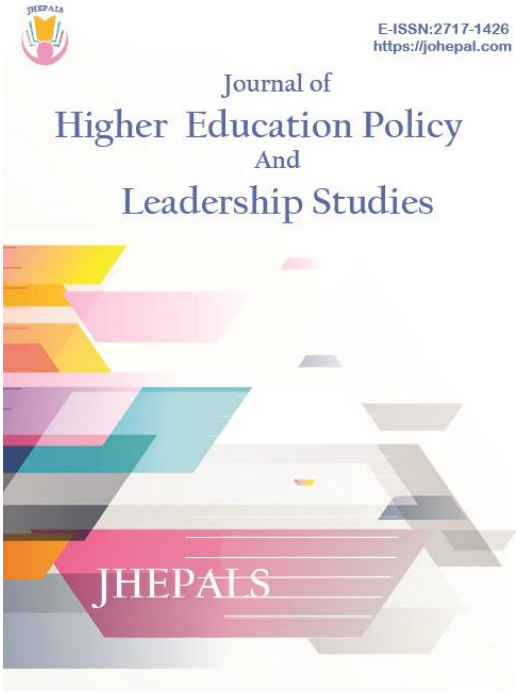
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Editorial Note

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In alignment with the journal's policy in terms of distribution of authors as well as novelty of ideas/ research practices; JHEPALS SEPTEMBER Issue 2026 (Volume 7/ Issue 3) presents novel and innovative research from both higher education leaders and scholars with more than three decades of extensive research; and also novice researchers whose voices and works matter to the HE scholars, students, and policy-makers worldwide.

Journal of Higher Education Policy And Leadership Studies (JHEPALS) with its commitment to *the rigor of the research, the enriched nature of methodologies of the studies,* and *the novel and innovative research findings and recommendations* for researchers, leaders, and policy-makers aims to foster novel ideas within the realm of higher education policy and leadership based on its eleven pivotal Aims and Scope.

There are five research in the ARTICLES section of the journal which present timely research in a global scope and are finally selected after rigorous double-blind review procedure.

Wesley Dixon, Claire Swedberg, Ava Chen, Mariam Eshetu, and Elizabeth H. Bradley in their research "*"The Curtain Was Pulled Back:" Building Leadership Capacity in Higher Education*" explain that unprecedented scrutiny of top university leadership has led to renewed calls for more effective management and leadership of higher education institutions. Despite promising evidence about the positive impact of early career management and leadership development programs in other sectors, little is known about their potential impact for institutions of higher education. So, they aim to evaluate the experience of participants and preceptors in a novel early-career administrative fellowship program for management and leadership development in higher education.

In the next research "*Governing Generative AI in Higher Education: Policy Archetypes, Cross-Regional Patterns, and an Adaptive Governance Framework*" Akram Hosseini and Elahe Khademzadeh emphasize that the emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence is reshaping debates and practices surrounding higher education governance and compelling universities to develop policy responses. They compare GenAI policies across 29 universities in North America, Europe, East and Southeast Asia, Oceania, and institutions in the Middle

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East, Africa, and Latin America through four questions: which policy archetypes have emerged across major regions; what emerging or hybrid approaches appear beyond these archetypes; what governance principles underpin policy approaches; and how these findings can inform a governance framework for higher education institutions.

Sandra Patricia Barragán Moreno and Nayibe Castro Novoa in the third research "*Simulating Digital Equity and Quality Gaps Associated with Digital Transformation in Higher Education*" explain that despite a decade of sustained investment in digital technologies, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) continue to show uneven progress in access and educational quality. They analyse the structural conditions behind the gap between Digital Transformation (DT) and educational outcomes through a System Dynamics model that connects technological investment, faculty training, organisational culture, and social equity.

Diana Carolina Ríos-Echeverri, Alejandro Valencia-Arias, Ada Gallegos, Jackeline Valencia, and Sebastián Cardona-Acevedo in their research "*Rural Women's Leadership: Approaches, Enabling Factors and Challenges for Its Recognition and Strengthening*" illuminate that women's leadership in rural contexts manifests in diverse forms that challenge traditional notions of power, representation, and agency. The latter is understood as the capacity to make autonomous decisions and actively transform the environment. The authors conduct a systematic review of the extant scientific literature, structured in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guideline, aiming to analyse the theoretical perspectives, enabling factors, and structural barriers shaping the consolidation of rural women's leadership.

In the fifth research "*Student Onboarding as a Strategic Tool for Student Success: A Comparative Study of Germany and the United States*" Andrea Honal, Alexander Scholl, Dietrich von Biedenfeld and Alexis von Biedenfeld believe that student onboarding can support academic adjustment, social integration, and student success. Hence, in this comparative cross-sectional study, they examine onboarding experiences at DHBW Mannheim in Germany and the University of Houston-Downtown in the United States. The authors suggest that onboarding should coordinate academic guidance, social connections, organizational information, and digital support across the first year. Institutional leaders can strengthen transition support through structured mentoring, clear communication, and guidance on responsible AI use.

The REFLECTION section of the journal is also a channel for the researchers to share their studies and adopt the novel ideas and innovative key points in other research as a stage to work on new research projects. In this regard, research submitted to this section also go through the same evaluation procedure by the editors-in-chief, members of the editorial team, and reviewers to ensure the works we publish meet all the journal's requirements.

Amy Tucker in her research "*Another Brick in the Wall: Credential Recognition, Occupational Closure, and the Persistence of Brain Waste*" explain that each year, thousands of

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internationally trained professionals arrive in Canada and other wealthy countries carrying years of education, only to find that their education is quietly set aside at the threshold of the labour market. She synthesizes the scholarship on that loss, often called brain waste, and asks why it persists despite decades of reform. The author argues that the underuse of immigrant skills is less an administrative delay than a structural feature of how professions guard their boundaries and how organizations earn legitimacy.

J. "Clay" Hurdle in his research "*Land-Grant Universities, University Cooperative Extension, and the 4-H Youth Development Program: Providing Leadership Development Opportunities to Youth in the United States*" claims that land-grant universities are in effect responsible for capacity building with respect to youth leadership development. For land-grant universities – as well as universities who wish to engage in more public outreach – programs like 4-H have a variety of implications moving forward. These implications include but are not limited to university matriculation, civic engagement, workforce development, and positive youth development.

We also receive numerous works for the COLLOQUIUM section of the journal; however, we have to be selective to present the novel and innovative works which provide insightful ideas for the research community worldwide. In some cases, we even invite the authors of research articles to consider resubmission of their works to the colloquium section of the journal based on the reviewers' comments and editorial decision.

Amin Safaei and Mahshid Safaei in their research "*Beyond Advisory Governance: A Three-Layer Model for Agentic AI in Universities*" propose the Three-Layer University Agentic AI Governance Model (TUAIGM), a proposed governance model for universities that are beginning to consider agentic AI in areas where decisions directly affect students. The paper argues that agentic AI exposes three governance weaknesses: diffused accountability, goal misalignment, and behavioural drift. These risks are especially difficult in universities because authority is already distributed across board, administrative, and faculty structures.

In the INTERVIEW section "*International Leadership: Personal Reflections on Higher Education*", Prof. Jun Li as the ARC Chair and Professor of Comparative and International Education at Western University, Past President of Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), and Founding President of Chinese Society for Education provides insightful and illuminating responses to the interview questions which would be of interest to and practical use for global higher education practitioners and policy-makers.

Hopefully, JHEPALS also receives numerous book reviews which are thoroughly reviewed by the editors-in-chief and the members of editorial team to select the most suitable book review which meets the academic rigorous criteria of the journal. The book review meets the journal's requirements in terms of its relevance to the HE community, being timely, including novel ideas with a focus to bridge the available gap in the knowledge about HE Policy and Leadership, as well as the reputation of the book authors and the publishers. The

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review procedure happens by the members of editorial board to select the most suitable work for this section.

Hilary Houlette in her review of "*No Confidence: When Faculty Turn Against Their Presidents*" by Michael T. Nietzel and Charles M. Ambrose concludes that it is an important book for higher education campus community members who are interested in understanding what happens behind the doors of the president's office and within the chambers of faculty senate meetings. Faculty need to understand the power of their collective governance and recognize that the No Confidence Vote remains a relevant mechanism to evoke change within an institution. In tumultuous times, exploring strategies for greater harmony between the faculty and administration is paramount. This begins with shared governance and ends with the enduring capacity to cast a No Confidence Vote.

Editors' final note:

JHEPALS team works in a collaborative, academic, unified, and friendly environment who have one common GOAL: Success of the journal as an international publication which meet the maximum scientific merits in terms of the works we publish.

We confirm our commitment to the academic excellence through research we publish at the JHEPALS which happens with the collaboration of globally recognized researchers, leaders, and policy-makers within the realm of HE Policy and Leadership.

Prof. Abbas Abbaspour
Dr. Ali Khorsandi Taskoh

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