

Editorial Note

Maryam. Hosseini Largani^{1*} 

¹ Associate Professor, Department of Educational and Curriculum Innovation, Institute for Research and Planning in Higher Education, Tehran, Iran

* Corresponding author email address m.hosseini@irphe.ac.ir

Article Info

Article type:

Chief Editor's Note

How to cite this article:

Hosseini Largani, M. (2026). Editorial Note. *Quarterly Journal of Research and Planning in Higher Education*, 32 (3), 1-6.



© 2026 the authors. Published by Institute for Research and Planning in Higher Education (IRPHE), Tehran, Iran. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) License.

It is with great pleasure and honor to announce the online publication of the **Quarterly Journal of Research and Planning in Higher Education** (Volume 32/ Issue 3). With more than 3 decades of continuous publication; the journal now serves as a nation-wide source of novel and innovative research within the realm of Higher Education. This success does not happen in a vacuum; rather, it is a joint academic endeavor among renowned scholars as the members of the editorial team, committed reviewers who provide meticulous and scientific evaluations of research submitted to the journal, and a group of staff members who work in alignment with the policies of the journal to meet our scheduled time frame from receiving submissions to online publication.

Our new issue (**Volume 32/ Issue 3**) comprises 10 timely research which have been selected from a large number of submissions to the journal.

Maghsood Farasatkah and **Reza Maniee** in their research “The Talent Competitiveness Gap in Iran: Emphasis on University Graduates” claimed that the outflow of intellectual capital and the depletion of Iran’s human potential have become a serious crisis. The productivity of Iran’s abundant human capital faces major structural barriers, and an analysis of the Seventh National Development Plan offers no effective path forward. They reveal that Iran’s greatest deficiencies at the national level include transparency, international economic collaboration, R&D employment opportunities, internet access, social inclusion and equality of opportunity, gender equality, national empowerment, and decentralization. At the university level, shortcomings include institutional autonomy, foreign investment, international faculty, and incorporation of student feedback. These barriers have undermined Iran’s ability to identify, attract, employ, engage, retain, and develop talent effectively. Moreover, differences

in perceptions and expectations were observed between male and female graduates and across three generational cohorts. The study highlights the critical importance of graduate surveys as a tool for policy and reform.

Naser Shirbagi, Abdullah Amini, Khalil Gholami, and Shamsi Ebrahimi in their research “Practicing Democracy at The University: The Faculty Members' Episodic Narratives of Competition for Academic Leadership” aimed to understand how faculty members make sense of the experience of democracy practice at the university (elections for determining academic managers) and how they express it in the form of sub-stories (description of events according to chronological sequence) within the context of University of Kurdistan, Iran. They highlighted that despite the shortcomings that the narrators enumerated, the positive consequences of it, such as satisfaction, commitment, morale, and organizational citizenship, should not be ignored. In such activities, university managers should consider the participation of all stakeholders in the university community. Politics is pervasive in higher education institutions. Therefore, understanding how to navigate these political environments is important for managers.

In the next research “Development of a Framework for the Digitalization of Higher Education Based on a Comparative Analysis of Global Experiences Across Over 40 Countries”; **Shirin Rajabibazl, Abasalt Khorasani, Hamid Reza Yazdani, and Farnoosh Alami** highlight that the digital transformation of higher education has been recognized as an inevitable necessity in addressing the complex challenges of the contemporary era. This transformation has been understood to demand coherent and comprehensive policies and frameworks. Despite extensive efforts in this domain, most existing studies have been found to primarily focus on technical and educational aspects while lacking an integrated approach for systematically analyzing all key drivers of digital transformation. As a result, the comprehensive identification of factors influencing the development and advancement of digital transformation in higher education has been hindered. In this study, they have developed a theoretical and policy-oriented framework for the digitalization of higher education through a comparative analysis of policies and experiences from 40 countries with varying levels of digital maturity.

Maryam Baharluoei and Ali Moradi in the fourth research “The Employment Issue of PhD Graduates in the Humanities in Iran: Barriers and Challenges” claimed that Iran has seen significant growth in the establishment of universities and student enrollment in various fields of study over the past two decades. However, this increase in higher education has been accompanied by unemployment among a growing number of higher education graduates, with doctoral graduates in the humanities experiencing a higher unemployment rate than other fields. Therefore, we aim to understand the barriers to employment and the conditions that lead to unemployment among PhD graduates in humanities. They identified seven main categories: Relationship governance, Ideological contexts, University massification, Humanities isolation, Market/university mismatch, Limitations in humanities entrepreneurship and Dysfunctional policymaking. They showed that one of the most important factors in the employment of PhD graduates in the humanities is the policies and decisions of the government and its affiliated institutions.

Seyed Ali Khaleghinezhad and Mahdieh Sadat Mirrahimi in their research “Comparative Study of Undergraduate General Education Curricula in Iran and Selected Middle East Universities” explain that although the undergraduate general education curriculum is often hailed as the conscience of higher education, its philosophical foundations remain underexplored in Iran. In this comparative study, they compared the general curriculum of the undergraduate course of the Iranian higher education system with the American University of Cairo, the American University of Sharjah, Qatar University, King Abdulaziz University, and KOC University. They found these universities offer a wider, more diverse selection of courses, align their learning outcomes with local, national, and global priorities, and operate under flexible curricular frameworks. Consequently, Iranian higher education, to enhance quality, should adopt an interdisciplinary framework and balance knowledge, skills, and attitudes within its general education curriculum.

Samad Izadi, Mostafa Azizi Shomami, and Shapour Moradifard in the next research “Exploring the Inhibiting Factors of Curriculum Viability at Farhangian University Based on Faculty Members' Perceptions” explore the inhibiting factors of curriculum viability at Farhangian University based on faculty members' perceptions. Their findings revealed overarching

themes, including barriers related to educational innovation, adaptability and system dynamism curriculum design, structure, and planning; the competencies, motivation, and professional identity of practitioners; assessment, instructional quality, and learning outcomes; organizational interactions, governance, and policymaking; resources and infrastructural limitations; and generational gaps and educational communication. Overall, the results indicate that the viability of curricula at Farhangian University is constrained by a set of structural, content-related, operational, evaluative, organizational, and generational barriers. Removing these barriers requires fundamental revision, improved policymaking, and strengthened professional and organizational capacities.

In the seventh research “Exploring Student Teachers’ Perceptions of Artificial Intelligence Adoption: Fears and Hopes”, **Abbas Ramazani**, **Maryam Sadat Ghoraiishi Khorasgani**, and **Masumeh Sharifi** believe that the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the teaching–learning process has brought about significant transformations. Student teachers’ perceptions toward AI-based educational technologies can profoundly influence their future implementation of these tools and the learning outcomes of their students. Therefore, examining their views on AI adoption is essential. Their findings assist policymakers, educational planners, and Farhangian University in preparing future teachers for intelligent, critical, and human-centered interaction with emerging technologies by designing targeted training courses, establishing ethical frameworks, and providing practical learning environments.

Nader Heidari Raziabad, **Reza Sarbaz Moradloo**, **Ali Khaleghkhah**, and **Ebrahim Taheri Namhil** in the next research “Identification and Validation of Key Digital Literacy Indicators among Faculty Members for Ensuring the Quality of Online Education” aim to identify and validate key indicators of digital literacy among faculty members in ensuring the quality of online education. They categorized the key digital literacy indicators of faculty members for ensuring online education quality and validated under five components: educational technology, instructional design, information management, effective interaction, and professional ethics. Based on the findings, identifying and validating these indicators can enhance the quality of online education and improve the effectiveness of teaching–learning processes. Integrating these indicators into educational planning can foster faculty professional development and ensure sustainable quality in virtual education.

In the next research “Study of opportunities for access to higher education in Upstream documents of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1357-1402)”; **Jafar Hezzarjaribi**, **Alireza Taherinia**, and **Gholamreza Zakersalehi** analyze the policies approved in documents after the Islamic Revolution of Iran regarding creating opportunities for access to higher education, and to discover and extract their policy approach. The following main theme “Policies Affecting Access Opportunities to Higher Education” and subthemes: “Ideological foundations of quantitative and qualitative expansion of higher education”; “Participation of individuals and institutions in quantitative and qualitative expansion of higher education”; “Priority of local, regional, and cultural needs in the expansion of higher education”; “Paying attention to the opportunity for special groups to access higher education”; “Organizing the student admission system with a focus on increasing access” emerged in their research. These themes are based on the approach of justice of Islamic researchers and with Capability approach.

Mahtab Mirkooshesh and **Mohammad Khodabakhshi** in their research “Review of Public Expenditure Efficiency Evaluation Using Data Envelopment Analysis: A Case Study of Research Expenditure Efficiency in Iranian Industrial Universities” explain that the efficiency of government expenditures is the ability to generate greater outputs using specified resources. Due to constraints on government resources, improving public expenditure efficiency has become crucial for reducing public budget consumption. Calculating the efficiency of public expenditures and implementing performance-based budgeting has led to the use of mathematical methods to optimize and assess government organizations’ efficiency. One effective approach is Data Envelopment Analysis, a technique that evaluates the relative efficiency of decision-making units by comparing inputs and outputs. When combined with other econometric or statistical methods, DEA offers a broader perspective on how units and organizations perform in terms of budget utilization. Furthermore, comparing similar units highlights the strengths and weaknesses of each system, guiding decision-makers. They aim to evaluate the challenges in calculating public expenditure efficiency using DEA, by reviewing studies comparing the performance of various governments

in international comparisons. The review highlights the methodological challenges, indicator selection, and decision-making unit selection.

The articles we publish in the **Quarterly Journal of Research and Planning in Higher Education** are selected based on the rigour of research methodologies, novelty of research questions, as well as novelty and innovation of findings which provide best practices and ideas for extensive list of the journal's audience: researchers, (post)graduate students, governing boards of universities, and policy-makers.

We also express our deep appreciation to the researchers whose works are rejected as we have to meticulously work in alignment with the journal's policy concerning the works we publish in the journal.

Seyedeh Maryam Hosseini Largani
Editor-in-Chief