the international system has become more complex and interdependent, with mutual relations becoming more diversified and intense. On the other hand, Turkey has shown great success since the early 2000s by increasing employment and income levels in terms of both economic and social development performance. Turkey has become an upper-middle income country (Açıklan, 2021). In the field of education, university rankings affect the views and preferences of students, academics, policy makers and other stakeholders. They often provide valuable insights into the quality and reputation of universities worldwide. Academic quality which reflects the effectiveness of teaching activities and educational programs encompasses both tangible and intangible elements that affect student learning outcomes and experiences. Global ranking systems, such as the Times Higher Education World University Ranking, evaluate institutional effectiveness across a range of dimensions. These systems rely on comprehensive datasets from approximately 1,800 universities worldwide (cited in Balcı, 2023). Therefore, it is recommended that higher education administrators in Turkey closely monitor global ranking systems and use their indicators as tools to support institutional dynamics, staff motivation, and student engagement.

Fayol argued that leaders who govern organizations based on his fourteen principles would inevitably contribute to organizational effectiveness and efficiency. He believed that without these principles, organizations would descend into chaos and operate in



darkness. Nonetheless, his theory has been subject to criticism for various reasons, including its overly formal structure, insufficient attention to employee dynamics, vague and sometimes superficial approaches, and its failure to associate managerial principles with justice or ethical responsibilities. Fayol also faced criticism for being overly universalist, neglecting empirical validation, viewing organizations as closed systems, and promoting a single management approach applicable under all circumstances. Moreover, the assumption that management functions such as planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling are naturally inherent to management is now considered a fallacy. Rather than debating the current relevance of Fayol's ideas, it may be more productive to examine how his general management approach corresponds to contemporary management theories. This approach would help us enhance our knowledge of management and identify commonalities among diverse theoretical perspectives (Karaboğa & Zehir, 2020).

Despite this criticism, Fayol has left an indelible mark on the history of management. His theory has not faded over time and continues to offer valuable insights for contemporary organizational leaders. Based on the theory and the process approach discussed in this study, it is recommended that higher education administrators serve as role models to their staff, prioritize organizational intelligence without reducing institutions to closed systems, and move beyond uniform management styles by responding to contextual goals and needs. Managers should place importance on the human dimension of organizations. Furthermore, it is advised that higher education institutions train their leaders in hierarchical, rule based, disciplinary, and authority related matters or collaborate with managers who demonstrate such competencies. In this way, role model leaders will positively influence their teams, enhance organizational intelligence, and contribute to the development of effective and successful management styles.

By adhering to Fayol's principles and utilizing management functions appropriately, framework can be established in alignment with the Contingency Theory's unique and integrative understanding of organizations. Projects and educational initiatives (such as courses and R&D studies) may also be used to support personnel development in this area. A key limitation of this study is that it explores management styles and organizational intelligence using only a limited number of theories. Future studies may consider additional theoretical frameworks to examine how managers influence their institutions through their management styles and organizational intelligence.

In summary; The management styles of higher education administrators and the concept of organizational intelligence have been examined through the lens of the process approach in classical management theory, as well as through the Contingency Theory and Organizational Learning Theory. Today's higher education institutions have evolved far beyond classical bureaucratic structures. Various factors lie at the core of organizational intelligence in universities. These institutions now seek to go beyond national boundaries and secure a place on international platforms while preserving their uniqueness. In the face of a global and competitive World order, universities must become more flexible, adaptive and agile. The pursuit of institutional rankings, accreditations of the need to align with an ever-changing information society to manage academic data, scientific outputs, and institutional processes systematically, universities have developed intelligence-based structures such as digital transformation initiatives and R&D centers.





In the post COVID-19 era, digitalization has accelerated, and the experience of distance education has underscored the importance of adaptability and flexibility. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has had some positive impacts on students, it has also resulted in various negative consequences. "The effects of the pandemic on students differ significantly depending on the socio-economic status of their families. Low-income families, particularly those engaged in daily-paid labor without a stable income, have been more adversely affected and have experienced elevated stress levels compared to others. Nevertheless, it can be posited that greater opportunities provided by parents during this period may have led to different outcomes for gifted students. In this regard, causal studies involving parents and children may be conducted to explore these dynamics further." (Erçetin *et al.*, 2021: 18).

The challenges and successes faced by organizations during this process have highlighted the critical role of management styles and decision-making capabilities in education and training. Today, universities are no longer solely institutions of education and research they are dynamic organizations contributing to knowledge production, economic development, and social transformation. Tools such as graduate tracking studies, evaluation mechanisms, strategic plans, information systems, and institutional intelligence assessments such as those conducted by the Higher Education Quality Council of Turkey (YÖKAK), indirectly measure the academic and strategic capacity of universities. Throughout this transformative process, organizational memory, management styles, learning structures, and organizational intelligence are of vital importance in shaping the present and future of higher education institutions.

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## **DIGITAL TOOLS IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH**

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### **Abstract**

The use of digital tools has recently gained prominence in the field of second language teaching due to the promising potential of technology use in education, which innovates teaching methods and enhances the effectiveness of learning. This systematic review focuses on recent research on the impacts of digital tool usage in second language teaching in higher education. The review covers findings from recently published studies and highlights challenges and best practices related to the implementation of digital technologies. The findings of the studies show that technologies such as blended learning, online learning platforms, mobile learning applications, digital games, and virtual and augmented reality offer opportunities for language acquisition. Moreover, artificial intelligence presents opportunities and challenges for not only language teachers but also learners. The conclusion section of the study covers the gap in existing research and recommendations for future research on the use of digital tools, which will make second language education in higher education more effective.

### **Keywords**

Digital Tools, Second Language Learning, Higher Education, Technology-Enhanced Language Learning, Systematic Review.

### **Resumo**

Nos últimos anos, a utilização de ferramentas digitais tem vindo a assumir um papel de destaque no domínio do ensino de línguas estrangeiras, impulsionada pelo potencial transformador da tecnologia na educação. Este fenómeno tem promovido a inovação nos métodos pedagógicos e contribuído para o aumento da eficácia dos processos de aprendizagem. A presente revisão sistemática incide sobre investigações recentes que analisam os impactos da integração de ferramentas digitais no ensino de línguas estrangeiras no ensino superior. A análise contempla os resultados de estudos publicados nos últimos anos e sublinha os principais desafios, bem como as boas práticas identificadas no que respeita à implementação de tecnologias digitais no contexto educativo. Os dados analisados evidenciam que tecnologias como o ensino híbrido (blended learning), plataformas de aprendizagem online, aplicações móveis de apoio à aprendizagem, jogos digitais, e ambientes de realidade virtual e aumentada proporcionam oportunidades significativas para a aquisição de



competências linguísticas. Paralelamente, a inteligência artificial revela-se uma ferramenta promissora, embora também apresente desafios, não apenas para os docentes, mas igualmente para os próprios estudantes. A secção final deste estudo identifica lacunas relevantes na literatura existente e propõe direções para futuras investigações. As recomendações formuladas visam contribuir para uma utilização mais eficaz e sustentada das ferramentas digitais no ensino de línguas estrangeiras no ensino superior, promovendo, assim, ambientes de aprendizagem mais inovadores e inclusivos.

### **Palavras-chave**

Ferramentas Digitais, Aprendizagem de Segunda Língua, Ensino Superior, Aprendizagem de Línguas Assistida por Tecnologia, Revisão Sistemática.

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## **DIGITAL TOOLS IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH**

**SEÇKIN ESEN**

### **1. Introduction**

The role of communication in education is undeniable, especially in the field of second language acquisition, as it promotes global interaction, cultural immersion, and a variety of career opportunities. Today's communication is mostly based on digital technologies that not only alter the education environments but also transform pedagogical practices and learning outcomes. Digital tools used in second language learning in higher education consist of various innovative tools and methods. These new learning environments include blended learning that combines online and face-to-face instruction and artificial intelligence platforms that provide personalized learning experiences. The widespread use of rapidly evolving technologies in education makes it necessary to review the recent research, which may help researchers investigate and understand the existing systems, identify trends, and find gaps in the field. This review aims to examine the studies on the use of digital tools in second language education in higher education and to provide a comprehensive perspective for researchers, educators, and policymakers.

### **2. Literature Review: Existing Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses**

Technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) has been a popular subject among scholars; therefore, numerous studies have been conducted on the integration of digital tools in language education. Several systematic reviews, such as blended learning in higher education for second language acquisition, have examined specific approaches. "A Systematic Review of Blended Learning in Higher Education: Second Language Acquisition through the Community of Inquiry Framework, 2024" analyzed studies published between 2014 and 2023. The study indicates that various studies were conducted on undergraduate English learners, and there were significant enhancements in language acquisition and student engagement due to the integration of social, cognitive, and teaching presence. Other reviews, covering studies from 2013 to 2024, have focused on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching that is based on online collaboration, emphasizing the potential of online environments to improve writing skills through interactive learning and feedback. (Al-Rahmi et al., 2024). The use of newly



developed technologies in English teaching at universities has also been systematically reviewed, and it was revealed that the number of empirical studies on the latest tools like chatbots and virtual reality is inadequate (Bakhsh & Abid, 2023). Research trends in TELL in the period between 2020 and 2022 were analyzed, pointing to the prevalence of quantitative studies in higher education (Albashiry & Khan, 2023). Furthermore, technology-enhanced self-regulated language learning has been systematically reviewed in the studies published between 2011 and 2020 (Yang et al., 2023).

Meta-analyses have been applied in order to determine the effectiveness of digital tools. In one meta-analysis, 34 studies on technology-enhanced vocabulary learning were investigated. It was found that technology had a moderately positive effect on vocabulary learning, and incidental instruction is more effective than intentional instruction (Lin & Yu, 2022). The effects of interactive technologies on language learning were investigated in another meta-analysis, finding that they have a significant positive effect on language skills, learning attitudes, and self-efficacy (Li & Peng, 2024). Digital game-based language learning (DGBLL) has been examined through meta-analysis, indicating a small to medium positive effect of digital games on second language development (Dixon et al., 2022). In addition, the effect of TELL on ESL/EFL writing skills has also been examined in some studies. Accordingly, it was found that technology has a clearly significant positive effect on writing skills (Xie and Wang, 2023). A meta-analysis on augmented reality (AR) in language learning examined studies from 2010 to 2023 and found that AR has a significant positive effect on both language and emotional outcomes (Wu et al., 2024). A meta-analysis was also conducted on blended language education, and as a result of the study, it was concluded that this method can be as successful as traditional face-to-face education (Baralt et al., 2021). Several of these studies (A Systematic Review of Blended Learning in Higher Education: Second Language Acquisition through the Community of Inquiry Framework, 2024; Bakhsh & Abid, 2023; Chen et al., 2025; González-Calatayud et al., 2023; Huang & Li, 2024; Wu et al., 2024) clearly demonstrate the methodological rigor employed in the field through the PRISMA guidelines for conducting systematic reviews.

According to the findings of literature reviews and meta-analyses, there is a well-established research area within TELL. However, due to the continuous development of new digital tools and the dynamic nature of educational practices, systematic reviews are needed to capture current trends and findings. There is a significant amount of research examining English as a foreign language, particularly at the undergraduate level (A Systematic Review of Blended Learning in Higher Education: Second Language Acquisition through the Community of Inquiry Framework, 2024; Al-Rahmi et al., 2024). However, due to the paucity of such research on other languages, more research is needed in additional target languages and at various levels of higher education, including postgraduate studies.

### **3. Digital Tools and Second Language Skills: Impact and Effectiveness**

This section of the study examines the impact and effectiveness of specific categories of digital tools in supporting second foreign language learning in higher education.



### 3.1. Blended Learning

Blended learning is defined as a hybrid model in which learners participate in both physical classroom environments and online platforms. Blended learning is a multifaceted concept that includes various definitions, models, and frameworks, incorporating all educational formats that combine online and face-to-face learning activities (Hrastinski, 2019). Another definition is that it is a "pedagogically balanced, adaptive combination" of various learning methods, consisting of both formal and informal dimensions as well as the integration of real and virtual educational experiences (Mintii, 2023).

Emphasizing the interaction of social, cognitive, and instructional presence, the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework has significantly improved language acquisition skills such as speaking, listening, writing, and general proficiency, as well as psychological outcomes such as student engagement, perception, confidence, and self-efficacy (A Systematic Review of Blended Learning in Higher Education: Second Language Acquisition through the Community of Inquiry Framework, 2024). There have been many significant cognitive improvements in behavioral outcomes, including academic performance, in blended learning environments (A Systematic Review of Blended Learning in Higher Education: Second Language Acquisition through the Community of Inquiry Framework, 2024). However, blended learning has its drawbacks, one of which is related to increasing reliance on technology. This situation may create barriers for students and educators. Technical difficulties such as poor internet connectivity, issues with Learning Management Systems (LMS), and limited access to digital resources can hinder the learning process. Students in areas with unreliable or inadequate internet connectivity may face difficulties during blended learning, which can lead to frustration (Suriaman et al., 2023). Furthermore, Romli et al. emphasize the essential necessity of adequate technology infrastructure. If technology infrastructure is inadequate, technical difficulties can prevent students from learning (Romli et al., 2023).

The idea of integrating online and face-to-face teaching is a valuable approach for second language acquisition in higher education since it can help the educators and learners to achieve positive outcomes by promoting social and cognitive presence. However, technical issues need to be prevented in order to make this approach effective for both students and educators.

### 3.2. Online Collaborative Learning

Online collaborative learning (OCL) is defined as a method of structured learning in which people participate in group projects using web resources. It usually results in the creation of shared products for evaluation. This approach is described as activities needing combined intellectual efforts between students or between students and teachers (Kawtar et al. 2024). This cooperative approach allows students, who might be geographically apart, to work either asynchronously or synchronously. Therefore, it strengthens the learners' sense of community and shared goal.

Online collaborative settings have been applied in teaching ESL and EFL in higher education. They focus on the digital platforms and the specific language skills targeted





(Al-Rahmi et al., 2024). Systematic reviews clearly show that collaborative online settings improve learners' language proficiency through interactive learning, feedback techniques, and personalized learning opportunities (Al-Rahmi et al., 2024). These environments not only help students improve their writing skills but also their oral and speaking skills because the nature of online collaboration allows for this (Al-Rahmi et al., 2024). However, collaborative online settings have disadvantages that need to be addressed. These drawbacks include distraction of the learners, issues with internet connection, lack of sources, and technical skills of learners (Al-Rahmi et al., 2024).

This learning approach encourages interaction among students. It offers significant opportunities, especially in the development of writing and speaking skills. In order for this approach to be effective, it is of great importance to prevent technical problems. In addition, sufficient support should be provided to both educators and students to ensure active participation of students and to increase educational efficiency.

### **3.3. Mobile Learning (MALL)**

Mobile Learning (MALL) allows users to access learning materials and activities independently of time and space by incorporating mobile devices into education (Indriani, 2020). This approach also encourages participatory and independent learning.

Recently, mobile learning has been widely used in second language education in higher education. The use of mobile applications has become one of the best practices in blended learning environments for language acquisition because it offers flexible and accessible tools for language acquisition (Systematic Review of Blended Learning in Higher Education: Second Language Acquisition with a Community of Inquiry Framework, 2024).

Research findings indicate that mobile applications of foreign language education generally focus on the development of vocabulary skills (Bakhsh & Abid, 2023). Besides, meta-analytic data show that mobile-assisted vocabulary learning is more successful than traditional computer-assisted learning approaches due to the instant learning and adaptability provided by mobile devices (Li and Peng, 2024).

### **3.4. Digital Game-Based Language Learning (DGBLL)**

Digital game-based learning (DGBL) can be defined as supporting and facilitating learning processes using video and digital games. Prensky coined the term, and according to Prensky, DGBL encompasses learning activities that include digital games, ranging from educational simulations to role-playing games (RPGs) (Byun & Joung 2018).

DGBL's potential in second language education has been a popular subject among researchers and educators. Meta-analyses have provided valuable insights into the effects of digital games on language education (Dixon et al., 2022), while systematic reviews have investigated how digital games could be utilized in teaching vocabulary skills (Bakhsh & Abid, 2023). These meta-analyses suggest a small to medium positive effect of DGBL on language learning outcomes (Dixon et al., 2022). Recent research has proposed that games designed for only entertainment purposes can particularly be more



effective for second language acquisition when compared with the games designed for only educational purposes (Dixon et al., 2022). In addition to the result of the studies. It is indicated that playing digital games might help learners' vocabulary acquisition and change the perspective of language acquisition in a favorable way (Franco, 2024).

Digital game-based language learning proposes a promotive way for second language acquisition based on the indications of studies that demonstrate beneficial effects on a variety of language skills, such as vocabulary skills. The realization of how games with an entertainment focus can be adapted to the process of second language learning highlights the importance of motivation and engagement in the language learning process. What is also inferable from the discoveries is the superiority of these elements compared to unique instructional designs.

### **3.5. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR)**

Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) have recently started to be used in second language education. These technologies support second language education with immersive and personalized learning experiences. While virtual reality offers simulated contexts that learners participate in authentic language use, augmented reality enhances the educational experience by providing visual components in the real world, encouraging vocabulary learning in context (Wu et al., 2024).

VR and AR-based digital tools maximize student participation in education and provide immersive learning experiences. At the same time, these technologies facilitate the understanding of complex topics through visualization and interaction. Vesisenaho et al. state that through these technologies, students can experience the real world in simulated environments and increase their competence (Vesisenaho et al., 2019). In addition, VR has the feature of minimizing risks. Thanks to VR technologies integrated into various medical education programs, students can practice procedures in a safe environment without the risks associated with real-life applications (Lie et al., 2022). This also applies to language learning. If these digital tools are used in higher education, students learning a second language can develop their language skills by experiencing real life.

### **4. Impact on Affective and Cognitive Factors**

Digital tools used in second language teaching have a significant impact on students' emotional and cognitive states. Educational experience, student motivation, and engagement are affected by these technological tools. They allow for varied learning modalities that can increase students' willingness to actively participate in their education and create a more dynamic learning environment (Pikhart et al., 2023).

The use of various digital resources can improve communication skills as it enables students to participate in language learning (Lee & Dressman, 2017). The inclusion of multimedia elements in education has a positive effect on students, making the learning



environment more interactive and making students more willing to communicate, which is a very important factor in language acquisition.

Technology-enhanced language learning environments (TELLEs) promote learners' willingness to communicate (WTC), which is a crucial element in second language acquisition. TELLEs increase the amount of engagement with content, peers, and educators as well as expand affective components including self-confidence and enjoyment. These environments help learners to develop linguistic skills and to reduce cognitive load; therefore, they increase the prospect of verbal communication (Huang & Li, 2024).

Gamified and interactive digital technology can contribute to learning by encouraging students to communicate. As a result, technology has a positive impact on communication, with the effect of improving interaction, emotional well-being, and language development. However, more research is needed to understand how digital technologies can benefit students at different stages of the learning process.

## **5. The Role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Second Language Education**

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed second and foreign language learning, as in many other fields. Researchers have begun to investigate the effects of AI on higher education curricula and have found that AI presents both opportunities and challenges (Chen et al., 2025). The effects of AI-based chatbots on language learning have recently become one of the popular topics of research (Bakhsh & Abid, 2023; Bimpong, 2025). We can classify these chatbots as virtual tutoring assistants because they provide personalized learning experiences as well as real-time feedback (Bimpong, 2025; Bali & Sharma, 2024). Generative AI and large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT have recently gained great importance in language education and offer smart tutoring opportunities (Voss, 2024; McKenzie, 2024; Bommarito, 2023). If we need to list the benefits of artificial intelligence in terms of language learning, we can say personalized learning, instant feedback, and the creation of adaptable learning environments (Chen et al., 2025; Language Learning Trends for 2025: What's New and What's Next, 2024; Reeve-Parker, 2024).

Research shows that students increasingly perceive the use of artificial intelligence tools as beneficial for their learning and future careers (Almusharraf et al., 2024; Reeve-Parker, 2024).

On the other hand, the use of AI in education raises concerns about the effective and ethical use of these tools, such as academic honesty and the potential for bias in AI-generated content (Chen et al., 2025; Voss, 2024; Compilatio, 2025).

Today, the need to use AI-supported digital tools, including chatbots and large language models, in second language teaching is an undeniable reality. However, their effective and responsible integration into the field of education, ethical implications, and pedagogical strategies must be carefully considered.



## 6. Challenges and Best Practices in Implementing Digital Tools

Using digital tools in second language education in higher education can pose challenges such as the need for reliable internet access and technical support, which can prevent learners from using digital resources effectively (A Systematic Review of Blended Learning in Higher Education: Second Language Acquisition through the Community of Inquiry Framework, 2024; Al-Rahmi et al., 2024). Additionally, ensuring adequate student engagement in online learning environments can be difficult, which is especially true in blended or fully online courses. It should also be noted that there are differences in language proficiency levels among students. This situation requires the use of tools and strategies to meet different needs (A Systematic Review of Blended Learning in Higher Education: Second Language Acquisition through the Community of Inquiry Framework, 2024). Another challenge to introducing equitable practices in language teaching is the inequality of access to technology and digital literacy (The Role of Digital Technologies in Personalizing ESL Instruction: Challenges and Innovations, n.d.). These challenges that need to be overcome necessitate the identification of best practices. Based on the findings from the research, some of these practices can be providing comprehensive training and ongoing support to teachers as well as enabling them to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices (Purwanto et al., 2023; Chai & Jung, 2024). The way to ensure that technology enhances students rather than hinders them is to align digital tools with pedagogical and learning goals (Al-Rahmi et al., 2024). Encouraging online communities and increasing opportunities for interaction and collaboration are essential to maximizing student engagement and creating a supportive learning environment (A Systematic Review of Blended Learning in Higher Education: Second Language Acquisition through the Community of Inquiry Framework, 2024; Al-Rahmi et al., 2024). Another factor to consider when determining digital tools is the need to consider the needs of all learners to ensure equal access to opportunities (The Role of Digital Technologies in Personalizing ESL Instruction: Challenges and Innovations, n.d.; Dahlstrom & Bichsel, 2025).

Developing a proactive approach to successfully integrating digital tools into second language education can help students overcome challenges related to participation, technology, and equity. Some of the practices that can be applied include training teachers, aligning technology with pedagogy, and developing online communities. This can help maximize the benefits of digital tools used in education.

## 7. Conclusion and Future Directions

This systematic review attempts to synthesize research on the use of digital tools in second language education in higher education and to identify the effects of various technologies on language learning. The analysis reveals that digital tools have a positive effect on language learning outcomes, student motivation, and student engagement.

With the emergence of artificial intelligence and its use in education, chatbots in particular have begun to play a major role in language teaching. Thanks to these tools, the potential for personalization and development of language learning experiences has increased.



Important insights have been gained from existing research; however, it is also known that this area needs to be further investigated. Most of the research conducted focuses on English as the target language, which indicates that more studies should be conducted on the effectiveness of digital tools in learning other languages. In addition, the long-term effects of these tools on language learning should be investigated. Another important issue is the need to examine the extent to which digital technologies affect students at different language levels. Further research is needed to ensure the pedagogical effects of the use of AI and LLM in language acquisition as well as their ethical and effective integration. Future research should also aim to refine the role of digital tools in developing reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills. Addressing these gaps can continue to advance the topic of supporting second language education with digital tools in higher education.

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## **THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION ALLIANCES: THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSNATIONAL UNIVERSITY COOPERATION**

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### **Abstract**

The European Higher Education Area has paved the way for a more inclusive and accessible education by facilitating the mobility of teachers and students among universities adhering to the Bologna Process framework. At the 2017 Gothenburg Summit, a further step was taken. Since then, the European Commission has promoted the creation of European University Alliances aimed at improving the quality of higher education through long-term cooperation projects among institutions in the member states. In this context, the European Strategy for Universities was presented in 2022, with four objectives: to strengthen the European dimension of higher education, to consolidate universities as promoters of the European way of life, to make universities key agents of change in the ecological and digital transition, and to position universities as global leaders representing the EU. Achieving these goals undoubtedly requires overcoming significant challenges, including funding, the establishment of joint European degrees, the creation of a legal status for alliances, and international mobility, among others. Therefore, this article will address the current characteristics of higher education, considering not only the common objectives shared by the universities that form the alliances but also the challenges they face in this new phase where joint degrees are being implemented.

### **Keywords**

European Higher Education Alliances, Transnational University Cooperation, Bologna Process, Labor Competitiveness, Educational Mobility.





## Resumo

A consolidação do Espaço Europeu do Ensino Superior constituiu um marco fundamental na promoção de uma educação mais inclusiva, acessível e integrada, favorecendo a mobilidade de docentes e estudantes entre instituições universitárias aderentes ao quadro definido pelo Processo de Bolonha. A Cimeira de Gotemburgo, realizada em 2017, representou um avanço adicional neste percurso, ao estabelecer novas diretrizes para o fortalecimento da cooperação no ensino superior a nível europeu. Desde então, a Comissão Europeia tem incentivado a criação de Alianças Universitárias Europeias com o objetivo de elevar a qualidade do ensino superior, através de projetos de cooperação estratégica e sustentada entre instituições europeias de ensino superior. Neste quadro, foi apresentada, em 2022, a Estratégia Europeia para as Universidades, centrada em quatro objetivos estruturantes: (1) reforçar a dimensão europeia do ensino superior; (2) consolidar o papel das universidades enquanto promotoras dos valores e do modo de vida europeus; (3) posicionar as universidades como agentes catalisadores da transição ecológica e digital; e (4) afirmar as instituições de ensino superior como líderes globais representativas da União Europeia. A concretização destes objetivos implica, inevitavelmente, a superação de diversos desafios de natureza estrutural, jurídica e financeira. Entre os mais prementes destacam-se o financiamento sustentável das iniciativas, a implementação de diplomas conjuntos europeus, a criação de um estatuto jurídico próprio para as alianças universitárias e a facilitação da mobilidade internacional de estudantes e profissionais do ensino. O presente artigo propõe-se, assim, a analisar as características atuais do ensino superior europeu, com especial enfoque nos objetivos comuns definidos pelas universidades participantes nas alianças e nos obstáculos que enfrentam na implementação desta nova fase de integração académica, particularmente no que se refere ao desenvolvimento e reconhecimento de diplomas conjuntos no espaço europeu.

## Palavras-chave

Alianças Europeias De Ensino Superior, Cooperação Universitária Transnacional, Processo de Bolonha, Competitividade Laboral, Mobilidade Educativa.

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## **THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION ALLIANCES: THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSNATIONAL UNIVERSITY COOPERATION RESEARCH**

**CONCEPCIÓN ANGUITA-OLMEDO**

### **Introduction**

The European Commission has been promoting the creation of European University Alliances since 2017, with the fundamental goal of improving educational quality, enhancing the competitiveness of universities, and increasing the mobility of the entire university community. Cooperation has become a key axis for adapting educational offerings to the changes experienced by international society, thereby fostering the employability of young people and promoting European values and identity.

The European Universities initiative was proposed by the Commission before the Gothenburg Social Summit in November 2017, with the idea of creating a European Education Area, with a timeline for implementation extending until 2025. Days later, in the conclusions of the European Council on December 14 of that year, various proposals were promoted, one of which was to "strengthen strategic partnerships between higher education institutions throughout the EU," thereby promoting university networks (Chaves, 2022). While considerable progress has been made in student mobility through the Erasmus+ program, it was deemed necessary to take an additional step towards achieving the Europeanization of university degrees.

In a context where the European Alliances for Higher Education must face significant difficulties in achieving their objectives, it is worth asking what are the conditions that the European Alliances for Higher Education face? Are the European Alliances prepared to offer joint degrees? What challenges do European universities face in achieving institutionalized cooperation? From a methodological standpoint, this article represents a qualitative and exploratory investigation of the current situation, starting from the most immediate past, in relation to the actions of the European Union in higher education and looking ahead to 2024 with the achievements made. Additionally, the role of the European Education Alliances and their challenges in improving educational quality and the mobility of students and professors will be analyzed, which should undoubtedly lead to better preparation to tackle the current and future challenges of the European labor market.



Therefore, it is necessary to consider the evolution of university policy in the current context. The first part of this article provides an overview of the Bologna Process, from its implementation to the present day. The second part presents a panorama that analyzes what the European Strategy for Universities of 2022 has meant for higher education. The third part of the article addresses the emergence of the European Alliances for Higher Education; the fourth part presents the current challenges that European higher education must face, and finally, some conclusions.

### 1. The Bologna Process. The European Higher Education Area

The beginning of a process of change and transformation in European universities started to take shape in 1998 with the Sorbonne Declaration<sup>1</sup>, signed by the ministers representing France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. This declaration was inspired by the Magna Charta Universitatum (Observatory Magna Charta Universitatum)<sup>2</sup>, adopted in Bologna ten years earlier. Its objective was to promote a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), deepening and expanding the path initiated by the Erasmus+ program, which from its inception has fostered student and staff mobility.

The following year would be key to this achievement: in June 1999, twenty-nine European representatives of education and science signed the Bologna Declaration<sup>3</sup>, titled "The Europe of Knowledge", to promote the convergence of national systems, thus giving rise to the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)<sup>4</sup>, with a clearly pan-European vocation. The Declaration, with a marked political or programmatic character, outlined a series of objectives (international competitiveness, mobility, and employability) and instruments<sup>5</sup> to achieve them, setting the year 2010 as the target date for the construction of this area. Undoubtedly, this document, although it did not establish legally binding commitments, was the starting point of a profound educational reform to which states have had to adapt, a transformation that still continues. Since then, 49 countries have joined this construction, whose benefits are shared by students,

<sup>1</sup> Joint Declaration for the harmonization of the design of the European Higher Education System, 25 May 1998, in <https://ehea.info/page-ministerial-declarations-and-communiqués> (accessed 28 January 2025).

<sup>2</sup> Signed by 400 rectors of European universities.

<sup>3</sup> Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education meeting in Bologna on 19 June 1999, in [http://www.eees.es/pdf/Bologna\\_ES.pdf](http://www.eees.es/pdf/Bologna_ES.pdf) (accessed 31 January 2025).

<sup>4</sup> The Member States of the EHEA are, in chronological order, since 1999: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom; since 2001: Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein and Turkey; since 2003: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Holy See, the Russian See, Serbia and the Republic of Macedonia; since 2005: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine; Montenegro (2007), Kazakhstan (2010) and Belarus (2015), the Republic of San Marino (2020). The Principality of Monaco is the only member of the Council of Europe that has not been integrated into the EHEA. Other States or territories have applied to join the Bologna Process, but their candidacy has been rejected; namely, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Due to the war between Ukraine and Russia, at the meeting held in Strasbourg in April 2022, it was decided to suspend all representation rights of the Russian Federation and Belarus, see: [https://ehea.info/page-full\\_members](https://ehea.info/page-full_members) (accessed 26 January 2025).

<sup>5</sup> The instruments cover six aspects: adopting a transparent system of comparable grades; following a system essentially based on two main cycles (undergraduate and postgraduate); developing the European Credit System (ECTS); promote mobility; to promote European cooperation for the assurance of academic quality; and to promote the European dimension in the university curriculum (Rodríguez Rodríguez, 2018).



academics, technical, management and administrative staff, higher education institutions themselves, and society at large.

In successive meetings—Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), London (2007), Louvain-la-Neuve (2009), Budapest and Vienna (2010), Bucharest (2012), Yerevan (2015), Paris (2018), Rome (2020), and Tirana (2024)—significant progress has been made in this process, although the path has not been easy. National and academic-institutional resistance makes the process even more complex. It is important to remember that "education is closely linked to issues of national, cultural, and linguistic identity, and is crucial in responding to social needs and the demands of the economic and productive system" (Valle, 2006, p. 263), in addition to presenting difficulties arising from the structural changes necessary to implement methodologies based on student self-learning (Delgado Martínez, 2019). In this sense, it is essential to consider that these new methodologies must combine theoretical knowledge with the acquisition of skills, where both teacher and student participation are fundamental (Calvo & Mingorance-Arnáiz, 2009).

The Bologna Process cannot be understood without recognizing its connection to two major vectors of change that occurred in society at the end of the 20th century. The first vector is related to economic, political, technological, social, and cultural transformation; the second, to the expansion of the European Union and the emergence of European citizenship. Therefore:

"Bologna becomes comprehensible in the transition from the 'modern' society to the 'knowledge' society, taking both concepts—modernity and knowledge society—as synthesis-concepts, to describe in one case the society resulting from the combined action of the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and the Liberal Political Revolutions, and in the other, the society shaped at the end of the 20th century by the combined effect of various processes" (Bajo Santos, 2010, p. 434).

At the core of this process lies the idea that university must be the driving force behind research and innovation and therefore must undergo the necessary changes to adapt to new times in which quality and excellence enable future professionals to develop the skills needed to perform in a globalized world that is completely different from that of the 20th century.

Therefore, the Bologna Process requires, among other things, that European universities strive to adapt not only from an academic-curricular perspective but also structurally, as without this, its goals cannot converge. The curricular adaptation required universities to adopt a three-cycle structure, with widespread use of the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System)<sup>6</sup>. Although this system existed long before the Bologna Process—as it allowed for student mobility and the validation and equivalency of studies within the Erasmus

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<sup>6</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). A unit of measurement of study or work and of the competences or learning outcomes acquired. The ECTS is based on the student's effort (not only the hours of face-to-face classes are counted, but also the necessary time to be dedicated to the preparation of practical tests or, where appropriate, laboratory, readings or partial and final exams). It was implemented in 2010, although the "ECTS User Guide" was approved at the Yerevan Conference (Armenia) in 2015, becoming the reference document. In this sense, each ECTS would correspond to 25 hours of student dedication, of which only 10 would be face-to-face.



program—its implementation has been one of the most important reforms adopted by universities. The widespread use of ECTS has led to educational harmonization, removing obstacles to the recognition of studies, facilitating the comparability of education systems, and paving the way for what was still to come: the European Degree.

This transformation would become a fundamental pillar not only to facilitate the recognition of studies between universities, but also for the new design of curricula, as it became a precondition for their structure. This unit of measurement (ECTS) also introduced an innovation in the recognition of teaching work, as it began to account not only for classroom teaching hours, but also for the time a professor dedicates to preparing, organizing, guiding, and supervising students' work outside the classroom. As a result, this change in the unit of measurement inevitably led to the adoption of a new educational model, centered on self-directed learning and student activities, as well as on independent work to achieve learning outcomes, rather than on content and the number of hours taught by instructors.

It was at the ministerial meeting in Bergen<sup>7</sup>, in 2005, that the generic descriptors for the key levels of the EHEA were adopted: Bachelor's degree (replacing the traditional "licenciatura"), Master's degree (with variations like "Maestría" or "Magister"), and the Doctorate. The Bachelor's degree, depending on the country, could have a duration of three years (180 ECTS) or four years (240 ECTS). The Master's degree required at least 60 ECTS, typically ranging between 60 and 120 ECTS, and could have three orientations: academic specialization, professional training, or initiation to research. To get a Doctorate, a student must have completed 300 ECTS, of which at least 60 must come from a Master's program (Valle, 2006).

Likewise, one of the principal issues addressed in the various meetings is the need to adopt common quality standards. In this regard, it becomes clear that to advance the EHEA, it is necessary to adopt "common criteria for evaluation, accreditation of studies, and mutual recognition" (García Gallego & Blanco Alonso, 2007). In the year 2000, the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) was established. Just a year later, at the Prague meeting (2001), a call was made for universities, other higher education institutions, national agencies, and the ENQA<sup>8</sup> to collaborate in the design of a common reference framework (Rodríguez Rodríguez, 2018).

At the Bergen meeting, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) were officially approved. Since then, considerable progress has been made in this area, but it was still considered necessary to "improve their clarity, applicability, usefulness, and scope" (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015, p. 5). With this aim, in 2012, the E4 Group (ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE), in cooperation with Education International (EI), BUSINESSEUROPE, and the European Quality Assurance Register for

<sup>7</sup> The European Higher Education Area-Achieving the goals. Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education. Bergen, 19–20 May 2005, accessed in [http://www.aneca.es/content/download/12230/142160/file/7.Comunicado\\_Bergen\\_2005.pdf](http://www.aneca.es/content/download/12230/142160/file/7.Comunicado_Bergen_2005.pdf) (accessed 17 March 2025).

<sup>8</sup> The EUA (European University Association), the EURASHE (European Association of Institutions in Higher Education) and the ESIB (since 2007 ESU, European Students Union) will also participate.



Higher Education (EQAR), was invited to prepare a proposal for the revision of the ESG (Ferreira, 2019).

As a result of the recommendations presented, during the Erevan meeting in 2015, the Ministers of Higher Education approved the revised ESG<sup>9</sup>, which were the result of a reflective process, and a public consultation carried out throughout the European Higher Education Area. This document, containing the quality assurance criteria, has become the reference tool for universities and quality assurance agencies. Among its key objectives are: establishing a common framework to ensure quality in teaching and learning; providing transparent information on the quality of higher education; and promoting mutual trust to facilitate recognition of credits and international mobility. Undoubtedly, implementing quality assurance is considered one of the core commitments of the Bologna Process. During this same conference, the “ECTS Users’ Guide” was also adopted as an official EHEA document, replacing previous versions that had been used unofficially and were never formally approved by any Ministerial Conference. Thus, it became a legitimized reference document, especially as it aims to promote the correct implementation of learning outcomes.

Paris hosted the next Conference of Ministers responsible for higher education on May 24–25, 2018. In it, the key commitments underpinning the EHEA were examined. In addition, the creation of three thematic working groups was approved, which between the years 2018 and 2020 were to address the following issues: the development of national qualification frameworks, compatible with the overarching qualifications framework in the EHEA; compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention; and the strengthening of quality, in accordance with the ESG in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, 2018).

At the 2020 Ministers’ Conference, held in Rome, there was a reflection on the progress made in the 21 years since the approval of the Bologna Declaration, but also the work lines for the following years were set, with 2030 on the horizon. This Conference was an opportunity to strengthen cooperation among member countries. As a result of this meeting, some commitments were adopted:

“to provide opportunities and support inclusive and equitable education for all people; to reinforce social inclusion and quality by leveraging the opportunities offered by technology; to protect and promote research, innovation, and knowledge transfer in all areas; and to promote student mobility and strengthen the Erasmus program, aiming to ensure that at least 20% of students completing their studies within the EHEA have had a learning or internship experience abroad, among others” (EHEA, 2020).

And finally, in May 2024, Tirana hosted what is, so far, the latest meeting held by the Ministers of Higher Education of Europe. Among the commitments adopted for the following three years, the following stand out: to make the EHEA an inclusive and interconnected space; the reaffirmation of the commitment to academic freedom, integrity, and institutional autonomy; to develop and publish action plans to address the

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<sup>9</sup> To check the changes, see Comparative Analysis of the ESG 2015 and ESG 2005 in ENQA, 2016, <https://www.enqa.eu/publications/comparative-analysis-of-the-esg-2015-and-esg-2005/> (accessed 25 March 2025).



implementation issues of the Bologna Process and promote knowledge exchange; to update the ECTS Users' Guide and the ESG to reflect current developments and improve quality assurance; to promote flexible, quality-assured, and recognized learning pathways, including micro-credentials; to ensure the responsible use of AI in education and research; to allow hybrid mobility and virtual exchanges; to make automatic recognition of qualifications and periods of study abroad a reality; to ensure proper monitoring of political commitments and plan future priorities of the EHEA; to adopt the new Rules of Procedure for the EHEA and assess the feasibility of an independent secretariat to permanently support the Bologna Process Secretariat and the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) (Torres, 2024).

Throughout this process, the support of the European Union has been fundamental, in understanding that the rapid and profound changes currently taking place in society require universities for societies to become more open, democratic, just, and sustainable. That is why it continues to advance in university cooperation. Thus, in 2022, the European Strategy for Universities was approved (European Commission, 2022a), which aims to give continuity to the changes experienced by higher education and to promote further progress.

## **2. The European Strategy for Universities (2022)**

Although universities have led this change to implement the Bologna Process, the support of other collaborating institutions and political actors who have driven this modernization and adaptation has been decisive (Alexiadou & Rambla, 2023). The creation of the EHEA cannot be understood apart from the very process of European integration. Although this process is not exclusive to EU member countries, as has already been established, it has been the European institutions that have driven the modernization of universities, considering research and innovation as key issues for generating economic growth, employment, and social cohesion. Regarding the latter, the fact that educational achievements are closely linked to employment and employability might suggest that European education policies have been vulnerable to their "capture" (Antunes, 2016). However, higher education's strategic nature cannot be denied, nor can the capacity of lifelong learning and training to provide solutions and responses to the problems of today's society.

Since the extraordinary European Council of Lisbon in 2000, the EU has been actively involved, through the funding of activities, to promote "the economic competitiveness of the area by integrating scientific and technological knowledge into production and services" (Rodríguez Rodríguez, 2018, p. 7). In addition, various European Council Resolutions and numerous European Commission Communications have made it possible to establish areas to focus on to achieve this modernization: (1) Bringing universities closer to the knowledge economy, (2) Reforming governance, (3) Overcoming financial scarcity, and (4) Seeking closer relationships between universities and businesses (Mora, 2009). Undoubtedly, European institutions are aware of the potential of higher education, as in the European area there are "more than 5,000 higher education institutions, 17.5



million higher education students, 1.35 million higher education teachers, and 1.17 million researchers" (European Commission, 2022d).

In this regard, in January 2022, the European Union approved the Strategy for Universities, which sets out objectives and a set of key measures for achieving them. Among the objectives, the following are highlighted (European Commission, 2022b, p. 1):

- "Strengthening the European dimension of higher education and research.
- Consolidating universities as key points for promoting our European Way of Life through support measures focused on academic and research careers, the quality and future relevance of skills, diversity, inclusion, democratic practices, fundamental rights, and academic values.
- Empowering universities as key agents of change in the dual ecological and digital transition; and
- Boosting universities as engines for the role and global leadership of the EU".

This Strategy and the subsequent Council Recommendation of the European Union (European Council, 2022) – in which Member States were invited to establish coherent and compatible political priorities for promoting transnational cooperation and making the necessary investments for it – show how the European Union and the Bologna Process, with its pan-European nature, are working hand in hand with the same goal: to make universities and the higher education sector the engine of societal transformation by placing them at the heart of education, research, and innovation. This Strategy is, therefore, "a call to EU countries and higher education institutions across Europe to join forces" (European Commission, 2023a). In addition, the need is expressed for universities to work to ensure that more and more young people are equipped "with digital skills and skills for the green transition, or developing green solutions through technological and social innovation, if the higher education sector pulls its weight" (European Commission, 2022c). Regarding digital skills, the European Union states that by 2030, 45% of people between the ages of 25 and 34 must have a higher education degree, and at least 60% of adults must participate in learning initiatives (European Commission, 2022d).

This Strategy represents a shift for the European Commission, as until then it had focused on coordinating European policies. However, at this point, it takes a turn to emphasize organizational coordination, that is, the establishment of European Alliances, highlighting the need for cross-border university cooperation as a means to drive European policies (Maassen, Stensaker, & Rosso, 2022). Therefore, it is stated that universities need to work to ensure that more and more young people are equipped "with digital skills and skills for the green transition, or developing green solutions through technological and social innovation, if the higher education sector pulls its weight" (European Commission, 2022c).





The implementation of this Strategy and the Council Recommendations was expected to yield significant results. One of these was the adoption of the European Approach to Microcredentials (DOUE, 2022), which is considered a tool for higher education institutions to facilitate flexible and modular short duration learning that allows for the certification of the acquisition of specific skills and competencies tailored to the needs set by the evolution of society and the labor market. These microcredentials are not intended to replace traditional qualifications but to provide a complement to them. Although microcredentials already existed in Europe, this Recommendation aims to boost the definition of common standards. Furthermore, it is believed that microcredentials can facilitate the achievement of the EU's main objectives to be reached from that date until 2030, "in particular the objective that 60% of all adults participate in training activities every year and an employment rate of at least 78%" (DOUE, 2022, p. 7).

Another of the expected results was to continue to deepen the joint European degree label. At that time, 90 universities and 17 ministries were participating in 10 Erasmus+ pilot projects where effective, institutionalized cooperation instruments were being tested, leading European universities to a new level and paving the way for the universities of the future. In line with this, work is being done on a possible European legal status for university alliances, which would facilitate closer cooperation, but also the possibility of sharing human, technical, data, education, research, and innovation capacities (European Council, 2022).

Following the path set years earlier, this Strategy includes support for the creation of 60 university alliances under what is known as the "European Universities Initiative" (EUI) launched by the European Commission in 2018.

"This aims to develop and establish long-term, structural, sustainable, and systemic cooperation in education, research, and innovation through the creation of interuniversity European campuses where students, staff, and researchers from all over Europe can enjoy seamless mobility and create new knowledge together across countries and disciplines" (European Commission, 2022b).

In the development of this initiative, there was a lot of skepticism about its implementation due to the challenges it presented, as it could not be considered the same to approach a collaborative interuniversity project as to an institutionalized integration (Maassen, Stensaker, & Rosso, 2022), as this was one of the most important steps in higher education that in the near future would allow the creation of true European Universities (Jungblut, Maassen, & Elken, 2020). More than 500 higher education institutions were called to participate in these alliances.

### **3. European Alliances: a new form of transnational university cooperation**

The "European Universities" are transnational alliances of higher education institutions. The concept of European Universities was introduced by French President Emmanuel Macron on September 26, 2017, in his speech on the refoundation of Europe, titled "For a Sovereign, United, and Democratic Europe" (Macron, 2017). The proposal would create



"European universities that will be a network of universities from several European countries, setting up a path where each of their students will study abroad and take courses in at least two languages" (République Française, 2025). In this speech, he identified the great principles that should support it, with the goal of achieving it by 2024. The objective was to create the universities of the future, based first on innovative teaching methods and a multidisciplinary approach; second, on the promotion of multilingualism and European values; and third, to respond to the challenges posed by today's society. The idea was none other than to form interuniversity European campuses, both physical and virtual, where degrees would be jointly taught and where at least 50% of the students could move between universities.

Although the push for its formation is found in the 2022 Strategy, since 2019 and in 2020, 2022, 2023, and 2024, the European Commission has made calls under the European Universities Initiative to fund the alliances. In the first call of 2019, 17 university alliances were selected, and 24 in the second call, made in 2020. Currently, there are a total of 65 alliances composed of 570 European institutions from 35 countries<sup>10</sup>. To support the creation of these alliances, the initiative has been linked to the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 program with a budget of 1.1 billion euros, the largest so far (European Commission, 2024d).

The criteria for its funding, in addition to the creation of inter-university campuses, are based on the use of innovative methodologies centered on the student and the possibility for the student to follow an individualized itinerary with multidisciplinary teaching grounded in challenge-based learning. Furthermore, the alliances must follow a sustainability strategy and ensure geographical balance.

In parallel with the latest 2024 call, where 14 new alliances were approved, a project was selected that brings together all European alliances. This is the project "FOREU4ALL", which aims to be an instrument for "exchanging good practices by establishing a community of practice and strengthening synergies beyond the alliances" (République Française, 2025). This project has a total budget of 1.2 million euros, of which 962,642 have been financed by the EU. It has two main objectives: the first is to reinforce collaboration and learning among the alliances. Shared experiences will allow the exchange of strengths from each one, using those synergies to advance. The second is to "increase the dissemination of results and transferable models within the higher education sector to allow for broader use" (arQus European University Alliance, 2025).

To achieve these objectives that would benefit all the Alliances, FOREU4ALL aims to:

*"establish thematic groups on key issues to facilitate the exchange of good practices; prepare guidelines and case studies on best practices that provide valuable ideas and lessons for the alliances between European universities and the higher education"*

<sup>10</sup> Number of participating institutions by country: Albania (3) Austria (17), Belgium (17), Bosnia and Herzegovina (4), Bulgaria (13), Croatia (8), Cyprus (7), Czechia (12), Denmark (7), Estonia (5), Finland (23), France (64), Germany (67), Greece (15), Hungary (6), Iceland (4), Ireland (4), Italy (46), Latvia (7), Lithuania (11), Luxembourg (2), Malta (2), Montenegro (1), Netherlands (the) (21), Norway (11), Poland (32), Portugal (29), Republic of North Macedonia (3), Romania (22), Serbia (3), Slovakia (8), Slovenia (4), Spain (56), Sweden (24) and Turkey (5) (European Commission, 2024a).



*sector in general; collaborate with experts who contribute to political dialogue; organize events and activities such as webinars, meetings, and workshops to share information and engagement; build the community through activities that foster a sense of belonging and cooperation; promote the dissemination of transferable results, as well as events, webinars, and workshops organized by European university alliances” (Arqus Universidad de Granada, 2025).*

The support for European alliances from the Commission is also strengthened by the Master Plan for a European Degree, from March 2024. With this Master Plan, the aim is to ease the path for alliances by reducing bureaucratic procedures and achieving automatic recognition of joint degrees across the EU. This idea of a joint degree automatically recognized was already considered in the European Commission's Communication on achieving the European Higher Education Area by 2025 (published in September 2020). This European degree would constitute “a key element for students of all levels and disciplines to choose what, where, and when to study within the members of a transnational university alliance, following solid pedagogical guidelines” (European Commission, 2020).

However, the diversity of higher education systems across Europe does not allow for rapid progress. Therefore, the European Commission proposes two approaches: first, through a preparatory European label, students would receive a certificate with the European degree label along with their joint degree. Second, through an actual European degree,

*“This new type of qualification would be based on common criteria and anchored in national legislation. It would be awarded jointly by several universities from different countries or, possibly, by a European legal entity created by these universities: students would receive a ‘European degree’ that would be automatically recognized” (European Commission, 2024b).*

The attainment of a European Degree would have added value for students, universities, and employers. First, for educational institutions, it would allow them to eliminate the existing barriers and facilitate the creation of joint programs, which would increase competitiveness and attractiveness. Both issues would serve to offer better learning experience and greater opportunities, which would be a significant incentive for being considered a good choice for students worldwide. Secondly, students would have the opportunity to study at different universities across Europe, obtain a universally recognized diploma, in addition to having the chance to receive more innovative education, thus gaining transversal skills. Without a doubt, this would provide them with better access to a demanding labor market with the highest qualifications. Lastly, for employers, it would provide the possibility of having highly qualified individuals with the necessary preparation to face the challenges of international society and a significant adaptability to the current labor market. But the European Union and its states would also benefit, as it would help strengthen European identity, student mobility, attract talent to the EU, and reinforce strategic autonomy (European Commission, 2024c).



To take these steps toward the European Degree, the Commission has presented specific actions: first, the creation of a European degree policy laboratory that will develop the guidelines for the implementation of European degrees, composed of experts from higher education institutions as well as accreditation agencies or social and economic stakeholders. This laboratory will be financed by the Erasmus+ program in 2025. Secondly, an annual degree forum that will not only monitor progress but also serve as guidance for the next steps. Thirdly, funding with Erasmus+ grants for "European university pathways projects" that ultimately lead to a European degree (European Commission, 2024b).

#### **4. The next challenges in European Higher Education**

In January 2025, the European Commission presented the Compass for Competitiveness based on the Draghi Report (European Central Bank, 2025), which provided a diagnosis and formulated recommendations to boost the competitiveness of the European Union. One of the horizontal facilitators proposed as a roadmap was to promote professional skills and quality employment, placing citizens and their qualifications at the foundation of competitiveness. To achieve this goal, the "Union of Capacities" initiative is announced, with a plan to "improve education, training, and high-quality lifelong learning" (European Commission, 2025). European universities, and by extension, University Alliances, therefore become a fundamental pillar for achieving this, as research and innovation will drive global competitiveness.

However, the Alliances, in their role as a driving force for change, still face significant challenges. In all the reports analyzing the situation of the European Alliances, similarities arise regarding the challenges they face. In general terms, there are differences in legal and financial frameworks, as well as in the culture and organization of research, where each university has different priorities. Undoubtedly, all of this makes collaboration more complex and requires a high degree of flexibility in the approaches, as otherwise, not all universities will be able to participate in the initiatives within the Alliances (European Commission: European Research Executive Agency, O'Neill, G., and Acheson, H., 2023), nor will they serve the purpose intended by the European Union in this "Union of Capacities" initiative.

As already seen earlier, achieving the joint European degree is the most important challenge in the short term; however, there are other challenges that define the path of the European alliances: the legal status, the European student card, the simplification of quality procedures, or sustainable financing.

##### **• Legal Status for the Alliances**

Greater and deeper cooperation within the European Higher Education Alliances requires maximizing the resources and infrastructures of each one. In this sense, one of the main instruments for institutionalized cooperation is, without a doubt, the adoption of a specific transnational legal status that would allow overcoming national regulatory complexities.



Considering a structural issue and a matter of the functioning of the Alliances, the Council's draft Recommendation to the Commission of January 2022 emphasized that

"A legal status for the alliances of higher education institutions would facilitate access, exchange, and sharing of joint services and resources (financial, human, digital, and physical). The absence of such a legal status makes it more difficult for higher education institutions to achieve a deeper level of cooperation and limits their competitiveness" (European Council, 2022).

With this legal basis, the European Alliances would gain added value by addressing the challenges of transnational cooperation. This legal instrument would simplify the adoption of strategic decisions, joint contracting, or sharing of human, technical, data, teaching, research, and innovation resources. In this sense, most of these issues depend on national regulations, which complicate, if not prevent, appropriate transnational collaboration, for example, in the mobility of researchers.

Although the European Union has recommended trying the existing legal instruments, such as the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)<sup>11</sup> or the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG)<sup>12</sup>, the most widespread conclusion is that there is no European instrument sufficiently suitable to meet the needs of these Alliances. Therefore, in February 2023, four projects funded by the Erasmus+ program budget were launched (European Commission, 2022e) with the aim of exploring new forms of cooperation regarding possible legal status. Although the European Union had set mid-2024 (European Commission, 2022b) as the reference deadline for developing this legal status, as of today, no legal form has been adopted to regulate the Alliances. This is undoubtedly one of the main challenges in the immediate future.

#### • **The European Student Card (ESC)**

The idea of creating a European Student Card (ESC) began in 2016 and was a pilot project funded by the EU for the period 2016-2018. With it, all students would have easy access to the services of host institutions across Europe during their mobility. But it would also make universities' work easier, as they could quickly and easily verify the students' status, that is, where they are enrolled, at a European level by digitalizing the procedures. In this way, all data would be centralized, which would reduce paperwork and facilitate the transition to digital processes. It is expected that by 2025, a large number of students will benefit from its use, whether with a physical or virtual card. This card will grant access to the host university's campus, library services, or other benefits available to students, enhancing their experience as mobility students. From the outset, the goal was for it to be available to students in the Erasmus+ program countries between 2022 and 2025, not only at universities but also for service providers on and off-campus to recognize it.

<sup>11</sup> See *Regulation (EC) n° 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)* (OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 19).

<sup>12</sup> See *Regulation (CEE) n° 2137/85 of the Council, of 25 July 1985, on the establishment of a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG)* (OJ L 199, 31.7.1985, p. 1).



To ensure its implementation, a governance model has been created in which the European Commission (EC) is involved, as it defines policies, oversees implementation, and provides resources; the ESC Steering Committee, which sets the strategic direction and ensures adherence to policies; the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC), which promotes the success of the project, defines plans, and oversees progress; the ESC Solution Providers, which scale the project and manage strategic activities; and the User's Working Groups, which consult on technical and business needs and test developments (European Commission, 2023b).

The European Student Card is implemented through a digital platform called ESC Router (ESC-R), which has been operational since October 2024. This platform allows participating institutions to validate student status in real-time and integrate all the features of the card, including a unique card identifier, a student identification number, and an ESC logo composed of a QR code, the text "European Student Card," and the EU flag, which certify authenticity and validity at the European level (European Commission, 2024g). By the end of December 2024, 18 countries were using the ESC, 15 of which are EU members and 3 non-associated countries. Additionally, 16 EU member countries and third-party countries associated with the Erasmus+ Program are connected to the ESC-R, although they do not issue the ESC. Furthermore, 3.4 million student cards had been issued, with 1.56 million active cards. A total of 940 organizations are registered in the ESC-Router, and more than 308 organizations issue the ESC (Conferenza dei Retori delle Università Italiane, 2024).

#### ● **Simplification of quality assurance procedures**

Quality assurance is a key element for any qualification, even more so for transnational joint qualifications. Since the beginning of the Bologna Process, it has become an essential tool within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It was expected that by 2005, all member states would have a quality assurance system that included the following elements: "definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved; evaluation of programs or institutions; accreditation system, certification or similar processes; international participation; cooperation and networking" (European Ministers of Higher Education, 2003). These agencies should verify that higher education institutions have a coherent institutional strategy concerning teaching and learning (European Commission, 2024f).

There are three main objectives of quality assurance activities (Backhouse Erazo, Domínguez Fernández, & Gutierrez Gómez, 2012). The first is control or accountability, as institutions must comply with a set of standards that allow them to meet the minimum quality requirements. Therefore, universities have the primary responsibility for quality, as it is based on the principle of institutional autonomy. The second is the guarantee of quality, which seeks to assess whether institutions meet what they offer and have the resources and procedures in place to evaluate the minimum quality standards. In this regard, to assess quality, there needs to be both internal mechanisms (within higher education institutions) and external ones that oversee quality (Posca Cohen, 2024). Finally, improvement through recommendations for their performance. Since Berlin



2003, work has been done in this direction, promoting a “culture of quality” (Matarranz, 2021).

Moving forward in time, the 2024 Council Recommendation focuses on working on quality and recognition systems that “support transparency, mobility, and transnational cooperation, and are based on high quality and mutual trust.” Although since 2006, both the Council and the Parliament had been insisting on greater international cooperation, these Recommendations reinforce the progress made so far, such as the creation of the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies, which allows Member States to choose which one to use (European Commission, 2024e). However, things have changed significantly since 2006, especially because the emergence of European Alliances has been a revolution in the higher education system.

Today, there are obstacles that hinder the provision of joint educational offerings. The procedures established by universities and agencies remain lengthy and costly, which is why the European Union advises working to simplify and improve these processes. It is a necessity for the university of the future that higher education institutions can adapt their programs more quickly to the needs of society, but also that they can more easily offer competitive programs that are recognized throughout the European Union with all the guarantees of quality.

- **Long-term sustainable financing: pooling resources and capacities**

Another major challenge facing the European Universities initiative is undoubtedly financing. Being a strategic project for the European Union, the Alliances are primarily financed through the Erasmus+ programs and the European Excellence Initiative, regardless of the national funds each university receives. However, these funds are not sufficient. Revenues come from different sources: first, the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programs (for research and innovation), with the budget from Erasmus+ not exceeding 80% of the Alliance's budget. Second, the national contributions from the governments and universities participating in an Alliance<sup>13</sup>. Third, external contributions such as private sources, though this is not common. A report from the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture Youth, Education and Erasmus+, 2022) reveals that the total costs of the Alliances' activities are higher than the funding they receive from the EU and from the universities themselves, and that in the coming years, their financial sustainability will still require funds from both the EU and the Member States.

However, the Strategy for Universities maintains that the money coming from the EU should only complement national public funding and investment from third parties, both public and private, which is still far from the reality. It is true that participation in an

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<sup>13</sup> Financing can take different forms, for further in-depth information see the Final Report of the Study on the state and effectiveness of national funding systems of higher education to support the European Universities Initiative, pp. 46 and seq (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture Youth, Education and Erasmus+, 2022).



Alliance adds value to the participating institutions and that this should be rewarded with funding, but it is also true that there is a need to generate social wealth with this value.

Clearly, Alliances must diversify their funding sources to be sustainable in the long term. This is why they are required to explore synergies to find other sources of support, such as micro-credential certificates or joint research projects. At this point, we return to the need for Alliances to have their own legal status, not only to be able to apply for different types of funding alongside their institutional partner members, but especially because with this status, resources and capacities could be shared, as mentioned earlier, which would undoubtedly lower the costs of the Alliances.

## Conclusions

European Alliances have been a further step in the European Higher Education Area, driven by European institutions but also by the need to respond to the challenges of today's international society. University Alliances have become one of the key pillars of European policies aimed at innovation and competitiveness.

Although academic and curricular adaptation has not been easy, over the years a European Higher Education Area has been achieved; however, the real obstacles lie in the structural adaptation of universities and in the legal framework that allows for the design of formal structures and decision-making bodies. This would undoubtedly also have economic benefits for the Alliances, as it would allow the finding of public or private funding beyond the contributions from the universities themselves or from the European Union. Overcoming all the challenges requires continuous long-term effort, otherwise the Alliances will not be able to develop institutionalized transnational collaboration that overcomes national barriers. The human factor is also important; in these governance tasks, academics, researchers, students, and administrative and service staff must also be involved, or there will be a risk of disconnecting from the fundamental objectives of the Alliances, which is none other than the effective transmission of knowledge, learning, and innovation.

The European Union must continue working to transform higher education. The Compass for Competitiveness requires Alliances capable of increasing the qualifications of citizens and fostering labor skills from which companies will benefit, leading to greater competitiveness in European markets. In this sense, if Alliances can offer high-quality, attractive, and sustainable academic and research careers, the European Union will be able to compete by attracting and retaining talent.

It is therefore necessary to continue working on actions that transform European higher education. The universality of the European student card, the automatic recognition of qualifications, the design of a legal framework for the Alliances, and sustainable, inclusive, and more technological programs will undoubtedly help this transformation.

In short, European higher education alliances are essential to fostering cooperation and integration between educational institutions from different countries. Collaboration means the exchange of knowledge, resources, and best practices, enriching the





educational experience for both students and faculty. Cooperation allows us to address common challenges, resulting in higher quality qualifications.

The Alliances promote student mobility, which fosters cultural exchange and a deeper understanding of European values and culture. But they also promote researcher mobility by creating innovative international networks, which drives the economic and social development of the region. In a world where industry increasingly depends on technology and innovation, University Alliances play a key role in preparing future generations by applying student-centered teaching methods and encouraging lifelong learning, tools that will undoubtedly enable the personal and professional growth necessary to face the challenges and opportunities of the future.

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## **HIGHER EDUCATION FROM AN INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE: EXPANDING THE BOUNDARIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**

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### **Abstract**

This study addresses the significance and applicability of an inclusive governance approach in higher education institutions. It emphasizes that higher education is evolving globally toward the goals of democratization, diversity, and inclusion. Inclusive governance encompasses the active participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes, transparency, accountability, and participatory structures. In this context, the study highlights the necessity of involving students, academic and administrative staff, and external stakeholders in university governance processes. The study asserts that inclusivity involves not only representation but also effective participation and decision-making power, which must be supported by institutional culture, leadership practices, and structural arrangements. It also emphasizes that inclusive governance contributes significant value to higher education in areas such as quality assurance, academic success, and social responsibility. In conclusion, higher education institutions are expected to serve not only as knowledge producers but also as environments where social justice, equality, and participation are actively upheld. To achieve this transformation, it is recommended that the core principles and practices of inclusive governance be integrated into the administrative systems of universities.

### **Keywords**

Social Justice, Access To Higher Education, Inclusive Governance, Disadvantaged Groups, Education Policy.

### **Resumo**

O presente estudo examina a relevância e a aplicabilidade de uma abordagem de governação inclusiva no contexto das Instituições de Ensino Superior. Salienta-se que o ensino superior, à escala global, se encontra em transformação, orientando-se progressivamente para os princípios da democratização, da diversidade e da inclusão. A governação inclusiva, neste quadro, é entendida como um modelo que promove a participação ativa das diversas partes



interessadas nos processos de tomada de decisão, sustentado em princípios de transparência, responsabilidade e estruturas participativas. O estudo sublinha a importância de integrar estudantes, pessoal docente e não docente, bem como entidades externas, nos mecanismos de governação universitária, reconhecendo que a inclusão vai além da mera representação simbólica, implicando uma participação efetiva e um poder de decisão real. Este modelo de governação deve ser apoiado por uma cultura institucional propícia, práticas de liderança inclusiva e dispositivos estruturais adequados. O estudo defende que a adoção de práticas inclusivas de governação acrescenta valor significativo ao ensino superior, particularmente em domínios como a garantia da qualidade, o sucesso académico e a responsabilidade social das instituições. Em síntese, considera-se que as instituições de ensino superior devem assumir-se não apenas como centros de produção e disseminação de conhecimento, mas também como espaços que promovem ativamente a justiça social, a igualdade e a participação democrática. Para que esta transformação seja efetiva, recomenda-se a integração dos princípios e práticas fundamentais da governação inclusiva nos sistemas administrativos e na cultura organizacional das universidades.

#### **Palavras-chave**

Justiça Social, Acesso Ao Ensino Superior, Governança Inclusiva, Grupos Desfavorecidos, Política Educacional.

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## **HIGHER EDUCATION FROM AN INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE: EXPANDING THE BOUNDARIES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**NILAY NEYİŞCI**

### **1. Introduction**

In the 21st century, global education policies shaped by the ideal of the knowledge society have positioned higher education as a cornerstone of both social development and individual competence. However, these global trends have often failed to eliminate socio-economic inequalities in access to and success within higher education; instead, they tend to reproduce such disparities. Access to higher education must be understood not only in terms of university admission but also through indicators such as graduation rates, utilization of institutional support systems, and academic achievement. From this perspective, the concept of social justice offers a critical analytical framework.

In Türkiye, the massification of higher education has accelerated notably since the early 2000s, particularly through the expansion of universities and the increase in student quotas (Erçetin, Akbaşlı & Baysülen, 2020). However, for this quantitative growth to translate into a more equitable structure, it is essential to address the structural barriers that impede access for disadvantaged groups—such as low-income individuals, those residing in rural areas, persons with disabilities, and refugees. The participation of these groups in higher education should not merely be framed within the principle of equal opportunity but must also be addressed through a rights-based understanding of social justice (Furlong & Cartmel, 2009).

The concept of social justice necessitates an expansion of education policies beyond the sole dimension of access, encompassing fair representation, participatory governance, equitable distribution of resources, and parity in academic outcomes (Rawls, 1971; Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Singh, 2011). In this regard, the notion of “inclusive governance” emphasizes a governance model that prioritizes both the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes and the responsiveness of institutional structures to the specific needs of disadvantaged groups. Inclusive governance demands that higher education institutions be assessed not solely based on their educational and research outputs, but also on their capacity to generate social responsibility and justice (Wise, Dickinson, Katan & Gallegos, 2020). Social justice entails not only equal opportunities



but also the systematic empowerment of historically marginalized subgroups. Higher education systems, in this context, may serve as corrective mechanisms that enable the transformation of these groups both individually and collectively. Fraser's principle of "parity of participation" thus compels the establishment of equality mechanisms that extend beyond resource distribution to include representation and recognition (Fraser, 2009).

As emphasized in the reports of international organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, and the European Commission, higher education access policies should not be confined to expanding quotas; rather, they should be integrated with supportive mechanisms such as scholarship schemes, student support services, psychological counseling, and mentoring programs (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2022). Moreover, governance processes should be rendered more transparent and participatory through mechanisms such as student representation, academic advising systems, and social impact assessments (European Commission, 2021).

Accordingly, the primary aim of this study is to examine the extent to which access policies based on social justice are structured in line with the principles of inclusive governance within Turkish higher education system. Drawing on literature and policy documents, this study seeks to explore the alignment between access policies and the objectives of social justice, and to identify the institutional reforms required to enhance such alignment. To this end, the study first outlines a theoretical framework addressing the concepts of social justice, access, and governance; subsequently, it analyzes access policies in the Turkish context, presents findings on inclusive governance practices, and concludes with a set of recommendations.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The concepts of social justice and inclusive governance in higher education lie at the intersection of the disciplines of educational sciences, public administration, and political science. In this study, the social justice approach is grounded in Rawls' (1971) theory of "justice as fairness," which goes beyond equal opportunities and incorporates affirmative action measures in favor of disadvantaged groups. Fraser (2009), on the other hand, conceptualizes social justice as a multidimensional structure that includes not only the redistribution of resources but also cultural recognition and political participation. Accordingly, ensuring social justice in higher education policies requires equitable mechanisms of representation and sensitivity to cultural diversity (Sen, 2010; Wilson-Strydom, 2011).

Access to education is defined by UNESCO as "the right of every individual to receive quality education," and it emphasizes that this right must be guaranteed especially for disadvantaged groups (UNESCO, 2022). In the context of higher education, access encompasses not only physical admission but also academic preparation, financial aid, institutional guidance, and access to post-graduation opportunities (Erçetin, Akbaşlı & Esen, 2024). Governance, in contrast to traditional hierarchical administration, refers to multi-stakeholder, participatory, transparent, and accountable decision-making





processes (Trow, 2010). Inclusive governance is a variant of this broader understanding that prioritizes social justice, particularly by ensuring the active participation of disadvantaged groups in the delivery of public services (Rhodes, 1997; Fung, 2006).

Inclusive governance in higher education extends beyond achieving diversity in governing bodies; it also involves student participation in the design of academic programs, collaboration with civil society in institutional evaluation processes, and the implementation of community feedback mechanisms (Marginson, 2016). Based on these theoretical foundations, this study proceeds from the premise that social justice must be considered not only in terms of equality but also through the principles of fairness, recognition, and participation, and it focuses on assessing the transformative capacity of higher education systems. Inclusive governance should be viewed not only as an ethical mode of governance but also as a strategic framework for reconstructing institutional legitimacy. In his model of “participatory governance,” Fung (2006) emphasizes that legitimacy is not only linked to the effectiveness of governance outcomes but also to the diversity of actors involved in the process. In this context, governance structures in higher education should not be limited to internal university stakeholders but must also integrate external factors such as civil society organizations, local governments, and students into decision-making processes. Within this framework, three core conceptual areas—social justice, access, and inclusive governance—emerge as key to evaluating policies aimed at adjusting higher education systems and reducing social inequalities. These concepts involve not only the formal recognition of the right to education but also its equitable, fair, and inclusive realization (Açıklalın & Erçetin, 2018).

Social justice is a multi-layered concept at the heart of debates around equality in education. Based on Rawls’ theory of “justice as fairness” (1971), social justice necessitates arrangements that enable individuals—taking into account their inherent or socially constructed disadvantages—to access equal opportunities. Fraser (2009) conceptualizes social justice through three dimensions: redistribution (equitable distribution of economic resources), recognition (visibility and respect for cultural identities), and participation (inclusion in decision-making processes). In this context, social justice in higher education entails a comprehensive approach that goes beyond access to student quotas, encompassing active participation in learning environments, utilization of support services, and success in graduation.

Although access to higher education is often discussed in terms of inequality at the point of university admission, it should be understood as a broader process. According to Brennan and Naidoo (2008), access should be addressed through a “processual equity” approach that includes preparation, admission, retention, success, and graduation. This perspective enables the evaluation of not only selection criteria but also pedagogical practices, financial support systems, and post-graduation opportunities from a justice standpoint (Erçetin, Akbaşı & Esen, 2024). Furthermore, access policies should not be designed solely around individual achievement but also reflect the principles of social responsibility aimed at addressing structural inequalities (Singh, 2011).

The concept of governance refers to multi-stakeholder, participatory, transparent, and accountable decision-making processes, in contrast to traditional hierarchical



management. Inclusive governance in higher education institutions entails operating based on the principles of multi-stakeholder engagement, participation, transparency, and accountability throughout decision-making, implementation, and evaluation processes. UNESCO (2015) defines inclusive governance as the establishment of institutional mechanisms that ensure the representation of disadvantaged groups. This approach goes beyond symbolic forms of participation, such as student representation, and requires structural transformations including representation in academic committees, data-driven decision-making processes, social impact evaluations, and horizontal accountability models (Trowler, 2010). Inclusive governance also mandates that higher education institutions be evaluated not only based on their educational outputs but also in terms of their contribution to social equity. The tripartite structure of social justice in higher education—redistribution (scholarships and support services), recognition (visibility of cultural identity and diversity), and participation (access to decision-making processes)—necessitates a holistic approach to institutional policy design (Fraser, 2009; Gewirtz, 2006). For instance, supporting students from rural areas both economically and academically requires not only financial resources but also pedagogical advising and psychosocial support systems. Although the expansion of access to higher education is often presented as an indicator of democratization, its secondary effects that may deepen socio-economic inequalities should not be overlooked. For example, the fact that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds tend to enroll in under-resourced institutions reduces the notion of equal opportunity to a superficial framework (Marginson, 2011). In this sense, massification can become a “quantitative illusion” that masks structural inequalities. At the intersection of these three conceptual domains, higher education policies that prioritize social justice must be holistically structured—not only through quota planning but also in areas such as resource allocation, pedagogical support, academic culture, and governance structures. In the context of Turkey, this theoretical framework provides a functional basis for both the analysis of existing policies and the normative foundation of proposed recommendations.

### **3. Development of Higher Education access policies in Turkey**

The formation of access policies to higher education in Türkiye has been shaped by a centralized structure since the early years of the Republic. The university reform carried out in 1933 laid the foundations of modern higher education, while access to university remained limited under an elitist model for many years. During this period, universities were positioned as institutions catering only to a specific social segment. Following the establishment of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) in the post-1980 era, a centrally planned higher education system was constructed. University entrance examinations, enrollment quotas, and standardized program structures rendered access to university both competitive and restrictive. This system particularly hindered participation in higher education for students from low-income and rural areas (Yücel, 2023; İnan & Demir, 2018; Kandemir, 2014).



### **3.1 Massification Process After 2000**

Beginning in the 2000s, Turkey adopted massification policies in higher education. A key strategy in this process was the increase in the number of universities, with the aim of establishing at least one public university in each province. Universities established between 2006 and 2012 were a significant component of this goal (YÖK, 2014). The massification process was further supported by increasing enrollment quotas and expanding distance education opportunities. However, these developments brought about several quality-related issues. Notably, deficiencies in academic staff, infrastructural inadequacies, and imbalances in program quality became apparent, especially in newly established universities (Bali, Demirbilek, & Demirtas, 2024; Altunoğlu, 2020).

### **3.2 Policy Initiatives for Disadvantaged Groups**

The situation of disadvantaged groups in accessing higher education constitutes a key agenda item in Turkish education policy. Efforts have been made to develop specific access policies for groups such as individuals with low socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, residents of rural areas, and refugees. Recent strategic documents published by YÖK emphasize the need to increase sensitivity toward these groups (YÖK, 2023). Accessibility units have been established in universities for students with disabilities, physical conditions on campuses have been improved, and special arrangements have been made in examinations. However, systematic data regarding the institutional effectiveness of these practices and their impact on students' academic achievement remains limited. Similarly, economically disadvantaged students are supported through scholarships and loan systems. Yet, factors such as the transparency, adequacy, and sustainability of scholarship distribution criteria limit the effectiveness of these practices (Erçetin & Açıklın, 2018).

### **3.3 Access and Integration Challenges of Refugees**

In the post-2011 period, as a result of the Syrian crisis, Turkey's higher education system had to accommodate a significant population of refugee students. YÖK and universities implemented measures to facilitate the application processes of Syrian students under temporary protection, including additional quotas, exemption from exams, and scholarship opportunities. Nonetheless, the integration of refugee students into higher education involves multi-layered challenges. Language proficiency, psychosocial support needs, housing, and the sense of belonging are among the primary factors affecting the success and retention of refugee students (UNHCR, 2020). While many of the policies developed in this area, long-term perspectives on social integration and institutional inclusivity have yet to be sufficiently developed (Açıklın, Erçetin, Potas, Çevik, Neyişçi & Görgülü, 2021; Erçetin & Kubilay, 2019).



### **3.4 The Role of Open and Distance Education**

Open and distance education systems are among the most significant tools for expanding access to higher education in Turkey. Universities have enabled millions of students to obtain degrees through open education. This model offers flexible learning opportunities, particularly for working individuals, women, and residents of rural areas. However, factors such as the pedagogical quality of open education systems, the adequacy of student support services, and graduation rates limit the system's effectiveness (Can, 2020). Moreover, student participation in governance processes and institutional belonging among open education students remain notably low. This hinders the system's integration with broader goals of social justice (Erçetin & Açıklın, 2024).

### **3.5 Policy Documents and the Monitoring**

Various strategic policies by YÖK and the Ministry of National Education aim to enhance inclusivity and access in higher education. However, most targets focus on quantitative indicators, while performance monitoring mechanisms remain insufficient. The disconnect between policy objectives and implementation limits sustainable progress in the area of access. Additionally, universities need to develop their own access strategies at the local level and update them through social feedback mechanisms. Centralized policies that disregard local contexts prove ineffective in universities, creating only symbolic access for disadvantaged students (Özdemir, 2018).

### **3.6 Conceptual Model: A Social Justice-Based Multidimensional Access Approach**

In line with the discussions presented above, it is evident that access policies to higher education in Türkiye must be restructured based on the principles of social justice. Access based on social justice in higher education requires a holistic approach that goes beyond merely expanding physical access and instead integrates four key dimensions: structural expansion, supportive policies, representation and recognition, and inclusive governance. Structural expansion refers to increasing the number of universities, enhancing infrastructure, and ensuring their equitable geographical distribution to improve physical access. Supportive policies aim to reduce economic and psychosocial barriers through mechanisms such as scholarships, housing, and counseling services. Representation and recognition involve making disadvantaged groups visible, promoting cultural inclusivity, and ensuring institutional acknowledgment of diverse identities to strengthen students' sense of belonging. Inclusive governance emphasizes participatory decision-making, the development of context-specific strategies, and accountability through the monitoring of educational outcomes. When these four dimensions are addressed collectively, social justice can be institutionalized in higher education not merely as a principle of access, but as a foundation for structural and cultural transformation. This model is constructed on four main pillars: structural expansion, supportive policies, representation and recognition, and inclusive governance. Each pillar corresponds to a different dimension of inequality in access to higher education and collectively reflects the principles of equality and equity embedded in social justice (Wilson-Strydom, 2011; Fraser, 2009).



In general, access policies to higher education in Türkiye have been shaped by physical expansion and quantitative growth, whereas participatory and inclusive governance models grounded in the principles of social justice have not yet been sufficiently institutionalized. Access policies must be assessed not only in quantitative terms but also through a holistic lens encompassing qualitative aspects, representational equity, and support systems. In this context, it is vital to restructure access policies to higher education based on the principles of equality, equity, recognition, and representation, as required by social justice. Integrating the perspective of inclusive governance into policy-making processes at local, institutional, and national levels will enable the higher education system to become more just and sustainable.

#### **4. Findings**

The concept of social justice in higher education encompasses not only equal access but also the fair distribution of opportunities for active participation in academic processes and achievement. The literature reveals a limited number of policy analyses concerning the integration of socially disadvantaged groups into higher education systems (Marginson, 2016). This gap highlights the need to evaluate social justice in higher education not only at the point of entry but also throughout students' persistence and graduation phases. Inequities in access often stem from multi-layered and interrelated socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural factors. Individuals living in rural areas are disadvantaged in accessing higher education institutions in central urban locations due to deficiencies in both physical and digital infrastructure. Similarly, students from low-income families face additional burdens arising from both direct educational expenses and indirect living costs (OECD, 2023). Furthermore, cultural factors such as ethnic background, language differences, and migratory history increase the risk of exclusion and discrimination within the education system.

Targeted policy interventions in some countries have shown potential to reduce these inequalities. For instance, in Australia, universities are required to conduct detailed reporting and performance monitoring for social groups defined under the category of "equity groups" (Gale & Parker, 2013). These mechanisms track not only application and admission rates but also students' academic achievements, graduation rates, and career outcomes.

Efforts to broaden access to higher education in Türkiye have primarily focused on enrollment planning, financial support mechanisms, and open and distance learning practices. The quota regulations implemented by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) aim to reduce regional disparities through additional quotas allocated to universities in specific geographical areas. These advantages offered to universities in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia help make youth from these regions more visible within the system (YÖK, 2023).

Scholarship and loan systems are critically important for enabling students from low-income backgrounds to continue their education. The loans and non-repayable grants provided by the Credit and Dormitories Institution (KYK) function as support mechanisms



that help students endure economic pressures during their academic journeys (YÖK, 2023). However, the scope and adequacy of this support often fall short of fostering equality among different social groups. A lack of transparency regarding the application process, evaluation criteria, and distribution mechanisms can undermine the system's credibility. Although open and distance learning practices have the potential to reduce spatial disadvantages, the pedagogical quality and the impact on student success remain contested. Institutions have extended access to large populations; however, inequalities in benefiting from these models persist due to inadequate digital infrastructure and insufficient individual learning support. In addition, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often face limitations in accessing digital tools, further exacerbating digital divides (Erçetin & Açıkalın, 2024).

## 5. Discussion

In Türkiye, higher education policies have long prioritized expanding quantitative access. This orientation has manifested in the expansion of physical capacities of universities, the increase in student quotas, and the dissemination of higher education institutions across various regions. However, this expansion has not been sufficiently supported by qualitative transformations necessary to ensure equity in student success. It is critically important not only to enable access for socioeconomically disadvantaged students but also to provide the structural support necessary for them to succeed throughout their educational journey. In line with Fraser's (2009) framework of justice, which encompasses redistribution, recognition, and representation, current practices in Türkiye appear to have made partial progress primarily in the domain of redistribution, while structural deficiencies persist in the realms of recognition and representation.

Students from low-income backgrounds, rural areas, first-generation university attendees, and ethnic minorities face multiple barriers from entry to graduation within the higher education system. In order to sustain academic success, these students require multidimensional support mechanisms that go beyond financial assistance, encompassing access to learning materials, psychosocial support, and digital literacy (Wilson-Strydom, 2011). While Türkiye's scholarship and loan systems generally address these needs, systematic deficiencies remain in areas such as academic advising, cultural adaptation, and social integration. Nonetheless, mentoring programs and student support centers recently introduced in some universities can be regarded as promising initiatives aimed at promoting equity in success.

Institutional limitations also play a decisive role in the failure to achieve equity in academic success. Structural disparities between public and foundation (private) universities in Türkiye further deepen inequalities. Foundation universities, often endowed with greater financial resources, modern infrastructure, and international connections, are able to offer a broader range of opportunities to students. However, the high tuition fees associated with these institutions constitute a significant barrier, particularly for low-income students. Public universities, on the other hand, offer more affordable education but often suffer from infrastructure deficiencies, large student-to-instructor ratios, and insufficient academic counseling, all of which negatively impact



student success. Moreover, the scholarship and support programs in foundation universities are typically tied to strict performance criteria, rendering them unsustainable as long-term support mechanisms for disadvantaged students (Özdemir, 2018). Therefore, in promoting social justice in higher education, it is essential to consider not only quantitative expansion across institutions but also qualitative equity in opportunities among them. The lack of early intervention systems to identify students at risk of failure can lead to declines in academic performance. Student retention models in the United Kingdom have demonstrated that student success depends not only on individual effort but also on institutional responsibility (Singh, 2011). Early warning systems and counseling networks implemented in some Turkish universities offer positive examples in this regard, though they still fall short in terms of widespread adoption and sustainability.

Inclusive governance principles are crucial for integrating social justice into institutional operations. However, despite being included in policy documents, these principles have not been systematically implemented in practice in Türkiye. The participation of disadvantaged groups in decision-making processes is a mechanism that not only enhances representation but also strengthens policy effectiveness. Democratic governance must go beyond mere representation to ensure that such representation is meaningfully reflected in decision-making processes. In this context, the strengthening of student councils, increased student participation in advisory boards, and the promotion of multi-stakeholder decision-making processes in some universities can be cited as positive developments (Wise, Dickinson, Katan, & Gallegos, 2020).

Currently, student representation systems and structural supports would enable students to contribute to decision-making processes in an informed and constructive manner. Students approaching the issue from a social justice perspective face difficulties in articulating their needs or influencing policies. However, recent projects carried out by student communities in collaboration with civil society organizations and academic units indicate encouraging progress in participatory governance. Institutional support for these projects can help create an environment conducive to meaningful student participation in governance processes.

Disability support units must be considered an integral component of inclusive governance in higher education. There is significant variation among Turkish universities in terms of the structure, service capacity, and expertise levels of these units. While some universities have made commendable efforts to improve physical accessibility, deficiencies remain in areas such as adapting digital materials, training academic staff, and raising awareness of the academic rights of students with disabilities. In this regard, the "Barrier-Free University" award program recently initiated by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) can be considered an important incentive mechanism to promote awareness and disseminate best practices. Strategic plans of higher education institutions in Türkiye tend to frame inclusivity goals through quantitative indicators, often neglecting qualitative dimensions such as experiential justice, sense of belonging, and academic atmosphere. For instance, objectives like "increasing the proportion of disadvantaged students" provide no insight into the quality of these students' experiences, nor do they include metrics concerning the functionality of support systems or levels of student satisfaction.



In conclusion, while the Turkish higher education system has achieved significant progress in terms of access, systemic transformation is still needed in areas such as equity in success, inclusive governance, and experiential justice. Inclusive governance must go beyond representation to institutionalize effective, sustainable, and accountable participation in decision-making processes. In this regard, social justice should not be treated merely as a strategic goal but must be embraced as a normative value at the core of all academic, administrative, and cultural practices within higher education institutions.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Ensuring social justice in higher education should not be confined to expanding physical access alone; rather, it must also include the systematic strengthening of support mechanisms and inclusive governance structures that prioritize equity in student success. In Türkiye, the recent increase in the number of universities and their geographic distribution across different regions can be seen as a significant development in terms of access. Spatial equity must be considered in conjunction with socioeconomic, cultural, and digital inequalities. Higher education institutions should broaden the scope of institutional support structures and ensure their systematic functionality in alignment with the goal of realizing social justice. Services such as academic advising, psychosocial support, career counseling, and learning centers are fundamental to enhancing student success.

The digitalization process has introduced new dimensions to social justice. Particularly in the aftermath of COVID-19, the proliferation of remote education practices has rendered digital inequalities more visible. In this context, it is imperative for higher education institutions to strengthen their digital infrastructures and develop policies concerning internet access, device provision, and the production of accessible digital content. The Council of Higher Education's efforts in open access resources, digital library systems, and the institutionalization of distance education are positive steps in this direction. However, these practices must be disseminated sustainably and inclusively across all universities. Social assistance policies must be restructured through a social justice lens. Economic support should go beyond scholarships and encompass comprehensive policies addressing basic needs such as housing, nutrition, transportation, and healthcare. Multi-dimensional support models implemented at some universities—such as integrated student cards providing access to meals, transportation, and stationery—aim to relieve students from economic pressure and demonstrate that social assistance functions not merely as financial aid, but also as a mechanism for leveling academic achievement.

Performance monitoring mechanisms are essential for evaluating and improving the effectiveness of social justice policies. These systems should not be limited to quantitative data but must also incorporate qualitative analyses and student experiences. Qualitative data collection tools include student surveys, focus group discussions, case studies, and ethnographic observations. Tracking access policies with measurable and assessable indicators is necessary not only for performance management but also for accountability and strategic planning. The Higher Education Quality Council of Turkey offers a





framework in this regard; its quality assurance systems encourage the consideration of social indicators such as inclusiveness, access, and student experience in institutional performance evaluations. This system allows social justice to be embedded in institutional structures not just as a vision but as a measurable performance criterion.

In conclusion, achieving social justice in higher education requires not only the expansion of access opportunities but also the institutional internalization of structural mechanisms that support student success and inclusive governance practices. The transformative and lasting impact of this approach can only be realized to the extent that it is reflected in daily practices, academic culture, and a sense of societal responsibility. Embedding social justice as the normative foundation of the higher education system produces a public good that supports not only disadvantaged groups but also the welfare and democratization process of society as a whole.

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## **NURTURING AND UPBRINGING; THE FORGOTTEN ASPECT IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS(HEIS)**

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## Abstract

In today's volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world, humanity is experiencing complexities with new trends in lifestyles, orientation and thinking. These complexities that keep on revolving are the result of education without a soul, values and clear dimension of nurturing and preparing the youths with positive attitude, skills, morally acceptable behavior for self-identification and management. Today the character and behaviours manifested in our society like; violence, land grabbing, merciless killings and climate change among others are a clear indication that nurturing and upbringing has been forgotten in both curriculum development and implementation. Therefore, there is a great need to refocus on what we prepare for learning and how it is learnt at all levels of education. Another aspect of humanity without spirituality, respect for culture and protection of the next generation has been encountered. This kind of experience that humanity is going through has led to unacceptable behaviours like homosexuality, corruption, lack of respect and distrust. This paradigm shift in lifestyle has also led to distortion of religion, societal norms and beliefs, culture of given societies and historical heritages. The damages caused cannot predict a better future for the next generation. To avert this situation and regain human civilization with the components of humanity, spirituality and respect for nature and dignity, there is a need to capture the component of attitude formation, nurturing with a focus on values and life skills and upbringing so as to prepare a better generation for the new world order. The purpose of this paper is to expose the reader to the forgotten aspects in curriculum development and its implementation, especially the nurturing of attitude, life skills and values.

## Keywords

Nurturing, Upbringing, Curriculum development, Curriculum Implementation.

## Resumo

No atual contexto global caracterizado por volatilidade, incerteza, complexidade e ambiguidade (VUCA), a Humanidade confronta-se com desafios crescentes resultantes de novas tendências nos estilos de vida, orientação e pensamento. Estas complexidades emergentes revelam-se, em grande medida, como consequência de uma educação desprovida de dimensão ética, espiritual e axiológica, bem como da ausência de uma formação sólida que prepare os jovens com atitudes positivas, competências essenciais e comportamentos moralmente responsáveis, capazes de sustentar a autoidentificação e a gestão pessoal. A proliferação de fenómenos sociais como a violência, a apropriação ilícita de terras, os homicídios brutais e as alterações climáticas, entre outros, constituem evidências claras de que os sistemas educativos contemporâneos têm descurado, tanto no desenho como na implementação curricular, a integração de uma educação orientada por valores e por uma formação humanista. Torna-se, por isso, premente reconsiderar não apenas os conteúdos que integram os programas de ensino, mas também os métodos e as finalidades da aprendizagem em todos os níveis de educação. Acresce ainda que se tem assistido a um declínio progressivo da espiritualidade, do respeito pelas culturas e da preocupação com a preservação das gerações futuras. Esta realidade tem contribuído para o surgimento de condutas consideradas



por diversos sectores da sociedade como eticamente problemáticas, tais como a corrupção generalizada, o enfraquecimento do respeito interpessoal e a quebra da confiança social. Paralelamente, tem-se verificado uma distorção de referenciais fundamentais, nomeadamente a religião, as normas sociais, os valores culturais e o património histórico, comprometendo gravemente a possibilidade de construir um futuro mais promissor para as próximas gerações. Neste cenário de transição civilizacional, torna-se imperativo reorientar os sistemas educativos para que integrem, de forma estruturada e intencional, componentes formativos centrados na promoção de atitudes construtivas, valores éticos, competências para a vida e um profundo respeito pela dignidade humana e pela sustentabilidade ambiental. O presente artigo tem como propósito evidenciar as dimensões negligenciadas no processo de conceção e implementação curricular, com especial enfoque na educação para os valores, nas competências pessoais e sociais e na formação integral dos indivíduos, de modo a contribuir para a preparação de uma geração apta a enfrentar os desafios da nova ordem mundial.

### **Palavras-chave**

Educação, Formação, Desenvolvimento Curricular, Implementação Curricular.

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**GRACE K. BAGUMA**

### **Introduction**

As humanity is embracing cultural diversity, inclusion, and gender equity, the world is becoming more complex in nature to the extent that the emergence of new world order plagued with issues of technological advancement, globalization, massification, commodification, institutional ranking, competition for natural resources, sustainability, capitalism and extremism(Waller, Lemoine, Mense, Garretson, & Richardson, 2019). These forces have left man today at the crossroad without a clear solution of how to nurture and mold a responsible knowledgeable citizen imbued with skills, values and spirituality for self-development and community transformation. These phenomena which have never been experienced in human life, have called for diversion of human efforts and endeavors towards infusing these aspects into education and in every aspect of human transformation and development. For instance; communicating through social media is with humanity in all aspects of the human spectrum. While redefining how life should look like and at the same time continue to exist, the issue of moral decadence and inhuman behavior is lingering among the different societies of the world Uganda inclusive. In addition, today Uganda is facing serious complex challenges due to lack of values and unacceptable attitudes from different kinds of humanity at all levels of human development. For instance; the society today is facing issues of corruption, trafficking both drug and human, homosexuality, and abuse of democracy, injustice, land grabbing, civil wars and extremism (Embry & Sandler, 2012; Miuro, 2017). These tendencies and many others are a clear indicator of moral erosion and decadence among the people of different societies, hence posing serious challenges for the existence of the next generation. Meanwhile, many schools of thought attach this unpleasant situation to the knowledge without soul and values that has been used in nurturing and upbringing of different generations in order to propel human civilization. Today many HEIs' curricula frameworks have been developed to prepare required human capital that can outcompete



others on the world map in terms of knowledge creation, skills enhancement, technological advancement and so on(Embry & Sandler, 2012; Goodwin, & Angeles, 2017). But the component of nurturing and upbringing seems to be missing especially among the youths. For this reason and many others some parts of the world have devoted their efforts on imbuing nurturing and upbringing into the curriculum so as to prepare a better generation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. For instance; in Asian countries Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia among others are using knowledge integration to produce the required holistic personality even though the issue of values and attitudes formation are still very big challenges in curriculum development and implementation (Brough, 2007).

These countries have developed several frameworks to support the nurturing and upbringing of children for example, Malaysia's Education blueprint emphasizes values, spirituality and individual well-being, achieved through several pedagogies such as wisdom and Sejahtera(Aroff, 2014). Similarly, Japan and Indonesia are implementing Takatssu to improve face to face interaction between students and teachers(Eskasasnanda, 2020). These strategies highlight key elements that education stakeholders consider while designing and implementing the curricula.

However, to avert this situation and recall the integration of knowledge with soul, values and attitude among graduates and the society in general, there is a need to redefine education as a source of nurturing values and attitudes through curriculum development and implementation. Thus, what is nurturing and upbringing? What is nurturing values and attitudes? What is the meaning of curriculum development and implementation? What is the missing gap in curriculum and its impact on society?. The purpose of this paper is to expose the reader to Nurturing and Upbringing as the Forgotten Aspect in Curriculum Development and Implementation.

### **What is nurturing and upbringing?**

The concept Nurturing and upbringing are used interchangeably. Research has shown that they have an influence on the entire spectrum of human growth, development and transformation. Recently the concept of nurturing and upbringing has attracted scholarly attention due to its essence in molding human psychology and behavior. For that reason and many other researchers have developed different parameters to define its meaning and relevance to humanity. Nurturing is a concept that requires collective efforts of different resources from the community with a common goal using diverse ways of intergenerational mentoring and upbringing of the young (Kuttner, 1997). This statement implies that to raise a child up to the level of maturity, requires different stakeholders like parents, teachers and the community at large; to be concerned on how the next generation should look like so as to push human development, transformation and growth for both self and the society to another level.

There are several frameworks that have been developed for instance; Embry & Sandler, (2012) states that nurturing should be integral in nature with an enabling environment that includes epidemiological evidence. This factor affects pathological development, Psychological and psychological pathways. This factor strengthens confidence in





instances of risks and protective factors. Lastly is experimental evidence. This factor acts as an intervention for prevention of psychological, health problems or behavioral issues and this results in positive development. Goodwin et al., (2017) state that nurturing in Los Angeles catered for caring, supportiveness, playfulness, and pleasure helps individuals to thrive and this was more centered in families. Early & Development, (2019) states that enable communities and caregivers to ensure children's good health and nutrition, protect them from threats, and give them opportunities for early learning through interactions that are emotionally supportive and responsive.

Habimana, (2024) states that curriculum development and implementation should cater for physical, emotional, social, moral, and intellectual development of students. Yusoff, et al., (2018) in their study done on both primary and secondary school children in Malaysia state that curriculum should involve caring, collaboration skills, critical, creative and communication skills through all the subjects taught at these levels. (Gehlbach & Hough, (2018) state that curriculum should capture elements of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, social responsibility and relationship management.

A study by Ab Razak, (2020) highlights the foundational principles of humanistic theories, emphasizing that human growth and development revolve around aspects: love, creativity, loneliness and personal growth. These traits form the cornerstone of a well-balanced personality, and evolve through a well-motivated process of self-discovery and development. Integrating these humanistic concepts into the educational curriculum is crucial for nurturing individuals who can make to make informed choices based on values, spirituality, curiosity and conscious awareness (Littlejohn et al., 2019). This approach fosters not only academic success but also the holistic development of learners. However this ideal remains largely unachieved in many educational systems, including Uganda. Ugandan graduates often exhibit significant gaps in theory and practical applications necessary for well-rounded personality development. Addressing this challenge requires a paradigm shift in educational practices, focusing more on a human centred approach that prioritized personal growth alongside academic achievement.

Even though many scholars suggest different frameworks that curriculum development and implementation should encapsulate, Uganda's education system over the years has not produced the required humanity with elements of knowledge interwoven with both hard and soft skills, values, attitudes and spirituality especially among the youths (Kifuuse, 2024). This is because the government of Uganda has recently embarked on retooling, nurturing and reshaping youths aspirations and mitigation of violent behavior amongst them (Tukundane, Minnaert, Zeelen, & Kanyandago, 2015). To avert Uganda's education system, there is a need to re-conceptualize curriculum development and implementation at all levels to nurture learners with a new mindset towards self and community development.

Similarly, Miiro & Otham, (2018) in their paper talent management practices a trajectory and ingenuity in higher education institutions; a meta-analysis review of literature alluded that preparation of a holistic graduate requires a curriculum designed and tailored with critical thinking, communication, innovation, problem solving, entrepreneurship and



team work in order to fit in diverse, mobile and non-boundaries, culture and place. When this kind of curriculum is designed with pre-requisite skills for the survival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and after, there is need to ensure that the implementation stage is done by staff who are talented with skills of being agile, privy and astute in nature with an aim of addressing today and future generation demands with real life practical solutions.

Unfortunately, Uganda's education system at different levels of education does not translate into the frameworks given above. This is because so far the several attempts done to address curriculum development with required skills for empowering graduates with necessary skills for survival and community transformation are at lower secondary school level. But still at the level of curriculum implementation a lot of effort is required in order to train teachers in empowering learners with competencies and required skills for socio-economic transformation. This is because most of the teachers who are implementing the curriculum at lower secondary school level are graduates without competencies and skills for innovation and holistic personality development. These teachers are a product of Eurocentric curriculum which emphasized more of the content and examination grade without competencies and skills. This challenge has been exacerbated by the current situation especially at HEIs which have not until today conceptualized their curricula and cause structures to address skills and competencies' gaps among graduates (Miuro, \$ Baguma, 2023). The purpose of this paper is to examine the forgotten aspect of nurturing and upbringing in curriculum development and implementation.

Nurturing and Upbringing, goes hand in hand with a saying "If we change the beginning of the story, we change the whole story." It means that all stakeholders in the education sector should put into consideration that nurturing children with healthy values of life, skills, attitude and spirituality is a catalyst for their well-being in both physical and mental health in order to secure sustainable transformation of societies (Early Childhood & Development, 2018). Thus, nurturing and upbringing is the state of the art designed by a given society to give a road map based on evidence from policies and intervention about how children should be prepared to fully participate in community development and transformation.

To attain human growth and development through the use of curriculum, many countries have designed different curriculum frameworks for instance; Kenya's curriculum focuses on values, theoretical approaches, education goals and principles (BCEF, 2017). Likewise, in Singapore, the education framework for nurturing and upbringing emphasizes the importance of character/value formation, social emotional learning skills, and fostering good behavior towards learning. This has not only helped to prepare learners for lifelong learning, but it has also influenced learners to have a positive self-identity and responsible decision-making towards their community, family and country (Ministry of Education, 2012). However, nurturing discipline has remained one of the most challenging key issues in the development and implementation of the curriculum. This is because most of the stakeholders in this aspect seem to leave? the responsibility of curriculum implementation in the hands of teachers and schools (Ankerson & Pable, 2020; Miuro, 2017, 2022a).



Nurturing values, spirituality and attitudes is a huge task that involves different stakeholders. This is because it evolves from parents, to the community both (school environment and various community settings) with an aim of producing a responsible and holistic human being. This implies that preparing a responsible citizen is a combined effort that calls for different stakeholders without which citizens imbued with required knowledge integrated with spirituality, values and skills may not be achieved. In Uganda this kind of strategy has been lacking at different levels of education thus causing a generation without values and skills towards self and community development. Therefore to avert this situation, there is a need for various education planners at different levels for example, curriculum developers and implementers to rethink what teaching and learning should encapsulate in order to produce holistic individuals for socio-economic transformation of communities. This duty requires collective efforts so as to redefine what a child/ youth/person must be and tamed in terms of education values, skills and how education should inculcate him/her to be acceptable to his or her community. This person should be with human characters, skills and spirituality required for self, organizational and community transformation.

Today many parts of the world have achieved this milestone of developing learners' experiences, interests, passion and wonderments through a whole system approach; the home/parents, the community/community leaders or clan elders, the religious institutions, civil society organizations, the politicians among others are all in place to support the growth and development of humanity. This effort is coupled with the support of talented and skilled educators across all levels of education systems. However, to regain a child with values and humanistic attitudes and not materialistic in nature, concerned with society norms and advances is still a challenge especially in Africa. The spirit of child nurturing and upbringing cannot be attained without involving the community in its entirety where both parents and teachers and the community play a role of inculcating attitudes and values at all levels of education.

## Discussion

The concept of nurturing requires stakeholders' involvement into children's lives to help them understand the essence of creation and the role of man in the society so as to develop within them sound reasoning based on moral protection in order to face ethical realities and provide solutions to the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The role of man has been to protect life, religion, prevention of harm, protection of intellect and protection of the environment. However, when humanity diverted from the soul cause of existence, life has become more complicated and full of injustice, murder and abuse of the basic principles for human survival and existence. This can be explained by the laws that humanity normally enacts and do not provide any solution to the recurring challenges. Moreover, the natural laws through which human behavior and moral uprightness are manifested have been undermined in the protection of human rights hence causing life without humanism and sincerity (Chowdhury, 2020; Miuro and Siraje, 2018).

The unprecedented time that the world is going through today is because of the forgotten key issues in curriculum development and implementation whereas nurturing plays a



significant role in shaping the kind of personality that the world needs. This calls for creating a challenge towards nurturing and production of responsible youths and people with morals, skills, self-definition, management, and respect for culture and community transformation. It is therefore important that curriculum developers and implementers in countries like Uganda and other African countries focus on nurturing people in order to retain their culture, norms, systems and structures of developing a person with good character.

Unfortunately Many African countries, Uganda inclusive have embarked on pursuance of globalisation, information technology, artificial intelligence, privatization, commodification, school ranking, increased enrollment without practical strategies of empowering teachers with necessary skills and improvement of their welfare. Whereas it is clearly known that teachers are the actual implementers of the curriculum in which the forgotten aspect of nurturing and upbringing is espoused. To improve nurturing and upbringing at implementation level, there is a need to address teachers' challenges in teaching and learning so as to smoothen the environment and culture of nurturing and upbringing strategies.

That notwithstanding, There is also need to contextualize how the unprecedented world forces that affect nurturing and upbringing should be addressed, these forces as mentioned above have a great impact on the way curriculum is developed and implemented as shown below.

## **Globalisation**

The concept of globalisation has opened doors for human integration without borders. This force with ambiguous effects has infiltrated all aspects of human endeavors for instance; cultural, spirituality, political, economic and education spheres (Anaghara-uzor & Farooq, 2019). It has made the world one pillage at the expense of collapsing state boundaries and human natural setup. it has eased business, access to knowledge, communication, and skills acquisition among others. Through its demands, education has been shifted from traditional norms to re-align with knowledge economy demands like internationalization, innovation, invention, focus on competencies and skills (Machingambi, 2014). Even though globalisation has led to many positive impactful effects, it has led to production of knowledge without soul, knowledge without a clear direction of what humanity should be thus causing alteration of cultures, religion and change of human behavior and abuse of climate etc. It is therefore important that education system should be shaped to address this knowledge gap that is driving especially the youth into unruly citizens with skills for self and community socioeconomic transformation in many parts of the world

## **Artificial intelligence (AI)**

Artificial intelligence (AI) is another challenge facing nurturing and upbringing, it is a computer science program that is designed to predict human behavior and intelligence



(Maurya, Puranik, Senthil Kumar, & Subramanian, 2023). This concept kills self-independence in terms of creativity and formulation of strategies for human development and transformation (Pedro, F., Subosa, M., Rivas, A., & Valverde, 2019). When implementers are given a chance to ignore the functionalities of their minds, social interaction and depend on machines, their intelligence, problem solving skills, critical, care and proper communication will all be dumped so as to find easy ways of dealing with challenges temporally with proper diagnosis of the cause, process and the effect of the decision take to self and entire humanity (Akinwalere & Ivanov, 2022). It is true that machines are good in facilitating work but humanity especially in the teaching and learning process should not be replaced by machines because learning calls for caring, team work, practice and so on. These programs which include Chat GTP and so on should not be advocated for especially in developing countries because the concept of nurturing and upbringing will disappear completely in curriculum development and implementation.

### **Information and communication Technology**

Information technology are resources, tools and devices used to create, communicate, store and dominate information. These tools are used to manage and facilitate access to knowledge through broadcasting technologies, internet, smart phones, computers. In education ICT has been adopted to facilitate teaching and learning. It exposes learners to new information through curriculum design and integration (Salehi & Salehi, 2012). It is because of ICT that several pedagogies have been improved to ease the work of both learners and teachers. However, the negative part of ICT is the exposure to wrong information and knowledge among learners at different levels of education. Therefore the work of an instructor should be to monitor so that learners are not exposed to information that does not fit their cognitive abilities and stages of development (Adeyinka Tella, 2009; Ciroma, 2014). To nurture learners into proper use of ICT requires teachers who are skilled and well-motivated to understand that teaching is about mentoring and molding learners to achieve self and community aspirations.

### **Commodification and Privatization**

Offering education to the citizens is a public service that must be fulfilled by the government. It is a right that every government of a given nation must fund and ensure that every child in every generation accesses it using taxpayers money (Silbaugh, 2011). This process requires government officials to mobilize masses to support its agenda by providing land and payment of taxes. In return, the government constructs schools, procures facilities and resources required to ensure that the teaching and learning takes place at all levels of education. The cost benefit analysis is achieved through production of talented human capital for socio-economic development and transformation of their communities. With the emergency of privatization, public services were privatized and has led to exaggeration of costs for the services and neglect of government duties thus causing inequality among regions, poor service delivery, and poor curriculum implementation (Ball, 2004; Brancaleone & O'Brien, 2011). The effect of commodification



and privatization is that humanity has been forgotten especially on social responsibility at the expense of commoditizing each and every aspect of human endeavors. Without money nothing can be offered towards human transformation and development. It is therefore important that stakeholders especially in the field of education pay extra attention to this aspect if there is still a belief that education is an important aspect towards human development and civilization.

To address the forces mentioned above and their impact on the curriculum development, there is a need to capture the issues raised below as an emphasis in curriculum development and implementation in order to prepare a better future generation.

### **Attitude and values**

These are components that help learners or children to understand the well-being and strategies of thriving in the present and future aspects of their lives and the generations to come. These concepts refer to beliefs and principles normally integrated with culture, spirituality and knowledge that one acquires to influence his or her behaviours, choices, actions and judgment towards societal, individual and environmental well-being (Miuro, 2017; OECD, 2019). Through these principles and cardinal pillars of human survival, the African civilization and its niche areas of human development, nurturing and upbringing were preserved to date even though a lot is planned against it.

As the world is turning valueless due to the emphasis of contradictory cultures and inhuman behaviours like extremism, homosexuality, civil wars, drug and human trafficking and the like, there is need to understand that the role of parents and other stakeholders in instilling behaviours and change of attitude was neglected unknowingly. This has led to production of citizenry who cannot manage themselves and at the same time respect others, and the cultural heritages that have been preserved for years. Many parents have been emphasizing achievement of work related issues, and leaving the children at the hands of teachers which are also frustrated and fail to pay attention to learners hence creating a very big gap towards child nurturing and upbringing (Miuro, 2022b). Also, the more challenging situation that many African countries have found themselves in is the over emphasis on marks and grades neglecting the aspect of character formation and morals. Many teachers in schools have been overtaken by this aspect hence not fulfilling the needed aspect on society preservation, protection and growth.

It is therefore important to note that no community and its leaders, however magnificent they may be, can survive the waves of the time without strengthening and renewing trust of its people, developing and protecting core shared values that lead to mutual respect, fairness, personal, social responsibility, integrity and self-awareness. Through harnessing values and change of attitude, an inclusive society; with strong moral fiber, sustainable economics, peaceful in nature with men and women of respect to themselves and the society will be achieved.

As schools, workplace and other communities become diverse in terms of culture, ethnicity, and spirituality and linguistic, it is important that emphasis is put on protection



of values and attitude through nurturing and upbringing so as to attain a society with interrelatedness in knowledge, culture, attitude and values and indeed character formation in an individual.

Skills are another variable that nurturing should capture so as to attain a society with an art of self-development, innovation and invention. Today many parts of the world have defined the objectives of their education system for instance; Japan is emphasizing moral education, for Ireland it is personal, social and health education, Singapore character and citizenship education, Mexico civics and ethics education et cetera. These objectives that steer the intentions of these countries have both intended and unintended conquests based on the actions of the curriculum developers and implementers (Andreas, 2021; Cheong, Hill, & Leong, 2016). It is therefore important that African countries go back to the drawing board and redefine their education with aims and objectives that do not only lead to Ubuntu, but also lead to skilling the youths in order to become more relevant to the society. Today, many African youths cannot challenge the current status of their community due to the lack of skills, both soft and hard because of the education system that has been emphasizing more of marks and grades than capacity building in terms of skills, values and attitudes.

At a time when the most productive persons in society (youths) are of no value today in terms of transformation and development, we therefore need to get back to the drawing board and emphasize the aspects being discussed in this paper. It is also important that education for real life is designed to curtail the surging challenges of human development so that the youths are helped to compete in the mad race. Through this strategy, social, emotional, physical, psychological issues and hope will be recovered, behavior will be protected and intellectualism will exist to achieve a personality geared towards development of a balanced society. All this cannot be achieved if parents and other stakeholders do not show high levels of maturity coupled with supervision, sensitivity to and support for youth needs, and disciplinary efforts so that a required competent child is not left to the teacher alone to nurture and to the required direction (Brough, 2007; Kuttner, 1997; Gutman, Brown, & Akerman 2020).

### **Life skills/Social emotional learning skills**

In the event where the graduated youth today has failed to compete favourably towards self and community transformation, designing an education system that unpacks their potentials through competence discovery and self-realization is an essential issue that parents, teachers and other education actors must pay greater attention to. Today, the biggest number of unemployed youths though educated poses a big challenge and a time bomb to any part of the world. This is due to the fact that the youth look at leaders and other key role players in any country's development as poor planners for their lives and as people who do not mind about their future and their next generation. This kind of attitude has brought about clashes among leaders, elders and other people with the youth. To avert this situation, there is a need to recapture the early methodologies and intentions that both formal and informal education captured before and reached a memorable level of community transformation. Through these strategies, issues of



entrepreneurship and self-development will be achieved and thus cause a positive impact to the society. However, this cannot be achieved when parents and government stakeholders especially in the field of education do not do research and understand community needs and the practical solutions needed to fill up the gaps. In many countries, especially around Asia, nurturing the youth for self-employment, job creation and community transformation is the concentration of all education activities. Though this aspect is still wanting especially in the African societies due to lack of a well-defined education philosophy (Miuro, 2022b; Raj, 2016)

### **Integration of spirituality**

One of the major challenges that the world is facing is the neglect and misinterpretation of religion in human life. For that matter, the purpose of creation and provision of service to humanity has been forgotten and all this is as a result of education without soul and education based on human laws other than the natural set up of life. Today education has lost its soul due to lack of touch with realities in the communities and hence produced graduates without any impact to the society. Many education/curriculum developers and implementers need to do a continuous inquiry in their work with an aim of understanding whether they are providing societies with solutions other than creating more anarchy and selfish behavior. If this is done, philosophy will be resurrected in teaching and learning thus remembering the purpose of creation. The many challenges that humanity faces today are due to curriculum/education that does not make sense to the human soul hence training people who do not mind about the impact of their actions and behaviours towards the community.

For curriculum developers and implementers, there is a need to cater for the three types of human soul in order to prepare a sane community. Human bodies are composed of three souls and these include; a soul prone to evil, the reflective soul and the peaceful soul. These three types of souls require different approaches so as to nurture a youth that is more concerned about peace and harmony for others.

The abuse and denial of basic human rights, environmental destruction, the lack of meaningful future to thousands of generation, drug and human trafficking, civil wars, land grabbing, merciless killings; all these explain it clearly that the philosophy of education is not in place hence causing severe threats to the next generation (Randall, Koetting, & Combs, 2005). For nurturing and upbringing, there is a need to deal with internal and external facets of human behaviours so that a holistic person is produced to the world (Tirri, 2009). Through these efforts and strategies, the curriculum will regain meaning and help to curtail the growing society without values, skills, attitudes and morals that lead to a sane and civilized society.

### **Conclusions**

With the emerging era where life is losing meaning, there is a need for all education stakeholders to understand that education should address both the external and internal





human aspect so as to have value for life and at the same time provide security and protection for the next generation. This should be done through the use of intergeneration of values, spirituality skills, with an intention of recalling the lost culture, norms and beliefs of the youth especially in the African continent Uganda inclusive. It is also important to note that nurturing and upbringing should not be left in the hands of teachers when other key stakeholders are not involved.

### Recommendation

Accepting cultural diversity and challenges that have mushroomed in our society, is one of the ways through which curriculum can be revitalized using methodologies that bring back soul into the education and regain its essence as mentioned above.

The philosophy of education should be manifested in the curriculum, especially in African countries like Uganda. They should come out explicitly informing the society the essence of education and its impact to the society. When this aspect is intertwined with spirituality, values, attitude, and social emotional learning skills, each and every actor in education will be aware of where the African society is heading to. Thus, nurturing a society with humanity imbued with skills for self and community transformation.

### Implications

When nurturing and upbringing is put as a key ingredient in the development and implementation of the curriculum, a society with values and well-skilled human capital will be realized with strong attachment to its cultural heritage, language, self-identity, community concerns, protection of family, humanity, and civilization. This will be enhanced in the young generation imbued with key elements like self-identity, appreciation of diversity, skills, decency, decorum, attitude formation of human development and transformation. Thus, a generation for self and community development will be observed at all levels of education and in all aspects of human growth, and transformation.

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## **EXPLORING PLASMA LEADERSHIP IN TURKISH UNIVERSITIES: A DOCUMENT-BASED ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to examine the duties of the rector, dean, department heads, and chairs of main science or main art disciplines (academic sub-units specific to the Turkish system, such as “ana bilim dalı” and “ana sanat dalı,” typically led by senior faculty within a department), who are in administrative positions in higher education, according to the academic organization regulations in universities in Turkey, within the framework of the plasma leadership concept. As a result of this examination, it is aimed to reveal the similarities and differences by examining the plasma leadership behaviors expected from people in managerial positions according to the duties assigned to them in accordance with the regulation and to contribute to the management process of higher education in Turkey. Another aim of this study is to contribute to the development of management practices in higher education in Turkey, to emphasize the importance and functionality of plasma leadership within the framework of educational management and, accordingly, to look at the duties of the rector, dean, department head and head of department from more original perspectives within the scope of plasma leadership. In this research conducted for these purposes, the document analysis method, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Official sources and regulations obtained on behalf of higher education, scientific articles, theses, journals and documents related to the subject accessed on the internet were used as data collection tools. The fact that higher education institutions achieve the goals determined in line with their visions, raise qualified individuals and innovative, self-improving faculty members who embrace academic values, and transform into higher education institutions open to development reveals the need for plasma leaders in higher education management. As a result of the research, it was concluded that the duties of the department heads, and chairs of main science or main art disciplines, who are in administrative positions in higher education, according to the academic organization regulations in universities in Turkey, are related to plasma leadership dimensions, and in this direction, it was concluded that people in managerial positions should adopt plasma leadership characteristics and exhibit effective plasma leadership behaviors and this study underscores their necessity and importance.



## Keywords

Educational Management, Higher Education, Management, Plasma Leadership.

## Resumo

Esta investigação tem como objetivo analisar as funções desempenhadas pelos Reitores, Decanos, Diretores de Departamento e Coordenadores das principais disciplinas científicas ou artísticas (designadas, no contexto do sistema de ensino superior turco, como *ana bilim dali* e *ana sanat dali*), enquanto titulares de cargos administrativos no ensino superior, à luz do conceito de “liderança plasma”. Estas subunidades académicas são habitualmente coordenadas por docentes seniores dentro dos departamentos universitários. O estudo visa, por um lado, identificar as semelhanças e diferenças entre as funções atribuídas a cada um destes cargos pela regulamentação organizacional das universidades na Turquia e, por outro, examinar os comportamentos de liderança esperados no âmbito da liderança plasma, de modo a contribuir para a melhoria dos processos de gestão no ensino superior turco. Adicionalmente, pretende-se promover o reconhecimento da importância e da aplicabilidade da liderança plasma no contexto da administração educacional, oferecendo uma análise aprofundada e inovadora das funções mencionadas. Para atingir estes objetivos, recorreu-se ao método de análise documental, uma abordagem qualitativa que envolveu a recolha e análise de dados provenientes de fontes oficiais, regulamentos institucionais, artigos científicos, teses académicas, publicações especializadas e documentos disponíveis online relacionados com a temática. A crescente necessidade de que as Instituições de Ensino Superior alcancem os objetivos delineados nas suas visões estratégicas — formando indivíduos qualificados e promovendo docentes inovadores, com forte adesão aos valores académicos e empenhados no seu desenvolvimento contínuo — evidencia a urgência da adoção de modelos de liderança transformacional e adaptativa, como é o caso da liderança plasma. Esta abordagem visa dotar as instituições de uma cultura organizacional aberta ao progresso, ao rigor e à excelência. Os resultados obtidos indicam que as funções atribuídas a Diretores de Departamento e Coordenadores das principais áreas científicas ou artísticas estão alinhadas com diversas dimensões da liderança plasma. Conclui-se, assim, que os responsáveis por cargos de gestão no ensino superior devem desenvolver e incorporar características associadas a este modelo de liderança, adotando comportamentos eficazes e coerentes com os princípios da liderança plasma. O estudo reforça, por conseguinte, a relevância deste paradigma no fortalecimento da qualidade da governação universitária e no desenvolvimento institucional sustentável.

## Palavras-chave

Turquia, Gestão Educacional, Ensino Superior, Gestão, Liderança Plasma.

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## **EXPLORING PLASMA LEADERSHIP IN TURKISH UNIVERSITIES: A DOCUMENT-BASED ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Introduction**

Higher education institutions serve as dynamic entities that not only develop qualified human resources but also contribute to societal progress through research and community engagement across diverse scientific domains. A fundamental mission of universities is to deliver specialized academic education, preparing individuals capable of making substantial contributions to national advancement. According to Karsantık (2019), ongoing developments in science and technology, alongside globalization and the rising need for a skilled workforce, have profoundly influenced the structure and function of higher education, thereby heightening the significance of effective leadership and governance.

Universities today are charged with responsibilities that extend beyond traditional research and instruction; they must also facilitate lifelong learning and spearhead rapid transformations in knowledge and technology (Çetin, 2013). Meeting these complex demands necessitates strong leadership, as the leadership styles and practices embraced by university administrators are critical determinants of institutional success on a global scale (Karsantık, 2019).

The progress of higher education institutions, which are integral to national development, is closely linked to the efficacy of their governance structures (Karaaslan & Akin, 2019). Leaders in higher education play a pivotal role in initiating and managing change within their institutions (Fullan, 1998). Given the inherently innovative and evolving nature of universities, administrators are expected to be not only responsive to technological advancements but also proactive in fostering innovation and aligning curricula with societal needs.

In an increasingly volatile and fast-changing environment, leaders must adopt integrative approaches that blend influence, creativity, and strategic guidance to drive institutional success (Erçetin, 2000). In this context, the ability of universities to nurture visionary,



adaptable academics and to evolve into institutions open to continuous improvement underscores the critical need for plasma leadership in higher education management. Plasma leadership, recognized as a novel and impactful leadership model, offers a robust framework suited to contemporary challenges.

Emerging from the interdisciplinary convergence of physics and management sciences, plasma leadership was first conceptualized by Erçetin, Açıkalın, and Bülbül (2013) in their study titled "*A Multidimensional Approach to Leadership in Chaotic Environments.*" Erçetin (2014) argues that the distinctive characteristics of plasma often regarded as a fourth state of matter require a reimagining of leadership models, emphasizing that leadership traits must be shaped by the cultural, societal, and regional dynamics in which leaders operate.

### **Leadership and Management Concepts in Universities**

Leadership within universities is of paramount importance, as these institutions must not only deliver high-quality education but also adapt to rapid advancements in technology and meet the ever-evolving demands of society. While management typically focuses on operational control and structure, effective leadership in academic environments requires more than just supervision. It demands vision, emotional intelligence, and the ability to inspire and motivate individuals toward shared goals (Bozkurt, Ergun, & Sezen, 2008). According to Erçetin, Potas, and Açıkalın (2013), leaders in chaotic and complex environments must possess a multidimensional skill set, one that goes beyond traditional managerial duties, enabling them to navigate uncertainty and guide their institutions through transformative processes.

As universities continue to face a range of conflicting objectives from academic freedom to operational efficiency, strong leadership is essential for strategic alignment and long-term success (Sporn, 1996). Erçetin et al. (2019) underscore that leadership in higher education must balance autonomy with accountability, guiding institutions through internal and external pressures. The leadership styles embraced by university administrators directly influence how institutions respond to societal changes, technological advancements, and global shifts in knowledge production. This is particularly evident in the crucial role of rectors, vice rectors, and deans, who are tasked with shaping both academic strategies and the operational framework that supports them (Potas, Erçetin, & Açıkalın, 2012).

The capacity to lead within the dynamic academic sector goes beyond the ability to manage. Erçetin (2001a) highlights the importance of a leader's adaptability in the face of constant change, advocating for flexible management approaches that encourage responsiveness. Furthermore, Erçetin (2001b) argues that organizational intelligence is at the heart of effective leadership, enabling leaders to make informed decisions and navigate complex organizational dynamics. On the contrary, he warns against organizational rigidity what he terms "organizational stupidity" (Erçetin, 2004a) which can severely hinder a leader's effectiveness.





Moreover, research on school administrators' perceptions of institutional readiness for change further emphasizes how leadership can directly influence organizational transformation. Erçetin and Demirbulak (2002) show that by fostering a culture of readiness and guiding institutions through change, leaders can significantly impact the educational environment. The application of organizational intelligence in educational settings, as discussed by Erçetin (2004b), further underlines the critical role leadership plays in shaping successful and sustainable academic institutions.

Ultimately, leadership within universities is not just about achieving short-term goals but about shaping the future of higher education itself. Effective leadership ensures that universities are not only able to meet the demands of the global knowledge economy but also remain vital contributors to societal progress. Leaders in higher education must be able to navigate complex governance structures, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and drive technological and academic innovation, ensuring that universities continue to evolve and fulfill their critical societal roles.

### **Duties of the Rector**

The rector serves as the highest academic and administrative authority within a university. The duties of the rector are outlined in the 2547 Higher Education Law as follows:

1. Chair university councils; implement decisions from higher education governing bodies, review and decide on university council proposals, and ensure smooth operations across university-affiliated institutions.
2. At the end of each academic year and when necessary, provide the Interuniversity Board with information regarding the university's academic, educational, research, and publication activities.
3. Prepare the university's investment programs, budget, and staffing requirements, considering the opinions and suggestions of affiliated units, the university management board, and senate, and submit them to the Higher Education Council.
4. Where necessary, assign or relocate faculty and staff members across the university's departments and units.
5. Oversee the general supervision and inspection of all university units and staff at every level.
6. Carry out other responsibilities delegated by law and regulations.

The rector holds primary responsibility and authority for the rational use and development of the university's teaching capacity, ensuring the provision of necessary social services to students, and taking security measures when required. Additionally, they oversee the planning and execution of educational, research, and publication activities in alignment with state development plans and goals. The rector also supervises



and inspects the academic and administrative activities, ensures proper delegation to sub-units, and manages their follow-up and result tracking (2547 Higher Education Law).

### **Duties of the Dean**

The dean is the top authority within a university faculty. Their responsibilities, as defined by the Higher Education Council, include ensuring that faculty operations align with established regulations and academic standards. The dean is appointed for a three-year term from a list of three professors, nominated either internally or externally, as proposed by the rector. Upon the completion of the term, the dean may be reappointed. Additionally, the dean selects up to two assistant deans from the faculty's academic staff to aid in managing the faculty. The core duties of the dean, as outlined in the 2547 Higher Education Law, are:

1. Preside over faculty councils, implement their decisions, and facilitate smooth coordination among various faculty departments and units.
2. At the conclusion of each academic year, and upon request, provide a report to the rector concerning the overall performance and operations of the faculty.
3. Communicate the faculty's budget and staffing needs to the rector, providing justification for such requests, and submit the finalized budget proposal to the rector's office after consulting with the faculty's management team.
4. Oversee and monitor the activities and performance of faculty members and units, ensuring that all operations meet required standards.
5. Carry out any additional tasks assigned by laws, regulations, or higher authorities.

The dean holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring the effective and efficient use of the faculty's teaching resources, providing essential student services, maintaining security when necessary, and overseeing the proper execution of educational, research, and publication activities. Furthermore, the dean is accountable to the rector for overseeing the faculty's operations, ensuring that all activities are properly supervised and outcomes tracked (2547 Higher Education Law).

### **Duties of the Department Head**

The department head is responsible for overseeing all educational, teaching, and research activities within a university department. This role involves ensuring the regular and efficient operation of all departmental functions and optimizing the use of available resources. The department head represents the department in faculty or school meetings. The duties of the department head, as specified in the 2547 Higher Education Law, include:

1. Ensuring the department's teaching, research, and activities run efficiently, and making optimal use of resources.



2. Representing the department in faculty or school councils.
3. Monitoring and supervising the performance of faculty members within the department.
4. At the end of each academic year, submitting a report to the rector, dean, or school director outlining the department's past activities and plans for the upcoming year (2547 Higher Education Law).

### **Duties of the Department Chair of Main Science or Main Art~**

The Department of Main Science or Main Art is an academic unit within a university focused on teaching, application, and research. Its establishment or dissolution is decided by the Higher Education Executive Board. The department chair, appointed by the teaching staff, carries out the following core responsibilities:

1. Preside over department committees and implement their decisions.
2. Coordinate with the relevant academic department head.
3. Provide recommendations for faculty contract extensions based on departmental feedback.
4. Participate in meetings and assign tasks to faculty members when necessary.
5. Prepare and align the department's strategic plan with the faculty's objectives.
6. Distribute course assignments fairly and propose them to the department head.
7. Ensure smooth communication between the department and department head's office.
8. Maintain continuity of educational activities.
9. Foster a conducive environment for teaching and research collaboration.
10. Identify and communicate departmental educational needs to the department head.
11. Oversee the preparation and clarity of the department's curriculum and learning outcomes.
12. Provide relevant information about the department for the Academic General Assembly.
13. Organize course registration at the start of each semester.
14. Ensure accurate entry of grades and attendance in the automation system.
15. Prepare and submit the academic activity report to the department head.
16. Inform the department head about faculty position needs.
17. Stay updated on regulatory changes and inform the staff accordingly.
18. Ensure faculty profiles are current in the YÖKSİS database.



19. Complete additional tasks as assigned by the department head or dean, in accordance with relevant regulations.

These responsibilities ensure smooth operations, maintaining both academic and administrative integrity.

### **Plasma Leadership and the Characteristics of a Plasma Leader**

Plasma leadership is an innovative and flexible leadership model that draws on the physical properties of plasma to understand dynamic relationships and interactions within organizational contexts. This multidimensional approach emphasizes adaptability, communication, and systemic awareness, enabling leaders to effectively navigate and guide organizations through volatile and complex environments. A core characteristic of plasma leadership is the leader's awareness of the organizational ecosystem and the intricate interrelations between its components. This awareness empowers leaders to balance short-term actions with long-term consequences. Moreover, plasma leaders are adept at integrating various leadership approaches to address the shifting dynamics of their organizations, making swift and informed decisions.

Plasma leadership underscores the necessity of continuous and dynamic communication between leaders and team members, responding to the ever-changing demands of the organizational environment. Leaders do not confine themselves to a single leadership style; rather, they adopt a flexible, situational approach depending on the needs of the moment.

The characteristics of plasma leadership, as outlined by Çevik (2021), include:

- Leader-Member Interaction (Plasma Particles Interacting): The continuous, dynamic relationship between leaders and followers, emphasizing sustained communication rather than intensity, with occasional interruptions being inevitable but not disruptive.
- Fair Leadership and Talent Management (Plasma's Neutrality): Reflecting plasma's neutrality, leaders are impartial, evaluating employees based on their skills and abilities, and leveraging diverse talents to align with organizational goals.
- Organizational Intelligence (Plasma's Collective Behavior): Just as plasma particles interact collectively, leaders cultivate teamwork and cohesion, facilitating a collective organizational response to environmental demands.
- Swift Action and Response (Chemical Reactions in Plasma): The rapid chemical reactions in plasma symbolize the need for quick decision-making and response, allowing leaders to address challenges promptly and effectively.
- Information Management (Heat and Electricity Conductivity in Plasma): Plasma's ability to conduct heat and electricity reflects the efficient transfer of information within an organization. Leaders must ensure smooth communication flows, optimizing information channels to overcome barriers.



- Innovation Management (Plasma’s Constant Reorganization): Plasma’s continuous ionization and restructuring parallel the need for ongoing innovation. Leaders are responsible for ensuring organizational structures evolve to remain adaptive to emerging challenges.
- Human Resources Management (Low Energy Emission in Plasma): Despite its high temperature, plasma’s low particle density reflects a balanced approach to human resource management, matching individuals’ skills to roles for optimal efficiency.
- Organizational-Environmental Interaction (Plasma’s Response to Magnetic Fields): Plasma’s sensitivity to magnetic fields mirrors the organization’s need for adaptability to external environments. Leaders must protect the organization from external threats, ensuring resilience and responsiveness.

Ultimately, plasma leadership offers a comprehensive and adaptable framework for leading organizations through complex and rapidly changing environments. By emphasizing system awareness, communication, and adaptability, this approach equips leaders to direct the collective energy of the organization toward achieving strategic goals.

## Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design and utilizes document analysis to investigate the roles of academic leaders—rectors, deans, department heads, and chairs of main science or main art disciplines (i.e., *ana bilim dalı* and *ana sanat dalı*)—within the framework of plasma leadership in the governance of Turkish higher education institutions.

Data were collected from public universities located in Turkey, such as namely: Ankara University, Gazi University, Hacettepe University, Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University. The document set consisted of strategic plans, academic organizational regulations, faculty and departmental bylaws, institutional activity reports, official YÖK legislation, and relevant academic studies, such as theses and peer-reviewed articles. These documents were chosen because they formally define the duties and responsibilities of academic leaders, reflect the institutional vision and administrative structure, and provide normative and practical data on leadership practices.

The selection of documents was based on the following inclusion criteria;

1. Recency; documents published or updated within the last 10 years were prioritized;
2. Relevance; documents had to be directly related to the organization, governance, or leadership roles within the university context;
3. Credibility; only official, institutional, or peer-reviewed academic sources were used;



4. Accessibility; documents needed to be publicly available or accessible through university websites or open-access databases.

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis, in which the selected documents were systematically examined through coding of relevant expressions, categorization of codes, theme development, and interpretation. The analysis focused on how leadership roles and expectations outlined in the documents align with the theoretical dimensions of plasma leadership.

To ensure validity and reliability, triangulation was applied by using multiple document types from diverse institutions. The coding process was reviewed for consistency, and findings were cross-checked with the theoretical framework to maintain objectivity and analytical rigor (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

## Findings

The findings of this study, based on the analysis of academic organizational regulations in Turkish universities, reveal the roles of rectors, deans, department heads, and chairs of academic departments within the framework of plasma leadership. These findings are outlined below:

### Duties of the Rector in Plasma Leadership Context

The rector is the highest administrative authority in universities, overseeing both academic and non-academic staff. Effective higher education management, crucial for national development, hinges on the rector's leadership.

- **Leader-Member Interaction:** Rectors ensure coordination and continuous communication across university units, embodying the two-way communication central to plasma leadership.
- **Fair Management and Talent Management:** Rectors are responsible for equitable task distribution, resource allocation, and leveraging individual strengths to maximize human resource effectiveness.
- **Organizational Intelligence:** Rectors must foster unity among staff, align activities with the university's mission, and address challenges to achieve institutional goals.
- **Swift Action and Response:** Rectors make timely, decisive actions in both routine and urgent situations, ensuring the university's responsiveness to internal and external changes.
- **Information Management:** Plasma leadership requires rectors to facilitate the flow of vital information, ensuring it aligns with the university's strategic objectives.
- **Innovation Management:** Rectors drive institutional innovation, adapting university policies and fostering an environment that encourages creative solutions.



- Adaptability to Environmental Conditions: Rectors proactively manage external threats, ensuring the university adapts to societal and governmental shifts while safeguarding its interests.

### **Duties of the Dean in Plasma Leadership Context**

The Dean is the highest authority within a faculty, responsible for operations and ensuring compliance with the regulations set by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). Plasma leadership, a modern leadership approach, can be applied to analyze the Dean's duties across several dimensions:

- Leader-Member Interaction: The Dean must ensure regular coordination and continuous interaction with faculty units, maintaining effective communication and collaboration, in line with the "Leader-Member Interaction" dimension of plasma leadership (Çekmecelioğlu & Ülker, 2014).
- Fair Management, Talent Management, and Human Resources Management: The Dean must ensure fairness in distributing resources, tasks, and responsibilities, making impartial decisions in staffing and budgeting, which aligns with the fair management dimension. Additionally, they must efficiently utilize human resources and infrastructure, relating to talent and human resources management (Luo, 2009).
- Organizational Intelligence: Plasma leadership requires the Dean to unite faculty members around common goals and foster collaboration, ensuring efficient use of faculty resources and promoting a coordinated, intelligent organizational culture (Çevik, 2021).
- Swift Action and Response: The Dean must make timely and accurate decisions, especially in critical situations, ensuring the smooth functioning of teaching, research, and faculty activities (Erçetin, 2004).
- Information Management: Deans must facilitate the sharing and management of knowledge, ensuring real-time communication and removing barriers to information flow, in line with the knowledge management dimension (Toytok, 2019).
- Innovation Management: Deans should foster innovation within the faculty, exploring new methods to enhance performance, supervise faculty units, and introduce new policies to address evolving challenges (Çelik & Eryılmaz, 2006).
- Adaptability to Environmental Conditions: Deans must adapt to environmental changes, manage risks, and ensure the faculty's alignment with national development goals, demonstrating the adaptability dimension of plasma leadership.

### **Duties of the Department Head in Plasma Leadership Context**

The Department Head is central to the management of academic, teaching, and administrative activities within the department, ensuring alignment with university



policies. Their responsibilities can be analyzed through the dimensions of Plasma Leadership:

- **Leader-Member Interaction:** The Department Head ensures effective coordination and communication within the department, fostering continuous engagement and collaboration with faculty to achieve departmental goals.
- **Fair Management and Talent Management:** The Department Head ensures equitable distribution of tasks and responsibilities, making merit-based decisions regarding faculty duties and aligning them with individual expertise. This aligns with Plasma Leadership's emphasis on impartial decision-making and talent management.
- **Organizational Intelligence:** By harnessing collective capabilities, the Department Head fosters cohesion, ensuring all units within the department work towards common goals. This includes managing teaching schedules, faculty performance, and promoting collaboration among faculty.
- **Swift Action and Response:** The Department Head must make timely, informed decisions, especially in crises, ensuring rapid implementation and resolution of academic or administrative issues. This aligns with Plasma Leadership's emphasis on responsive leadership.
- **Information Management:** Effective communication and real-time information sharing are key responsibilities. The Department Head facilitates smooth information flow within the department and with external stakeholders, ensuring transparency and efficiency.
- **Innovation Management:** The Department Head leads efforts to innovate teaching, research, and operational processes, coordinating improvements and fostering a culture of continuous development within the department.
- **Environmental Adaptability:** The Department Head manages the department's external relationships, ensuring adaptation to changes in academic, social, and technological environments. This includes promoting collaborations, quality assurance, and managing accreditation efforts.

In conclusion, the Department Head's role, when examined through the Plasma Leadership framework, encompasses a dynamic and multifaceted approach to effective department management, innovation, and responsiveness to both internal and external challenges.

### **Duties of the Department Chair of Main Science or Main Art in Plasma Leadership Context**

The Department Chair oversees educational and research activities, ensuring smooth operations within the department in line with university policies. Their role aligns with several dimensions of plasma leadership:





- **Leader-Member Interaction:** The Chair ensures coordination and fosters effective communication among faculty members. Regular interactions and collaborative efforts contribute to achieving departmental goals.
- **Fair Management, Talent Management, and Human Resources:** The Chair ensures fair distribution of tasks and resources, aligning course assignments with faculty expertise. Effective talent and human resource management are integral to this process.
- **Organizational Intelligence:** The Chair unites the department's members, guiding them towards common goals, ensuring operational coherence, and promoting collaboration to sustain essential activities.
- **Swift Action and Response:** In times of disruption or crisis, the Chair makes quick, effective decisions to maintain educational continuity and address emerging challenges.
- **Information Management:** The Chair is responsible for timely, transparent communication, ensuring efficient information flow within the department and with higher administration.
- **Innovation Management:** The Chair leads initiatives to improve teaching, research, and administrative processes, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within the department.

These responsibilities, rooted in plasma leadership, emphasize dynamic interaction, fairness, organizational intelligence, responsiveness, and adaptability in leadership.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

In higher education, leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping both academic success and institutional efficiency. Plasma leadership, a dynamic model emphasizing adaptability, flexibility, and systemic awareness, offers a comprehensive framework for managing academic institutions. Unlike traditional hierarchical models, plasma leadership integrates key dimensions such as leader-member interaction, fair management, organizational intelligence, innovation management, and environmental adaptability. These elements are essential for fostering collaboration, responsiveness, and innovation across all levels of academic administration, from rectors to department chairs.

The leader-member interaction dimension highlights the importance of continuous communication and coordination between academic leaders and faculty members, ensuring that educational and research activities align with the institution's broader goals. Fair management and talent management emphasize transparency in decision-making and equitable distribution of responsibilities, fostering a meritocratic environment. Organizational intelligence, coupled with innovation management, enhances the capacity of universities to adapt to changing demands, whether technological or societal, while promoting efficiency through information sharing and collective decision-making.



Plasma leadership underscores the imperative of environmental adaptability, enabling universities to remain resilient amid external pressures and sustain their competitiveness within the global academic arena. By adopting this dynamic leadership paradigm, institutions can foster more integrated, responsive, and sustainable systems. To maximize the potential of plasma leadership, academic leaders at all levels rectors, deans, and department chairs must proactively engage in continuous professional development and cultivate collaborative networks. In today's higher education landscape, where unpredictability and complexity are the norm, leadership models that embrace nonlinearity and transformation are essential. The principles of plasma leadership rooted in adaptability, fluidity, and responsiveness closely align with the multifaceted and evolving character of academic institutions. Drawing from their analysis of high school students' career interests through the lens of chaos and complexity theory, Erçetin and Potas (2019) highlight the need for educational leadership to accommodate disorder and emergent change. In a parallel vein, Açıkalın (2022) emphasizes the strategic significance of leadership in shaping complex international relations, reinforcing the value of vision and influence in turbulent environments. Together, these perspectives illustrate how plasma leadership offers a robust and forward-thinking framework for navigating academic autonomy, global pressures, and institutional transformation in higher education.

In conclusion, the implementation of plasma leadership in higher education offers a transformative approach to management, fostering innovation, equity, and resilience. By aligning leadership practices with plasma leadership's core dimensions, universities can enhance institutional performance and respond effectively to both internal and external challenges. For long term success, it is crucial that academic leaders adopt plasma leadership principles, ensuring that higher education institutions remain agile and relevant in an ever-evolving global landscape.

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## **GLOBALIZING THE INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

Globalization has undoubtedly widened the horizons and significantly impacted multiple areas of Higher Education system across the globe. In India, the globalization of higher education has brought about remarkable changes, shaping and influencing the overall structure, delivery, and perception of education holistically. This Research paper while employing the doctrinal method of research, discusses the multifaceted attributes and dimensions of globalization with regards to the Indian Higher Education Industry. This paper critically examines the historical evolution, contemporary trends along with the opportunities and challenges that globalization poses to the Indian Higher Education Industry. The paper also highlights the importance of international collaborations and also of the policy framework around the issue. Conclusively, this paper advances recommendations for harnessing the modern day globalization to raise the academic standards and also the overall quality of Higher Education in India.

### **Keywords**

India, Higher Education, Globalization, Policy Framework.

### **Resumo**

A globalização expandiu significativamente os horizontes do ensino superior, produzindo impactos profundos e duradouros em múltiplas dimensões dos sistemas educativos. Também no contexto indiano a globalização do ensino superior tem gerado transformações substanciais, influenciando de forma abrangente a sua estrutura, a oferta formativa e a perceção social da educação. Este artigo de investigação, desenvolvido com recurso ao método doutrinário, analisa de forma crítica os atributos e as diversas dimensões que caracterizam o fenómeno da globalização no setor do ensino superior na Índia. A investigação contempla uma abordagem histórica, examinando a evolução do sistema, bem como uma

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análise das tendências contemporâneas, das oportunidades emergentes e dos desafios estruturais que a globalização impõe ao ensino superior indiano. Além disso, o estudo sublinha a importância das colaborações internacionais e do enquadramento político e legislativo que regula estas dinâmicas, assumindo estes fatores como determinantes para o fortalecimento institucional e académico das universidades indianas. Ao concluir, o artigo apresenta um conjunto de recomendações orientadas para a maximização dos benefícios da globalização no ensino superior, com o objetivo de elevar os padrões académicos e a qualidade global da educação superior na Índia, promovendo, simultaneamente, a sua competitividade a nível internacional.

### **Palavras-chave**

Índia, Ensino Superior, Globalização, Quadro Político.

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## **GLOBALIZING THE INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL**

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### **1. Introduction**

Globalization, generally referred to by being marked by rising interconnectedness and interdependence between nations, has reshaped higher education. It has affected the face of higher education significantly in India, where there is immense educational history combined with an equally fast-developing economy. The inflow of foreign students, the presence of overseas universities, and the introduction of international standards in curriculum and pedagogy are some of the expressions of this trend. The internationalization of Indian higher education is affected by multiple factors ranging from high-skilled labour to advance infrastructure among others. But, notably, this process is full of challenges which may range from commercialization of education among with multiple other factors. This research article makes a specific attempt to present an holistic analysis of the globalization of higher education in India. Categorically, the paper begins by presenting a historical background. Then, it subsequently goes on to discuss the function of global partnerships and ICTs in shaping the future of Indian higher education. The paper concludes by advancing policy recommendations for harnessing the advantages of globalization.

### **2. Historical Evolution of Higher Education in India**

The initial history of higher education in India can be traced back to ancient times. The Nalanda and Takshashila universities, which was established around the 5th century BCE, were counted among the earliest centers of higher education globally. These institutions attracted scholars from across Asia and offered a wide range of subjects, including philosophy, medicine, and astronomy (Altekar, 1944). Transitionally, during the medieval period, the setting up of madrasas and makhtabs by Mughal rulers resulted in the advancement of higher education in India. These institutions focused on religious studies but also included subjects such as mathematics, astronomy, and medicine (Habib, 2010).



The advent of the British period in India marked an important turning point in the history of Indian higher education. It is already established that the Britishers have been historically credited when it comes to the establishment of universities in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras in 1857, modeled over the University of London. These institutions targeted to produce a class of educated Indians who could assist in the administration of the colony (Basu, 1974). The colonial period also witnessed the introduction of English as the medium of instruction, which had a significant impact on Indian education. While this facilitated access to Western knowledge, it also led to the marginalization of indigenous languages and knowledge systems (Naik, 1975). After gaining independence in 1947, India faced challenge of expanding reach to higher education while maintaining. The government established several universities and colleges, and the University Grants Commission (UGC) was set up in 1956 to oversee the development of higher education (University Grants Commission, 1956). The post-independence period also saw the emergence of specialized institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), which played a crucial role in producing skilled professionals for the growing economy (Agarwal, 2006). The economic liberalization of 1991 flagged the inception of a new era in Indian higher education. The liberalization of economy led to the increased demand for skilled professionals, pressing the government to allow private players to enter the education industry. This period also saw the emergence of foreign collaborations and the establishment of offshore campuses by international universities (Tilak, 2008).

### **3. Current Trends in the Globalization of Higher Education in India**

One of the most important moves in the globalization of higher education in India is the internationalization of the module. There is an increase in adoption of global standards in curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment in Indian Universities. This includes the introduction of interdisciplinary courses, the use of case studies, and the emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Altbach, 2004). The acceptance of international modules is also seen in the increased popularity of programs such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) in Indian schools. These programs prepare students for higher education in global institutions and foster a global outlook (Cambridge International Examinations, 2020). Mobility of students is an important feature of the globalization of higher education. India is considered as the one of the largest senders of international students. It has thousands of Indian students who pursue higher education abroad every year. The United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia are among the most popular destinations (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020). Simultaneously, India is also turning up as a place for international students. The initiatives of the Government, i.e., 'Study in India' attracts foreign students by offering scholarships, improving the quality of education, and simplifying procedures related to visa. The presence of international students enriches the academic environment and promotes cultural exchange (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2018). Faculty exchange programs and international collaborations are important parts of the globalization of higher education. Indian universities are increasingly partnering with foreign institutions for joint research projects, faculty





development programs, and student exchange programs (Agarwal, 2009). They also facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology, contributing to the overall development of the Indian higher education system (Sharma, 2012).

The shift by higher education into an increasingly virtual world, a very major step. The Covid-19 pandemic has universally accepted digital implementations of traditional learning methods, virtual classrooms and digital resources. Indian universities are utilizing ICT to improve the quality of education, extend access and globally outreach (Kumar, 2020). Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and online degree programs of Indian institutions are gaining popularity both among domestic and international students. NEP 2020 of the government highlights the importance of digital literacy and the integration of technology in the education. However the entry of Foreign university in India is a new and also very big matter. NEP 2020 has given a Facility for dearness universities to start their own campuses in the country, also-options of offering degree or diploma can also be offered. This change is thought to increase the quality of undergraduate education through an universal employer of standards and values of excellent (Kapur, 2010). But, Entry of Foreign University to India also arises issue like the commercialisation of education, prospective loss of cultural Identity. There is a need to balance it with the preservation of indigenous knowledge systems (Tilak, 2011).

#### **4. Challenges in the Globalization Of Higher Education In India**

While globalization has introduced various benefits to Indian higher education, it has also increased the problems in quality and accessibility. The rapid expansion of private institutions has led to concerns about the commercialization of education and the dilution of academic standards (Agarwal, 2006). Access to quality higher education has remained a challenge, specifically for students from weaker communities. The high cost of education, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate faculty are some of the barriers that need to be addressed (Tilak, 2008). There are many issues for India related to brain drain, or the emigration of highly skilled professionals. Many Indian students who pursue higher education abroad choose to stay in their host countries, leading to a loss of talent and expertise (Kapur, 2010). While the government has commenced initiatives such as the "Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)" to engage foreign faculty and researchers, still a lot has to be done to maintain talent in the country (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2015). The globalization of higher education has raised issues related to the loss of cultural identity. The adoption of Western curricula and teaching methods may lead to the neglect of indigenous knowledge systems and languages (Nussbaum, 2010). It is important to promote a stable view that integrates global best practices with the protection of cultural heritage.

It is significant that NEP 2020 expects multilingualism and of indigenous learning systems integration in the models properly (National Education Policy, 2020). The regime that oversees the Indian higher education are normally criticized for being overly rigid and archaic. The existence of the multitude of regulatory bodies like UGC, AICTE and NCTE has created the confusions and the hinderance for this sector (Agarwal, 2009). The NEP 2020 provides for establishment of HECI in place of regulatory mechanism, with regulatory authorities. However the implementation of this reform is still an issue



(National Education Policy, 2020). The digitalisation of the higher education sector has thrown light on what is now known as the digital divide in India. Urban centres have the strength of fast internet and digital resources but rural areas lack resources which are required. Digital India program by the government attempts to bridge this gap by enhancing internet connectivity and improving the digital literacy. Quite a bit more remains to be accomplished so many students access to the digital learning opportunities (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2015).

## 5. Opportunities in the Globalization of Higher Education in India

There is a chance to enhance the position of higher education in India, the globalization provides. The acceptance of global standards, incorporation of across national curricula and setup of foreign universities can bring out the standard of Indian institutions (Altbach, 2004). Unions with overseas universities could allow the movement of knowledge and technology, which can improve teaching and research. The inclusion of international students and staff can also enhance the learning and also raise cross-cultural content understanding (Sharma, 2012). Through globalisation, research and innovative work in Indian higher education has become better. International collaborations can give the Indian researchers access to funding, resources, and expertise which can facilitate them conducting advanced research both at national and at international levels respectively (Agarwal 2009). The NEP 2020 conceives importance of research and innovation and proposes creation of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to elevate research across various disciplines. Key to this goal can be played higher education through abstraction the National Education Policy, later it 2020.

Globalization can improve the employment opportunities of Indian graduates by providing them with the skills and knowledge that are significant in a globalized economy. Exposure to international curricula, internships, and exchange programs can prepare students for careers in multinational corporations and global organizations (Tilak, 2008). The NEP 2020 promotes the importance of skill development and offers the integration of vocational education into the higher education system. Employability of Indian graduates can be further improved (National Education Policy, 2020). The globalization of higher education can improve cultural exchange and diplomacy. The presence of international students and faculty in Indian institutions can foster cross-cultural understanding and build bridges between nations (Nussbaum, 2010). The government's programme, i.e., "Study in India" focuses on the position of India as a global hub for education and improve its soft power. By involving students from various backgrounds, India can advance its culture, values, and traditions at the global level (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2018). Foreign investment, jobs, and revenue can be improved by globalization of higher education. The establishment of foreign universities and the influx of international students can boost the local economy and create opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation (Kapur, 2010). The NEP 2020 intends India as a global knowledge superpower and promotes the significance of higher education in attaining this aim. By strengthening the benefits of globalization, India can hold its position in higher education and help in global knowledge production (National Education Policy, 2020).



## **6. Role of International Collaborations in the Globalization of Higher Education**

Students from Indian and foreign institutions acquire joint degree programs and these programs are becoming popular. They provide students with a global perspective and enhance their employability (Altbach, 2004). Indian universities are collaborating with foreign institutions to propose joint degree programs in different disciplines, including engineering, management, and humanities. These programs often include a period of study abroad, providing students with international exposure (Sharma, 2012). Research alliances between Indian and foreign universities are important for advancing knowledge and in dealing with global problems. These collaborations facilitate the exchange of ideas, resources, and expertise, leading to breakthroughs in science, technology, and social sciences (Agarwal, 2009).

"Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)", was initially various Government focused on collaborating with international faculty and researchers to the institutions of India for short-term teaching & research assignments. This initiative led to numerous successful collaborations, and there has been better research capabilities from Indian universities (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2015). Faculty development program is necessary for upgradation of status of teaching and research India in the field of higher education. Collaborations conducted by international institutions offer opportunities to Indian faculty for professional development, exposure to best practices worldwide and enables access to contemporary research (Sharma, 2012). Several number of Indian universities are establishing collaborations with the international institutions for exchange of faculties, organizer of workshops & training. These programs an Indian faculty remains in touch with the latest knowledge in their field and enhance their teaching and research skills (Agarwal, 2009). Student exchange programs are crucial for the universalization of higher education. These programs allow students study abroad, learn the international influence, develop the cross-cultural capacity (Altbach, 2004). Indian universities are promoting exchange programs of students with foreign universities. These programs usually include internships, research projects, and cultural activities, and offer the students a comprehensive learning (Sharma, 2012). International accreditation is also one of the aspects of the globalization of education of higher education. Accreditation by prestigious International bodies, boosts cultural and reputation of Indian institutions as well as assures that they meet global standards (Agarwal, 2009). Several of India's universities and colleges are looking to gain accreditation from international organizations, for instance Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). This has facilitated Indian institutions to have a global recognition and the world at the door of our institutions (Altbach, 2004).

## **7. Impact of Digital Technologies on the Globalization of Higher Education**

Online learning platforms have made available quality education in the area of higher education to the students all over world. Indian universities effectively utilize these



platforms to provide the extra curriculum programs online like certifications and MOOCs (Kumar, 2020). Platforms such as Coursera, edX, and SWAYAM are taking courses from India's, as well as international's, top institutions and making quality education accessible to broader public. The NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of the online learning and establishes provisions for the setting up of National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) for ensuring the use of technology for education (National Education Policy, 2020). Virtual classrooms are a feature of higher education in these days of COVID-19. The classrooms allow for real time interaction between teacher and student, wherever he is in the world (Kumar, 2020). Indian universities are embracing virtual classroom technologies to enhance teaching and learning experience to the worldwide public. Elearning using virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) also is seeing growth in the market, delivers students with experiences of-immersive learning (National Education Policy, 2020). Digital instruments such as e-books, online publications, and assets, can have changed just how that students acquire and kav ?>"/> Indian universities are demonstrating interest in digital libraries and online facilities in order to promulgate teaching and research (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2015). The government's National Digital Library of India (NDLI) offers access to collection of huge range of digitized resources like articles, books, and research papers. Provided the accessibility to quality education material literacy to the faculty's and students is now far easier this permissible (National Digital Library of India, 2020). Data analytics and Artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education are getting the same amount of attention. These technologies are being used for personalization of learning, improved student results and increased Institutional efficiency (Kumar, 2020). Indigenous universities are resorting to data analytics and AI to discover scholar operating, forecast trends, take knowledgeable selections. AI powered chatbots, virtual assistants are becoming more common, offer active support and mentoring services to the students (National Education Policy, 2020). The increasing of digital transformation in higher education have been added a lot of cybersecurity and privacy concerns. Indian universities need to assure that digital assets of their university are secure and student's data is protected (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2015). The government's Digital India programme has initiatives to enhance the security and confidentiality of data. Indian universities ought to adapt to the best practices in cyber security and data protection regulations to protect their digital assets (National Education Policy, 2020).

## **8. Policy Frameworks and Initiatives**

The NEP 2020 is a very vital policy that seeks to transform the Indian education system. The policy says for the importance of globalization, for the strategy to enhance the status and level of accessibility of higher education (National Education Policy, 2020). The single regulatory body for higher education, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), improved international partnership, technological integration into education are the major initiatives envisaged in the NEP 2020. The policy, on the other hand, calls for the method of research and innovation and it facilitates building institution of a National Research Foundation (NFR) (National Education Policy, 2020). The "Study in India" initiative aims at brand positioning of India as Global Education Hub and include



international students. The program is providing scholarships, promotes education status and facilitating visa process to make India a destination for foreign students (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2018). Government too has introduced the "Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)" to bring international faculty member and researchers on Indian institutions. Some of these programs involve promotion of global perception of Indian higher education and facilitate cultural exchange (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2015). Digital India ensures transformation of India into digital empowered society and a knowledge. The program also has provisions for promotion of internet access, digital literacy, and bringing of technology in education (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2015). That the establishment of National Educational Technology Forum (NEPF) under the NEP 2020 is matter of principal part of Digital India Programme. The forum will result in the use of technology in education and platform for all stakeholders to share best practices and integrate on digital initiatives (National Education Policy of India 2020). The Indian government has inked many agreements with foreign countries to make international collaborations in the higher education sector. These agreements aid in student and faculty exchange, collaborative research projects and establishment of offshore campuses (Ministry of External Affairs, 2019). Government's "Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)" and "Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)" are the initiatives of the government to ensure that they encourage international collaborations. These programs bundle money and resources for collaborative research projects, Faculty development programs, and Student exchange programs (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2015). The NEP 2020 gives importance to skill development and the holistic education system in the higher education commencement. The policy outlines the incorporation of holistic education within the higher education system and setting up multidisciplinary education and research universities (MERUs) (National Education Policy 2020). The government's "Skill India" initiative provides skill training to millions of Indians and enhance their employability. The integrative approach towards vocational or skills and life education into higher education, will prepare students to meet the needs of the global economy (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015).

## **9. The Impact of Globalization on Research and Innovation**

Globalization has a huge role to influence on research and innovation of Indian higher education system. International collaborations become increasingly essential in focusing on the issue of knowledge and discovering worldwide challenges. Indian institutions are partnering with the foreign universities for collaboration in joint research projects, resources sharing and sources of funding. Such as the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have partnered with universities in the United States and Europe in their cutting-edge research on fields like renewable energy, biotechnology and artificial intelligence (Sharma, 2012). These partnerships provide not just a researched based asset to Indian institutions but also help improve the global body of knowledge.



The "Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)" launched by the government is one more example of how globalization is making the research and innovation in India. This Programme is aimed at drawing in the foreign faculty and researchers at Indian Institutions for short term teaching and research assignments. GIAN has enabled various collaborations in the past, leading to publishing high-impact research papers and coming with growth of new answers to significant issues globally (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2015). NRF (National Research Foundation) that will create a common platform for research across disciplines and fund latest research projects – this is also proposed in the NEP 2020. The NRF has taken an approach of enabling a culture of research and innovation within Indian higher education, particularly towards issues at the national and global level (National Education Policy, 2020).

However there where a lot of problems that had to be looked at. Having first those innovations and growth. A lot is the shortage of sufficient financing for the study and innovation. While collaborating with the international partners offers resources, Indian institutions have traditionally found difficulty to protect enough funding resources to their research. Moreover, the administrative obstacles that one has to trudge through for getting research grants and approvals is also one of the major hurdles (Agarwal, 2009). To address these challenges, the NEP 2020 ensured the need of the overhaul of the research funding system and the plugging in the gaps for research and innovation . This includes creation of single regulatory authority ; the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), which will taxonomic arrangement the allocation of research grants and guarantee that it is being taken advantage of effectively (National Education Policy, 2020).

## **10. The Role of Digital Technologies in Globalizing Higher Education**

Digital upheaval of higher education is the driving force for Indianisation of globalization. The COVID-19 pandemic has spurred the acceptance of online learning sites, online classrooms, digital tools, and online resources to make the education more available and convenient for people. Indian universities are using digital technologies to improve the quality of education, increase access, and get a global reach. For example, platforms such as SWAYAM, Coursera, and edX provide a large number of online courses and degree programs from major Indian and international institutions who are building the quality education accessible for the students all over the world (Kumar, 2020).

The NEP 2020 makes it inevitable to digital literacy and the co-relation of technology with education. The policy suggests establishment of a National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) in order to integrate the use of the school using technology and to provide a cover for participants to call for best practices and coordinate digital Initiatives (National Education Policy, 2020). Moreover, the government's Digital India programme helps in making India a digitally powerful society and knowledge economy through boosting internet connectivity, making digital literacy, and using technology in education (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, 2015).

But also with the changes towards a digital higher education questions arise which are related to the digital divide. Though urban areas have all the prerequisites necessary like



high speed Internet and all the digital resources, rural areas are usually an exception to it. The vast difference between access to digital tools can widen the gaps of inequalities in education (Kumar, 2022). To address this issue, the NEP 2020 ensures the necessity of the digital divide by increasing internet facilities in the rural areas, besides promoting digital learning among students and faculty. The education policy also is beneficial to education of digital assets and infrastructure of educational institutions, including the establishment of digital libraries and online facilities (National Education Policy, 2020).

### **11. The Role of International Students in Globalizing Higher Education**

The presence of international students is a primary concern of the globalization of higher education. India is emerging as a destination for international students, because of the initiatives such as "Study in India" program, which ensures to help foreign students by proposing scholarships, enhancing the status of education, and analyzing visa procedures (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2018). The presence of international students enriches the academic environment by promoting cultural exchange and fostering cross-cultural understanding. Additionally, international students contribute to the local economy by paying tuition fees and living expenses, which can benefit the host institutions and the surrounding communities (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

However, attracting international students to India is not without challenges. One of the problems is the perception of Indian higher education among international students. While India has various prestigious institutions, such as the IITs and IIMs, the overall quality of higher education in India is often perceived as inconsistent. Additionally, issues such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of accommodation, and safety concerns can deter international students from choosing India as a study destination (Sharma, 2012). To look into the problems, the NEP 2020 ensures the need for improving the quality of higher education in India and making a welcoming environment for international students. This includes setting up of international student offices, the provision of accommodation and assistance services, and ensuring India's cultural heritage and traditions (National Education Policy, 2020).

### **12. The Role of Faculty in Globalizing Higher Education**

Staff has a big role in the globalisation of higher education. International integration will enable Indian faculty the chance to have their career flourished, exposure to international best practices and expansion to cutting edge of research. Many Indian universities have established linkages with foreign institutions for faculty exchange programme, workshops and training. One reason for this is that the programs assist Indian faculty in adhering to the most recent technology of their areas so as to boost their participation in training and research (Agarwal, 2009).

In fact, the Indian colleges can also get its status enhanced by international faculty posted to the colleges of India. For instance, the "Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)" involved instituting foreign faculty and researchers in Indian institutes for short duration of teaching and research, culminating in slew of new models and research



projects (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2015). Because, retaining and engaging the foreign faculty can be difficult for reasons such as low level of compensation, research, logistic facilities and bureaucratic hurdles. To study them, these challenges the NEP 2020 lays down the requirement for creating an environment for international faculty amongst others, the arrangement of competitive salary, research grant and assistance services (National Education Policy, 2020).

### **13. The Role of Policy Frameworks in Globalizing Higher Education**

Policy framework, take an important place in allowing the globalization of higher education in India. The NEP 2020 is an important policy, that to transform the Indian education system promoting internationalize, conducting research and innovation and applications of technology in the education. The policy achieves this by ensuring that the provision for developing a regulatory framework that enables the globalisation of higher education including establishment of a regulatory body, Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), which having in its purview accords for the growth of higher education and ensures that higher education gets built to global standards (National Education Policy, 2020).

In addition, the NEP 2020 provides a range of possibilities for unlocking international connections, including creation of National Research Foundation (NRF) and Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN). These enable foreign faculty and researchers to Indian institutions, promote joint research projects, and outcomes in the internationalization of the curriculum (National Education Policy, 2020). However, their successful implementation relies heavily on individual contributions of the government, educational systems, industry, and civil society. This involves a necessary element of proper funding, the construction of infrastructure, and favourable environment for research and innovation (Agarwal, 2009).

### **14. The Role of Industry in Globalizing Higher Education**

Industry is also used in the globalisation of higher education by giving students with an opportunity either through internships, industry projects or placements for the future. Not so long ago, many Indian universities has partnership with multinational corporation and global organization to deliver the industry courses and training programs. For instance, the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) has partnered with, among others, global corporations like McKinsey, Google & Microsoft to offer special management & technology (Tilak, 2008) courses. These partnerships significantly enhance the employability of Indian graduates but also provide them with possibilities to international great practices and industry situations.

Also, industry partnerships can lead to new module development and research activities. Eventually, Indian Institute of Technology IIT Bombay has linked up with the Indian software giant Tata Consultancy Services TCS to surrogate a course in the counterfeiting intelligent as well as automaton acquaintance, which is aligned with industry necessities (Sharma, Tutor, 2012). But industry ties also created questions about the





commercialization of education and the possible impact of private money on academic freedom. To deal with these challenges, NEP 2020 stresses the need of struct in strike of industry need as well as by academic uprightness (National Education Policy, 2020).

## 15. Recommendations

Taking about the goodness of the globalization should be the exploration of the regulatory inside the borders of higher education in India. The fact that, as envisaged by the NEP 2020, there will be a single regulatory body, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) is a move in the right direction (National Education Policy, 2020). The regulatory body should mainly focus on quality, accountability and facilitating international collaborations. It should also leverage concerns like the commercialisation of education and the pro-brications to be made for cultural identity (National Education Policy, 2020). Quality and accessibility of Indian higher education should be improved. It includes the task of better infrastructure, better faculty strength and all students to bring quality education (Agarwal, 2009). The government should provide financial support to the entities catering marginalized communities and education with inclusivity. The MERUs (Multidisciplinary Education & Research Universities) as envisioned by the NEP (2020) is a step in the right direction to elevate the stature of the higher education (National Education Policy, 2020). Research & innovation should place position in India as global knowledge super power. The creation of the National Research Foundation (NRF) under the NEP 2020 is a new concept (National Education Policy, 2020). Government should have to give grants and help for research Projects especially to those of National importance. International country partnerships must be fostered to allow the exchange of information and technology (Agarwal, 2009). Digital technologies should be used to up-grade quality and accessibility of higher education. The government should be investing in digital facilities, promoting digital ability and encouraging growth digital education facilities (Kumar, 2020). The formation of National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) under NEP 2020 is in line with application of technology in education. The forum should focus on evolution of good so-called best practices, educate the process, assist integration in among players (National Education Policy, 2020). Exchange and diplomacy through education should be further strengthened. The "Study in India" programme, should attract a larger international students and position India as global education hub (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2018). Indian universities must see the cross-cultural analysis and keep the Indian knowledge systems in picture of the module. The government also needs to improve learning of Indian languages and culture among foreign students (National Education Policy, 2020). To address problem of brain drain government should create an environment for Researchs and innovations. This involves supporting by means of fundraising, infrastructure and career prospects for researchers and professionals, Kapur (2010).

The government should also ensure entrepreneurship and innovation to retain talent within the country. Initiative programmes including the "Startup India" and "Make in India" campaigns are important aspects in the right direction (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015). Efforts should be made to improve the employability of Indian graduates by providing them with the skills and knowledge that



are important in a globalized economy. The collaboration of holistic view of education into the higher education system, as offered by the NEP 2020, is a positive step (National Education Policy, 2020). Indian universities should aim towards skill development, internships, and industry partnerships to make students for the career advancements. The government should also enhance lifelong learning and give enhancements for upgrading the skills (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015).

## 16. Conclusion

Globalization of higher education in India is a strict and complex phenomenon that holds the charm and the challenge. As it possesses the potential to change the position and availability of education and to elevate the research and the new things and to place India at the globe and knowledge super power it has also brought the issues of status of access and the identity cultural. To respond to the advantages of globalization, we should analyze the regulatory environment, to step up the status and accessibility of education, to enhance research and innovation and to facilitate digital technologies, help cultural exchange and diplomacy. By tackling these obstacles and capitalising on the opportunities, India can be best placed as a model for higher education and acquire knowledge production on a global basis. The NEP 2020 helps to formulate a holistic framework to transform the Indian education sector and get the benefits of globalization. But the policy requires an all-round thrust of the Government, educational institutions, industry and civil society organs. So, it can be concluded that the globalization of higher education in India is a very tough and multidimensional process which requires a balanced point. The formulation of higher education system by combining global best practices and safeguarding of cultural heritage, India can achieve globally competitive education with rich educational traditions. Higher education in India gives both prospects and challenges. While it can improve the status and accessibility of education, it can enhance research and innovation, and position India as a global knowledge superpower, it also helps understand issues about quality, accessibility, and cultural identity. To address the benefits of globalization, it is important to look into the the regulatory framework, improve the quality and accessibility of education, ensure research and innovation, harness digital technologies, and help cultural exchange and diplomacy. By looking into these problems and seizing the opportunities, India can keep itself as a leader in higher education and provide towards global knowledge production. The NEP 2020 gives a holistic framework for changing the Indian education system and addressing the benefits of globalization. However, the successful functioning of the policy needs the integrative efforts of the government, educational institutions, industry, and civil society. Conclusively, higher education in India is a complex and multifaceted process that needs a balanced approach through globalization. By collaborating global best practices and preservation of cultural heritage, India can make higher education system both globally competitive and rooted in its rich educational institutions.



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## **INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC POLICY: ADVANCES AND SETBACKS IN THE STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION OF BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITIES**

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### **Abstract**

The establishment of a comprehensive national public policy for the internationalization of higher education in Brazil has been identified as an urgent and indispensable priority. Brazil continues to face challenges in its strategic planning aimed at enhancing international integration within the higher education sector, particularly in effectively promoting its universities on the global stage. This study seeks to underscore the significance of implementing a national internationalization policy tailored to Brazilian universities, grounded in a thorough understanding of the current dynamics and characteristics of the internationalization process in the country. To achieve this objective, the study first examines the organizational structures of key government agencies, along with their respective initiatives and programs related to internationalization. Subsequently, these elements are critically analyzed in relation to the internationalization management processes at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), weighing their advantages and disadvantages. Through this analysis, the study identifies the principal challenges confronting the development of a cohesive national policy for internationalization. Methodologically, this research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing bibliographic and documentary analysis. The findings reveal that while the Brazilian government has played a significant role in the internationalization of higher education, its actions have often been fragmented across various agencies. This lack



of coordination has resulted in both benefits and setbacks for the internationalization efforts of Brazilian HEIs and for the country as a whole. Based on these findings, the study recommends fostering stronger collaboration between the government and HEIs in the formulation of national strategies, as well as promoting a clearer understanding of Brazil's existing capabilities, ambitions, and potential within the internationalization landscape.

### Keywords

Brazil, Internationalization, Higher Education, Public Policy, Management.

### Resumo

A criação de uma política pública nacional abrangente para a internacionalização do ensino superior no Brasil tem sido identificada como uma prioridade urgente e indispensável. O Brasil continua a enfrentar desafios no seu planejamento estratégico destinado a reforçar a integração internacional no setor do ensino superior, sobretudo no que respeita à promoção eficaz das suas universidades no cenário global. Este estudo pretende sublinhar a importância da implementação de uma política nacional de internacionalização ajustada às universidades brasileiras, baseada numa compreensão aprofundada das dinâmicas e características atuais do processo de internacionalização no país. Para alcançar este objetivo, o estudo analisa inicialmente as estruturas organizacionais dos principais órgãos governamentais, bem como as suas respetivas iniciativas e programas relacionados com a internacionalização. Posteriormente, estes elementos são objeto de análise crítica em relação aos processos de gestão da internacionalização nas Instituições de Ensino Superior (IES), avaliando os seus benefícios e limitações. Através desta análise, identificam-se os principais desafios que se colocam ao desenvolvimento de uma política nacional coesa para a internacionalização. Do ponto de vista metodológico, esta investigação adota uma abordagem qualitativa, recorrendo à análise bibliográfica e documental. Os resultados evidenciam que, embora o governo brasileiro desempenhe um papel relevante na internacionalização do ensino superior, a sua ação tem sido frequentemente fragmentada entre diferentes órgãos. Esta falta de coordenação tem provocado tanto ganhos como prejuízos para os esforços de internacionalização das IES brasileiras e para o país em geral. Com base nestes resultados, o estudo recomenda o fortalecimento da colaboração entre o governo e as IES na formulação de estratégias nacionais, bem como a promoção de uma compreensão mais clara das capacidades, ambições e potencialidades do Brasil no contexto da internacionalização.

### Palavras-chave

Brasil, Internacionalização, Ensino Superior, Política Pública, Gestão, Brasil.

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## **INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC POLICY: ADVANCES AND SETBACKS IN THE STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION OF BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITIES**

**JOSÉ ALBERTO MIRANDA**

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### **Introduction**

The internationalization of Brazilian higher education has, over recent decades, become consolidated as a strategic element for fostering academic, scientific, and cultural innovation—particularly within an increasingly interconnected global context. According to Jane Knight (2020), internationalization is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the functions and missions of higher education. In Brazil, this movement has gained momentum, though it continues to face significant challenges stemming from the absence of a comprehensive strategic framework.

The internationalization process in Brazilian higher education institutions (HEIs) has sparked debate regarding its relevance, associated challenges, and its potential impact on national development. For João Sguissardi and José Silva Júnior (2009), internationalization can enhance knowledge exchange, expand global visibility for universities, and foster greater academic competitiveness. However, national initiatives often lack a coherent public policy that integrates governmental and institutional actions, thereby limiting the scope and effectiveness of such efforts. Moreover, international engagement initiatives have revealed substantial gaps in terms of strategic planning and integrated management. These deficiencies compromise the sustainability of internationalization projects and diminish their potential benefits—such as the formation of international research networks and the attraction of global talent.

It is also essential to recognize that internationalization goes beyond the mere mobility of students and faculty. As highlighted by De Wit (2015), the concept entails a broader institutional transformation, including the enhancement of internationalized curricula, strategic academic partnerships, and inclusion policies for international students. In



Brazil, developing a national internationalization policy requires a clear understanding of the role of HEIs in the global landscape, as well as strategies to overcome local challenges such as regional inequalities and budgetary constraints. As Stallivieri (2017) emphasizes, it is crucial for institutions to conduct internal assessments in advance in order to accurately identify their potential for international engagement and their capacity to absorb the demands arising from this process.

Thus, the internationalization of higher education in Brazil represents a phenomenon that offers significant opportunities but also demands coordinated efforts to address existing structural and political challenges. As argued by Souza and Almeida (2021), the success of this internationalization process depends on effective coordination between the state and higher education institutions, with strategies that foster integration and strengthen the Brazilian academic identity on the international stage.

This study aims to analyze the predominant characteristics of internationalization within Brazilian universities, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities related to the construction of an integrated national policy. Adopting a critical perspective, it examines the actions and programs developed by key government agencies and their implications for university governance and management. Using a qualitative methodology grounded in bibliographic and documentary analysis, the study identifies both the gains and setbacks resulting from governmental disarticulation and points toward the formulation of more coherent strategies aligned with the broader interests of humanity.

In this way, the present article contributes to the ongoing discourse on the importance of a national public policy aimed at promoting the internationalization of higher education—specifically in Brazil—considering not only what has been accomplished, but, more importantly, what remains to be achieved and what the country can offer in a competitive global context. This analysis seeks to encourage a broader debate about the relevance of internationalization as a strategic vector for strengthening Brazilian universities and advancing the country's national development agenda.

In the first part of this text, we examine the impact of globalization on education and the integration of universities into the global landscape, primarily through the lens of Jane Knight's perspective and an analysis of how the internationalization process has unfolded in countries lacking a clear national framework to guide such efforts.

In the second part, we reflect on the challenges facing the strategic international engagement of Brazilian universities, with particular emphasis on how the development of an international education policy requires public policy elements aligned with the construction of a broader state project. This section highlights the weaknesses found in national policy documents regarding the promotion of university internationalization in Brazil.

In the third part, we present emerging trends in the international engagement of Brazilian universities and the challenges involved in advancing this process, particularly through South-South cooperation.





## **1. Globalization and the Strategic Integration of Universities into the Global Landscape**

Globalization, by expanding opportunities for academic and scientific cooperation, compels universities to rethink their strategies for international integration in alignment with the internationalization objectives of the countries in which they are embedded. This scenario presents numerous potential benefits, including the enhancement of student preparation for global labor markets, the elevation of institutional standards, and the promotion of enriching cultural exchange that contributes to national development.

Globalization directly impacts how students must be prepared to understand and apply their knowledge. The interconnected nature of global systems demands the capacity to comprehend complex problems and to research and implement solutions that take these interdependencies into account. Individual decisions can have transnational repercussions, necessitating the development of skills to anticipate, assess, and ethically evaluate personal and professional actions from a global perspective (Lauder, 2006).

The internationalization of higher education has become a strategic option for countries seeking to position themselves in a competitive and globalized environment, where, increasingly, "... internationalization is essential for survival" (Moreira & Ranincheski, 2019: 1). According to Jane Knight, there are several reasons a country might pursue the development of a national public policy on internationalization. While national motivations have evolved over the past two decades, key drivers include commercial interests, the acquisition of talent, human resource development, diplomacy, and nation-building (Knight, 2020).

Countries motivated by such objectives generally aim to align internal policies—particularly in education—with national technological, scientific, and economic development goals. Additionally, there is often an emphasis on integrating the country into the international arena, underpinned by foreign policy. In this context, a national public policy on internationalization represents a pathway through which the state establishes guidelines to be followed by the various stakeholders involved in the process. Despite the compelling nature of these motivations, many countries still lack a clearly defined national policy.

To date, the literature has devoted limited attention to how the process of internationalization unfolds in countries without specific national policies or strategic direction. In such cases, what often exists are isolated, fragmented, and inconsistent government initiatives. Moreover, universities are central actors in the internationalization process. They are both recipients of public policy and active agents in achieving policy goals, given that most internationalization-related actions are conceptualized, developed, and implemented within the academic environment. Thus, universities play a dual role—as both implementers and architects of internationalization strategies—placing them at the center of progress in this field.

Identifying a country's national interests and translating them into foreign policy strategy is a highly complex task, particularly in democratic contexts. Governments increasingly derive legitimacy from their ability to understand and address the needs and aspirations



of the populations they represent. For this reason, in the contemporary world, states and governments remain essential intermediaries in both domestic affairs and the international system (Lafer, 2007).

According to Giacomino, there are currently three sources of power in international politics: military power, economic power, and soft power. These sources are not mutually exclusive but carry different weights in the diplomacy of each country (Giacomino, 2009). Soft power strategies are often linked to culture, education, media, and tourism. For such strategies to produce lasting results, they must go beyond isolated events and be embedded in long-term programs, managed by specialists with secured financial resources. The use of international education as a soft power tool is common in the current international context. Countries such as Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States frequently leverage education in their foreign policy strategies.

Many of these countries have developed specific policy documents. Spain, for example, in an effort to strengthen the identity of its higher education system, designed and implemented its internationalization policy through the publication of the document *Strategy for the Internationalization of Spanish Universities 2015–2020*. The document outlines the goal of:

“Consolidating a strong and internationally attractive university system that promotes the inbound and outbound mobility of top students, faculty, researchers, and administrative staff, enhances educational quality, leverages the Spanish language as a vehicle for higher education, and supports the internationalization of educational programs and research and innovation activities, thereby contributing to Spain’s attractiveness and international competitiveness.” (Spain, 2014)

The United Kingdom and Germany—countries that employ international education as a foreign policy instrument—have also developed strategic national documents that guide the internationalization of their higher education systems. These documents typically outline necessary actions for modernizing and enhancing the quality of university systems, identifying internationalization as a strategic area for national development.

National actions and programs that use education as a diplomatic tool illustrate the various forms of public diplomacy and aim to foster rapprochement and cooperative relationships between nations. Academic exchanges promoted by countries are a clear example of the practical application of soft power (Giacomino, 2009, p.159). Educational cooperation initiatives can be seen as a positive dimension of international relations, as they contribute to economic and social development and promote values such as tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (2003) argue that education can serve as a means of building a particular kind of political community. Through education, political actors are encouraged—within their national frameworks—to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities toward a new center, whose institutions claim jurisdiction over established nation-states (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, 2003, p. 648).

In this study, the internationalization of higher education is understood as a commitment to advancing international and comparative perspectives through teaching, research, and



service missions in higher education. It defines the institution's ethos and values, influencing the entirety of its educational enterprise. It should be considered an institutional imperative, not merely a desirable option (Hudzik, 2015). While internationalization envisions the institution beyond national borders, universities remain rooted in local and national contexts and influenced by national policies and local constituencies. The dichotomy between the local and the global is a false one; internationalization mediates between the two, with global dynamics impacting the local and vice versa.

However, internationalization does not solely mean the physical movement of individuals to distant locations, though mobility is often involved. The central notion is the mobility of ideas, which may circulate not only through travel but also via the internet and other digital media. According to Hudzik (2015), the dominant models of the modern university—shaped in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—paralleled the rise of the nation-state. Universities were fundamentally national institutions. Tensions often arose between serving national interests and fostering the transnational exchange of ideas and scholars in pursuit of global knowledge. Internationalization at that time was often in conflict with political, institutional, and cultural constraints, and viewed as an individualistic phenomenon.

Higher education institutions exhibit unique characteristics. Even within centralized national systems, institutions develop distinct formal and informal cultures and governance mechanisms shaped by local traditions and leadership. A comprehensive internationalization process must be consistent with and committed to the institutional principles of each HEI.

In developed countries, internationalization has been integrated into state policy and implemented not only by HEIs but by the executive branch as a whole. In other words, the role of state policy in promoting the internationalization of higher education institutions in developed countries is explicit (Lima & Contel, 2011; Laus, 2012; De Wit, 2015; Stallivieri, 2017).

This interdependence and convergence between state actions and HEI initiatives in higher education internationalization is of great importance, particularly when understood as a set of policies and programs implemented by universities and governments in pragmatic response to globalization (Gacel, 2003).

Thus, the central thesis emerges that the internationalization of higher education hinges on the political decision of the state to pursue such a process. However, for the country to move in a unified direction, HEI decisions must align with the guiding objectives of governmental policies.

## **2. The Challenges of the Strategic International Integration of Brazilian Universities**

In Brazil, there are some low-impact initiatives in the realm of foreign policy that nonetheless offer opportunities for young Latin American and African students to pursue



studies in the country. These programs aim to encourage educational exchange and promote Brazilian culture, primarily within the field of scientific cooperation. Examples include the Undergraduate Student Exchange Program (PEC-G), the Graduate Student Exchange Program (PEC-PG), and, in the past, the landmark Science Without Borders program.

Traditional forms of international relations among states have come to require new expressions of power. Emerging international actors—such as multinational corporations, NGOs, media organizations, and international public opinion—are now influenced more by soft power than by hard power. To achieve national objectives, diplomacy has had to recognize the role of public opinion and the media. In other words, foreign policy is now shaped not only by governments but also by these new international actors. Among its many functions, education serves to promote culture and shared values, contributing to social cohesion and integration. Durkheim emphasized this point by identifying education as an essential support for the construction and consolidation of the nation-state (Durkheim, 1977).

In Brazil, the Division of Educational Affairs, located within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is responsible for developing foreign policy actions related to education in collaboration with other national government agencies. Among the Itamaraty's key roles in educational cooperation are its joint management of the PEC-G and PEC-PG programs with the Ministry of Education, its oversight of general issues related to educational cooperation in Brazil, participation in the negotiation of international education agreements, and coordination of educational cooperation activities conducted abroad (Brazil, 2016b).

Developing a policy for international education requires public policy components that align with a broader state-building project. Presently, although there are economic, political, academic, and sociocultural motivations supporting national development through education and technology, there remains a lack of clear strategies demonstrating how international education can strengthen Brazil's international position within the global higher education system.

According to José Alberto de Miranda and Luciane Stallivieri, there are numerous weaknesses in Brazil's official documents regarding the promotion of internationalization in higher education institutions. These documents, they argue, are not grounded in an ambitious public policy capable of defining the direction Brazil seeks to pursue regarding the global integration of its universities. Moreover, the absence of an official policy framework hampers progress in this field, complicating the conceptualization of internationalization for a country with Brazil's unique economic, geographic, and linguistic profile, as well as the definition of quality standards (Miranda & Stallivieri, p. 610).

In Brazil, scientific and technological knowledge production is largely concentrated at the graduate level. International cooperation typically begins with the training of doctoral students and professors abroad, which, over the course of their careers, leads to relationships not only through the consumption of international literature but also through academic partnerships with the departments and research centers in which they studied. This process enables advanced international cooperation, characterized by the joint production of knowledge through collaborative research projects. The development



of academic networks supported by funding calls promotes research and the training of human resources in partnership with international institutions. Graduate-level international cooperation is primarily managed by Capes/MEC and CNPq/MCT. Both agencies operate in overlapping areas. While CNPq is working to revitalize its research agenda, approximately 60% of its resources still go toward scholarships—that is, training.

Efforts to promote internationalization by the Ministry of Education focus, on one hand, on graduate student training, emphasizing the importance of international internships. Scholarships are allocated according to each academic field's domestic training capacity. "Doctoral programs in Brazil must be complemented with shorter-term international internships. Evidently, certain fields—whether due to the need for mass training, the underdevelopment of domestic programs, or the complete absence of such programs—heavily depend on foreign training." Furthermore, the plan proposes to "reinforce graduate education abroad as an integral component of Brazil's human capital development system; implement a more efficient system to improve the orientation, selection, and monitoring of scholarship recipients; and restore the international purchasing power of scholarships in the short term by creating differentiated mechanisms that consider, among other factors, the destination country of the candidate" (CAPES 2025). On the other hand, the plan also encourages researcher internationalization through international exchanges, the articulation of national and international partnerships, and the institutionalization of sabbatical opportunities, with a focus on postdoctoral studies to enhance scientific exchange.

It is also worth noting that some graduate programs are highly internationalized, with consolidated international academic networks, the regular presence of distinguished foreign researchers, high-quality joint international publications, and Brazilian scholars serving as visiting professors or guest lecturers abroad. At the same time, other programs exhibit minimal or no international engagement, remaining focused primarily on Brazilian or regional contexts. In other words, graduate programs in Brazil vary widely in their levels of internationalization (Morosini, 2011).

### **3. New Trends in the International Integration of Brazilian Universities**

As the internationalization of higher education continues to advance, new possibilities have emerged, reflecting global socio-economic realignments—such as the shift of the world's center of gravity from the North Atlantic to the Global South and East Asia, and a reduction in the process of Americanization, whereby the United States no longer holds undisputed global hegemony. This transition is also marked by the systematic weakening of the authority of nation-states (Hobsbawm, 2010). The BRICS countries—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and new members—stand out as emerging powers. Despite accounting for nearly half of the global population, 20% of the world's landmass, and 15% of global GDP, these nations still face major obstacles in becoming hubs of innovation. These challenges include authoritarian regimes, overpopulation, conflicting trade relationships, and linguistic barriers. Thus, the traditional model of international cooperation—characterized by a South-North qualification logic—remains dominant, although it is now



more commonly applied to specific programs and areas of expertise rather than general or isolated demands.

In summary, international higher education is shifting from an era dominated by public policies fostering South-North relations to a new phase increasingly marked by South-South cooperation. While the accumulated expertise of developed countries underscores the continued importance of South-North internationalization, South-South cooperation—grounded in solidarity among developing nations—has the added benefit of strengthening regional blocs in a transnationalized world.

As noted by Marília Morosini, every academic exchange has a dual character. The expansion of South-South cooperation can also stem from Brazilian commercial interests, thus mirroring the same logic found in traditional international cooperation. The point here is that as developing countries increase their qualifications, stronger exchange relationships can be established—ranging from graduate and postdoctoral education, to academic networks, and even commercial opportunities such as book publishing, faculty exchanges, and consulting services (Morosini, 2011).

According to Almerinda de Carvalho, head of the Division of Educational Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the internationalization of higher education affects Brazil's global standing in three key dimensions: (a) economically, by producing a more qualified workforce to drive national development; (b) politically, by strengthening diplomatic ties through educational cooperation as part of a positive foreign policy agenda, promoting Brazil's image as a nation grounded in solidarity and committed to peace, mutual understanding, and international trust; and (c) culturally, through interpersonal exchange, language acquisition, and shared experiences that foster closer bonds with other societies (Carvalho, 2014).

Capes has pursued a truly academic internationalization of Brazil's university system and is recognized internationally as an effective agency in this regard. One of the agency's original goals at its founding in 1951 was to address gaps in Brazil's educational system—particularly in comparison to major global powers—through scientific and academic cooperation (Canedo & Garcia, 2004–2005). With the development of graduate programs in Brazil over the years, conditions were created for internationalization to evolve from a reactive, receiver-oriented model to one based on more equitable collaboration among inter-institutional groups (Laus & Morosini, 2005).

At the governmental level, the promotion of university internationalization must acquire strategic significance for the nation. However, current policy documents rarely articulate this objective explicitly. Instead, they tend to reference broader goals such as national development, human capital formation, and the promotion of science and technology research. Brazilian universities' openness to the world must be accompanied by greater reciprocity, enabling modernization and innovation through international cooperation. Presently, much of Brazil's international cooperation remains one-sided, often benefiting only one of the participating partners.

This lack of reciprocity is not consistently addressed in Brazil's official documents. Although economic, political, academic, and sociocultural motivations for internationalization are acknowledged as essential to supporting the country's



development, there is still an absence of clear strategies showing how internationalization will strengthen Brazil's position within the global higher education system. In other words, there is no concrete vision for how Brazil intends to actively assert itself on the international education stage through its higher education institutions.

The absence of a comprehensive national document guiding the design and implementation of regional and national internationalization policies impedes progress in the field. This gap also hinders the conceptualization of internationalization in the Brazilian context and obstructs the definition of quality parameters that reflect the country's unique economic, geographic, and linguistic characteristics.

Only through the construction of a positive policy agenda, continuous and productive dialogue, inclusive debate, and the development of a national framework that incorporates the perspectives of key stakeholders can Brazil establish a coherent and long-term vision for higher education internationalization—one that aligns with the country's broader strategic objectives and global aspirations.

## **Conclusion**

The reflections presented in this study indicate that, over the past twenty years, the Brazilian government has played an important role in shaping the country's higher education landscape. However, it has acted in a fragmented and uncoordinated manner through its various governmental agencies when it comes to the internationalization of Brazilian universities. This disarticulation has had consequences for both the management of internationalization at the institutional level and the formulation of strategic directives that would enable Brazil to benefit more fully from global engagement.

With the goal of contributing to the development of new interpretations and policy pathways, this study identifies the urgent need for a national public policy on internationalization—one that recognizes the varying degrees, actors, and potentials of internationalization within Brazilian higher education. Cutting-edge research, aligned with Brazil's technological development needs, must be prioritized in order to enhance the country's global competitiveness and, in turn, contribute to its broader social and economic advancement.

Policy must not only guide efforts to increase the degree of internationalization across universities but also propose innovative approaches. For example, recognizing internationalization as an integral part of the university mission, promoting virtual collaboration initiatives to make internationalized training more inclusive, and creating incentives and mechanisms to involve more students and faculty with international experience are all key elements of a contemporary national strategy.

The international integration of Brazilian universities must be developed domestically and serve as the driving force behind a truly national process. It is necessary to move beyond the current duality in which institutions await guidance from the government, and the government, in turn, expects action from the institutions.



Placing the entire responsibility for developing internationalization on the universities themselves reveals the absence of a clear governmental intention to strategically position Brazil on a global stage through science, technology, extension expertise, and globally relevant education. It normalizes the country's reactive stance toward internationalization and, consequently, its marginal role in the global development of science and technology. This perpetuates a model in which Brazil remains primarily an exporter of intellectual talent and raw materials.

Therefore, it is urgent that internationalization be understood in a broader, more systemic manner—across all levels of education—so that higher education can truly contribute to societal transformation. Higher education is only the tip of the iceberg in the educational system.

To view Brazil exclusively through the lens of the “world-class university” model is to disregard the country's deep-rooted educational inequalities and social challenges. Internationalization initiatives that fail to address, for example, the large number of students pursuing teaching degrees—without any concerted effort to address this imbalance—are at best disconnected from Brazil's future and the preparation of its next generations.

Public policy and internationalization must not be detached from social realities, nor should they be designed solely to serve the interests of a narrow elite of individuals or institutions. The guiding principles must be inclusion, democracy, and alignment with the needs and aspirations of society as a whole, in the interest of ensuring that the benefits of internationalization are widely shared.

When education becomes a central component of a country's foreign policy agenda—aimed at identity-building and community development—it is essential to reflect on who formulates and who implements that policy. Such reflection is critical for enhancing the national discourse on how the internationalization of higher education institutions relates to the broader direction and destiny of the nation.

Nevertheless, it is evident that Brazil has yet to develop a clear identity framework for the internationalization of higher education as a matter of public policy. The absence of an official document capable of guiding higher education institutions, establishing clear directives, and promoting the balanced development of Brazilian education in the global arena reinforces the urgent need for a national identity framework. While several programs and documents with targeted actions have emerged and offer clear benefits, they have not stemmed from a cohesive public policy. As such, they have failed to provide strategic direction or meaning to Brazil's efforts to position itself more effectively in global higher education.

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## **AN EXAMINATION AND VALIDATION OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN UGANDA**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine and validate the concept of Social emotional learning skills (SEL) among university students in Uganda . The concept has become an issue of relevance among scholars and academicians towards preparation of a holistic graduate. A cross-sectional research design, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) were used to examine the hypothesized SEL measurement model. A randomly chosen sample of 664 volunteers was used to examine the Cronbach's alpha construct reliability and validity, composite reliability, maximal reliability, and discriminant and convergent validity standards. The findings of the study reflected that the hypothesized measurement model is a significant five-factor model with 24 items correlated with one another. The study recommends that HEIs and future studies can apply SEL measurement model based on the context and culture of a given area.

### **Keywords**

B Social Emotional Learning, Self-Management, Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, Social-Awareness, Relationship-Management.



## Resumo

Este estudo tem por objetivo examinar e validar o conceito de “competências de aprendizagem socio-emocional” (Social and Emotional Learning – SEL) entre estudantes do ensino superior no Uganda. A relevância deste conceito tem vindo a aumentar no meio académico e científico, particularmente no que se refere à formação de graduados holísticos, capazes de integrar competências cognitivas e socio-emocionais. Recorreu-se a um desenho de investigação transversal, com a aplicação de uma Análise Fatorial Exploratória (AFE) e de uma Análise Fatorial Confirmatória através da Modelação por Equações Estruturais (Structural Equation Modelling – SEM), com vista a testar a adequação de um modelo hipotético de medição das competências SEL. A amostra do estudo foi constituída por 664 participantes, selecionados aleatoriamente, tendo sido analisadas a fiabilidade e a validade do construto com base em diversos indicadores estatísticos: alfa de Cronbach, fiabilidade composta, fiabilidade máxima e padrões de validade convergente e discriminante. Os resultados indicaram que o modelo hipotético de medição apresentou significância estatística, estruturando-se em cinco fatores principais, com um total de 24 itens intercorrelacionados. Estes achados sustentam a adequação do modelo teórico proposto no contexto específico da amostra estudada. O estudo recomenda, por conseguinte, que as Instituições de Ensino Superior considerem a aplicação deste modelo de competências SEL, devidamente adaptado ao contexto cultural e educacional em que se insere, e sugere a realização de investigações futuras que explorem a validade do modelo noutras realidades socioculturais.

## Palavras-chave

Uganda, Ensino Superior, Aprendizagem Socio-Emocional, Autoconsciência, Decisão Responsável, Consciência Social.

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## **AN EXAMINATION AND VALIDATION OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN UGANDA**

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### **Introduction**

As the world continues to traverse through unprecedented moments in human life, the solution for any future challenges of any country in terms of political, social, economic and religious aspects of life will depend on the way schools nurture the learners of today. For instance; learners who come from poor backgrounds with family dysfunctions, abuse are likely not to face a miserable future if their emotional learning skills are not addressed (Baker, et al..., 2003; Nickolite & Doll, 2008). Therefore nurturing learners with SEL will help several countries to cause socio-economic cohesions among graduates. Unlike in the past centuries, countries that are more focused on the bright future of their citizens, have laid tremendous strategies to uplift their levels of civility through visionary education that encompasses stunning scientific adventures and innovation to help them thrive in the challenging socio-economic situations of all times. This is done to encounter opportunities and at the same time pave ways through which new dimensions that shape up human endeavors can be addressed to tackle issues of multiculturalism and socio-political issues through the use of social emotional learning. For instance, in the USA when the pressure for No Child Left Behind Act came into existence, a lot was experienced for example, states' laws governing students achievement, instructional practices and accountability changed due to the readily apparent needs of students that call for changes in the way teachers and schools nurture and address students' needs (Rohanna, et al., 2009).

To cope with the new trends of technological advancement and innovation, there is need for HEIs to rethink about the nature of education needed to raise the levels of civilization all over the world. This is due to the fact that there is no any other shortcut that the bright future of citizens will exist without research in these key forces that shape up the future times. Without thinking in these lines, educational institutions will remain operating using the past traditional methods especially in teaching and learning situations, the education strategies of tomorrow will remain a jeopardy and kill the developmental strategies for enhancing skills of thinking and reasoning among learners. It is therefore important for governments to prioritize investment in higher education to boost research, publication and academic excellence in areas like social emotional



learning skills. This approach will empower learners at HEIs with skills for self-management, self-awareness social responsibility and making responsible decisions (McCuin, 2012).

Since the wealth of any country lies in the education of its people, for countries to capture the soft and hardware technological standards of their people, there is need to imbue social emotional learning skills and practices in the higher education system so as to help learners and teachers discover themselves and think selflessly towards the development of their communities.

Given the increased research on the importance of Social emotional learning skills adoption in different education systems world over, a multidimensional nature of this concept should be sufficiently conceptualized and tested among university students. The purpose of this is to guide in the nurturing and upbringing of learners in different field of human development. This is due to the fact that these institutions play a very big role in preparation of the human capital required for socio-economic transformation and development. Even though this trend has been adopted in both developed and developing countries, Uganda's HEIs seem to be lagging behind in re-conceptualizing the curricula intertwined with this aspect of human development and growth. This is because many of their graduates seem not to mind about SEL skills. Also at present there is scanty information available to guide us on the nature and state of SEL constructs and their relationship at higher education level in Uganda.

### **Definition of social emotional learning**

Social emotional and life skill learning have been talked about for years as means that help individuals recognize and control their sentiments, care for others, take good decisions, be responsible by behaving ethically well to develop relationships with others and avoid negative tendencies that hurt others (Elias, et al., 2007). Today, many parts of the world are looking at these skills as critical foundation for formation of future societies. It is important to note that acquiring knowledge in different disciplines and of itself alone cannot help to better the future of competent human being. However it is imperative that societies think in arenas of producing knowledge and intelligent mindsets coupled with caring attitudes and compassion for developing health communities. This cannot be attained without investing in training the stakeholders in the area of social emotional learning since most of the learners today are more in school based programs and activities.

Social emotional learning can be termed as a process through which both adults and children attain knowledge and skills needed to facilitate their relevance, efficiency and effectiveness in managing social contexts (Gehlbach & Hough, 2018). It a mechanism that many researchers and educationists propose to help learners understand how to deal with challenges of fear, frustration, guilt and blame (Reynolds, 2016). This process equips learners with techniques of recognition and management of emotion, development of care and being concerned about others, being responsible in decisions and establishment of good rapport and relationship in handling puzzling situations effectively



(Zhou & Ee, 2012). Meanwhile, CASEL (2003) refers to social emotional learning as a process by which learners acquire knowledge and skills to navigate through their life challenges. The philosophy of carrying out SEL is to help learners gain supportive ways and competences needed through learner-teacher relationship to address the challenging environment engulfed with unethical tendencies that require someone to be a good student, citizen, and worker that avoids many different risky behaviors.

Numerous studies have so far been done for instance; a study conducted by Poulou (2017) on students' emotional and behavioral difficulties; the role of teachers' social and emotional learning and teacher-student relations, with a sample of 98 teachers. It was established that teachers' perception of emotional intelligence and social emotional learning are not related to students' emotional and behavioral difficulties. Also Cooper (2010) stresses that there is need for coherence between different policies in regard to social emotional learning which educational sectors should give particular attention and provide solutions to social challenges that face the youth. In a study done by Buchanan and Gueldner (2009) on social and emotional learning in classroom; a survey of teacher's knowledge, perceptions, and practices in USA using a sample of 263, it found out that many teachers believed that SEL is relevant and should be given an important role towards receiving, training and support from different professions in order to improve students' academic performance.

Meanwhile, the world is going through situations of antagonism, merciless killings, and drought and drug abuse. These behaviours have not only made no difference between life and death in some parts of the world, but they have also caused several negative effects both in development and preservation of civilizations. Therefore to find solutions for similar challenges and those that are likely to happen in future, many countries are redefining the nature of their education systems from K-12 elementary levels of education so as to create a brighter future for their citizens (Miiro, 2017). Even though this is the practice at lower levels of education, there is need to capture social emotional learning skills at HEIs especially in Africa, Uganda inclusive. There is need to integrate HEIs curriculum with SEL in order to prepare well-grounded graduates for socio-economic transformation of their communities. Though, the biggest percentage of graduates do not measure to the standards in terms of social emotional learning skills, thus finding it hard to manage themselves and at the same time provide social services to their communities (Miiro & Baguma, 2023). Since there is anecdote of information on the concept of SEL among higher education institutions in Ugandan education institution, this research further intends to establish the constructs that measure this concept according to different schools of thought.

Moreover, at the same time today's leadership is required to pass on responsibility to graduates in order to drive the nations forward. Meanwhile in developing countries that normally face immense challenges of emotional difficulties for instance; African countries especially Uganda, do not seem to pay greater attention to this aspect especially in higher education institutions. Whereas, on the other hand higher education institutions are taken as hubs for providing solutions to community challenges (Farooq, 2024). It is therefore imperative that these institutions play a greater role of providing more productivity channels of higher performance to their graduates through emotional



learning skills to cope up with change demands of the time. In order to attain sustainable solutions towards human behaviours there is need to equip learners with the necessary skills required for enhancement of a harmonious society (Hull, et al., 2021).

Today's generation is in dire need of educators with the right mind set to address their behavioral challenges for purposes of boosting their academic performance (Barak, et al., 2020). This is because many of these students are exposed to different courses that sometimes limit their scope of reasoning and logical approaches for solutions to their challenges. It is therefore important that lecturer- student interaction is at its best to help them acquire both soft and hard skills of emotional learning (Jimbai et al., 2021). Owing to this kind of practice that many countries are opting for to improve the status of their graduates to boost the economic growth though, little seems to be taking place or known about SEL practice in higher education institutions (HEIs) especially in Uganda.

Countries are vying for better education as the major source of economic development and civilization. This is attributed to both the history of human civilization and global forces that help to shape up communities and their challenges. The global demands put it clear that for any country to survive in the next generation, its citizens must attain high skilled education in order to boost both individual and national growth (Miiro & Baguma, 2023). To achieve this dream. nations should integrate curriculum with social emotional learning skills to acquire reasonable levels of civility. This kind of practice is geared towards helping the disadvantaged from being exploited and at the same time maintaining equality at all levels. Whereas other parts of the world are focusing their resources on this aspect through several ways to ensure that every child is catered for in terms of quality education, the Ugandan situation does not seem to predict and portray the same picture. This study is therefore designed to examine and validate the current practice and factors of social emotional learning skills among university students in Uganda.

### **Literature review of social emotional learning skills**

In the recent past decades, the issue of social emotional learning has received greater attention among researchers and educators. This kind of attention has cropped up due to changes the world forces for instance, commodification, privatization, capitalization are posing to influence human behavior especially the young generation. Many children of the future generation seem to be caught at crossroads with inhumane behaviours that some countries have been exposed to in different parts of the world. For that reason, there is need for schools to rescue the young generation and prepare them for the better future in terms of values and skills required for self-development and community transformation. To help children navigate school-related challenges, fostering teacher-student relationship is essential for adapting to changing educational demands (Poulou, 2017). To bridge this gap, schools should implement strategies that help learners develop self-awareness and resilience for future challenges. It is against this background that this study is designed to examine the social emotional learning skills among university students in Uganda.





For learners to attain support and competencies that help them gain skills that link the social, academic and emotional development, self-awareness, social awareness, recognition, and self-control of emotions, building relationship skills, empathy and being responsible in decision making should be considered as a foundation for students' progress in this aspect of life (Smart, 2017). To achieve better results of the said sub dimensions of SEL, there is need to integrate the existing curriculum with these sub constructs of SEL so as to improve learners' perceptions of life and its challenges (Gehlbach & Hough, 2018; Reynolds, 2016). Since HEIs play a greater role in generating solutions to society needs, challenges and desires, the onus is on them to ensure that they link the SEL components in curriculum, research and development of concepts that address social needs of their communities. Meanwhile Corcoran & Tormey, (2012), argue for an integration of traditional and modern theories in SEL assessment. However, their study lacks a cross-cultural perspectives, which is crucial for its application in diverse contexts like Uganda.

It is therefore vital that HEIs provide SEL programs since they play a significant role towards positive social response, emotional benefits and at the same time improve students' academic performance. Meanwhile, below are the components of social emotional learning as per results indicated in a study done by Zhou and Ee (2014) on Development and Validation of the Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ). It was found that self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management and responsible decision-making are the five construct that measure SEL. These results were generated from a sample of 356 Singapore secondary schools and all the components from the questionnaire correlated through the use of Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

In addition, other scholars divide the dimensions of SEL into two, the primary and secondary, for instance; primary involves improvement in learning motivation, decrease in school dismissal rates, academic excellence as well as having more commitment to school programs whereas secondary involves increase in cooperation with others, development of problem solving and social skills, care for healthy life and commitment to society issues, and lastly, is less involvement in crimes, abuse of substance and improvement in family relationship (Gülcan Faika Ülvay, 2018).

Since there seems to be no agreed upon concept of social emotional learning and its measurements and this is brought about by the way different researchers understand the concept in relation to site and populations studies. This study employed the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (2008) which involves recognition and control of emotions, development of care and concern for others, establishment of positive relationships, making responsible decisions, management of challenging situations ethically and constructively. This comprehensive model which is complete enough in that it covers most of the critical aspects of both social and emotional competence as enumerated in other theoretical models (Bar-on, 2014; Ji & Dubois, 2013; Levesseur, 2015). This study found it reasonable enough to expand and examine the same model on Ugandan university students in the central region. This is because the model involves understanding both personal and other people's emotions so as to acquire skills for laying a firm ground and take responsible decisions( Cooper, 2010; Mayer et



al., 2012; Zhou & Ee, 2014). Below are the five sub constructs of the framework for social emotional learning; self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management and responsible decision making.

**Self-awareness:** This is a skill that requires one to discover him/herself in terms of strength, feelings, weakness, emotions and how they affect ones or her performance (Lee, et al., 2019). It requires self-discovery using one's cognitive capacity and laying a strategy of improving one's self development (Ji & Dubois, 2013). Moreover, learners who are aware of their inner person tend to recognize themselves and understand clearly the reasons behind their emotional reactions and lay strategies for self-management especially in both exciting and challenging situations (Levesseur, 2015). Equipping learning with skills of self-regulatory abilities is important, in that it helps them to acknowledge their emotions metacognitively and be in better position to develop self-control emotions mechanism and thus arrive at reasonable ways of making decisions.

**Self- management:** Is the ability to regulate someone's emotions and this can be seen in handling of stress, impulses' control and perseverance in overpowering obstacles faced. In this aspect learners are taught ways of monitoring their academic progress and scores and at the same time expressing their inner feelings appropriately. When this aspect is not done well, students who cannot control their feelings tend not to think and perform well, whereas, on the other side those who are exposed to these skills tend to be successful at work and also handle their peers relationships well (Adams, 2011; Gülcan Faika Ülvey, 2018; Uka, 2014).

**Social awareness:** Is the ability to read other individuals' cues and to comprehend and appropriately respond to their feelings. In simple terms, it implies the ability of an individual to appreciate diversity in background and culture, and to have empathy with others. It involves sharing emotions with friends and attaining a better way of relating with them ( Nickolite & Doll, 2008; Uka, 2014). It is therefore important that lecturers and teachers at all levels of education help learners to acquire the skill of understanding other peoples' perspectives, attitudes and perceptions over certain issues and appreciate their levels and backgrounds. This kind of approach for instance; helps learners to interpret other peoples thoughts, feelings by demonstrating sensitivity over their matters in even complex situations. It also helps to explain the ambiguities and difficulty situations of using harmonious and peaceful means. Children who are natured with this aspect of SEL tend to have sensitivity, maturity in handling issues and inhibitory control(Bar-on, 2014; Zhou & Ee, 2014).

**Relationship management:** In this aspect friends play an important role in management of other students' affairs especially at school. Studies such as (Martín-Antón, et al., 2016)indicate that students who are rejected by friends tend to get isolated and feel like denied by the society. In such a situation when loneliness and isolation take lead, the student is likely to perform poorly and eventually leave the school if he/she is not cared about (Poulou, 2017).

**Responsible decision making:** It refers to having ability to make with ethics and safety meanings of arriving at decisions that do not only benefit an individual per se but also considers society wellbeing. This kind of approach can enable the learner to mind about



his or her academic excellence and equally think about the social situations that contribute to the wellbeing of the society and the school community (Baskin & Sipa, 2014).

Worldwide, the issue of integrating SEL concept into the curriculum reform is a national concern that calls for different strategies from different actors within the education sector for its proper development and implementation. From 1924 to date, Uganda's education system has gone through several stages of development and reforms (Tromp & Datzberger, 2021). However, the required results of a reformed curriculum have not been achieved as intended due to lack of quality teachers and professionalism at all levels of education imbued with SEL. The Teacher Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TISSA) indicated that the quality of education in sub-Saharan Africa Uganda inclusive was facing serious challenges that range from lack of teacher professionalism, shortage of science teachers, inadequate quality assurance standards, under-professionalization of the teaching profession and low academic entry requirements into the teaching profession among others (Farooq, 2024). This has not only affected teacher professionalism but has also led to graduates without pre-requisite skills for self-development and human transformation.

### **Statement of the problem**

There is increasing recognition and acknowledgement that social emotional learning skills influence learners' behavior in schools. In developed countries especially in America and India, research has shown that there is a link between students' academic achievement and emotional learning skills whenever it is applied (Guo et al., 2022; McCuin, 2012; Panayiotou, et al., 2019). Social emotional learning plays a pivotal role in shaping the future opportunities of today's learners, therefore schools and teachers should take it as a serious course of action and solution towards the emerging challenges that face the young generation (Hassan, Suhid, et al., 2010).

Accordingly, many studies have come up with different and distinct ways of conceptualizing and defining the meaning of social emotional learning concepts to address nurturing of student behavior, needs and monitoring progress. Because of the divergent opinions in regard to the meaning of SEL, its contextualization and cultural concerns, there is a need to explore and validate the measurement scale of the hypothesized model before its integration in the curricula (Bhatnagar & Many, 2022). This is because there is no agreed position among scholars, academicians and education practitioners on the significant standardized assessment tool and measurement scale of social emotional learning constructs both at national and international levels, which makes it difficult to understand and evaluate progress outcomes globally. Also the context and the purpose under which the SEL validation tool is conducted varies from one place to another, therefore this gives more room to examine the reliability and validity in each new setting.

Despite the increased recognition of the relevance of SEL, its application and emerging validation measurement tool as proposed by CASEL model within diverse educational and



cultural contexts remain unexplored and validated especially in Uganda, graduates are not contributing greatly to socio-economic transformation of their societies. This is attributed to education systems that have not changed to prepare a holistic personality especially at HEIs level.

For this purpose, this study is designed to examine the current practice in Higher education institutions with emphasis on the ways that are used to expose learners to social emotional learning skills, the curriculum and techniques used for its implementation. Furthermore, the many studies carried out for instance Conley and Conley (2015) social emotional learning in HEIs, advancing the science and practice of social and emotional learning: looking back and moving forward Osher, Kidron, and Weissberg (2016), the evidence base for how we learn supporting students' social, emotional, and academic development, Jones & Kahn (2017), Academic self-concept during the transition to upper secondary school Keyserlingk, Becker, and Jansen, (2019), social-emotional learning and academic achievement: using causal methods to explore classroom-level mechanisms McCormick, Connor, and Mcclowry (2015), investing in evidence based social and emotional learning companion guide to social and emotional learning interventions under the every student succeeds act: evidence review Jones and Kahn (2017), an empirical basis for linking social and emotional learning to academic performance Panayiotou et al., (2019), basic psychological needs satisfaction at school, behavioral school engagement, and academic achievement: Longitudinal reciprocal relations among elementary school students Wang, Tian, and Huebner (2019), Effects of peer-led training on academic self-efficacy, study strategies, and academic performance for first-year university students with and without reading difficulties Bergey, Parrila, Laroche, and Deacon (2019) have not explored and validated students' perception of SEL skills among universities in Uganda, thus forming bedrock for designing this study.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To examine the underlying structure of social emotional learning skills among universities in Uganda context
2. To validate the measurement model of social emotional learning skills among universities in Uganda.
3. To develop SEL assessment scale with reasonable psychometric properties to employ in Ugandan education sector.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to examine and validate the concept of social and emotional learning among university students in Uganda. This is because many Ugandan HEIs could be missing this aspect in the teaching and nurturing of future generations.



## Research hypothesis

H<sub>1</sub>. Social Emotional learning skills is a multidimensional construct comprising five interconnected dimensions.

H<sub>2</sub>: The measurement model of SEL is multidimensional and valid construct.

## Method

### Participants and Sample

The study data was obtained from 664 students from both public and private universities. Majority of the sample were females with 56%, 26% studying in year one, 47.2% aged between 25-30. The targeted universities were located in different regions of the country that include; central, Eastern, etc. Furthermore, the data was analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Full Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), hence addressing the purpose of the study. The sample size of the study deemed reasonable to address the SEM parameter estimates.

### Instrumentation

Since instrumentation is an important step in developing a research tool, its validity, and reliability. This study adopted and adapted a survey questionnaire for data collection with 5 sub constructs of SEL construct and 58 items used in previous different studies (Rimm-kaufman, 2014; Stavsky, 2015; Zhou & Ee, 2014). To arrive at the concrete reliability margin of error recommended, the researcher analyzed the data using EFA technique measure each of the individual sub dimension (Jayasinghe-Mudalige, et al., 2012). After EFA, the measurement model was examined using CFA of structural equation modelling analysis to establish whether it fits the model (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010; Byrne, 2009; Mann & Mann, 2011).

A five Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used to examine students' social emotional learning skills among universities. The reliability index of Cronbach Alpha for the five subconstructs ranged from an alpha .705 to .803 (self-awareness .706, social-awareness .715, self-management .739, relationship-management .737 and responsible-decision .803).

### Data analysis

The data collected was stored in Excel and later transferred to SPSS version 22 for initial data cleaning and screening. The data was transformed to examine the reliability for each of the sub constructs, and descriptive analysis was conducted to show the demographic variables of all respondents. EFA was conducted to establish the items that measure each of the factors for the theory of Social emotional learning (SEL). To measure the relationship for all the constructs at once, the study employed structural equation modelling. This is a robust statistical technique that combines regression and



confirmatory factor analysis into a simultaneous test. Therefore to arrive at plausible results and at the same time test the theories and conceptual model of SEL using the Ugandan perspective this technique was deemed at reasonable for data analysis (Ary et al., 2010; Byrne, 2009).

## Results

### Underlying Structure of Social Emotional Learning Skills

The descriptive statistics for the dimensionality reduction of the items are shown in Table 1. The maximum score for each of the survey questionnaire items is 5. The hypothesized mean score for all items was below 2.5. Precisely, the mean score for all the items of the dimension SEL was less than .55. This implied that respondents had low levels of SEL. The Cronbach's alpha deemed reasonable.

**Table 1.** Factor Loadings, communalities, total variance explained and eigenvalue of the five-factor dimensions of the social emotional learning skills' construct.

Factor	Dimension & indicators of social emotional learning	Alpha	Mean	SD	Factor loading
Self-awareness	selfaware1	.706	4.0	1.051	.686
	selfaware2		4.1	.964	.641
	selfaware3		4.1	.982	.682
	selfaware4		4.0	1.050	.574
	selfaware5		3.8	1.162	.482
Social-awareness	Socialawa1	.715	3.0	1.270	.377
	Socialawa2		2.7	1.247	.688
	Socialawa3		3.1	1.305	.770
	Socialawa4		3.4	1.250	.774
	Socialawa5		2.7	1.250	.600
Self-Management	selfmagt1	.739	3.4	1.27	.692
	selfmagt2		3.8	1.11	.683
	selfmagt3		3.7	1.26	.728
	selfmagt4		3.6	1.27	.599
	selfmagt5		3.8	1.21	.479
Relationship-Management	relatiosh1	.737	4.1	1.10	.596
	relatiosh2		4.1	.955	.656
	relatiosh3		3.6	1.18	.610
	relatiosh4		3.5	1.21	.627
	relatiosh5		4.0	1.09	.533
Responsible decision making	respon1	.803	3.9	1.11	.569
	respon2		4.0	1.03	.683
	respon3		3.8	1.08	.728
	respon4		3.7	1.05	.712
	respon5		3.8	1.10	.784



To explore the underlying structure of responses to the 25 items of social emotional learning skills construct among students in HEIs, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted. The results from the sample of 664 showed that there was a justification for using Principal Component due to the degree of inter-correlation among the items measuring self-reported questionnaire among students. The findings on Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .902, which was above the threshold of 0.7, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square 4663.045, degree of freedom (df) 300, sig .000. The correlation matrix produced indicated the best fit inter-correlation whereby the intercorrelation among the indicators accounted for 52% of the total variance explained. Oblimin method of axis rotation was used as a maximum likelihood procedure for the results obtained results.

As shown below the PCA given in the table 2 indicated five factors for SEL construct. The variance explained per factor reflects that responsible decision making was 6.77, self-awareness 2.18, self-management 1.46, social awareness 1.25 and relationship management 1.19. The findings are supported by an earlier study done by Belay and Dejene (2024), though differed in the number of items for factor number five. In contrary the study differed with the findings of Tomé-Fernández, et al., (2020) due to the fact that their study was produced on a scale of six underlying factors of SEL.

From the findings, it is reflected that the factor loadings were statistically significant and correlated with their items accordingly. The factor loading were of practical importance due to large scores showed was statistically significant at  $P=.01$ . There was also a strong and significant loadings for the five rotated factor loadings. Thus the findings reflected a perfectly matched logical grouping of the items. This paved way for further analysis using CFA. The commonality that loaded on each of the factors showed that the five factor loading have a significant impact on the construct SEL.

A CFA was conducted using the Analysis of Moment Structure to examine the maximum likelihood estimates for validating the hypothesized SEL five-factor measurement model (Miuro, et al., 2016). The findings from the initial analysis as shown in Figure 1 reflect that the CFA was conducted on a five factor structure measurement model of SEL with 25 items extracted from EFA as reflected in the previous studies (Ross & Tolan, 2018), though the goodness-of fit measurement model did not meet the requirement fixed indices comparative fit index (CFI), the relative or normed chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$ ), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), degree of freedom (DF), and Chi-square. The required indices for fit goodness RMSEA values  $\leq .08$ , CFI values  $\geq .90$ , and  $\chi^2/df \leq 5.0$  (Byrne, 2016) were also examined to arrive at measurement of the study.

To identify the regression coefficient for the error terms were fixed at 1 for the endogenous variables. In harmony with Amos analysis principles, the latent variables were represented in circle format, measurement errors as ellipses, and observed constructs (indicators/items) as rectangles (Byrne, 2016; Farooq, et al., 2017; Ross & Tolan, 2018). The hypothesized measurement model for SEL was conceptualized by five constructs inter-correlated double arrows in figures 1 and 2. These include; - social-awareness, self-management, self-awareness, relationship skills, social responsibility skills and responsible decision making. From the circles to rectangles are single headed



arrows that represent the regression paths. These arrows indicate the connection between sub-construct and their items. The study factor loadings are indicated on the trajectories and the single-headed arrows from ellipses to rectangles reflect the measurement error for each item (Silalayi, 2018; Yong & Pearce, 2013).

**Table 1.** Eigenvalues and Proportion of Variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	
	Total	% of	Cumulati	Total	% of	Cumulative	Total	% of
		Variance	ve %		Variance	%		Variance
1	6.763	27.052	27.052	6.763	27.052	27.052	2.907	11.628
2	2.187	8.747	35.800	2.187	8.747	35.800	2.696	10.786
3	1.461	5.844	41.643	1.461	5.844	41.643	2.500	9.998
4	1.354	5.418	47.061	1.354	5.418	47.061	2.469	9.874
5	1.199	4.795	51.856	1.199	4.795	51.856	2.393	9.570
6	.939	3.754	55.610					
7	.881	3.522	59.133					
8	.812	3.247	62.379					
9	.793	3.172	65.551					
10	.741	2.964	68.515					
11	.693	2.774	71.289					
12	.653	2.612	73.901					
13	.631	2.523	76.424					
14	.625	2.500	78.924					
15	.604	2.414	81.339					
16	.563	2.250	83.589					
17	.546	2.185	85.774					
18	.533	2.133	87.907					
19	.517	2.067	89.974					
20	.494	1.976	91.950					
21	.430	1.721	93.671					
22	.423	1.692	95.363					
23	.402	1.610	96.972					
24	.391	1.562	98.535					
25	.366	1.465	100.000					

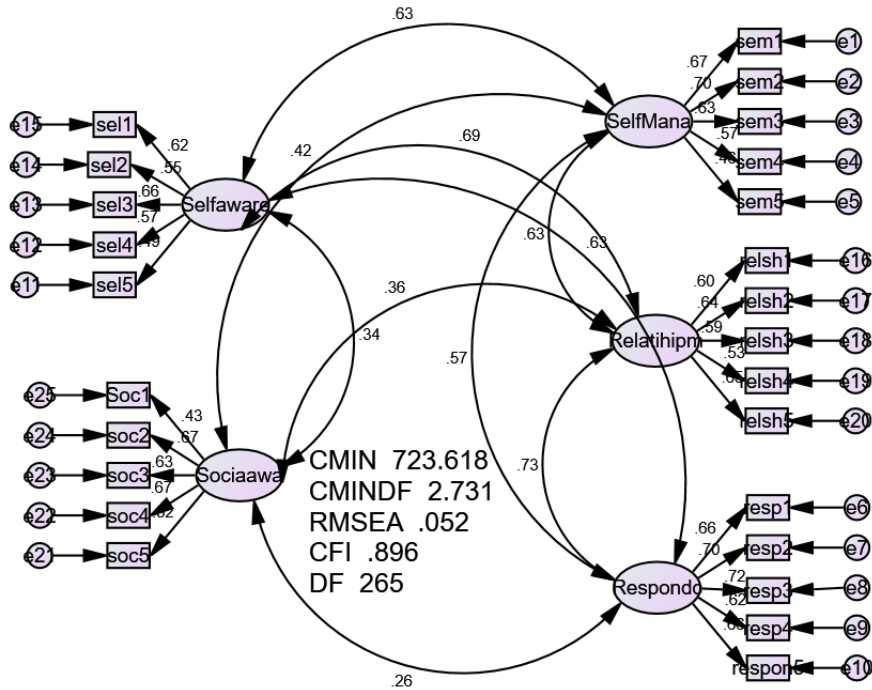
In Figure 1, the first five-factor hypothesized model with 25 items loaded on their respective constructs did not show satisfactory goodness-of-fit as mentioned before in that CFI= .896, Df= 265, ( $\chi^2 = 723.618$ , RMSEA=.052,  $p < .001$ ; and  $\chi^2/df = 2.731$ ).

To attain better goodness-of-fit indices requirements, a re-specified measurement model analysis was done on the same data though one item (sem5) on the sub-construct self-management with low loadings of .479 was deleted as shown as in Figure 2 below.

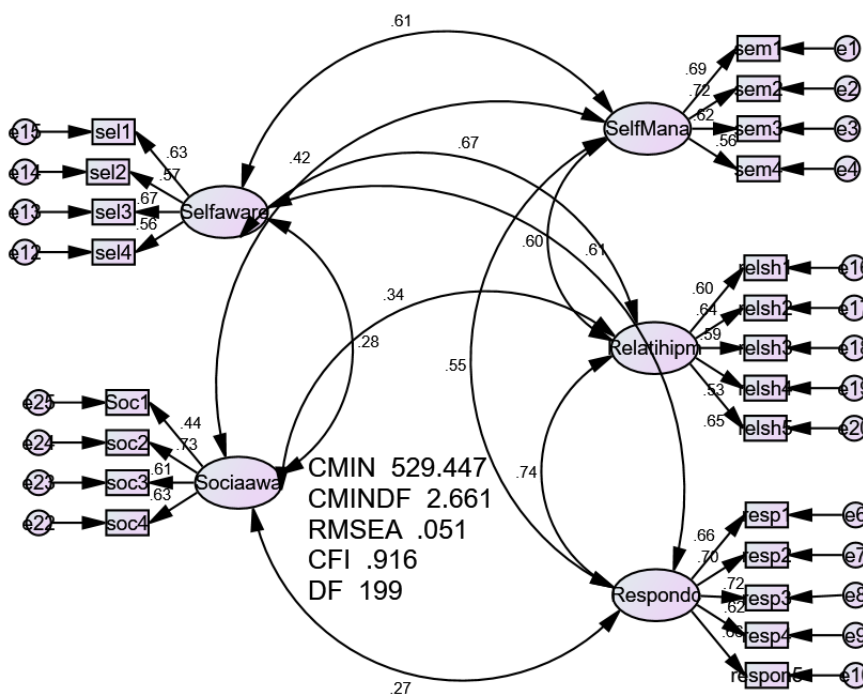




**Figure 1.** Confirmatory factor analysis of the hypothesized measurement model of SEL



**Figure 2.** For re-specified hypothesized measurement model for social emotional learning skill' construct





The findings from the re-specified hypothesized measurement in Figure 2 indicate that CFI= .916, Df= 199, ( $\chi^2 = 529.447$ , RMSEA=.051,  $p < .001$ ; and  $\chi^2/df = 2.661$ ).

### SEL Measurement model reliability and validity assessment

**Table 3** - Convergent validity for social emotional learning skills construct

<b>Sub construct</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Factor loading</b>
<b>Self-Management</b>	Sem1	.693
	Sem2	.715
	Sem3	.616
	Sem4	.558
Cronbach's Alpha $\geq 0.7$		.738
Composite reliability		0.74
Average variance explained		0.76
<b>Responsible decision Making</b>	Resp1	.663
	Resp2	.699
	Resp3	.719
	Resp4	.616
	Resp5	.655
Cronbach's Alpha $\geq 0.7$		0.74
Composite reliability		0.88
Average variance explained		0.55
<b>Self-awareness</b>	Sel1	.618
	Sel2	.551
	Sel3	.661
	Sel4	.568
Cronbach's Alpha $\geq 0.7$		0.71
Composite reliability		0.72
Average variance explained		.044
<b>Relationship-management</b>	Relsh1	.598
	Relsh2	.639
	Relsh3	.592
	Relsh4	.533
	Relsh5	.652
Cronbach's Alpha $\geq 0.7$		803
Composite reliability		0.78
Average variance explained		0.44
<b>Social-awareness</b>	Soc2	.673
	Soc3	.643
	Soc4	.674
	Soc5	.520
	Cronbach's Alpha $\geq 0.7$	
Composite reliability		0.73
Average variance explained		0.43
Cronbach alpha for 19 items		.847



Despite the high Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.7 (ranging from .715-.803) for all the SEL sub-constructs to achieve the acceptable measurement model requirements, another step was taken to establish both construct validity and reliability as shown in table 3 below, the reliability and validity were assessed using composite reliability(CR) and average variance explained from the Table 3 below showed that CR values exceeded .7 ranging from 0.71-81, thus indicating a good construct reliability. There was a slight divergence in the items of five multidimensional of the hypothesized model of SEL. This suggests that the conceptualization and definition of SEL vary from one country to another(Belay & Dejene, 2024; Ross & Tolan, 2018;). The study findings reflected that the respondents were above to differentiate the five study subconstructs of SEL as indicated in Table 3 below.

### Social Emotional Learning Psychometric Properties

It is portrayed from figure 2 that the specified model of SEL construct is a unified model with five latent variables with standardized regression coefficients paths and indicator items (self-management, social-awareness, responsible decision-making self-awareness, and , relationship skills,). The results further indicated that standardized coefficient values were between .43 to .72, reflecting reasonable significant factor loadings at  $p < .001$ (see Table2).

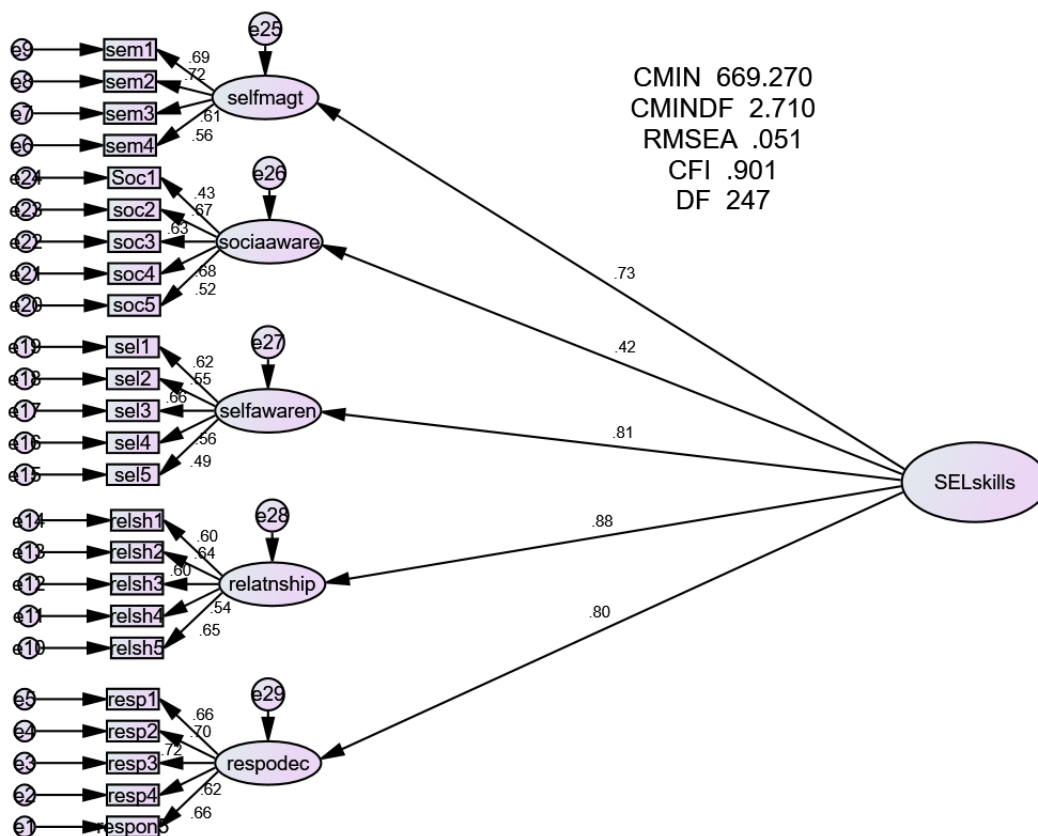
**Table 4.** Shows AVE for Social Emotional Learning Skills Measurement Model.

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
SelfMagt	0.51	0.53	0.52	0.29	0.48
Respdeci	0.73	0.54	0.42	0.30	0.48
Selfaware	0.72	0.65	0.44	0.30	0.48
Relnshp	0.54	0.55	0.55	0.50	0.24
Sociaware	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.49	0.47
Composite Reliability	0.74	0.88	0.72	0.78	0.73

Under the diagonal in Table 4 above is the correlation matrix, above the diagonal are the average variance explained value,. while the shared values variance matrix is above the diagonal.



**Figure 3.** second-order factor analysis of SEL hypothesized model with standardized estimates



From the study results, Figure 3 indicates second-order measurement model of SEL skills generated through confirmatory factor analysis. The findings reflected significant strong significant indicators at  $p < .001$  in that responsible decision making value ( $\beta = .80$ ), relationship skills ( $\beta = .88$ ), self-awareness scored ( $\beta = .81$ ), Social-awareness ( $\beta = .42$ ), and self-management ( $\beta = .73$ ). This implies that relationship skills scored the highest variance explained at 88%, followed by self-awareness scored 81%, responsible decision making value 80%, self-management 73%, and social-awareness 42% across universities in Uganda. The findings further revealed that the hypothesis that SEL is a five structure measurement model is valid and reliable, and its constructs are specifically and systematically associated with it.

### Discussion

The study findings in the tables indicate that there was evidence for convergent validity because the 70% of the values of the AVE for SEL were above 0.5, representing satisfactory convergent validity discriminant validity was also realized due to large values corresponding with shared values (values above the diagonal). The inter-factor correlation was moderate (Hair, et al., 2010). This showed that SEL is a multidimensional construct with inter-related factors but distinct in nature. The data reflects that the study composite reliability values ranged from 0.72 (self-awareness) to 0.88 (responsible



decision making). This implies that the values were high enough and above the acceptable values thus providing proof of convergent validity (Lam, 2012)

The consistence of validity and reliability of SEL construct survey tool differs from one country to another. Therefore it is important for researchers that before using CFA and full SEM at the same time, an analysis of EFA should always be done first in order to come up with better factor loadings.

The results from Figure 1 obtained using CFA showed that the hypothesized model of SEL is a multidimensional construct with five subconstructs, and these did not meet the standardized goodness-of-fit for using SEM (Awang, et al., 2017). The study further contributed to the body of knowledge by examining and validating the existing survey tool however, self-management constructs proved that in the context of Uganda is measured with four items. This is because some of its items loaded below the required value scores. The five-factor measurement model is in agreement with earlier studies like (Chernyshenko, 2018; Ross & Tolan, 2018; Saxe, 2011).

The study further indicates that SEL measurement model should be implemented based on context and culture of a given place, this will ease the work of different stakeholders in the sector of education (CASEL, 2013, 2015). A strong positive correlation among the five factor and their item indicators was shown by the study findings. This implies that SEL is holistic in nature due to interconnectedness among its sub constructs. The study has added on the advocacy of fostering and integrating SEL in the curricula of different levels of education in order to prepare a holistic graduate for socio-economic transformation of their societies (Hicks, 2012; Kivunja, 2014).

### **Limitation**

The key interest of this study as purported by the author was to examine and validate the hypothesized theoretical model of SEL, The intention was to have strong factor loadings for the entire measurement model fit with all its item loadings on the factors. However, one of the items for self-management sub construct did not meet the standards.

The study was not longitudinal due to high costs that were required, therefore it was done using a cross-sectional survey design on a particular group of students in the central region.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This is the first kind of study done in Uganda to validate SEL hypothesized conceptual model as a measurement model. The study findings provide a robust support for integration of model in curriculum and management of social emotional skills especially at HEIs. Though the results were gained from a self-report survey tool, the findings are applicable across different ages of sample cohorts. A study with mixed methods with more diverse and large sample of participants across the country is needed to establish the robustness across age groups of different education levels. Future studies on SEL have a basis of using this reliable and valid measurement model to examine the trajectories of the five sub-constructs of SEL, the difference in their meaning, and function of the entire design.



HEIs should also train lectures in SEL skills in order to train graduates who are imbued with skills of self-management and self-awareness to make responsible decisions that affect their relationship and social responsibility positively.

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